二哈和他的白猫师尊

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Synopsis

Mo Ran thought becoming Chu Wanning's disciple was a mistake.

His shizun was really too much like a cat while he himself was a dumb pup who'd only slobber and wag his tail.

Dogs and cats were different by nature; originally, the dumb pup didn't want to extend his furry paws to that cat.

He originally thought, dogs should be with dogs, like his shixiong, beautiful and tame like a cute Japanese Spitz, and the two of them together would surely be a match made in heaven.

Yet, after having died and reborn, after having lived two lives, the one he hauled back each time to his den in the end was always the one he couldn't stand at first: that snow-white kitty shizun.

Dumb off the charts husky gong x proud, aggravated, big white cat shou

Emperor of the cultivation world Mo Weiyu deceived elders and slaughtered ancestors, and committed all crimes and sins known to man. After ending his own life, he was reborn and transmigrated to the year he first became a disciple.

In the shell of a boy held an old and weary soul. After coming back to life, truth after truth that had been hidden below the surface in the previous life floated to the top and broke through the waters one after the other.

Of all the revelations, the one that stunned him the most was that the Shizun he had hated to the bone in his previous life had always been protecting him from the shadows…

The heart of man can change; even demons and monsters can become compassionate and do good. Only, he had

sinned deeply. Can the blood on his hands ever be cleansed?

Book I: Different Paths

Ch.1 This Venerable One Dies

>>suicide

That bit of time before Mo Ran had yet to become the emperor, there was always someone calling him a dog.

The manager called him a ‘son of a bitch’, the customers called him a ‘bitch pup’, his little cousin called him a ‘shitty dog’, and his mother was the best, saying he was raised by a bitch.

Of course, there were other dog related metaphors that weren’t too bad. For example, his one-night stands would always grumble with some petulance that the strength of his back was like that of a male dog; honey dripped from his lips luring away the soul, but the weapon down below was robbing the sweetness of her life. But, they’d turn around and boast to others afterwards, so much so that the entire district knew that the man Mo Weiyu was both handsome in looks and aggressive in tool; those who tried were satisfied with their meal, and those who hadn’t were dearly tempted.

It had to be said that those names were all very spot on. Mo Ran was indeed very much like a tail-wagging dumb dog.

It wasn’t until he became the emperor of the cultivation world that these kinds of monikers disappeared in a flash.

One day, a small sect from a faraway land gifted him a puppy.

The puppy had a coat of whitish grey, three slashes of flames upon its forehead, kind of like a wolf. But, it was only as big as a melon, and looked

kind of stupid, chubby and round. Nonetheless, it still thought of itself rather mightily, running all over the great hall with abandon. Several times it tried to climb the very, very high steps to see clearly that person who sat upon the throne so composedly, but because its legs were too short, it finally abandoned the endeavour.

Mo Ran stared at that ball of fur who possessed no wits but plenty of energy and suddenly chuckled, laughing as he called it ‘Shitty Dog’.

The puppy soon grew up and became a big dog; the big dog became an old dog, and the old dog then became a dead dog.

Mo Ran closed his eyes, then blinked them open. His life was filled with the ebb and flow of prestige and shame, sometimes up, sometimes down. Before he knew it, thirty two years had gone past.

He’d played with everything and had gotten tired of it. Everything was tasteless and lonely, and in recent years, there were less and less people he knew by his side; even that three flames dog had passed to the heavens. It was time, he thought. Time to end everything.

He picked off a glistening, full grape, and languidly peeled its purple skin.

His movement was easy and practiced, like King Yu in his camp peeling off Princess Hu’s robes, but there was a laziness to it like he was tired of it all. The lustrous fruit quivered lightly in his fingertips; its juice gushed and flowed, delicately purple, like a wild goose gliding down red cliffs, like haitang blossoms entering slumber.

But more so like that of filthy blood.

He stared at his own fingers as he swallowed that overwhelming sweetness in his mouth, then lazily opened his eyes.

It's about time, he thought.

About time he went to hell.

Mo Ran, courtesy name Weiyu.

The first emperor of the cultivation world.

It really hadn't been easy to reach this position. The requirement wasn't simply that of outstanding spiritual powers; he'd also needed a thick skin as hard and solid as that of a meteorite.

Before him, the ten greatest sects in the cultivation world had divided territories, fought and hoarded against each other over their domains. With the sects clashing against one another, there was no one who could rule the world and call all the shots. And besides, every sect leader were outstandingly learned, so even if they wanted to grant themselves a title for fun, they would be wary of what the historians would pen, afraid they would receive disgrace in the books of history.

But Mo Ran was different.

He was a scoundrel.

What others didn't dare do, he'd done it all. Drinking the spiciest fine wine of the mortal realm, marrying the most beautiful woman in the world. First, he became the Alliance Leader of the cultivation world "Taxian-Jun", then he granted himself the title of emperor.

All knelt and yielded before him.

Those who refused to kneel, he slaughtered, one and all. In the years he asserted his dominance, blood flowed like a flood and mournful wails were everywhere. Countless vigilantes sacrificed themselves, even the Rufeng Sect of the Ten Great Sects was completely annihilated.

And later, even the honored master who'd taught Mo Ran wasn't able to escape his demonic claws. In a final battle with Mo Ran he was defeated, and taken prisoner in the palace by his once beloved disciple, his whereabouts now unknown.

The once great land of clear rivers and calm seas was suddenly smothered with smog and haze.

The Dog Emperor Mo Ran didn't read a lot of books and was someone who was fearless of all, so while he was in power, the world was never short of ridiculous affairs. Such as the titles for those reigning years.

The first set of three years, the title was "Bastard".[1] It was something he'd thought of while feeding fish by the pond.

The second set of three years, the title was "Croak", the reason being he'd heard frogs croak in the garden in the summer, and determined it as inspiration granted by the heavens and shouldn't be taken for granted.

All the scholars of the country believed there could never be any reigning titles more tragic than "Bastard" and "Croak", but, alas, they understood nothing of Mo Ran.

The third set of three years, grassroots unrest began to shake up various local regions, whether it be buddhists, taoists, or spiritual cultivators, all those righteous vigilantes in the world started to rise up in rebellion.

Thus, this time, Mo Ran contemplated deeply for a long time, and after tossing away many drafts, a title that shook the heavens and made ghosts and gods weep was born— “Cease Battle”.[2].

It was meant to have a well-meaning connotation. The first emperor used up all of his brainpower to come up with those two words, taking from the fortuitous idiom “Cease Troops Rest Battles”. Only, when it was spoken out loud in the common world, it was exceedingly awkward.

Especially to those who couldn’t read, it was even more awkward hearing the title.

The first year was called the First Cease Battle[3] year, but why did it sound like the year of Cock Balls.

The second year was called the second year of Cock.

The third year of Cock.

Some people would curse at it behind locked doors, “What complete nonsense! Why not give the title “Ji Ba Chen” to complete the circle! So next time you see a man, no need to ask how old they are, just ask how old his cock is! Hundred year old masters can be called Centennial Cock!”

Finally, three years were suffered through, and it was finally time to replace the reigning year title “Ji Ba”.

People all over the world were waiting anxiously to see what His Majesty the Emperor would come up with for the fourth title, but this time, Mo Ran no longer had any care to draw up a name. Since, this year, riots of the cultivation world finally, completely erupted. After having endured for almost a decade, vigilantes, heroes, and valiant men finally gathered

together and formed an army of millions, charging towards the First Emperor Mo Weiyu.

The cultivation world really didn't need an emperor.

Especially not a tyrant like this.

After many months of battles bathed in blood, the rebel army finally came to the foot of Sisheng Peak. This place was situated in the Sichuan province, upon perilous mountain bluffs, surrounded by streams of clouds and mist throughout the year. Mo Ran's grand and majestic palace sat at its summit.

It was too late to turn back, and overthrowing tyranny was only a strike away. However, this last strike was also the most treacherous. The ray of hope for victory was before their eyes, but thoughts of estrangement began to grow internally within the allied army who'd gathered to fight the same enemy. With the annihilation of the old empire, a new regime would need to be built. No one wanted to waste their strength unnecessarily right now, and thus no one wanted to head the front lines, to charge up the mountains first.

They were all afraid that this cunningly vicious tyrant would suddenly drop from the skies, bare his shining beast-like white teeth, and rip apart all those who dared to surround and destroy his palace, shred them to pieces.

Some said, with a grim expression, "Mo Weiyu's spiritual powers are great, and his person cunning. We must be cautious lest we fall for his traps."

All the leaders agreed.

Right then, an exceedingly handsome, flashy young man walked forward. He was wearing a set of silver blue light armour, a belt embellished with a lion's head, his hair fastened in a high ponytail with an exquisite silver hairpin secured at the roots.

That young man's expression was exceedingly dark. He said, "We've already come to the foot of the mountain, what are you all moseying about for, dragging your feet in going up? Are you all waiting for Mo Weiyu to climb down himself? What a bunch of scaredy cats!"

Anger exploded all around because of his words.

"Such abuse, young master Xue! What do you mean by scaredy cats? A soldier must always be utmostly prudent. If we're all brash and reckless like you, who'll be responsible if accidents happen?"

Another instantly taunted sarcastically, "Hehe, young master Xue is the darling of the heavens, we are but mere commoners. If the darling of the heavens can't wait to fight the emperor of the mortal realm, then by all means, please go up the mountain first. We'll set up a feast down here by the foot of the mountain to await your gracious return with Mo Weiyu's head, wouldn't that be nice?"

That was a rather aggravating comment. One of the old monks in the alliance immediately stopped the young man who was about to explode, and put on a folksy expression, coaxing him in a gentle voice, "Young master Xue, listen to this old monk. This old monk knows that you and Mo Weiyu share a deep, personal grudge. However, this palace invasion is a critical matter; you must think of everyone, don't let your emotions carry you away."

The one everyone addressed as ‘Young Master Xue’ was named Xue Meng. Over a decade ago, he’d been praised by all as a young genius, the darling of the heavens.

Yet, as all things change with the flow of time, he must now endure the taunts and ridicule of those people, if only to go up the mountain to see Mo Ran’s face one more time.

Xue Meng’s face twisted with anger, his lips trembling, but he still arduously suppressed himself, demanding, “Then just how long do you all plan on waiting for?”

“We’ve got to at least observe any movements, right?”

“Yea, what if Mo Weiyu has set traps?”

The old monk who’d mediated just now also urged, “Young master Xue, don’t be impatient. Since we’ve already come to the foot of the mountain, it’s best if we remain cautious. Either way, Mo Weiyu is trapped inside the palace and can’t come down. He’s now at the end of his rope, nothing will come of anything, so why must we be impatient and act recklessly? There’s so many of us down here, with so many nobilities and prominent figures among us, if they lost their lives by accident, who can be responsible?”

Xue Meng exploded with rage, “RESPONSIBLE? THEN LET ME ASK YOU, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MY SHIZUN’S LIFE? MO RAN HAS IMPRISONED MY SHIZUN FOR TEN YEARS! A WHOLE TEN YEARS! WITH SHIZUN JUST UP THE MOUNTAIN BEFORE ME, HOW CAN YOU MAKE ME WAIT?”

Hearing Xue Meng mention his shizun, the mob felt a trickle of shame.

Some looked ashamed, some eyed left and right, murmuring but did not speak.

“Ten years ago, Mo Ran titled himself Taxian-Jun. Nevermind slaughtering all seventy-two city fortresses of the Rufeng Sect, he also planned to annihilate the rest of the Ten Great Sects. Later, when Mo Ran made himself emperor, he tried to eradicate all houses. In both disasters, who was the one to stop him in the end? If it wasn’t my shizun who fought with his life on the line, would you all still be alive right now? Can you all still stand here and talk to me like it’s nothing?”

Finally, someone cleared his throat and said gently, “Young master Xue, don’t be angry. In regards to Chu-zongshi, we… all feel guilty, and grateful. Just as you say, he’s been imprisoned for ten years, so if anything’s happened, it would’ve already… So, you’ve already waited for ten years, waiting for another moment won’t hurt, don’t you think?”

“WHAT I THINK? I THINK IT’S BULLSHIT!”

That man widened his eyes, “Why would you yell like that?”

“WHY WOULDN’T I YELL AT YOU? SHIZUN PUT HIS LIFE ON THE LINE AND IT WAS TO SAVE YOUR KIND OF… Kind of…”

He couldn’t continue anymore, a sob constricting his throat, “I’m disheartened on his behalf.”

Towards the end, Xue Meng whipped his head around, his shoulders shaking lightly, holding back his tears.

“It’s not like we said we weren’t going to rescue Chu-zongshi…”

“Yea, we all remember the good Chu-zongshi has done for us, we never forgot. Young master Xue, you’re accusing us all of being unjust ingrates, we won’t stand for it!”

“But speaking of which, isn’t Mo Ran also Chu-zongshi’s disciple?” Someone whispered. “I gotta say, as a master, he should be responsible for his criminal disciple. As they say, an undisciplined son is the father’s fault; an improperly educated son is due to the negligence of the teacher. The whole thing couldn’t be helped, so what’s there to complain about?”

Now that was harsh, and someone instantly shouted, “WHAT NONSENSE ARE YOU SPOUTING? MIND YOUR TONGUE!”

Then he turned to console Xue Meng with a pleasant face, “Young master Xue, don’t be impatient…”

Xue Meng cut him off, his eyes bulging, “HOW CAN I NOT BE IMPATIENT? THIS DOESN’T CONCERN ANY OF YOU SO IT DOESN’T HURT, BUT THAT’S MY SHIZUN! MINE!!! I HAVEN’T SEEN HIM FOR SO MANY YEARS! I DON’T KNOW WHETHER IF HE’S ALIVE OR DEAD, I DON’T KNOW HOW HE IS! WHAT DO YOU ALL THINK I’M STANDING HERE FOR?”

His breathing was harsh, the rims of his eyes red. “Did you all think that by just waiting here, Mo Weiyu will come down the mountain himself and kneel in front of you all to beg for mercy?”

“Young master Xue…”

“Besides shizun, I’ve no family left in this world.” Xue Meng broke free from the old monk’s hold on his sleeves and croaked, “You won’t go, I’ll go myself.”

Throwing that out there, he went up the mountain alone; one man, one sword.

Through the rustling cries of bleak and wet cold winds mixed with millions of leaves, the thick fog crept like countless angry ghosts and aggrieved spirits within the trees, muttering in hushed voices.

Xue Meng hiked to the peak all by his lonesome. The majestic palace Mo Ran was in had calm candlelight illuminating the night. He suddenly saw that before the Heaven-Piercing Tower were three graves. When he approached for a closer look, at the head of the first grave were long weeds growing, and the tombstone was engraved with crooked and dogged words: “Grave of the Steamed[4] Consort Chu”.

In contrast to this “Steamed Consort”, the second grave was newly dug, the earth only just sealed, and upon the tombstone engraved: “Grave of the Deep Fried Empress Song”.

“...”

If this was over ten years ago, Xue Meng would’ve laughed out loud in spite of himself upon seeing such a ridiculous sight.

At the time, he and Mo Ran were disciples under the same shizun, and Mo Ran was the class clown. Even if Xue Meng had long since disliked him, he would still be teased to laugher by him from time to time.

Who knows what this Steamed Consort Deep Fried Empress was all about. Perhaps the style in which the Scholar Mo had graced his two wives were the same as “Bastard”, “ Croak” and “Cease Battle”. However, as to why he would give those monikers to his own empresses, there was no way of knowing.

Xue Meng turned his gaze to the third grave.

Under the night sky, the earth of that grave mound was still dug open. There was a coffin resting within, but there was no body in that coffin, and the tombstone was also yet to be marked.

Before the grave was a small pot of Pear Blossom White Wine, a bowl of now cold spicy wontons, a few plates of spicy side dishes -- they were all Mo Ran's favourites.

Xue Meng stared at the grave stunned, and suddenly his mind snapped to -- could it be that Mo Ran had no intention of fighting, and had long since dug his own grave, ready to die?

Cold sweat rolled.

He would not believe it. Mo Ran had always been someone who never knew fatigue even at the brink of death. He knew not of surrender, and based on the way he acted, he would've for sure fought with the rebel army to the bitter end, so why would…

These past ten years, Mo Ran had stood at the summit of power. What exactly did he see? And what exactly had happened?

No one knew.

Xue Meng turned around and reentered the darkness, stalking in large strides towards the brightly lit Wushan Palace.

Inside Wushan Palace, Mo Ran's eyes were screwed shut, his face deathly pale.

Xue Meng had guessed right. Mo Ran was determined to die. That grave mound was dug by himself. Two hours ago, he had used the communication spell to dismiss his servants, while he swallowed deadly poison. His cultivation was great, and so the effects of that poison were particularly slow in dissolving and circulating within his body. Thus, the agony of having his inner organs chewed away was also acutely vivid.

Creak -- the doors to the hall opened.

Mo Ran didn't look up and only gasped hoarsely, "Xue Meng. It's you, right? Have you come?"

Upon the golden pavement within the hall, Xue Meng stood tall and proud, his ponytail falling straight, his light armour shimmering.

It was a reunion of companions from the same sect once upon a time. Mo Ran sat leaning, propping up his chin, his expression empty, thick curtains of fine lashes lowered before his eyes.

Everyone knew he was a monster and a savage devil, but in truth, he was good looking. The curve of his nose gentle and soft, his lips thin and dewy, his appearance naturally radiating notes of kindness and sweetness. Just by looking at his face, anyone would think he was a lovable, good person.

When Xue Meng saw his face, he knew Mo Ran had taken poison just as he had suspected. It was hard to dissect what he was feeling, and he opened his mouth to speak, but no words came out. In the end, he clenched his fists and only demanded, "Where's shizun?"

"...What?"

Xue Meng demanded again sharply, “I SAID, WHERE’S SHIZUN??? YOURS, MINE, OUR SHIZUN!!”

“Oh.” Mo Ran humphed softly, and finally, slowly, blinked open his eyes, his pupils black with hints of purple, dropping them onto Xue Meng’s person through layers upon layers of time past.

“Now that I think of it, ever since the farewell at Taxue Palace on Mount Kunlun, it’s been two years since you and Shizun have seen each other.”

Mo Ran smiled faintly as he spoke.

“Xue Meng, do you miss him?”

“STOP YOUR NONSENSE! GIVE HIM BACK TO ME!”

Mo Ran glanced at him calmly, enduring the twisting pain in his stomach, and his lips contorted into a sneer as he laid heavily back against the emperor’s throne.

Waves of blackness invaded his sight, he could almost feel his innards wrenching, melting, dissolving into stinking, bloody swill.

Mo Ran replied lazily, “Give him back to you? Foolish. Why don’t you use your brain to think a little? Shizun and I share such deep hatred for each other, why would I allow him to live in this world?”

“YOU--!” Blood completely drained from Xue Meng’s face, his eyes bulging as he backed up, “You can’t have… You wouldn’t…”

“I wouldn’t what?” Mo Ran snickered. “Why don’t you tell me, why wouldn’t I?”

Xue Meng's voice trembled. "But he's your… He's your shizun after all… How could you bear to kill him??"

He looked up to Mo Ran who was sitting high above in the seat of the emperor. There was Fuxi in Heaven, Yanluo in Hell, and in the mortal realm, there was Mo Weiyu.

But to Xue Meng, even if Mo Ran had become the eminent emperor of the mortal realm, he still shouldn't have become like this.

Xue Meng's entire body was shaking, his tears rolling from outrage, "Mo Weiyu, are you still human? He once…"

Mo Ran raised his eyes quietly, "He once what?"

Xue Meng's voice trembled, "You should very well know how he once treated you…"

Mo Ran suddenly laughed, "Are you trying to remind me that he once beat me so hard my body was covered in blood, that he made me kneel before all to admit my crimes? Or did you want to remind me that he once, for you, for irrelevant people, three times he stood in my way, ruined my great endeavours?"

Xue Meng shook his head in pain, "..."

No, Mo Ran.

Think back properly. Let go of your vicious hatred. Look back.

He once trained you in cultivation and martial arts, and made sure to protect you.

He once taught you how to read and write, taught you poetry and painting.

He once learned how to cook just for you, even though he was so clumsy and got cuts all over his hands.

He once… He once waited every day for you to come home, all alone by himself, from nightfall...til the break of dawn...

So many words stuck in his throat, but in the end, Xue Meng could only sob, “His… his temper is bad, and his words are harsh, but even I know he treated you really well, so why… how could you…”

Xue Meng raised his head, but having held back so many tears, his throat was even more constricted, and he couldn’t say anymore.

It was a long pause before Mo Ran’s silent sigh floated from the throne. “Yea.”

“But Xue Meng. Did you know?” Mo Ran’s voice was clearly exhausted. “He had also once ended the life of the only person I’ve ever loved. The only one.”

It was silent like the dead for a long time.

The pain in his stomach was like a blazing fire, his blood and flesh torn and ripped into broken shreds.

“Still, we were master and disciple once. His corpse is resting in the Red Lotus Pavilion in the Southern Peak. He’s lying among the lotus blossoms, very well preserved, like he’s only fallen asleep.” Mo Ran caught his breath and forced himself to calm down. When he said this, his expression was blank, but his fingers were digging into the long rosewood desk, his joints pale to the point of bruising.

“His corpse is maintained by my spiritual powers. If you miss him, don’t waste your breath here with me. Go now before I die.”

A lump of astringent sweetness swarmed up into his throat; Mo Ran coughed a couple times, and when he opened his mouth again, there was nothing but blood between his lips and teeth. Yet his eyes were still at ease.

He said with a hoarse voice, “Go. Go see him. If you’re too late and I die, breaking off the spiritual powers, he will turn into dust.”

Then, he closed his eyes dispiritedly, the poison striking his heart, blazing fires bringing torment.

The agony was so heart wrenching that even Xue Meng’s twisted, despairing wails became faraway, like there was an ocean spanning thousands of miles between them, and his voice was coming through the waters.

Blood continued to pour out from the corners of his lips, and Mo Ran squeezed his sleeves tight, his muscles spasming.

When he opened his bleary eyes, Xue Meng was long gone. That bastard’s qinggong[5] wasn’t bad; it wouldn’t take him too long to run from here to the Southern Peak.

He should be able to see Shizun one last time.

Mo Ran pushed himself up, and wobbled as he rose to his feet. Using hands spotted with blood, he formed a hand seal, sending himself to the front of Sisheng Peak’s Heaven-Piercing Tower.

It was deep autumn. The haitang blossoms were beautifully thick and flowing in the wind.

He didn't know why in the end he chose this place to end his sinful life, but he felt since the flowers were blooming so vibrantly, it wouldn't be such a bad tomb.

He laid down in that open coffin, and looked up to watch the blossoms of the night, soundlessly drifting as they wilted.

Drifting into the coffin, drifting onto his cheeks. Dancing and fluttering, like the past wilting away.

In this life, from the bastard son who possessed nothing, after innumerable encounters, he became the only eminent Lord Emperor of the mortal realm.

He had blasphemed, and his hands were covered with blood. All that he loved, all that he hated, all that he prayed for, all that he resented, in the end, there was nothing left.

In the end, he had also never penned an epitaph for himself using that confident and wild writing of his. Whether it be a shameless "Emperor of the Era" or something ridiculous like "Deep Fried" or "Steamed", he didn't write anything. The grave of the first emperor of the cultivation world, in the end, left no words behind.

A spectacle that lasted for a decade finally dropped its curtains.

It was many, many hours later when the mob, with torches held high, invaded the resident palace of the emperor like a fire snake. However, what awaited them was an empty Wushan Palace, a Sisheng Peak without

a soul, and Xue Meng, who had cried himself numb, prostrating over a ground spilled with ashes at the Red Lotus Pavilion.

And, before the Heaven-Piercing Tower, Mo Weiyu, whose corpse was already cold.

Ch.2 This Venerable One Lives

>>warning: 15 year old Mo Ran fucks a prostitute

“My heart had already stilled and my thoughts turned to ash, yet unexpectedly the light of spring shines through the cold night. Could it be that the heavens pity the blade of grass in the secluded valley? Yet I fear only that the world is unpredictable and full of hardships.”

A woman’s crisp voice passed by his ear, poetic verses rolling like pearls and jade, but all they did was make Mo Ran’s head throb, the vein by his brow twitching madly.

“What’s with all the noise! Where’d this wailing banshee even come from! Servants, kick this bitch off the mountain!”

Only after bellowing so did Mo Ran realize with a start that something wasn’t right.

…Hadn’t he died?

Hatred and coldness, pain and loneliness stabbed at his chest. Mo Ran’s eyes flew open.

Everything that had happened right before his death scattered like snow in the wind. He found himself lying on a bed; not the bed at Sisheng Peak, but a bed carved with a dragon and phoenix, the wood smelling heavily of powder. The old quilt was colored pink and purple, embroidered with mandarin ducks——the kind of bed one would only find in a whorehouse.

“…”

Mo Ran froze.

He knew where this was.

This was the entertainment district near Sisheng Peak.

So-called entertainment district just meant brothel, easy come easy go.

Mo Ran had had a period of debauchery in his youth, and had spent the greater portion of half a month at this establishment. But this place had been sold and converted into a wine shop when he was twenty-something. How did he end up here of all places after death?

Had he transgressed too much in life, wronged too many people, and so the king of the underworld was punishing him to reincarnate into a whorehouse and take customers?

Mo Ran turned over as his imagination ran wild.

And unexpectedly came face to face with a slumbering person.

“…”

What the hell!!! Why was there a person next to him??

A man, totally naked!

He was lovely and pleasing to the eye, and quite androgynous.

Mo Ran showed no expression, but his heart was full of turmoil. He stared at that pretty boy's face for a while and suddenly remembered.

Wasn’t this the boy toy he’d doted on when he was young, named... Rong San?

Or was it Rong Jiu?

It didn't matter if it was San or Jiu, what mattered was, this prostitute got an STD and died years ago, even his bones should've rotted away by now. Yet, here he was, delicately curled by his side, neck and shoulders dotted with blue and purple, full of love bites.

Mo Ran pulled a long face, lifted the quilt, and peeked downwards.

"…"

This Rong someone, don't know if he's Jiu or San, let's just call him Rong Jiu. Rong Jiu's pretty little body was covered in rope burns, and his pale, tender thighs were still tied intricately with red rope.

Mo Ran stroked his chin: how interesting.

Look at this exquisite rope art, the skilled technique, the familiar scene.

Didn't he fucking do this himself??!!

As a cultivator, he had read about the concept of rebirth. He began to suspect that he had somehow gone back in time.

To confirm his suspicions, Mo Ran found a copper mirror. The mirror was worn, but good enough to vaguely make out his appearance.

Mo Ran had been thirty-two when he died, but the face in the mirror was quite young; it was a charming face exuding a youthful arrogance, looking no more than fifteen or sixteen.

There was no one else in the room. Thus, the once cruel ruler of the cultivation world, Evil Tyrant of Bashu, Emperor of the Mortal Realm, Lord

of Sisheng Peak, Taxian-Jun Mo Ran himself, after much consideration, expressed his thoughts honestly.

“ Fuck….. .”

The sleeping Rong Jiu got “fuck”-ed awake.

The pretty thing sat up languidly, the thin quilt sliding off of his shoulder to reveal an expanse of pale skin. He gathered his long, soft hair and, lifting his peach blossom eyes smudged with red ink, he yawned.

“Oh…Mo-gongzi, you’re up early today.”

Mo Ran did not respond. Back then, he had indeed liked Rong Jiu’s type: delicate and androgynous. But now, the thirty two year old Taxian-Jun couldn’t figure out what the hell he had been thinking to find this kind of man attractive.

“Did you not sleep well last night? Nightmare?”

This Venerable One fucking died, how about that for a nightmare.

Rong Jiu thought his continued silence was because he was in a bad mood, so he slipped off the bed to stand before the carved window, wrapping his arms around Mo Ran from behind.

“Mo-gongzi, pay attention to me~ what are you spacing out for?”

Mo Ran’s face turned blue at this embrace. He wanted nothing more than to rip this hussy off of himself and grant that fragile-looking face some seventeen, eighteen slaps, but managed to suppress the urge.

He still felt a bit dizzy and uncertain of the situation.

After all, if he really had been reborn, then he couldn't just beat Rong Jiu up out of the blue after spending the previous day all lovey-dovey with him. It would make it seem like he'd lost his marbles. Definitely couldn't have that.

Mo Ran arranged his expression, putting on a pretense of forgetfulness: "What day is it?"

Rong Jiu stared for a second, then smiled: "Fourth of May."

"Thirty third year?"

"That was last year. It's the thirty fourth year now. They do say that great men tend to be forgetful."

The thirty fourth year…

The gears in Mo Ran's head turned rapidly.

That year, he'd turned sixteen, and had just been identified as the Sisheng Peak Leader's long-lost nephew, transforming from a pathetic, bullied dog to a phoenix on the branch overnight.

So then, he really had been reborn?

Or, was it just a hollow dream in death…

Rong Jiu smiled: "Mo-gongzi is so hungry he doesn't even remember the date anymore. Wait here a minute, I'll go fetch some food. How does fried pancake sound?"

Mo Ran had just been reborn, and wasn't sure how to deal with all of this yet. But, it should be fine if he just followed the same approach as before.

So he thought back to his charismatic style back then and, suppressing his disgust, playfully pinched Rong Jiu's thigh.

"Sounds delicious! I want congee too, and I want you to feed me."

Rong Jiu pulled on some clothes and left, soon returning with a tray carrying a bowl of pumpkin congee, two youxuan pastries, and a plate of side dish.

Mo Ran happened to be a bit hungry and was about to dig into the pastries when Rong Jiu brushed his hand away: "Allow me to serve Gongzi."

"……"

Rong Jiu picked up a pancake and sat on Mo Ran's lap. He wore nothing but a thin robe, legs spread wide open and flush against Mo Ran, even rubbing against him now and again without subtlety.

Mo Ran stared at his face.

Rong Jiu thought he was getting horny again: "What're you staring at me for? The food's going to get cold."

Mo Ran was silent for a moment. Remembering the "good deed" Rong Jiu had done behind his back in his previous lifetime, the corners of his lips curved into a sweet smile.

He, the great Taxian-Jun, was no stranger to disgusting acts. As long as he felt like it, there was nothing too disgusting for him to do. This right now was merely putting on a show; mere child's play.

Mo Ran casually leaned back against the chair, smiling: "Sit."

“I…I’m already sitting.”

“You know where I’m telling you to sit.”

Rong Jiu blushed: “Why the rush, how about Gongzi finishes eating fir-...ah!”

Before he could even finish, Mo Ran pulled him forward and pressed him back down. Rong Jiu’s hand shook and knocked over the bowl of congee. He managed between gasps: “Mo-gongzi, the bowl…”

“Doesn’t matter.”

“B-but you should still eat first..... nn…… ah……”

“Aren’t I eating right now?” Mo Ran held onto his waist, the sight of Rong Jiu’s extended neck and lovely visage reflected in his pitch black pupils.

In his previous lifetime, he’d liked to kiss those captivating red lips during intimacy. After all, Rong Jiu was pretty and knew just the right words to say. It would be a lie to say that Mo Ran had never felt anything for him.

But now that Mo Ran knew what these lips had done behind his back, he found them unbearably foul, and definitely had no interest in kissing them.

The thirty two year old Mo Ran was different from the sixteen year old Mo Ran in many aspects.

For example, the sixteen year old him still knew gentleness in love and intimacy. However, the thirty two year old him had only violence left.

Afterwards, looking at Rong Jiu who had passed out from getting fucked to within an inch of his life, his tumultuous eyes curved faintly, even carrying

a hint of a sweet smile. He was very good-looking when he smiled, eyes a deep, rich black with a sheen of arrogant purple from certain angles. Right now, he dragged Rong Jiu onto the bed by his hair, and casually picked up a shard of the broken bowl from the ground, holding it by Rong Jiu's face.

He had always avenged every grievance; right now was no different.

Thinking about how much he had taken care of Rong Jiu and his business in the last lifetime, how he'd even thought about buying his freedom, and how Rong Jiu had paid him back by scheming against him with others, his eyes couldn't help but curve into a smile as he pressed the shard against Rong Jiu's cheek.

This person's body was his business; without this face, he would have nothing.

He would be forced to wander the streets like a dog, to crawl on the ground, get kicked, and suffer all kinds of spurn and abuse…he was so delighted by the mere thought that even the disgust he felt from fucking this person just now vanished like smoke.

Mo Ran's smile became even more lovely.

Just a tad of pressure, and a thread of blood, captivatingly red, seeped out.

The unconscious person seemed to have felt the pain and groaned softly in a hoarse voice, looking quite pitiful, with tears still clinging to his eyelashes.

Mo Ran's hand suddenly stopped.

He remembered a dear friend.

"……"

Then, he suddenly realized what he was in the middle of doing. It took a few seconds of him being in a daze before he finally, slowly, lowered his hand.

He had done so much evil that it had become habitual. He even forgot that he had been reborn.

Right now, everything had yet to happen, the irrevocable mistakes had not yet been committed, and that person…still lived. There was no need to walk the same cruel path; he could do it over.

He sat down and propped his foot on the bed, absentmindedly toying with the piece of broken porcelain in his hand. Suddenly noticing the oily pancake that still sat on the table, he grabbed it, peeled off the wax paper, and tore into it with his teeth, eating until crumbs flew everywhere and his lips got shiny with grease.

The pancake was this brothel's specialty. It was nothing special, especially compared to the delicacies he tasted later on. But ever since this place had gone bankrupt, Mo Ran never got to eat it again. Now, the familiar taste of the pancake, through the turbulent events of the past, once again returned to the tip of his tongue.

The unreal feeling of rebirth lessened with every swallow.

By the time he finished the pancake, he finally woke up from the stupor he had been in this whole time.

He really had been reborn.

Everything hateful in his life, everything that he couldn't take back, all of it had not yet come to pass.

He had not yet killed his uncle and aunt, not yet razed seventy two cities to the ground, not yet betrayed his teacher and ancestors, not yet gotten married, not yet…

No one had died yet.

He savored the taste in his mouth, licking along his teeth and feeling the thread of joy in his chest ballooning rapidly into a kind of feverish excitement. He'd rebuked Heaven and Earth in his last life, dipping into all three of the forbidden techniques of the human realm. He had mastered each of the other two; only the last one, "rebirth", had eluded him regardless of his talent.

Unexpectedly, that which he had failed to obtain in life fell effortlessly into his lap in death.

All the distaste, the repugnance, the desolation, the loneliness, all of his complicated feelings from his previous life were locked in his chest. The sight of the army marching on Sisheng Peak, fire lit for ten thousand fathoms, still remained in his mind.

That time, he really had not wanted to live anymore. The people all said that his very existence cursed all who came close to him, that he was fated to die alone. Everyone had turned their backs on him. Toward the end, even he himself had felt like the walking dead: senseless, lonesome.

He didn't know what had gone wrong and where, for an irredeemably wicked person like himself to get the chance to redo everything after ending his own life.

Why destroy Rong Jiu's face over such a measly grudge from so long ago?

Rong Jiu loved money. He would just not pay this time, and take some silver on top, to teach him a lesson. As for his life, he didn't want that burden just yet.

"I'm letting you off easy, Rong Jiu."

Mo Ran said with a smile, tossing the porcelain shard out the window.

Then he emptied out Rong Jiu's jewels and valuables, tucking all of it into his pouch. He took his time dressing and arranging himself before leisurely strolling out of the place.

Uncle, aunt, cousin Xue Meng, Shizun, and…

Mo Ran's eyes softened at the thought of that person.

Shige, I'm coming.

Author's Notes:

This story's ship is: Mo Ran x Shizun

There is a white lotus Shige, do not board the wrong ship.

Ch.3 This Venerable One's Shige

>>warning: violence/gore involving children

Hm… since his soul had been transported back in time, maybe his cultivation had come along for the ride too?

Mo Ran recited an incantation and felt the spiritual energy in his body rush forth. It was abundant, but not strong. That was to say, his cultivation had not carried over.

No matter. He was smart and perceptive, and blessed with innate talent; he could just cultivate all over again, it was no big deal. Rebirth was a blessed event of unparalleled proportions, some small imperfection was perfectly normal. Thinking so, Mo Ran quickly rearranged his gloomy and fierce expression into one more appropriate for a sixteen year old youth, and cheerfully headed back toward his sect.

It was the midst of summer. Horse-drawn carriages sped past, wheels rolling, and no one paid any attention to the sixteen year old Mo Ran.

Only the occasional village woman, taking a break from tending the fields and looking up to wipe her sweat, would notice this exceptionally handsome youth and stare a bit.

Mo Ran returned the stares with a smile and no restraint, until those married women blushed bright red and looked away.

Mo Ran arrived at Wuchang Town around evening. The town was close to Sisheng Peak, the towering peaks in the distance framed by clouds lit on fire by the blood-red sun. He touched his empty stomach and headed into

a restaurant. Glancing at the menu and knocking on the counter, he placed a quick order. “Shopkeep, a pounded chicken, a plate of beef tripe in chili sauce, two catties of soju, and a plate of sliced beef.”

This area was a popular rest stop, and it was currently bustling with activity. A storyteller was on the stage, shaking his fan and telling the story of Sisheng Peak in an animated manner, spit flying everywhere.

Mo Ran picked a private room by a window, and listened as he ate.

“As I’m sure everyone already knows, the cultivation world is divided into the upper and lower cultivation regions. Today we’ll talk about the greatest sect in the lower cultivation region, Sisheng Peak. Did you know that a hundred years ago, our Wuchang Town was a poor and desolate place due to its proximity to the entrance of the demon realm? No one dared to go out after dark. If they really needed to travel at night, then they had to shake an exorcism bell and sprinkle incense ash and paper money while chanting, ‘people barred by mountains, demons barred by paper’ while passing through as quickly as they could. But these days, our town is bustling and flourishing, no different from anywhere else, and it’s all thanks to Sisheng Peak’s care. This righteous sect stands right at the gate to the demon realm, between the boundary of yin and yang. Even though the sect was only established not that long ago…”

Mo Ran had heard this history so many times that his ears had damn near grown calluses, and so he started glancing around outside the window instead. It just so happened that right then, there was a stall set up below where several strangers from out of town, dressed in cultivator garb, were carrying a cage covered with a black cloth as they performed streetside tricks.

This was much more interesting than the storyteller's tale.

Mo Ran's attention was drawn over.

"Come one, come all! Take a look at these pixiu cubs, fierce mythical beasts tamed by us to obediently perform tricks and even do math! It's not easy travelling to perform chivalrous deeds, everyone spare some tips and stick around. Come watch the first trick——pixiu abacus!"

The cultivators ripped off the black cloth with a flourish to reveal a couple of human-faced, bear-bodied monsters in the cage.

Mo Ran: "……"

Just meek fuzzy bear cubs like these?? And you actually dared claim that they're pixiu???

That was quite the bullshit right there, only donkey brains would believe that.

But Mo Ran's views were widened soon enough, as twenty, thirty donkey brains gathered to watch, cheering and clapping, drawing the attention of everyone in the restaurant as well, making things quite awkward for the storyteller.

"The leader of Sisheng Peak right now is a man known far and wide for his strength and brilliance——"

"Nice!! Again!!!"

Encouraged, the storyteller glanced toward the owner of the voice, only to find a customer whose face glowed red with excitement, but whose gaze was locked onto the street performers below, not on himself.

“Oh? The pixiu is doing math on the abacus?”

“Wow, quite impressive!”

“Good show! Make the pixiu toss apples again!”

The entire restaurant was laughing, everyone gathered by the windows to watch the scene below. The storyteller pathetically tried to carry on: “The master is best known for that fan of his, he……”

“Ahahaha, that light-colored pixiu wants to eat the apple, look at it rolling around on the ground!”

The storyteller wiped his face with a towel, his lips trembling from anger.

Mo Ran pursed his lips and smiled, leisurely calling out from behind the bead curtain, “Forget Sisheng Peak, tell a story from 《Eighteen Caresses》 instead, I guarantee it’ll pull everyone’s attention back.”

The storyteller didn’t know that the person behind the curtain was the young master of Sisheng Peak, Mo Ran himself, and gathered all the moral integrity he had to stutter out, “V-vulgar stories are not f-fit for an elegant hall.”

Mo Ran laughed. “You’re calling this place an elegant hall? How are you not embarrassed.”

A burst of noise came from below.

“Ah! What a fast horse!”

“Must be a cultivator from Sisheng Peak!”

In the midst of the chatter, a black horse galloped from the direction of Sisheng Peak and broke into the streetside circus like lightning!

There were two people on the horse, one wearing a black bamboo hat and shrouded in a black cloak, covered so completely that it was impossible to tell their age or gender. The other was a thirty or forty year old woman, with rough hands and a weathered face.

The woman started crying as soon as she saw the man-bears. She scrambled off the horse and stumbled toward them, kneeling to embrace one of them in her arms, wailing, “My son!!! Oh, my son—”

The audience was stumped. Someone muttered while scratching his head, “Eh? Aren’t these pixiu cubs? Why’s this woman calling it son?”

“Maybe it’s a pixiu mother?”

“Aiyo, that’s quite something then, if the female can even take on a human form.”

These villagers had no knowledge or experience, and were only babbling nonsense, but Mo Ran figured it out immediately.

Rumor had it that some cultivators out there liked to abduct children, rip their tongues out so that they couldn’t talk, burn their skin off with boiling water, and then stick animal hides on their bloodied bodies so that child and fur became one once the blood had congealed, looking just like a monster. These children couldn’t speak or write, and had no choice but to suffer the abuse and obediently perform tricks like “pixiu abacus”; any resistance would only earn them a beating.

No wonder he hadn't sensed any demonic energy, these "pixiu" weren't monsters at all, but actually living humans.....

While he was thinking to himself, the person in the black cloak whispered something to the cultivators, who flew into a fury. "Apologize? That ain't in my vocabulary!" "So what if you're from Sisheng Peak?" "Mind your own damn business! Beat him up!" They pounced on the black cloaked person for a beating.

"Aiyo."

Watching his fellow disciple get beat up, Mo Ran only let out a low chuckle. "How scary."

He had zero intention of helping out. He'd always loathed the righteous and meddlesome ways of his sect, even in the previous life. The lot of them rushed to throw themselves at any trouble that cropped up, like so many idiots. Even some minor inconvenience like Mrs. Wang's cat getting stuck in the tree was something to bother them with. The entire sect, from the leader all the way down to the servants, every last one of them was a dimwit.

There were so many unfair things in the world, what do you care? It was enough to tire a person to death.

"They're fighting, they're fighting! Hoh! What a punch!"

Inside and outside the restaurant, everyone gathered to spectate.

"So many of you ganging up on one person, aren't you ashamed!"

"Watch out behind you sir! Aiya! Too close! Wah——"

“Nice dodge!”

These people loved a good fight, but Mo Ran didn’t care to watch. He’d seen plenty of blood-letting; the events currently unfolding were like a fly’s buzzing to him. He lazily dusted peanut crumbs off his clothes and got up to leave.

Downstairs, the cultivators and the black cloaked person were at a stalemate, swords swishing. Mo Ran crossed his arms and leaned against the restaurant’s door, took one glance and clicked his tongue in annoyance.

What a disgrace.

Everyone from Sisheng Peak was a fierce fighter, each the equal of ten men, but the black cloaked person was a pathetic fighter. Even when dragged off the horse, surrounded and kicked, the person was still holding back.

They only called out politely, “Honorable men speak with their mouths, not their fists. I’m trying to reason with you, why won’t you listen?!”

Cultivators: “……”

Mo Ran: “……”

The cultivators were thinking, the hell? This person’s already so soundly thrashed and still preaching that nonsense? He must have mantou for brains, empty inside?

But Mo Ran’s face changed abruptly, his head spinning for a second. He held his breath, eyes wide with disbelief——that voice…

“Shi Mei!” Mo Ran shouted and rushed forward, agitated. He let loose an attack filled with spiritual power that instantly knocked away five of the jianghu cultivator swindlers, and knelt on the ground to help up the black cloaked person who was covered in muddy boot marks, and his voice couldn’t help but tremble slightly——

“Shi Mei, is that you?”

Ch.4 This Venerable One’s Cousin

This Shi Mei [name] was not that kind of shimei [junior sister].

Shi Mei was genuinely male and, considering when he’d joined the sect, he was actually Mo Ran’s shixiong.

The reason he had such an unfortunate name was due to the Sisheng Peak Leader’s lack of erudition.

Shi Mei was an orphan, and the Peak Leader had found him in the wild. He had been a weak and sickly child, and so the Peak Leader had thought he would give this child a humble name, as humble names bring an easier life.

As a child he had been very pretty, like a darling young lass, lovable and charming. After much thinking, the leader eventually came up with the name Xue Ya, which meant Chickee.

As Xue Ya grew older and older, so too did he grow more and more beautiful. He possessed a slim figure, and the tips of his brows and the corners of his eyes were well-shaped, giving him a graceful mien. The overall effect was of a striking and peerless natural beauty.

The crude, uncultured farmers of the villages didn't think it wrong to use the name Xue Ya, but had anyone ever heard of a legendary beauty named "Dog Balls" or "Steel Cocks"?

His fellow sect disciples didn't think it appropriate and gradually stopped calling him "Xue Ya". But since it had been a name bestowed by the Peak Leader, they didn't dare presume to change it, and so they half jokingly started calling him shimei instead.

Shimei this, shimei that; after a while, out of kind consideration, the Peak Leader shook out his long sleeves and kindly offered, "Xue Ya, why don't you change your name to Shi Mei once and for all? Using the character "mei" from the word meng mei, meaning ignorant and uncivilised, what do you think?"

He actually had the gall to ask……what normal person wouldn't abhor such a name? Still, Shi Mei had a sweet temper, and when he saw that the Peak Leader was watching him with excited cheer, thinking that he'd done an amazing deed, Shi Mei didn't have the heart to decline. Even if he felt aggrieved, he couldn't embarrass the Peak Leader, so he knelt and accepted the name with grace. From that day on, his name was changed to Shi Mei.

The person in the black cloak coughed a few times, finally catching his breath. His gaze fell onto Mo Ran. “Mn? A-Ran? What are you doing here?”

Behind a thin layer of organza, a pair of eyes gentle as spring water and bright as the night stars pierced into the depths of Mo Ran’s heart.

With this one look, the seal on Taxian-Jun’s hidden feelings and tender affections was suddenly broken.

It was Shi Mei.

There was no mistake.

Mo Ran was a scoundrel. In his past life, he’d played around with many men and wom en. That he hadn’t died from too much sex had come as a surprise, even to him.

However, the only person he'd ever given his heart to, he did not dare to touch.

He and Shi Mei had been close, their relationship ambiguously romantic. However, up until Shi Mei's death, Mo Ran had only ever held his hand and the one time their lips had brushed in a kiss, it had been an accident.

Mo Ran felt that he was dirty and sullied, while Shi Mei was pure and gentle; Mo Ran was not fit to be with him.

In life, Shi Mei had been treasured and cherished by Mo Ran, and all the more so after his death. Then, he'd become Taxian-Jun's moonlight. No matter how much he desperately tried to relive memories of him, the deceased still belonged to the past, dissolved to nothing more than a lump of earth. In the underworld below, traces of that transcendent figure had long been obscured.

But in this moment, Shi Mei was standing in front of him, alive once more. It was only with great effort and all of Mo Ran's willpower that he could hold back his emotions, restrain himself.

Mo Ran helped Shi Mei up and patted away the dust on his cloak, heart aching with an almost physical pain.

"If I hadn't been here, they would have bullied you even more! Why didn't you hit them back?"

"I wanted to try reasoning with them first....."

"You can't reason with these people! Are you injured? Where does it hurt?"

" Cough cough , A-Ran, I.....I'm fine."

Mo Ran turned his head, his expression ferocious. He said to the cultivators, “You d are lay hands on someone from Sisheng Peak? Some nerves you’ve got there.”

“A-Ran…... don’t mind it.....”

“You guys wanna fight? Come on then! Fight me!”

The group of cultivators had taken just one blow from Mo Ran, but that one blow had been enough to make them aware that his cultivation skills were far beyond theirs. They retreated, afraid to get into a brawl with him.

Shi Mei sighed, and advised, “A-Ran, cease the quarrelling, forgive and forget.”

Mo Ran turned back to Shi Mei, and couldn’t help but feel a forlorn sort of distress in his heart, the corners of his eyes feeling all hot.

Shi Mei had always been kind hearted. In his past life, at his deathbed, there had been no resentment, no hatred. He’d tried to persuade Mo Ran to not hate their Shizun who could’ve clearly saved Shi Mei’s life, but who had instead chosen to stand at the side, not lifting a finger.

“But they.....”

“I’m okay though, see, nothing happened. Having less problems is better than having more problems, please listen to this shige.”

Mo Ran sighed. “Alright, I’ll listen to you, I’ll listen to everything you say.” He shook his head, then shot a glare at the cultivators. “You hear that? My shige has pleaded for leniency on your behalf! Hurry up and get lost! What are you still here for? Are you waiting for me to accompany you out?”

“Yes, yes! We’re leaving, we’re leaving!”

“Hang on,” Shi Mei said to the group of cultivators.

They assumed that, after having beaten Shi Mei up, he was not about to let them go easily. Thus, they knelt onto the floor, bowing as they said, “Xianjun, xianjun! We were in the wrong, we were ignorant. Please let us go!”

“You didn’t listen to me earlier when I tried to reason with you.” Shi Mei sighed. “You kidnapped someone’s child, breaking their parents’ hearts. How can you live with this on your conscience?”

“We’re sorry! We’re sorry! Xianjun, we made a mistake! We will never do it again! We will never do it again!”

“From now on you must live a clean life, no more evil deeds, do you understand?”

“Of course! You’ve taught us a good lesson! We, we’ve learned our lesson! We’ve learned our lesson!”

“Then, please apologize to this Madam, and heal her children with care.”

And so the incident finally came to an end. Mo Ran helped Shi Mei up onto his horse, then rented another one from the pit stop. The two headed back to their sect, side by side.

The moon shone high up in the sky, its light piercing through the leaves to scatter onto the footpath.

As they went, Mo Ran began to feel an elation growing inside him. He’d initially thought he wouldn’t be able to see Shi Mei until he was back at

Sisheng Peak. He hadn't expected Shi Mei to come down to the base of the mountain for errands, and run into him by chance. This only cemented Mo Ran's belief that he and Shi Mei really were fated.

Even though Shi Mei and himself weren't technically an item right now, they'd already snogged in their past life. By all indications, it was going to be smooth sailing this lifetime as well, it was all just a matter of time.

The only thing he needed to worry about was protecting Shi Mei, making sure that things would not happen like they had that year, when Shi Mei had died in Mo Ran's arms…

Shi Mei had no way of knowing Mo Ran was reborn, and chatted with him as he usually did while they went back. Soon, they arrived at the foot of Sisheng Peak.

Who would have thought that, in the dead of the night, there would be a person standing in front of the mountain's gate, glaring at them with a threatening gaze.

"Mo Ran! You finally remembered to come back??"

"Eh?"

Mo Ran looked up. Ah! Such an angry little darling of the heavens.

It was none other than a youthful Xue Meng.

Compared to the one he'd seen before his death, this fifteen-ish year old version was much more unruly and handsome. He was dressed in a set of light armour, with a black base and blue trimming, high ponytail tied up with a silver hair piece. A belt decorated with a lion's head was fastened around his strong and slender waist, gaiters wrapping around his wrists and

ankles. A slim scimitar on his back gleamed with a cold light, and the quiver by his left arm glittered with silver.

Mo Ran sighed to himself, quietly thinking.

Hmm, flashy.

Xue Meng, whether a teen or a grown up, was really flashy.

Just look at him; rather than sleeping, he dresses himself in full armour. What is he doing? Here to perform a pheasant's mating call? Like a peacock displaying his train?

Mo Ran disliked Xue Meng. Xue Meng too, disliked him back.

Mo Ran was an illegitimate child. When he was little, he hadn't known who his father was. He'd gotten by working odd jobs at a pleasure house[6] in XiangTan. It was only when he was fourteen that he was found by relatives, and brought to Sisheng Peak.

Xue Meng, on the other hand, was the young master of Sisheng Peak, as well as Mo Ran's cousin. He was a prodigy, with people calling him the "darling of the heavens'' and "son of the phoenix". For a cultivator, on average, the first three years was spent on learning the basics. To form a spiritual core, it took ten. With Xue Meng's innate talent, it had only taken him five years to achieve all of that.

But in Mo Ran's eyes, whether it was a phoenix or chicken, peacock or duck, they were all birds. The only difference was in how long their feathers were.

And so Mo Ran saw Xue Meng as: a bird.

Xue Meng saw Mo Ran as: a dog.

Perhaps it ran in the family, but Mo ran was shockingly gifted as well, even more so than Xue Meng.

When Mo Ran had first arrived, Xue Meng had considered himself higher class. He was more skillful, more educated, stronger and more handsome. How could he be compared to his illiterate, sloppy, hooligan of a cousin?

Thus this narcissistic phoenix boasted to his attendants, “Listen up, this Mo Ran is a loafer, an absolute street mongrel. You are not allowed to give him any attention. Just pretend he’s a dog.

The attendants praised him right back, saying, “Young master is right, that Mo Ran is already fourteen years old. To start cultivation now, he would have to study the basics for ten years, and take another twenty years to form his spiritual core. By then, young master will have already ascended, and he can only watch from below.”

Xue Meng sneered. “Twenty? Hmph, looking at this piece of trash, I doubt he could even form a spiritual core.”

Who would have thought that, this piece of trash would have gained his spiritual core after just one year of studying with his Shizun.

The phoenix felt like he’d been struck by lightning. The harsh truth was hard to swallow.

And so he’d secretly cursed the other to slip and fall when he traveled on his sword, reciting curses until his tongue twisted.

Every time he saw Mo Ran, the small phoenix Xue Meng couldn't help but roll his eyes, and his scoffing could be heard from three miles away.

As Mo Ran remembered these childhood memories, he couldn't help but narrow his eyes in amusement. It had been a very long time since he'd experienced such trivial things. After ten years of loneliness, even unpleasant things from the past had become very sweet to him.

Noticing Xue Meng, Shi Mei dismounted his horse and took his bamboo hat off, revealing a peerlessly stunning face.

It made sense that he would be dressed like this to go out by himself. Mo Ran stole a peek from the side, feeling elation and longing, thinking to himself that this person was truly alluring, a beauty that was out of this world.

Shi Mei greeted Xue Meng, "Young Master."

Xue Meng nodded. "You're back? Did you take care of the man-bear incident?"

Shi Mei smiled. "It's been taken care of, all thanks to A-Ran's help."

Xue Meng's proud and lofty gaze was sharp like a blade. It swept up and down over Mo Ran, then immediately turned away. He furrowed his brows, face twisting in displeasure, as if one more look at Mo Ran would sully his eyes.

"Shi Mei, go back and rest. Stop hanging out with him, he's a petty thief. You'll only learn bad things, hanging out with him."

Mo Ran showed no weakness, and said mockingly, "If Shi Mei isn't going to learn from me, then is he supposed to learn from you? Dressed in full

armour in the middle of the night, sticking your tail out like a bird. Prince of the Heavens...? Hahaha! More like Princess of the Heavens!”

Xue Meng was furious. “Mo Ran! Watch your mouth! This is my home! Who do you think you are?!”

Mo Ran contemplated for a moment, counting off on his fingers as he did so, then said, “I’m your older cousin. If you think about it, I’m ranked higher than you, actually.”

It was like Xue Meng had been splattered with a faceful of dog shit. He scowled, and said sharply, “Who wants a cousin like you? Don’t flatter yourself! In my eyes you’re nothing but a dog rolling in the mud!”

Xue Meng was someone who really liked to call other people dogs. Like dog spawn, dog thing, son of a bitch, such epithets came to his mouth with ease. Mo Ran picked his ear nonchalantly; he’d long grown used to these things. But, beside them, Shi Mei was feeling rather awkward. He said some soothing words in a low voice, and with a sneer, Xue Meng finally shut his righteous beak.

Shi Mei smiled, then gently asked, “Young Master, it’s so late. Are you waiting for someone?”

“What else would I be doing? Moon-watching?”

Mo Ran burst into laughter. “No wonder you’re dressed like this, you’re waiting for your date! Ay, who’s the unlucky one? I pity her. Hahahahaha.“

Xue Meng’s expression darkened, and he snapped, “You!”

“…Me?”

“I’m waiting for you, what are you going to do about it?”

Mo Ran: “.....???”

Ch.5 This Venerable One Did Not Steal

Loyalty Hall was brightly lit.

Shi Mei had parted ways with them a while back. Mo Ran stepped into the hall after Xue Meng, perplexed, but suddenly understood the situation upon seeing the scene inside.

Rong Jiu, that sissy.

Mo Ran had stolen some money from him before leaving, and he’d actually had the nerve to come to Sisheng Peak to complain.

Rong Jiu was crying miserably while curled into the arms of a large, stocky man. When Mo Ran and Xue Meng entered the hall, his sobs grew three pitches higher, as if he might foam at the mouth and swoon if not for the arms holding him.

On the dais, behind a bead curtain, a delicate lady sat, clearly at a complete loss.

Mo Ran didn’t spare the repulsive pair so much as a glance, and instead saluted to the lady. “Aunt, I’m back.”

This woman was indeed the master of Sisheng Peak, Madam Wang.

Unlike those heroines who were every bit a match for their male counterparts, she was a meek homemaker who did not dabble in outside

matters. Without her husband here, she really didn't know how to deal with this at all. She spoke timidly, saying, "A-Ran, you've finally returned."

Mo Ran acted as if he didn't even see the pair here to complain, and smiled at her. "Aunt is up so late, did you need me for something?"

"Mn. You see, this Rong gongzi says that you… that you took his money?"

She had a thin face, and was too embarrassed to say that Mo Ran went whoring. Sooo instead, she chose to address the minor offense.

Mo Ran's eyes curved in a smile. "Really? It's not like I'm short on money, why would I need to take theirs? Besides, they don't look familiar, do I know you?"

The stocky man sneered. "Yours truly is surnamed Chang, the eldest of my family. As a business person, minor formalities matter little; you may call me Chang Da [eldest son]."

Mo Ran smiled, and purposefully flipped his name around: "Ah, so it's Da Chang [big intestine] gongzi. It's an honor to finally meet you, please excuse my rudeness. And this other gentleman is…"

Big Intestine gongzi: "Hah, Mo-gongzi sure is fond of acting the fool. This is the first time you and I have met, but in the thirty days of this month, you've spent fifteen nights in Jiu-er's room. Have you gone blind? How would you not recognize him?"

Mo Ran was entirely unperturbed, still smiling as he glanced toward Rong Jiu. "What's this, trying to slander me? I'm a decent, honorable person, of course I've never slept with any San-er or Jiu-er."

Rong Jiu's face was red with anger, but he continued to nestle against Chang's chest, sobbing. "Mo, Mo-gongzi, I know my status is low and unseemly... if you hadn't exploited me so cruelly, I wouldn't have come calling, but to be treated like this, I… I…"

Mo Ran's tone was as if he was the one being wronged. "I really truly do not know you, I can't even tell if you're male or female, how could we have met?"

"You patronized my business just last night, how could you be so cold? Chang-gongzi, Chang-gongzi, you have to get justice on my behalf." He burrowed even deeper into Chang's arms, crying louder than ever.

Off to the side, Xue Meng's entire face was ashen, frown twitching as he listened to this absurdity. If not for the self-restraint of his young master upbringing, he would've beaten this repulsive pair off the mountain long ago.

Big Intestine-gongzi patted Rong Jiu's head while soothing him with soft words, then declared threateningly, "Madam Wang, Sisheng Peak is a virtuous, upright sect, but this Mo-gongzi is vulgar and despicable! Jiu-er works hard for his money, all to buy his own freedom as soon as possible. But this guy! As if mistreating Jiu-er wasn't enough, he even stole all the savings Jiu-er sweat and bled for! The Chang family are not cultivators, but we are moneyed and have been in business for generations. If your sect does not give us a satisfactory explanation today, we will be sure to give the whole lot of you a hard time in BaShu!"

Madam Wang was flustered. "Ah……Chang-gongzi please calm down, I, I... …"

Mo Ran sneered internally. The Chang family were salt merchants, ludicrously loaded. Who would believe that the eldest son of the Chang family couldn't afford to buy out Rong Jiu's freedom, and had to let his Jiu-er earn his way himself? Smelled fishy, to say the least.

But his smile remained fixed as he said, "Ah, so Big Intestine-xiong is the son of Yizhou's affluent merchant family, impressive and commanding as expected. Truly admirable, admirable!"

Big Intestine-gongzi looked quite smug. "Hmph, so you do know your place. Why don't you make it easy on yourself and 'fess up, where are Jiu-er's things? Hurry and return them."

Mo Ran said, still smiling, "How strange, your Jiu-er takes so many guests every day, even if he lost something, why am I being blamed?"

"You!" Big Intestine-gongzi gritted his teeth, sneering. "Fine fine fine, I just knew you would try to get out of it! Madam Wang, as you've just seen, Mo-gongzi won't be reasonable, and refuses to come clean, I won't waste my breath on him anymore. You're the one in charge, you decide!"

Madam Wang knew little and less of such affairs, and her words stumbled over each other in her nervousness. "I… A-Ran…... Meng-er……"

Unwilling to let his mother get put on the spot like this, Xue Meng stepped forward. "Chang-gongzi, Sisheng Peak has strict rules of discipline. If your accusations turn out to be true, if Mo Ran truly violated the mandates against greed and promiscuity, we will naturally deal out severe punishment. However, it's your word against his, have you any evidence?"

Big Intestine-gongzi smirked. "I knew your sect would pull this, that's why we rushed to get here before Mo Ran arrived, to confront Madam Wang."

He cleared his throat, saying, “All of you listen well. Jiu-er lost two units of pearls, ten gold ingots, a pair of gold plum blossom bracelets, a pair of jade hairpins, and a jade butterfly pendant. Just search Mo Ran for these items, and the truth of my accusations will be made clear.”

Mo Ran objected, “What right do you have to body search me?”

“Hmph, looks like a guilty conscience to me.” Big Intestine-gongzi lifted his chin haughtily. “Madam Wang, what’s the punishment for the sins of thieving and lechery at Sisheng Peak?”

Madam Wang answered softly, “Uhm…my husband has always been the one in charge of sect matters, I truly…do not know…”

“Doubtful, doubtful. I think Madam Wang is purposefully playing dumb to shield her nephew. Heh, who would’ve thought that Sisheng Peak was actually such a corrupt, filthy place——”

“That’s quite enough out of you. My aunt already said she’s not used to making these kinds of decisions, aren’t you done bullying a housewife yet?” Mo Ran interrupted, finally fed up with his blathering. Even the carefree grin that was usually on Mo Ran’s face had dropped somewhat. He aimed a sideways glare at the repulsive couple.

“Fine, search me then. But if nothing is found, yet you slandered my sect to such extent, what should be done then?”

“Then I will promptly apologize to Mo-gongzi.”

“Sure.” Mo Ran agreed easily enough. “But just one thing. If you’re wrong, then you have to crawl off Sisheng Peak on your hands and knees as an apology.”

Seeing Mo Ran's confidence, a seed of doubt couldn't help but sprout within Big Intestine-gongzi's heart.

He had held cultivators in high regard since he was young, but he himself unfortunately had no talent for cultivation.

A couple days ago, he'd heard that his old paramour Rong Jiu had somehow earned Mo Ran's favor, so the two had come to an agreement. Rong Jiu would find an opening to seize Mo Ran's cultivation, and Big Intestine-gongzi would buy his freedom in exchange. Not only that, he'd also promised to take Rong Jiu into his household, and take care of him for life.

Big Intestine-gongzi longed for cultivation, Rong Jiu coveted riches. The pair of scoundrels were well-matched in their collusion.

Mo Ran had fallen for their scheme in the previous lifetime. He'd gotten even in the end, but had suffered quite a bit in doing so. This time around, their ploy came up completely empty, for Mo Ran had done an about-face suddenly and for no apparent reason. He'd still been in a drunken stupor mere days ago, nestled tenderly in Rong Jiu's arms, Jiu-er this, Jiu-er that. But this morning, he'd brutally screwed Rong Jiu twice, unexpectedly taken all his belongings and valuables, and run off.

Big Intestine-gongzi was furious, and had immediately dragged Rong Jiu to Sisheng Peak to complain.

This salt merchant gongzi was a shrewd businessman; he figured that if he just busted Mo Ran, then he could force Madam Wang to disperse his cultivation. He'd come prepared with a cultivation-absorbing jade pendant,

to gather some easy pickings for assimilation into his own spiritual reservoir later.

But looking at Mo Ran now, Big Intestine-gongzi hesitated.

Mo Ran was a crafty guy. What if he'd already sold the stolen goods, and was just waiting to pull one over on him?

But then again, things had already come to this point, it'd be a waste to give up now. Maybe he was just bluffing……

The one over here was still struggling with his thoughts, but Mo Ran had already started stripping over there.

He took off his outer robe, casually tossed it aside, and gestured in invitation with a smile. "Go ahead and take your time to search."

After all that racket, they found nothing but some spare change. Big Intestine-gongzi's expression changed entirely.

"Impossible!! You're definitely playing some trick!"

Mo Ran squinted his purple-tinted eyes, stroking his chin. "You've already turned my robe inside out ten times, and touched me all over seven, eight times. There's nothing left to do short of getting totally naked, and you're still not giving up?"

"Mo Ran, you——"

Mo Ran had a sudden realization. "Ah, I get it! Big Intestine-gongzi, could it be that you've been lusting after my good looks, and put on this entire show just to take advantage of me and cop a feel?"

Big Intestine-gongzi was about to pass out from rage; his entire face was red with anger, and he pointed at Mo Ran, but was unable to manage a single word. Watching from the side, Xue Meng had long hit the limits of his patience; he might have disapproved of Mo Ran, but Mo Ran was still a member of Sisheng Peak, and outsiders had no right to degrade him.

Xue Meng strode forward with not a trace of politeness, raised his hand and unhesitatingly broke Big Intestine-gongzi's finger, admonishing, "We've humored you for half the night, but it turns out you were just making trouble out of nothing!"

Big Intestine-gongzi howled in pain, cradling his finger. "T-the lot of you! You're all in on it together! No wonder the things weren't on Mo Ran, you must've hidden them! You strip too, let me search!"

Someone actually dared to order him to strip?! Xue Meng immediately flew into a humiliation-driven rage. "Shameless! You really think those dog paws of yours are fit to touch even the corner of my hem? Get the hell out!"

Now that the young master had spoken, the attendants in Loyalty Hall, also long since fed up with this facade, immediately surged forth to clear out this pair of ordinary people with no means of resistance, and soundly kicked them off the mountain.

Big Intestine-gongzi's furious screeching could be heard from the distance. "Mo Ran, just you wait! I'm not done with you yet!"

Standing outside Loyalty Hall, Mo Ran gazed at the night sky, his eyes curved into a smile, and sighed. "I'm so scared~"

Xue Meng shot him a cold glare. "What're you afraid of?"

Mo Ran said with genuine worry, “They’re salt sellers, I’m afraid I won’t get to have any more salt in the future~”

“……”

Xue Meng was silent for a moment, before asking, “You really didn’t screw the prostitute?”

“Nope.”

“And you really didn’t steal?”

“I really did not.”

Xue Meng hmph’d. “I don’t believe you.”

Mo Ran raised a hand, laughing. “Let the heavens strike me down with lightning if I’m lying.”

Xue Meng suddenly lifted his hand, and grabbed Mo Ran’s arm in a vice grip. Mo Ran stared at him. “What are you doing?” Xue Meng humph’d again, and rapidly chanted an incantation. Scattered sounds could be heard as a handful of beads, each about the size of a soybean, slipped out of Mo Ran’s sleeve and fell to the ground.

Xue Meng gathered spiritual energy in his hand and waved toward the beads. The beads started glowing and growing in size, turning into a pile of jewels and valuables, plum blossom bracelets, and jade earrings, golden and sparkling on the ground.

Mo Ran: “…We’re fellow disciples of the same sect, don’t make things difficult.”

Xue Meng glowered. “Mo Weiyu, have you no shame.”

“Hehe.”

Xue Meng roared, “No one’s laughing with you!”

Mo Ran sighed. “It’s not like I can cry on command.”

Xue Meng’s face was gloomy. “Is this how you use Sisheng Peak’s concealing technique?”

“Mhm, practical applications~”

Xue Meng’s anger returned. “That salt merchant was an annoying dog-thing, so I didn’t roast you in front of him. But that dog-thing did have one thing right: violating the mandates against thieving and lechery like you have, no matter which sect you’re at, you’d have it coming!”

Mo Ran grinned, undaunted. “And what are you gonna do about it? Wait for uncle to come back to tattle on me?”

He wasn’t even worried. His uncle spoiled him to no end; the most he would do would be to scold Mo Ran a little, he’d never have the heart to beat him.

Xue Meng turned around, brushing his wind-blown hair aside, his eyes glinting with scorn in the darkness of night.

“Dad? No, he’s at Kunlun and won’t be back for a month or two.”

Mo Ran’s smile froze, an ominous feeling washing over him. He suddenly remembered a certain person.

But——

If he were here, then it would've been him receiving Chang-gongzi at Loyalty Hall today, not the oblivious Madam Wang.

That person… shouldn't be here... right…?

Seeing the flickers in his eyes, Xue Meng's air of disdain became even more obvious.

"Dad does spoil you overmuch, but here at Sisheng Peak, isn't there someone who doesn't coddle you?"

Mo Ran slowly backed away a few steps, a forced smile on his face. "My esteemed cousin, it's so late already, let's not disturb the elder's peace and quiet, I was wrong, there won't be a next time, how about that? Please go get some rest, hehe, you look so tired."

And then he immediately made a run for it.

You've got to be kidding me! This Xue Meng fellow is way too ruthless!

Right now he isn't Taxian-Jun, ruler of the human world, how could he risk falling into that person's hands? If that person were to find out that he had stolen and whored, he'd probably break both of Mo Ran's legs! If he doesn't run now, he won't get a chance to anymore!

Ch.6 This Venerable One's Shizun

Xue Meng had grown up on Sisheng Peak, and knew all of its ins and outs and shortcuts, and so in the end he still managed to capture Mo Ran.

After arresting him, he dragged him to the back of the mountain. The entire back mountain of Sisheng Peak was the closest place the mortal realm was to the ghost realm. Between the two realms lay a barrier, and beyond that barrier was the underworld.

Taking a look at the appalling state of the barrier, Mo Ran immediately knew why even though that person was home, it was still Madam Wang who had appeared in the main hall to greet and receive the audience.

It wasn't that that person didn't want to help, it was that he really couldn't step away——

The barrier of the ghost realm had ruptured.

At this very moment, the entire back of the mountain was permeated with the essence of evil. Spirits that had yet to form a solid body swirled in the air, wailing in despair, their howling full of rancor. At the entrance to the mountain gates a giant breach could be seen, ripped open in the sky. Behind the breach lay the ghost realm, with a long, bluestone staircase, thousands of steps high, extending from the fissure of the barrier. Menacing ghosts that had already cultivated a flesh-form crawled down in great numbers, creeping from the ghost realm to the mortal realm.

If it were a normal person seeing this sight, they would no doubt freak out, terrified. Mo Ran had been soaked with the cold sweat of fear, the first time he'd seen something like this, but he'd long since gotten used to it.

The barrier between the mortal and the ghost realms had been first built by Emperor Fuxi in ancient times. It had become thin and weakened through the passage of time, often cracking and breaking in various places, needing the repair of cultivated immortals. However, a task like this not only did not elevate one's cultivation by much, but it was also incredibly taxing on one's spiritual power. To work so hard for nothing was an arduous chore, and so not many cultivators in the cultivation world were willing to pick up the burden.

When menacing spirits entered the world, the ones they attacked first were the common people of the lower cultivation world. As the protectors of the lower cultivation world, Sisheng Peak thus took on the job of repairing barriers. The mountains at the back of their sect faced the weakest point of the barrier, all for the sake of being able to do such repairs in time.

This ragged barrier would fail at least four or five times a year, just like a leaky, second hand pot: useless.

A man stood at the entrance to the ghost realm, atop the bluestone staircase. His snow white robes fluttered, his expansive sleeves flew in the wind, and the aura of his blade enveloped him, its golden light shimmering. By his powers alone, he was sweeping up those menacing spirits, cleaning those evil ghosts away, repairing the breach in the barrier.

That man was slender in form and elegant in appearance, with an aura of transcendent holiness and a face that was exceedingly handsome and beautiful. From afar, it would be easy to imagine him as a scholar of dignity, standing beneath a blossoming tree, studying a scroll with an otherworldly, studious air. But up close, his expression was as sharp as a blade; his

phoenix eyes slanted upwards, his nose was straight and narrow. He had the very appearance of sophistication and refined manners, but there was something acerbic to his gaze, giving him a particularly cold and cruel look.

Mo Ran watched him from a distance. Although he'd thought himself prepared, if he were to be honest, to see that person appear once more before him, healthy and well, made him tremble down to the smallest fragments of his bones.

Half dread, half…thrill.

His Shizun.

Chu Wanning.

The person that Xue Meng had cried and begged to see when he'd come to Wushan Palace in the previous life.

It had been this man who'd ruined Mo Ran's grand plans. He'd ruined Mo Ran's ambitious ideals and had, in the end, been imprisoned and tortured to death by Mo Ran.

Technically, Mo Ran should have been glad, to defeat an opponent and get the chance to avenge himself.

The ocean was free for fish to swim, the sky open for birds to fly, and no longer could anyone stop him. Originally, Mo Ran had thought he would think this way.

However, things did not turn out that way.

After Shizun's death, something else seemed to have been buried, together with Mo Ran's hatred.

Mo Ran wasn't a man of culture, and did not recognise that something else as the feeling of being evenly matched with a worthy opponent.

He only knew that, from then, he had no more arch enemies in this world.

When Shizun had been alive, Mo Ran had been scared, afraid, anxious. The moment he saw the willow vine in Shizun's hands, his entire body would break out in goosebumps, just like how the mere sound of a wooden club's knocking would make an oft-beaten dog shrink back, teeth aching and legs giving way, drool leaking from the corner of its lips. Even the muscles of his calves would spasm from nervousness.

With Shizun's death, the person Mo Ran feared the most had passed away. Mo Ran felt like he'd grown up, matured, that he was finally able to commit this sin of murdering his mentor.

After that, when his eyes swept through the mortal world, there was no longer anyone who dared force him to kneel, no longer anyone who dared slap him in the face.

To celebrate, he opened a pot of pear blossom white wine, and sat on the rooftops drinking for an entire night.

That night, under the influence of alcohol, the scars on his back from being whipped by Shizun in his youth felt like they were brand new, burning once more with fresh pain.

At this very moment, seeing with his own eyes his Shizun standing once more before him, Mo Ran couldn't help but stare, feeling both fear and resentment but also the faintest trace of a twisted sort of ecstasy.

To have regained such an opponent after having lost him, how could he not be delighted?

Chu Wanning was completely focused on fighting the scattered souls of the dead, ignoring the two disciples who had intruded the back of the mountains.

He had an elegant face; his brows were long and even, and his phoenix eyes were cast downwards, his demeanour graceful, dignified, and otherworldly. His expression was unchanged, cool and distant even in the face of demonic air and bloody rain; it would not have looked strange or out of place if he were to sit down on the spot to light incense and play the guqin.

However, this graceful and somber man was currently wielding a chilling long exorcist sword that dripped with blood. With a single flick of his expansive sleeve, the force of his blade sliced through the verdant stone steps with an explosion. Rubble and debris tumbled down, and a rift of indiscernible depth split into that staircase with its thousands of steps, from from the mountain gates at the top all the way down to the bottom of the mountain.

Such brutal ferocity.

How many years had it been since he'd last witnessed Shizun's strength?

That familiar valiant, overbearing force made Mo Ran's legs weak out of habit. Unsteady, he dropped to his knees onto the ground.

It didn't take Chu Wanning too much time to annihilate all the ghosts and neatly fill the leaking hole to the ghost realm. After completing his task, he

descended from the sky lightly and languidly, landing before Mo Ran and Xue Meng.

He first glanced at Mo Ran, kneeling on the ground, before looking up to Xue Meng, his phoenix eyes somewhat icy.

“Caused trouble again?”

Mo Ran had to concede.

Shizun possessed an ability, one that let him assess a situation and come immediately to the most accurate judgment.

“Shizun, Mo Ran went down the mountain and committed the crimes of thievery and debauchery. Shizun, please deal out his punishment,” Xue Meng said.

Chu Wanning was silent for a moment, expression completely blank, and then he said coldly, “I see.”

Mo Ran: “……”

Xue Meng: “……”

Both of them were a little taken aback. And then? Was that it?

Yet just as Mo Ran was starting to think he’d gotten off lucky, he stole a glimpse at Chu Wanning, and was caught entirely off his guard as he saw a flash of sharp golden light, slashing through the air violently. A lightning-like crackle whipped directly onto Mo Ran’s cheek!!!

Splatters of blood blossomed everywhere!

The speed of that golden light was too shocking. Nevermind dodging, Mo Ran didn't even have the time to close his eyes before the flesh of his face was slashed open, the wound burning painfully.

Chu Wanning stood coldly in the deadly breeze of the deep night with his hands clasped behind his back. The air was still filthy and thick with the stench of menacing spirits; with the addition of the smell of freshly spilt human blood, it made the forbidden grounds of the back mountain even more eerie and horrifying.

The thing that had whipped Mo Ran was a willow vine, which had appeared from out of nowhere into Chu Wanning's hand. The vine hung all the way down to Chu Wanning's boots, and was long and thin, with tender green leaves sprouting along it.

The vine was undoubtedly an elegant object, one that would have called to mind verses of poetry, like "Pliant is the willow branch I gift to my beloved".[7]

Unfortunately, Chu Wanning was neither pliant, nor in possession of a beloved.

The willow vine in his hand was actually a holy weapon called "Tianwen". At this very moment, Tianwen was sparking with bright gold and crimson light, illuminating the darkness all around, as well as the bottomless depths of Chu Wanning's eyes, bringing them to life.

Chu Wanning's lips pressed thin as he said, voice chilly, "Mo Weiyu, you sure are brazen. Did you really think I wouldn't discipline you?"

If this was really the sixteen year old Mo Ran, he might not have taken Chu Wanning's words seriously, thinking that Shizun was only bluffing to scare

him.

However, the Mo Weiyu who had been reborn had long since in his previous life paid the blood price to learn just what his Shizun's discipline was like. Immediately, he could feel the roots of his teeth aching and blood rushing to his head. His mouth was already running, aggressively denying everything, hoping to clear his name.

"Shizun…" Cheek still bleeding, Mo Ran raised his eyes, letting them fill with a sheen of tears. He knew that his current disposition was exceedingly pathetic and pitiful. "This disciple has never stolen…has never committed debauchery…how come Shizun hits me purely on the basis of Xue Meng's word, without even having asked my side of the story?"

"……"

Against his uncle, Mo Ran had two ultimate tricks. Number one: act cute. Number two: act pitiful. He now turned both moves onto Chu Wanning, looking so aggrieved that tears threatened to spill. "Is this disciple really so worthless in your eyes? How come Shizun won't even give me a chance to explain?"

Next to them, Xue Meng was so incensed that he stomped his foot. "Mo Ran!!! You, you piece of dog's leg! You, you're shameless! Shizun, don't listen to him! Don't let this bastard confuse you! He really did steal! All the stolen property is still here!"

Chu Wanning lowered his eyes, his expression cool and distant. "Mo Ran, have you really never commited theft?

"Never."

“…You should know what the consequences of lying to me are.”

Mo Ran’s entire body broke out in gooseflesh. How could he not know? Still, he remained stubborn as a mule. “Shizun, please investigate!”

Chu Wanning raised his hand. That shimmering vine came sweeping again, this time not to whip Mo Ran’s face. Instead, it bound itself tightly around Mo Ran.

This sensation was way too familiar. Other than whipping people on the daily, the willow vine ‘Tianwen’ had another use——

Chu Wanning stared at Mo Ran, who was held in Tianwen’s death grip, and asked once more, “Have you never committed theft?”

Suddenly, all Mo Ran could feel was a familiar agony piercing straight into his heart, as if a sharp fanged little snake had suddenly slithered its way into his chest and was causing havoc amidst his organs.

Accompanying the stabbing pain was an irresistible temptation. Mo Ran’s mouth opened in spite of himself and he said hoarsely, “I…have…never…AH…!!”

Tianwen’s golden light went berserk, as if it could sense he was lying. But though the pain was enough to drench Mo Ran in cold sweat, he still resisted this torture with all he had.

After whipping, this was Tianwen’s second function——interrogation.

Once bound by Tianwen, none could lie before it. No matter whether they were human or ghost, alive or dead, Tianwen had the ability to force them to speak, giving Chu Wanning the answers he demanded.

There was only one person in the previous life who had, relying on his strong cultivation, finally managed to achieve the feat of keeping a secret from Tianwen.

And that person was the one who had become the emperor of the mortal world, Mo Weiyu.

The freshly reborn Mo Ran had high hopes, and thought that he should still be able to fight against Tianwen's forceful interrogation like he'd once been able to. But after what felt like an eternity of biting down on his lips, giant beads of sweat dripping down his inky dark brows, and full-body shivers wracking through him, in the end, he was left prostrate from pain, kneeling at Chu Wanning's feet, gasping out heaving breaths.

"I… I… did steal…"

The pain disappeared abruptly.

Mo Ran hadn't even caught his breath before Chu Wanning's next question came, his voice sounding colder than before.

"Did you commit debauchery?"

Clever men don't do stupid deeds. Since he hadn't been able to hold on earlier, then it was even more impossible now. This time, Mo Ran didn't even bother to object; the moment the pain came he cried, "I have I have I have I have!!! Shizun please! No more"

At the side, Xue Meng's face was just about turning blue, and he said, shocked, "How, how could you…that Rong Jiu is a man, and yet you….."

He went ignored as Tianwen's golden light slowly dimmed. Mo Ran sucked in large mouthfuls of air, his entire body drenched like he'd just been fished

up from water. His face was white as a sheet, and his lips trembled uncontrollably as he lay on the ground, unable to move.

Through his sweat drenched lashes, he could see Chu Wanning's blurry yet elegant silhouette, with its green jade crown and expansive sleeves that draped to the ground.

A wave of powerful hatred suddenly coursed through his heart—— Chu Wanning! This Venerable One hadn't been wrong in treating you the way he had in the previous life!! Even coming back to life, the very sight of you is enough to annoy me! Fuck all eighteen generations of your ancestors!!

Chu Wanning was not aware that his beast of a disciple was going to fuck all eighteen generations of his ancestors. He stood where he was for the moment, face gloomy. Then, he said, "Xue Meng."

Even though Xue Meng knew that currently it was trendy for wealthy houses to find pleasure in the male form, that many enjoyed playing with boy prostitutes because it was refreshing, that it didn't mean they actually liked men, he still found that fact rather difficult to swallow. It took him a moment to reply. "Shizun, this disciple is present."

"Mo Ran has transgressed the three mandates against greedy thievery, debauchery, and deception. Take him to Yanluo Hall for penance. Bring him to the Platform of Sin and Virtue first thing tomorrow morning to be punished before all."

Xue Meng was shocked. "W-what? To be punished before all?"

To be punished before all meant that the disciple that had committed grave sins would be dragged before all the disciples of the sect to be sentenced

and punished in front of everyone. Even the grannies in the cafeteria would be brought over.

Completely disgraceful.

It should be known that Mo Ran was a young master of Sisheng Peak! Although the rules of the sect could be said to be strict, because Mo Ran's status was special — his uncle felt sorry that he'd lost his parents since young and that he had been stranded outside for a whole fourteen years — he would always defend Mo Ran out of indulgence. Even if Mo Ran made mistakes, he would still only lecture privately, and had never once beaten him.

But Shizun would not save even the sect leader's face, and would actually drag his precious nephew to the Platform of Sin and Virtue, would punish and shame Mo-Gongzi before the entire sect. This was something Xue Meng had never expected.

Mo Ran, on the other hand, wasn't surprised at all.

He lay on the ground, his lips curling into a sneer.

Look how righteous his Shizun was, so full of justice.

Chu Wanning was a cold-blooded person. In the previous life, Shi Mei had died before his very eyes. Mo Ran had cried and pleaded, tugged at the hem of his robes, knelt on the ground, begged for his help.

But Chu Wanning had turned a deaf ear.

And so his disciple had breathed his last breath before him. And next to him, Mo Ran had cried his heart out. And still, Chu Wanning had watched on without lifting a finger.

Right now it was nothing more than being dragged to the Platform of Sin and Virtue to be sentenced in public. There was nothing out of the ordinary about this.

Mo Ran could only resent his current self's weak cultivation. He resented that he couldn't peel off Chu Wanning's skin, pull out his nerves, drink his blood. Resented that he couldn't yank Chu Wanning's hair back, couldn't violate and corrupt him to his heart's content, couldn't torment him, destroy his dignity, make him live a life worse than death…

The beast-like savagery in his eyes let slip for a moment, and Chu Wanning caught a glimpse of it.

He glanced lightly across Mo Ran's face, his own graceful, scholarly face completely devoid of expression.

"What are you thinking about?"

Shit!

Tianwen hadn't been withdrawn yet!

Mo Ran could once again feel the vine that bound him squeeze and twist, his organs feeling like they were going to wrench into mush. He screamed in agony, letting loose the thoughts in his mind——

"CHU WANNING! THINK YOU'RE SO TOUGH?! WATCH ME FUCK YOU TO DEATH!"

All was silent.

Chu Wanning: "……"

Even Xue Meng was dumbfounded, "……"

Tianwen suddenly returned to Chu Wanning's palm, transforming into specks of golden light before eventually disappearing out of sight. Tianwen was made from Chu Wanning's bones and blood, and could appear when summoned and disappeared at will.

Xue Meng's face was pale as he stammered, "Sh-Sh-Shizun….."

Chu Wanning didn't speak. His long, inky, delicate lashes were lowered as he looked at his own palm for a long moment. Then he raised his eyes, face unmoved other than his expression being slightly icier than before. He pinned Mo Ran with a glare that said "this beastly disciple deserves death" for a long moment before speaking, voice low as he said:

"Tianwen is broken. I'm going to fix it."

After throwing out such words, Chu Wanning turned around and left.

Xue Meng wasn't a bright child, "H-How can a holy weapon like Tianwen be broken?"

Chu Wanning heard him. He turned and once again used that "this beastly disciple deserves death" gaze to glance back at him. Xue Meng felt a chill run down his spine.

Mo Ran lay on the ground, half dead, his expression lifeless.

Earlier he really had been thinking about finding a chance to fuck Chu Wanning to death. He was well aware that this Chu-zongshi, with his titles like "Yuheng of the Night Sky, Beidou Immortal"[8] was someone who always paid attention to refined, elegant manners and dignity. What he really

couldn't bear was to be quashed beneath someone’s foot, to be sullied and oppressed.

But how could he let Chu Wanning find something like this out!

Mo Ran howled pathetically like an abandoned dog, covering his face.

Recalling Chu Wanning’s eyes as he’d left, Mo Ran felt that he probably didn’t have long to live.

Author’s Notes:

Shizun is finally here! Do not board the wrong ship, do not assume the wrong position. Shizun is bottom, bottom, bottom = =. Ink Feed Fish (a pun on Mo Weiyu) is the top, the MC is the top!

Meatbun: Why did your legs go weak when you saw Shizun? Aren’t you the top? Where is your top energy?

Ink Feed Fish: Old age, arthritis.

Meatbun: Speak properly.

Ink Feed Fish: Can you stop emphasizing my 32 year old soul in the story! After reincarnation I became supple! I’m an innocent and energetic youth!

Meatbun: Then how do you still have arthritis?????

Ch.7 This Venerable One Likes Wontons

The sun blazed down from above.

Sisheng Peak's veranda stretched out for a hundred miles.

As a newcomer among the cultivation sects, it was different from the other famed sects of the upper cultivation region.

Take, for example, Rufeng Sect of Linyi. Their main hall was named "Six Virtues Hall", to encourage the disciples to be "wise, faithful, holy, righteous, benevolent, and loyal". The disciples resided in an area called "Six Demeanor Gate", reminding the disciples to be "filial, cordial, harmonious, martial, responsible, and compassionate" toward one another. And the area of study was named "Six Arts Platform", meaning that disciples were expected to be masters in "ritual, music, archery, riding, calligraphy, and arithmetics".

In other words, endless elegance.

On the other hand, Sisheng Peak came from an impoverished background, and its names were…hard to explain, to say the least. "Loyalty Hall" and "Platform of Sin and Virtue" were still acceptable. Perhaps it was because Mo Ran's father and uncle weren't exactly scholars and couldn't choke out that many decent names, but towards the end, they started to get nonsensical, assigning "Xue Ya"-esque names left and right.

Thus, Sisheng Peak had many names plagiarized from the underworld. For example, the self-reflection room was called Yanluo Hall.[9]

The bridge connecting the recess and study areas was called Naihe Bridge.[10] The dining hall was called Mengpo Hall.[11] The training field was called Mountain of Daggers and Sea of Flames. The forbidden area behind the mountain was called Ghost Zone. So on and so forth.

At least these were relatively acceptable. The more out of the way areas were bluntly named “This is Mountain”, “This Is Water”, “This Is A Hole”, as well as the famed “Aaaaah” and “Waaaah” cliffs.

The quarters of the elders naturally did not escape unscathed, and each had their own nicknames.

And naturally, Chu Wanning was no exception. He liked peace and quiet and did not want to live near others. His residence was located at the southern summit of Sisheng Peak, hidden in a bamboo grove like an ocean of jade. There was a pond before the main hall, covered in blooming red lotuses throughout the seasons thanks to a bounty of spiritual energy, resplendent as crimson clouds.

The disciples secretly called this elegant and scenic place ——

Red Lotus Hell.

Thinking about it, Mo Ran couldn’t help but snicker.

Chu Wanning wore a frightful and sour face day in day out. To the disciples, seeing him was like seeing the devil himself, and what should the home of the devil be called if not hell?

Xue Meng interrupted his daydream. “The hell are you giggling about! Hurry and finish your breakfast, I have to take you to the Platform of Sin

and Virtue after this. Did you forget that Shizun is going to discipline you in public today!”

Mo Ran sighed, and gingerly touched the lash mark on his face.
“Hss……ow.”

“Serves you right!”

“Sigh, I wonder if Tianwen has been fixed yet. Please don’t interrogate me with it again if not, who knows what other nonsense I might spout.”

Faced with Mo Ran’s genuine worries, Xue Meng’s face flushed with anger. He threatened, “If you dare to be im-improper toward Shizun in public, I’ll rip your tongue out!”

Mo Ran covered his face with one hand and waved the other as he croaked faintly, “No need, no need, if Shizun ties me up with that willow vine again, I will just end myself on the spot to prove my innocence.”

Early in the morning, Mo Ran was brought onto the Platform of Sin and Virtue in accordance with customs. He cast his gaze out; below, a sea of people stood, dressed in dark blue as far as the eye could see. The disciples of Sisheng Peak were all dressed in the sect uniform: light armor so blue as to be nearly black, lion head belt, wrist guard and clothing trimmed in sparkling silver.

The sun rose from the east; below the Platform of Sin and Virtue, a sea of gleaming armor.

Mo Ran knelt on the high platform, listening to the Jielu Elder read the lengthy indictment.

“Mo Weiyu, disciple of Yuheng Elder, disregarded commandments and ignored teachings, disrespected sect rules and abandoned morality. You have violated the fourth, ninth, and fifteenth mandates. As punishment, you will receive eighty strikes, copy the sect rules one hundred times, and reflect in confinement for one month. Mo Weiyu, have you anything to say in your defense?”

Mo Ran glanced at the white silhouette in the distance.

That elder was the only person in the entirety of Sisheng Peak who was not required to wear the standard silver-trimmed blue uniform.

Chu Wanning dressed in snow-white satin, with an outer drape of cloud-patterned silver silk, as if swathed in clear frost from the highest of the heavens, but the person himself seemed more frigid than even snow and frost. He sat calmly, too far away for Mo Ran to see his expression, but Mo Ran knew, without needing to see, that this person was probably entirely unperturbed.

Inhaling deeply, Mo Ran replied, “I have nothing to say in my defense.”

Next, in accordance with custom, Jielu Elder asked the disciples gathered below, “If anyone disagrees with the judgement, or has any other appeals, you may now speak.”

The disciples fidgeted, glancing at one another.

No one had thought that Yuheng Elder Chu Wanning would actually send his own disciple to the Platform of Sin and Virtue to be punished in public.

This… to put it politely, was strict and impartial; but to put it frankly, was called being a cold-blooded demon.

Cold-blooded demon Chu Wanning wore an air of indifference, sitting in his seat with his chin propped up. Suddenly, someone shouted, using an amplification technique, “Yuheng Elder, this disciple would like to plead for leniency on behalf of Mo-shidi.”

“.....Is that so?”

Mo Ran was the Peak Lord’s nephew; the disciple clearly thought that, even if he blundered, his prospects were still bright and promising, and so he decided to seize the opportunity to win favor with Mo Ran. He started to babble nonsense. “Although Mo-shidi had erred, he is cordial with his fellow disciples and compassionate to the small and weak in his daily conduct, will Elder please grant leniency in view of his kind nature!”

He was not the only one hoping to curry favor with Mo-shidi.

More and more people began to speak on Mo Ran’s behalf, on grounds fantastic and varied. Even Mo Ran himself was embarrassed listening to them——when had he ever been “pure and innocent, broad-minded and open”? Was this assembly for punishment or commendation?

“Yuheng Elder, Mo-shidi once helped me defeat demons and slay vicious beasts. I would like to request recognition for Mo-shidi’s merits, merits undoing demerits, requesting Elder to lessen the punishment!”

“Yuheng Elder, when I experienced qi deviation, it was Mo-shidi who helped me dispel my inner demons; I believe Mo-shidi only erred due to a brief lapse in judgement, requesting Elder to lighten shidi’s punishment!”

“Yuheng Elder, Mo-Shidi once bestowed me an elixir to save my mother, he is virtuous and benevolent by nature, Elder, please be lenient!”

The final person's pretext had been taken by the person before him, and he was left at a loss for words. Chu Wanning's frosty gaze swept toward him, and he rambled out in a panic: "Yuheng Elder, Mo-shidi once helped me dual cultivate——"

"Pfft." Someone failed to hold in their laughter.

That disciple blushed up to his ears, and withdrew in embarrassment.

"Yuheng, calm down, calm down……" Jielu Elder, seeing this turn of events, hurriedly tried to soothe him.

Chu Wanning spoke coldly, "I have never seen a person this shameless. What is his name? Whose disciple?"

Jielu hesitated slightly, then forced himself to quietly respond: "My disciple, Yao Lian."

Chu Wanning raised his eyebrows: "Your disciple? Save face?" [12]

This was acutely awkward for Jielu Elder, whose old face was bright red as he tried to change the topic. "His singing voice is not bad, useful to keep around when receiving offerings."

Chu Wanning hmph'd and turned away, not wanting to waste any more breath with this shameless Jielu Elder.

There were thousands of people in Sisheng Peak. A couple of sycophants here and there was nothing out of the ordinary.

Looking at the persistent conviction of his sect brothers, even Mo Ran himself almost began to believe them. Impressive, impressive. As it turns

out, he wasn't the only one in this sect adept at spewing lies in broad daylight—this place was full of talented people.

After countless pleas of "Yuheng Elder please be merciful", Chu Wanning finally spoke.

"Pleading on behalf of Mo Weiyu?" He paused before continuing. "Very well. Come up."

Unsure what to expect, those people went up with fear and trepidation.

A golden light flashed in Chu Wanning's hand, and Tianwen appeared as commanded, wrapping the people, more than a dozen of them, into a bundle with a woosh , binding them firmly in place.

Not this again!!

Mo Ran was about to lose all hope. The mere sight of Tianwen made his legs go soft; where the hell had Chu Wanning even attained such a deviant weapon from; it was a good thing he'd never taken a wife in the previous lifetime. Pity the woman who'd get stuck with him, if she didn't get whipped to death, she'd probably be interrogated to death.

Chu Wanning's gaze was full of scorn, he asked one from the group, "Mo Ran helped you defeat demons?"

The disciple had no chance against Tianwen's torment, and howled immediately, "No! NO!"

Asking another one: "Mo Ran helped you break out of a qi deviation?"

"AAAH!! Never! Never!"

“Mo Ran gifted you an elixir?”

“AA——! Help!! Nonono! I made it up! I made it up!”

Chu Wanning loosened the bind, but immediately after, he raised his hand in a ruthless brandish. Sparks flew everywhere as Tianwen soared out to land brutally against the backs of those lying disciples.

Shrieks were heard instantly, blood splashing.

Chu Wanning frowned, berating, “What are you yelling for? Kneel! Discipline attendant!”

“Present.”

“Deliver the punishment!”

“Understood!”

In the end, not only did these people not manage to gain any favor, they each earned ten strikes for violating the mandate against deception, plus a free bonus lash from Yuheng Elder.

Come nightfall found Mo Ran sprawled out on his bed. Even though medicinal ointment has been applied, his back was still covered in criss-crossing wounds, and it was impossible to even turn over. He let out a few sniffles, eyes watering from the pain.

With his cute looks, this kind of whimpering made him seem like a fluffy, abused kitten. Unfortunately his inner thoughts were nothing like those of a kitten.

He gripped the blanket and bit into the bed sheets, imagining that bastard Chu Wanning in their place. He bit! Stomped! Kicked! Ripped!

His only comfort was that Shi Mei came to visit him with a bowl of handmade wontons. Under Shi Mei's gentle, compassionate gaze, Mo Ran's tears poured even more fiercely.

He didn't care for concepts like "men do not cry". He loved to act spoiled in front of the person he liked.

"Does it hurt a lot? Are you able to sit up?" Shi Mei sat at the edge of his bed, sighing. "Shizun he..... his hand was really too heavy. Look at your wounds..... some of them are still bleeding."

Warmth rose in Mo Ran's chest, listening to these sympathetic words. He looked up with teary eyes, and batted his eyelashes.

"Since Shi Mei cares for me so much, I, I don't feel any pain anymore."

"Oh, look at your condition, how can it not hurt? It's not like you don't know Shizun's temperament; do you still dare blunder so in the future?"

Shi Mei looked at him with equal parts helplessness and sympathy, his expressive eyes gleaming in the candlelight like a warm spring.

Mo Ran's heart skipped a beat, he answered obediently, "Won't happen again. I swear."

"Who even takes your swears seriously anymore?" Shi Mei scolded, but he was smiling. "The wontons are getting cold, can you get up? Just stay put if not, I'll feed you."

Mo Ran was already halfway up, but at these words, he collapsed back down immediately.

Shi Mei: “.....”

In both this lifetime and the last, Shi Mei’s wontons were Mo Ran’s favorite. With wrappers thin like clouds and fillings delicate as cream, every bite was moist and satisfying, soft and savory, melting in your mouth and leaving behind a delectable aftertaste.

Especially the soup, simmered to a rich milky consistency, sprinkled with bits of chopped green onions and tender wisps of yellow eggs, and finally a spoonful of chili oil pepper stir-fried in garlic paste, warming you from the inside out when eaten.

Shi Mei fed him attentively, spoonful by spoonful, saying, “I didn’t add any chili oil today, your injuries are too severe, and spicy food is not good for recovery. Settle for the broth, ok?”

Mo Ran stared at him, smiling, unable and unwilling to look away. “Everything you make is delicious, spicy or not.”

“Flatterer.” Shi Mei smiled back, and picked out the poached egg in the soup. “Here’s a runny egg as a reward, I know you like those.”

Mo Ran laughed mischievously, a silly tuft of hair curling up from his head,[13] like a flower blooming. “Shi Mei.”

“Yes?”

“Nothing, just felt like calling your name.”

“.....”

The hair tuft swayed back and forth.

“Shi Mei.”

Shi Mei suppressed a laugh. “Just calling again?”

“Mhm, just calling your name makes me happy.”

Shi Mei hesitated for a moment, then gently felt his forehead. “Silly child, do you have a fever?”

Mo Ran chuckled, and rolled over halfway to peek at him sideways, eyes brightly shining, like they were full of stars.

“I wish I could eat Shi Mei’s wontons every day.”

He meant every word.

After Shi Mei’s death, Mo Ran had always longed to taste his handmade wontons again, but that flavor was gone forever.

At that time, Chu Wanning had not yet completely broken off all relations with him. Maybe due to a guilty conscience, seeing the way Mo Ran stayed kneeling in front of Shi Mei’s coffin in a stupor, Chu Wanning had quietly gone to the kitchen, kneaded dough and chopped fillings, and carefully folded a few wontons. But Mo Ran had seen before he could finish. Mo Ran, who had just lost his true love, couldn’t tolerate this at all. It had seemed to him as if Chu Wanning was mocking him, a clumsy attempt at copying, a deliberate stab.

Shi Mei was dead. Chu Wanning could have saved him, but had refused to help, and afterwards dared to try to make Mo Ran wontons in place of Shi Mei. Had he thought that would make Mo Ran happy?

Mo Ran had rushed into the kitchen and knocked everything over. Plump white wontons had rolled all over the floor.

He'd roared at Chu Wanning, "Who the fuck do you think you are? Do you have any right to use the things he used? To make the food he did? Shi Mei is dead , are you happy now? Or do you have to hound all your disciples to death or madness before you're satisfied? Chu Wanning! There is no one left in this world who could make those wontons ever again. No matter how much you imitate him, you'll never even come close!"

Eating this bowl of wontons now, he was overjoyed, and also deeply moved. He kept smiling as he ate, but his eyes grew slightly moist. Thankfully the candlelight was dim, and Shi Mei couldn't see such minute details of his expression clearly.

Mo Ran said, "Shi Mei."

"Mm?"

"Thank you."

Shi Mei paused for a second, then smiled gently. "Isn't it just a bowl of wontons? There's no need to be so formal, if you like it, I'll make it for you more often."

Mo Ran wanted to say, the thanks is not just for the wontons.

Thank you also, in both this lifetime and the last, for being the only person to never look down on me, who didn't mind my origins, who didn't care about the fourteen years I'd spent struggling to survive by any means, fair or foul.

Thank you also, because if not for the fact that I remembered you back then, when I was first reborn, I probably would have killed Rong Jiu, repeated a grave mistake, and walked the same bitter path as before.

Thankfully I was reborn before your death. I will definitely protect you this time. If anything were to happen to you, even if that cold-blooded demon Chu Wanning won't save you, I will.

But there was no way he could say any of this.

In the end, Mo Ran finished the soup without saying anything, leaving not even a scrap of chopped onion. He licked his lips as if still wanting more, dimples deep and charming, looking cute as a fuzzy kitten.

"Can I have more tomorrow?"

Shi Mei didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "Don't you want to try something else? Won't you get tired of it?"

"I'll never get tired of your wontons, as long as you don't get tired of me!"

Shi Mei laughed, shaking his head. "I'm not sure how much flour is left. If there isn't enough flour for wontons, how about egg in sweet soup instead? I remember you liked that one too."

"Okie dokie! As long as you make it, anything is fine."

Mo Ran was elated, so happy he could roll around hugging the quilt.

Look how kind[14] Shi Mei is; Chu Wanning, go ahead and whip me! There's a beauty to take care of me if I'm laid out on the bed, hehehe!

Just thinking about that Shizun of his lit a flame of anger in the midst of his gentle sentiments.

Mo Ran dug resentfully into the crack between the bed and the headboard once again, cursing internally, what Yuheng of the Night Sky, what Beidou Immortal, all bullshit!

Chu Wanning, this lifetime, just you wait and see!!

Author's Notes:

Shi Mei making wontons:

Ink Feed Fish: Eat, eat, eat!

Shizun making wontons:

Ink Feed Fish: Toss, toss, toss!

Ink Feed Fish from Sisheng Peak wasted food, and disrespected farmer's hard work. Is this the disgrace of human nature or the moral bankruptcy? Tune in for today's 《Constitutional Discussions》

Reality:

Shizun's cooking tastes really bad, his disciples have lost faith in the various Shizun Brand culinary products.

Ch.8 This Venerable One Gets Punished

Mo Ran laid on the bed like a dead fish for three whole days. His wounds had only just healed a bit when he received a summons, telling him to get the hell to the Red Lotus Pavilion to do manual labor.

This was part of the punishment as well; Mo Ran couldn't go down the mountain during the period of confinement, but neither could he just sit around. And so he would help out by doing odd jobs around the sect.

These odd jobs were generally things like helping the cafeteria lady at Mengpo Hall wash dishes, giving the three hundred sixty five stone lions on the pillars of Naihe Bridge a scrub down, transcribing copies of files and scriptures stale and dry, so on and so forth.

But just what kind of place was the Red Lotus Pavilion? It was the residence of that bastard Chu Wanning, the cursed place that everyone called Red Lotus Hell.

Very few people at Sisheng Peak had gone there. Of the ones who had, every single one had come back with either their arms or else their legs broken.

Thus, in addition to Red Lotus Hell, Chu Wanning's residence had another nickname that was even more down to earth: Pavilion of Broken Legs.

The sect disciples had an inside joke: "The Pavilion hides a beauty, the beauty holds Tianwen. Enter through the gate of broken legs, feel the agony of getting your legs broken. If you want your meridians busted, look no further than Yuheng Elder."

There was once a female disciple who had laughed in the face of death, whose lechery reached the skies. She had actually dared to thirst after Yuheng Elder's beauty, and snuck to the southern peak on a moonless night to climb onto the roof, hoping to peek at the Elder as he bathed.

The outcome was obvious. That female warrior was escorted by Tianwen to the very line between life and death, and had been laid out on the bed for no less than one hundred miserable days.

Furthermore, Chu Wanning had declared that should there be any more transgression, he'd poke out the eyes of the interlopers directly.

Do you see? What blunt boorishness! What insensitive gestures! What a loathsome man!

Within the sect, there were a number of naive and foolish young girls who, thinking that they were girls and that Yuheng Elder would pity them and show compassion, would giggle and tease, hoping boldly to arouse his attention. However, once the elder butchered that female delinquent, no one dared attempt to hit on him anymore.

The Yuheng Elder was indiscriminate when it came to lashing, having none of the disposition of a proper gentleman. Other than his face being pretty, there was nothing about him that was acceptable—that was the critique from the disciples within the sect.

The little messenger shidi looked at Mo Ran with sympathy in his eyes, and tried to hold back but in the end, he still couldn't. "Mo-Shixiong…"

"Hm?"

“…Yuheng Elder’s temper is so bad, no one who enters the Red Lotus Pavilion can come out standing. Why don’t you go see if maybe you could say your wounds haven’t healed and beg Yuheng Elder to let you go wash dishes instead?”

Mo Ran was very grateful for this shidi’s compassionate buddha heart, but he still rejected the idea.

Beg Chu Wanning?

Please. He didn’t want to be served by Tianwen for another round.

Thus he dressed himself with immense effort, and dragged his heavy feet to walk towards the southern summit of Sisheng Peak with great reluctance.

Red Lotus Pavilion, Red Lotus Hell. There was not a single soul in sight for a hundred miles around Chu Wanning’s residence.

No one wanted to go close to where he lived; Chu Wanning’s terrible taste and unpredictable temper made everyone in the sect stay far away, only watching with respect.

Mo Ran was still somewhat nervous, not knowing what Chu Wanning would make him do as punishment. His thoughts ran wild for the entirety of his journey to the peak of the southern summit. After crossing through a dense field of bamboo groves, a large expanse of vivid crimson red lotuses came into view.

It was only early morning just then; the sun had only just risen from the east, reflecting a dazzling gleam in the horizon. Through the heavenly lotus pads in the pond grew stalks that connected the fiery red skies with the

crimson blossoms, each absorbing and reflecting the other, amplifying their radiance, truly impressive to behold. Upon the pond, a winding zig-zag bridge led to the pavilion that stood in quiet elegance. Behind it, a mountainous backdrop that streamed with curtains of waterfalls, beads of water like shards of crystals beating at the rocks clinkingly at the bottom, watery mist steaming, light shimmering through the haze, casting an ethereal ambiance amidst the calm.

How Mo Ran felt about all this was:

Ugh.

No matter how beautiful, wherever Chu Wanning lived would be all UGH to him!

Look how excessively lavish, how wastefully bountiful! The dormitory where the disciples slept was tightly cramped, each room given very little space. Yet look at Yuheng Elder; he was just one person, but he'd taken over an entire mountain top, and had even dug three giant ponds, planting an abundance of lotus flowers. Alright, fine. Those lotus flowers were said to be of unique breeds and could be made into medicines of rare quality, but——

Anyway, it was an eyesore. It really was too bad he couldn't just set fire to this pavilion and burn it down!

Nonetheless, grousing was nothing more than grousing. Since he was only sixteen and powerless to compete with Shizun, Mo Ran still approached Chu Wanning's residence to stand at the front entrance. He squinted his eyes into a smile and called out with a disgustingly sweet voice, pretending to be a lowly pleb.

“This disciple Mo Ran greets Shizun.”

“En. Come in.”

It was a huge mess inside the house. That cold-blooded demon Chu Wanning was dressed all in white, the lapels of his robes crisscrossed high and tight, giving him an ascetic, chaste air. Today his hair was up in a tall ponytail, and he was seated on the ground surrounded by mechanical parts, wearing a pair of black metal gauntlets, and biting a brush between his lips.

He glanced at Mo Ran without any emotion, and with the brush in his mouth, he said, voice muffled, “Come here.”

Mo Ran went over.

It really was a little difficult because there wasn’t any space left in the house for a person to walk; blueprints, broken logs, and metal parts were scattered all over the place.

Mo Ran’s brows were twitching. In the previous life he had never entered Chu Wanning’s room. To know that a poised, handsome man such as he lived in such a mess…it was an undescribable feeling.

“Shizun, what are you doing?”

“The Holy Night Guardian.”[15]

“Huh?”

Chu Wanning was a little grumpy, probably because there was a brush in his mouth and it wasn’t easy to talk. “The Holy Night Guardian.”

Mo Ran mutedly glanced at the parts strewn about all over the floor.

This Shizun of his also had the title Chu-zongshi, which wasn't just an empty title. If he had to speak the truth, Chu Wanning was a remarkable man; whether it was his three holy weapons, his barrier repairing powers, or his mechanical engineering skills, they all deserved the name "highest of the peak". This was also why no matter how bad his temper was, how difficult it was to please him, every major cultivation sect fought over who could keep him.

As for this 'Holy Night Guardian', the reborn Mo Ran was more than knowledgeable of it.

This was a mechanical armor Chu Wanning had created; it was cheap in price but very strong and effective in battle, and could protect the common folks in the lower cultivation world from demonic intrusions at night.

In the previous lifetime, the completed Holy Night Guardian had been something that nearly each household owned. Each of the armors was priced at around the same price as a broom, and was more effective than pictures of door guardians and their open, teeth-baring mouths.

After Chu Wanning had passed away, those Holy Night Guardians still protected the impoverished families who couldn't afford the services of a cultivator. Such heartfelt compassion, when compared to the indifference with which he treated his disciples…heh, it filled Mo Ran with contempt.

Mo Ran sat down and looked at the Holy Night Guardian that was nothing more than mere parts at the moment, events of the past drifting through his mind. Unable to resist, he reached out and picked up one of the finger joints of one of the Holy Night Guardians to examine.

Chu Wanning clicked together the tenon and mortise of the parts in his hands, and finally freed a hand to take away the brush that had been between his lips. He glared at Mo Ran. “That one was just oiled, don’t touch.”

“Oh…” Mo Ran put down the finger joint and schooled his thoughts. Still playing the role of one that was cute and harmless, he asked with a happy smile, “Did Shizun summon me here to have me help?”

“En,” Chu Wanning said.

“What do you want me to do?”

“Clean up the house.”

Mo Ran’s smile froze, and he looked at the room that appeared like it had just undergone an earthquake. “……”

Chu Wanning was a genius when it came to the art of spells, but an idiot when it came to everyday life.

After cleaning up the fifth teacup that had been shattered but hadn’t been swept away, Mo Ran finally couldn’t take it anymore. “Shizun, how long has it been since you last cleaned? My god, it’s so messy!”

Chu Wanning was looking at a blueprint, and didn’t look up even when he heard the question. “Around a year.”

Mo Ran: “……”

“Where do you usually sleep?”

“What?” That blueprint probably had some problems; Chu Wanning was more prickly than usual at being interrupted. He ruffled his own hair and answered irritably, “On the bed, of course.”

Mo Ran took a look at that bed, which was piled high with various gadgets and gimmicks that were almost finished. There were also saws, axes, sickles, and other such tools, each exceedingly sharp, glinting with a steely light.

Amazing. How did this person sleep without chopping his own head off?

After laboring for over half a day, all the sawdust and dirt from the floor was enough to fill three dustpans. After wiping down the shelves, more than ten white rags were now black. By the time noon came around, only half the place had been organized.

Fucking Chu Wanning. He really was more evil than a harpy.

Cleaning a room didn’t seem like a severe punishment on the surface, and if anyone heard it wouldn’t sound like anything laborious either. However, who knew it was to sweep up a hellish place that hadn’t been cleaned for three hundred and sixty five days? Nevermind that he was covered in lashes right now, even if he was perfectly healthy, a tiresome torture like this would kill him half dead!

“Shizun…”

“Hm?”

“This pile of clothes of yours…” Had probably been sitting there for three months.

Chu Wanning finally finished connecting an arm of the Holy Night Guardian. He rubbed his sore shoulders and looked up to glance at the laundry basket that was piled high as a mountain with robes and said coolly, “I’ll wash them myself.”

Mo Ran let out a sigh of relief. Thank the heavens. Then afterwards, he was a little curious, “Eh? Shizun knows how to do laundry?”

Chu Wanning glanced at him. After a moment, he replied coldly, “How hard can it be? Throw it into the water, soak a bit, then fish it up to lay dry. Done.”

“……” Really. What would the ladies who secretly admired and crushed on Chu-zongshi think if they knew about this? Mo Ran wholeheartedly believed that this man was only good for looks and nothing else, repulsive and disgusting. If this went out, how many tender hearts would be broken?

“It’s getting late. Follow me to the cafeteria and do the rest when we come back.”

Mengpo Hall was bustling with activity, people coming and going. Sisheng Peak disciples gathered to eat together in groups of three to five. Chu Wanning placed a few dishes on his wooden tray and went to sit quietly in a corner.

Gradually, a twenty feet radius area centered around him became completely deserted.

No one dared to sit near Yuheng Elder, on the off chance that something upset him and Tianwen would come out for a whipping. Chu Wanning was aware of this but didn’t mind in the least. He sat by himself like a cold beauty, partaking of his meal in a refined manner.

But it was a little different today.

Mo Ran had come here with him, and naturally had to stay with him.

Everyone else was afraid of Chu Wanning, and Mo Ran was no different. But at least he had already died once, so he was not too frightened of Chu Wanning.

Especially after the dread from their first meeting had faded away, and the loathing he'd felt toward Chu Wanning in the last life had slowly re-emerged. So what if he was ferocious? He'd still died by Mo Ran's own hands in the previous lifetime.

Mo Ran sat down facing him, leisurely chewing the sweet and sour ribs in his bowl. Crunch crunch , a small hill of bones materialized speedily.

Chu Wanning suddenly slammed down his chopsticks.

Mo Ran blinked.

"…Can you not smack your lips when you eat?"

"I'm chewing ribs, how do I chew without smacking lips?"

"Then don't eat ribs."

"But I like ribs."

"Then get lost and go eat elsewhere."

Their argument grew louder and louder, and some disciples were already starting to steal glances toward them.

Mo Ran suppressed the urge to flip the bowl of food over onto Chu Wanning's head. His lips, gleaming with oil, pursed into a line. After a while, he squinted his eyes, the corners of his lips curving into a sweet smile.

"Don't yell so loudly Shizun. If others hear, won't they make fun of us?"

Chu Wanning had always had a thin face, and sure enough, he lowered his voice, saying quietly, "Scram."

Mo Ran laughed so hard he almost fell over.

Chu Wanning: "……"

"Ah, don't glare at me Shizun, please eat, eat. I'll try to eat quietly."

Having had his fun, Mo Ran went back to his good and obedient act, and indeed are his ribs much less noisily.

Chu Wanning was amenable to coaxing but not coercion; seeing that Mo Ran had done as told, his expression relaxed a bit and he no longer looked so bitter and resentful. He lowered his head, and continued elegantly eating his meal of vegetables and tofu.

This peace did not last long before Mo Ran started acting up again.

He didn't know why he did what he did either; what he did know was that every time he saw Chu Wanning in this lifetime, he just wanted to piss him off, one way or another.

Thus, Chu Wanning noticed that, although Mo Ran no longer chewed loudly, he was now eating with his hands, fingers covered in grease, sauce shiny and dripping.

The veins at Chu Wanning's temples bulged angrily as he tried to bear with it.

He lowered his gaze, not looking at Mo Ran, and focused on eating his own food.

Maybe it was because Mo Ran was having too good of a time eating, but forgetting form and manner, he finished chewing a bone and carelessly tossed it into Chu Wanning's bowl.

Chu Wanning glared at the messily gnawed rib, the air around him freezing visibly with frightening speed.

"Mo Ran…!!!"

"Shizun…" Mo Ran was slightly terrified, but even he couldn't tell how much of that was real and how much was fake. "That…uh, I didn't mean to do that."

Yeah right.

"……"

"Don't be mad, I'll pick it out right away."

Saying so, he really extended his chopsticks and speedily stuck them into Chu Wanning's bowl to retrieve the offending rib bone.

Chu Wanning's face was blue; he looked like he was about to faint from disgust.

Mo Ran's eyelashes quivered, delicate features looking somewhat pitiful as if he'd been wronged. "Does Shizun find me that repulsive?"

“……”

“Shizun, I’m really sorry.”

Forget it.

Chu Wanning thought to himself.

There was no need to argue with those who were younger.

He abandoned the urge to call forth Tianwen and give Mo Ran a beating, but his appetite had been wiped out. He stood up. “I’m full.”

“Eh? That’s all you’re going to eat? Shizun you’ve barely touched your food.”

Chu Wanning said coldly, “I wasn’t hungry.”

Mo Ran was delighted inside, but his mouth kept speaking sweet words. “Then I’m not eating any more either. Let us go back to Red Lotus He——cough, Red Lotus Pavilion.”

Chu Wanning’s eyes narrowed. “Us?” His gaze was disdainful. “There is no ‘us’. Elders and juniors have an order and distinction, watch your words.”

Mo Ran responded agreeably on the outside, eyes curved in a smile, clever, obedient and adorable.

But he thought on the inside, elders and juniors? Watch my words?

Heh, if Chu Wanning only knew what had happened in the previous lifetime, then he would realize——in the end, in this world, only him, Mo Weiyu, was the superior.

No matter how noble and arrogant Chu Wanning was, how unparalleled, in the end he had still been reduced to a mere piece of mud on the bottom of Mo Ran's boots, living on without purpose only by Mo Ran's grace.

Mo Ran walked faster to match Shizun's pace, still smiling brightly.

If Shi Mei was the pure white moonlight of his heart, then Chu Wanning was the piece of fish bone stuck in his throat. He would pull it out and crush it, or else swallow it and let it be dissolved by stomach acid.

In this reborn life, he could forgive anyone.

But he would absolutely never forgive Chu Wanning.

But, it seemed that Chu Wanning didn't intend to let him off easy either.

Mo Ran stood before the library at Red Lotus Hell, staring at the fifty bookshelves, each ten levels high, and thought that he had surely misheard.

"Shizun, what…did you say?"

Chu Wanning answered indifferently, "Wipe every book in here."

"……"

"And catalogue them."

"……"

"I will be checking in the morning."

"!!!"

What the hell!!! He's gonna get stuck here at Red Lotus Hell overnight??

But he’d already made arrangements with Shi Mei to change his bandages tonight!!!

He opened his mouth to bargain, but Chu Wanning ignored him, turned around with a sweep of his sleeves and left for the machinery room, even closing the door behind him.

Date night summarily dashed, Mo Ran sunk deeply into his feelings of disdain for Chu Wanning——he wanted to burn all of Chu Wanning’s books!!

Wait!

The gears in his head turned as he thought of an even more ruinous idea……

Ch.9 This Venerable One Is Not An Actor

Chu Wanning's tastes were truly terrible.

Dry, tedious, despair-inducing.

Just look at the crappy books this shelf was stuffed with!

《Catalog of Ancient Barriers》, 《Illustrated Archive of Unusual Flora》, 《Linyi Rufeng Sect Zither Music Arrangement》,《Plant Collection》. There were only a few books that counted as acceptable reading material, like 《Bashu Regional Travel Guide》 and 《Bashu Recipes》.

Mo Ran picked a few of the newer-looking books, the ones that Chu Wanning likely wouldn't read often, and doodled a bunch of porn on the pages.

As he drew, he thought to himself, heh, there are at least eight, if not ten thousand books here, who knows how long it would take for Chu Wanning to discover that a couple had been modified into forbidden books. By then, there would be no way to tell who had done it, and Chu Wanning would be stuck seething. He was really so unbelievably clever.

Thinking about it, Mo Ran couldn't help but snicker as he hugged the books in glee.

Mo Ran vandalized more than a dozen books without stopping, letting his imagination run wild and unconstrained, all kinds of erotic scenes appearing under his hand. His brushstrokes were alluring and elegant; the fabrics now clinging to the figures as if just rising out of water, then sweeping as if wind-blown. If someone were to borrow books from Yuheng

Elder and just so happened to pick these, one could easily imagine the kind of rumors that would spread——

“Yuheng Elder is truly a two-faced beast, to insert erotic paintings of men and women between the pages of 《Art of Meditation》!”

“Yuheng Elder is a fraudulent master who hides sequential illustrations of homosexual obscenity in his sword technique manuals!”

“‘Beidou Immortal’ my ass! He’s literally a beast in human clothing!”

The more Mo Ran thought about it the funnier it became, until he was rolling on the floor with laughter, holding his stomach and kicking his legs in glee. He was so absorbed that he didn’t even notice when someone appeared at the library doors.

And so, the sight that greeted Shi Mei as he approached was that of Mo Ran, rolling in a pile of books, laughing as if he had gone mad.

Shi Mei: “…A-Ran, what are you doing?”

Startled, Mo Ran sat up in a hurry, frantically covering up all the lewd drawings and putting on a more presentable face. “W-wiping the floor.”

Shi Mei held back a laugh. “With your clothes?”

“Ahem, I couldn’t find a cleaning rag. Anyway, moving on, what are you doing here so late, Shi Mei?”

“I couldn’t find you in your room, so I asked around and was told that you were at Shizun’s place.” Shi Mei stepped inside the library and helped Mo Ran clean up the books scattered all around on the floor, a gentle smile on

his lips. “There wasn’t anything else that needed doing, so I came to see you.”

Mo Ran was overjoyed and overwhelmed. He pursed his lips; for some reason, his usual smoothness and charm were nowhere to be found, and he couldn’t actually think of what to say right now.

“Then…um…then please have a seat!” Mo Ran spun excitedly in place, then said, a little nervously, “I-I’ll go get some tea for you!”

“No need, I snuck here, there will be trouble if Shizun finds out.”

Mo Ran scratched his head. “I guess…” Chu Wanning, that freak! I’ll topple him sooner or later, and get out from under his thumb!

“You probably haven’t eaten yet right? I brought you dinner.”

Mo Ran’s eyes lit up. “Wontons?”

“Pfft, you’re really not tired of them huh. Red Lotus Pavilion is a bit far, I was afraid the wontons would be congealed together by the time I got here, so I didn’t bring any. Here, see if this stir-fry is to your taste?”

Shi Mei opened the food box he brought, revealing the red-colored dishes inside. A plate of shunfeng pig ears, a plate of yuxiang pork strips, a plate of kungpao diced chicken, a plate of chopped cucumber, and a bowl of rice.

“Ah, you added peppers this time?”

“Just a little, so you don’t go into withdrawal,” Shi Mei said, smiling. They both loved spicy foods, of course he understood the concept of no spice no

joy. “But your wounds haven’t fully healed yet, so I only put a little bit, just to add some flavor. Better than not having even a hint of red.”

Mo Ran chewed on his chopsticks happily, dimples sweet like honey in the candle light. “Wah! I’m going to cry in gratitude!”

Shi Mei suppressed a laugh. “The food will be cold by the time you’re done crying. You can cry after you’ve eaten.”

Mo Ran cheered, chopsticks flying with impressive speed.

Mo Ran always ate like a starved dog; Chu Wanning hated the unseemly way he ate, but Shi Mei wouldn’t mind.

Shi Mei was always so gentle, laughing and telling him to eat slower, while offering him a cup of tea. Before long, the plates were empty; Mo Ran patted his full belly with a content sigh, eyes happily squinted. “That hit the spot……”

Shi Mei asked with an air of nonchalance, “Which tastes better, wontons or these dishes?”

When it came to food, Mo Ran was dedicated in the same way he was to his first love. He tilted his head, clear black eyes soft and fixed on Shi Mei as he grinned. “Wontons.”

“……” Shimei shook his head, smiling. He spoke again after a while, “A-Ran, let me help change your bandages and apply new medicine.”

The medicinal salve was made by Madam Wang.

Madam Wang had been a disciple of the medical sect “Guyue’ye”;[16] her martial aptitude was low and she disliked fighting, but she was fond of

studying medicine. Sisheng Peak had an herbal medicine garden, and she had personally planted many precious herbs there, so the sect's supply of medicine never ran low.

Mo Ran took off his top and sat, back facing Shi Mei. The scars on his back still faintly hurt, but as Shi Mei's warm fingers gently rubbed in and spread the ointment, he gradually forgot about the pain, and started getting frisky thoughts instead.

"All done." Shi Mei wrapped new bandages around Mo Ran, and carefully tied a knot. "You can put your clothes back on now."

Mo Ran turned his head around to peek at Shi Mei. Under the dim yellow light of the candles, Shi Mei's skin was pale like snow. Mo Ran's desire flared up even more. His throat felt dry and he really didn't want to get dressed, but after a moment of hesitation, he still lowered his head and quickly draped his outer robe over his shoulders.

"Shi Mei."

"Mm?"

Just the two of them in this library, secluded and hidden. This mood was quite good. Mo Ran originally wanted to say some earth-shakingly romantic poetry, but unfortunately he was the kind of illiterate who could make even his own era's name something like "Cock". He choked on his words for a good while, until his face turned red, but only managed to choke out three words: "You're really nice."

"Don't mention it, it's just a matter of course."

“I’m also going to be really nice to you.” Mo Ran carefully controlled his tone to be calm, but his palms were sweating non-stop, betraying the stormy waves in his heart. “When I become strong, I won’t let anyone bully you. Not even Shizun.”

Shi Mei didn’t know why he was suddenly saying these things. He hesitated for a moment, but still gently replied, “Alright, then, I’ll be counting on A-Ran from now on.”

“Mhm…”

Mo Ran mumbled a response, but grew increasingly fidgety under Shi Mei’s expressive gaze. He didn’t dare to keep looking, and so lowered his head.

He was always meticulously careful toward this person, determined in his dedication.

“Ah, Shizun asked you to clean this many books? And catalogue them overnight too?”

In front of the person he liked, Mo Ran absolutely had to save face. “It’s not too bad, I can do it, just gotta pick up the pace a little.”

Shi Mei said, “Let me help.”

“No way, if Shizun finds out, he’ll punish you too,” Mo Ran spoke resolutely. “It’s getting late, you should go back and get some rest, we have class tomorrow morning.”

Shi Mei held his hand, laughing softly. “Don’t worry, he won’t notice. We’ll be super quiet.....”

He didn’t even finish talking before an ice-cold voice spoke up.

“And what exactly are you doing super quietly?”

Without them knowing, Chu Wanning had come out from the machine room. His expression was cold, and his phoenix eyes were filled with endless frost. He stared at them without any expression on his face from where he stood at the door to the library in a thin layer of white robes. His gaze paused on their clasped hands for a moment before moving away.

“Shi Mingjing, Mo Weiyu, you’ve got some nerve.”

Shi Mei’s face paled instantly and he abruptly let go of Mo Ran’s hand, saying in a small voice, “Shizun…”

Mo Ran also recognized that the situation was bad, and lowered his head, “Shizun.”

Chu Wanning stepped inside, ignoring Mo Ran to look down instead at Shi Mei, who was kneeling on the floor. He spoke coolly, “There are barriers set throughout the Red Lotus Pavilion. Did you really think I wouldn’t know if an unexpected guest came in?”

Shi Mei lowered his head to the floor, frightened. “This disciple was wrong.”

Mo Ran panicked. “Shizun, Shi Mei just came by to help me change bandages, he was just about to leave, please don’t scold him.”

Shi Mei also panicked. “Shizun, this has nothing to do with Mo-shidi. This disciple was wrong, and is willing to accept punishment.”

“.....”

Chu Wanning’s face was starting to turn blue.

He'd barely even said anything, and these two were already hurrying to try and cover for one another, as if he was some kind of scourge they had to band together against. Chu Wanning was silent for a while, managing to suppress the twitch of his eyebrows with some difficulty. He spoke in a detached manner, "Such compassion between fellow disciples, how touching. Looks like I'm the only bad guy in this room, then"

Mo Ran: "Shizun…"

"…Don't call me."

Chu Wanning shook out his wide sleeves, unwilling to keep talking. Mo Ran wasn't sure why he was so mad; maybe it was because he'd always hated people being touchy feely in front of him, no matter what kind of touchy feely, all of it dirtied his eyes.

The three people were quiet for a long while.

Chu Wanning suddenly turned to leave.

The rims of Shi Mei's eyes were red when he looked up, helpless and confused. "Shizun?"

"Copy the sect rules ten times. You can go back."

Shi Mei lowered his eyelashes, paused for a moment, and softly replied, "… Understood."

Mo Ran remained kneeling in the same spot.

Shi Mei stood up, glanced at Mo Ran, and hesitated. After a long while, he knelt back down to plead with Chu Wanning.

“Shizun, Mo-shidi’s injuries have only just healed. Might this disciple be so bold as to beseech you to go easy on him.”

Chu Wanning did not respond from where he stood alone under the lantern’s flickering candle light. After a while, he turned his head toward them suddenly, sharp eyebrows lifted and eyes scorching, angry rebuke on his lips.

“Aren’t you just full of nonsense. Still not leaving?!”

Chu Wanning was exceedingly handsome but completely lacking in gentleness, and even scarier when mad. Shi Mei shuddered fearfully and quickly left with a bow to avoid further provoking Shizun and bring Mo Ran even more trouble.

With only the two of them left in the library, Mo Ran secretly let out a sigh before saying, “Shizun, this disciple was wrong. This disciple will continue the cataloguing immediately.”

Unexpectedly, Chu Wanning said, without even turning his head, “You can go back if you’re tired.”

Mo Ran’s head snapped up.

Chu Wanning continued icily, “I won’t keep you.”

Why would he let me off this easily? It must be a trap!

Mo Ran thought himself clever. “I’m not leaving.”

Chu Wanning paused, then smiled coldly. “…Fine, suit yourself.”

Saying so, he swept his sleeves, turned, and left.

Mo Ran was stunned——it wasn't a trap? He'd thought for sure that Chu Wanning was going to give him another round of lashings with the willow vine.

It wasn't till well into the night that he finished. Mo Ran yawned, and left the library.

The night was already so late, yet a dim yellow light could still be seen from Chu Wanning's bedroom.

Eh? That pesky demon still hadn't gone to bed?

Mo Ran went over to bid Chu Wanning goodnight before leaving. Once inside, he noticed that Chu Wanning had already fallen asleep, it was just that the forgetful man had neglected to put out the candles before going to bed.

Or maybe he'd passed out from exhaustion in the middle of making something. Mo Ran figured that that was probably what had happened when he saw the prototype Holy Night Guardian pieced together by the bedside, the metal gloves that Chu Wanning hadn't taken off, and the half piece of mechanical clasp still tightly gripped in his hand.

Chu Wanning was not so harsh and cold when asleep. He was curled up on the bed that was stacked with machine parts, saws, and axes. There were too many things spread out everywhere and not much space left to accommodate a person, and so he was huddled up tightly, body hunched, long lashes lowered. The sight was unexpectedly lonely.

Mo Ran stared at him blankly for a moment.

Just what…had Chu Wanning been so angry about today?

Was it just because Shi Mei had trespassed on the Red Lotus Pavilion, and had tried to help him organize the books?

Mo Ran approached the bed and rolled his eyes. He leaned down near Chu Wanning's ear, and with a very, very quiet voice, experimentally called out, "Shizun?"

"…Mm…" Chu Wanning groaned softly, and hugged the cold machine parts in his arms even more tightly. He was in a deep slumber, breaths even. The sharp metal glove still on his hand lay next to his face, looking quite like the claws of a cat or leopard.

Seeing that he probably wouldn't wake up anytime soon, Mo Ran felt a jolt in his heart and narrowed his eyes, the corners of his lips curving into a mischievous grin. He hovered over Chu Wanning's ear, testing with a low voice, "Shizun, wake up."

"……"

"Shizun?"

"……"

"Chu Wanning?"

"……"

"Heh, he's really asleep." Mo Ran was delighted. He propped his arm next to the pillow and looked at him with a grin. "Perfect, I'll take this chance to settle the score with you."

Unaware that someone wanted to settle the score with him, Chu Wanning remained fast asleep, handsome features appearing quite peaceful.

Mo Ran assumed an imposing posture. Unfortunately he'd grown up in a pleasure house and didn't have much in the way of formal education, instead being more influenced by street arguments and folk stories. The phrases he cobbled together were thus especially lame and laughable.

"Chu Wanning, you audacious radical, you treacherous liar, you dare look down on your Honored Emperor, you…hmm, you…"

He scratched his head, having run out of words. Even when he'd become the emperor, the words that had came out of his mouth were either this bitch or that bastard. But these words seemed ill-unfitting for Chu Wanning.

He racked his brain for a good while before suddenly remembering something a big sister back at the pleasure house used to say. Although he wasn't too sure what it meant, it seemed ok enough. Brows twisted, he snapped:

"You fickle, ungrateful, despicable little donkey hoof, do you acknowledge your misdeeds?"

Chu Wanning: "……"

"If you don't speak, this venerable one shall consider it a confession!"

Chu Wanning let out another groan, perhaps disturbed by the noise, but continued to sleep while holding onto the machine parts.

"Your transgressions are grave; according to the law, this Venerable One sentences you…hm, sentences you to Zuixing![17] Liu-gonggong!"[18]

Only after calling out of habit did he realize that Liu-gonggong was already a person of his past life.

Mo Ran contemplated for a moment, and decided to lower himself to act out the gonggong's part. So he responded in a flattering tone, "Your Highness, your old servant is present."

Then he cleared his throat and said solemnly, "Carry out the punishment immediately."

"As you command, Your Highness."

Alright, done with the formalities.

Mo Ran flexed his fingers and began to "carry out the punishment" towards Chu Wanning.

This so-called Zuixing didn't actually exist; Mo Ran had made it up on the spot.

Then how should this improvised punishment be carried out?

The once-tyrant emperor Mo Ran solemnly cleared his throat. Gaze cold and wicked, he slowly pressed in close to the face that looked frigid as a clear spring in a snowy valley, and gradually drew near that pair of light colored lips.

And then…

Mo Ran stopped. Glaring at Chu Wanning, he cursed, enunciating each word slowly,

"Chu Wanning, fuck you and your peerless pettiness."

Pa. Pa.

Two slaps in the air.

Hehe, punishment complete!

Fuck yeah!

Mo Ran was in the midst of rejoicing when he felt a sudden prick in his neck and a change in the atmosphere. He looked down abruptly, and was met by a pair of cold and lofty phoenix eyes.

Mo Ran: "……"

Chu Wanning's voice was like the shattering of ice, hard to tell if it's more elegant or frosty. "What are you doing."

"This Venerable One…puh. Your old serv…puh puh puh!" Fortunately Mo Ran had spoken softly. Chu Wanning frowned a little, but seemed to not have heard. Struck by a sudden idea, Mo Ran reached out and slapped the air near Chu Wanning's face two more times.

"……"

Faced with his Shizun's darkening expression, the once-emperor of the world gave a mollifying grin. "This- this disciple was killing mosquitoes for Shizun."

Author's Notes:

Mo Ran

Courtesy Name: Weiyu

Posthumous name: His honorable big radish deity, homosexual purple longevity saint, squeaky spirit shizun thruster, certified shithead top

thespian, general manager five thunder pinnacle big steamed man, stinky no shame realm, Taxian Emperor[19]

Career: Emperor (dead)

Societal Image: Illiterate

Current Fav: Shi Mei

Fav Food: (hand crossed out) Chu Wanning (hand crossed out), Spicy Oil Wontons

Dislikes: Being abandoned by others

Height: 186 before death, this venerable one became a lively youth after reincarnation, maximum height has yet to be reached, why should it be announced publicly? Hmmph Hmmph!

Ch.10 This Venerable One Goes on His First Mission

Fortunately for Mo Ran, Chu Wanning had not heard much of his play-pretend “Zuixing”, and he managed to scrape by with some made-up nonsense, but only just.

It was already very late by the time Mo Ran got back to his room. He took a nap and attended morning classes as usual the next day. After morning classes came his favorite morning activity: breakfast.

As morning classes ended, Mengpo Hall gradually filled with people.

Mo Ran sat across from Shi Mei; Xue Meng had come late and the spot next to Shi Mei had already been taken by someone else, so he could only sit reluctantly next to Mo Ran with a gloomy face.

If Mo Ran were asked what the best aspect of Sisheng Peak’s teachings was to him, he would definitely say: that this sect ’s cultivation doesn’t require fasting.

Unlike the lofty, ethereal sects of the upper cultivation world, Sisheng Peak’s cultivation method didn’t require abstinence from meat or any other foods, so the food here had always been sumptuous.

Mo Ran drank from a bowl of savory spicy soup, slurping up the peanut crumbs and crunchy soybean inside. A plate of crisply yellowed pan-fried buns he’d ordered just for Shi Mei sat in front.

Xue Meng glanced sideways at Mo Ran and said mockingly, “Mo Ran, it’s really quite incredible that you went to Red Lotus Hell and actually managed to walk back out on your own two legs. Truly inspirational.”

Mo Ran responded without even bothering to lift his head, “Of course, who do you think I am.”

“Who do I think you are?” Xue Meng sneered. “Just because Shizun didn’t break your legs, you’ve already forgotten which stick of onion you are ?”[20]

“Oh, so I’m a stick of onion, what are you then.”

Xue Meng scoffed. “I am Shizun’s top disciple.”

“Self-proclaimed? Hey why don’t you go ask Shizun for his seal of approval so you can frame it and hang it on the wall? You owe at least that much to your title of top disciple.”

Xue Meng snapped his chopsticks with a crack.

Shi Mei hastened to play mediator. “Please don’t fight, hurry and eat.”

Xue Meng: “…Hmph.”

Mo Ran mimicked him with a shit-eating grin plastered on his face: “Hmph.”

Xue Meng bristled, smacking the table. “How dare you!”

Seeing the situation rapidly deteriorating, Shi Mei hurriedly held Xue Meng back. “Young master, everyone’s watching; eat, eat, don’t fight.”

These two’s birth characters were truly incompatible; they were cousins but ended up fighting every time they met. Shi Mei tried without success to talk Xue Meng down, and had to resort to physically wedging himself between the two to ease the tension, placating left and right.

Now asking Xue Meng: “Young master, do you know when the Madam’s cat is going to give birth?”

Xue Meng answered, “Oh, you mean A-Li? Mom was mistaken, it’s not pregnant, just had a big belly from eating too much.”

Shi Mei: “……”

Then asking Mo Ran: “A-Ran, do you still have to go to Shizun’s place to do chores today?”

“Shouldn’t have to anymore, everything that needed to be tidied up has been tidied. I’ll help you with copying the sect rules today.”

Shi Mei laughed. “Do you even have time to help me? Don’t you have to copy them a hundred times yourself?”

Xue Meng raised an eyebrow, looking with some astonishment at Shi Mei, who usually didn’t even put a single toe out of line. “How did you end up having to copy the rules too?”

Shi Mei looked embarrassed. All of a sudden, before he could speak, the sounds of conversation in the dining hall died down abruptly. All three of them turned around to see Chu Wanning enter Mengpo Hall, white robes billowing behind him. He walked to the food counters without any expression and started selecting pastries.

There were more than a thousand people here eating in the hall, but with the addition of just one Chu Wanning, it suddenly became quiet as a graveyard. All the disciples lowered their heads to munch on their food; if anyone talked, it was in the quietest of tones.

Watching Chu Wanning carry his tray to the corner he usually sat at, quietly eating congee by himself, Shi Mei let out a soft sigh and couldn't help but say, "Actually, I feel kind of sorry for Shizun sometimes."

Mo Ran glanced up. "How so?"

"Just look, no one dares to go near where he's sitting, no one even dares to talk loudly with him around. It was still ok when the Peak Lord was here, but without him around, he doesn't even have anyone to talk to, isn't that so lonely?"

Mo Ran humph'd. "He brought it on himself."

Xue Meng got angry again. "You dare to mock Shizun?"

"How am I mocking him? I'm just speaking the truth." Mo Ran put another bun in Shi Mei's plate. "With a temper like that, who would want to hang out with him?"

"You——!"

The shit-eating grin was back on Mo Ran's face as he peered at Xue Meng, speaking lazily, "You got a problem with it? Feel free to go sit with Shizun for your meals then, don't sit with us."

That shut Xue Meng right up.

He felt great respect for Chu Wanning, but he felt even greater fear, no different from anyone else. Angry and humiliated, but having nothing to say in retaliation, he gave the table leg two sound kicks, and sulked by himself.

Mo Ran was the picture of languid smugness, tauntingly directing a glance at the little phoenix. Then his gaze, across the crowd, landed on Chu Wanning.

He didn't know why, but looking at the only white-colored figure in the hall full of people dressed in deep blue with silver armor, he suddenly thought of that person sleeping curled up amongst the pile of cold metal last night

Shi Mei wasn't wrong, Chu Wanning really was quite pitiful.

But what of it? The more pitiful he was, the happier Mo Ran would be. Thinking about it, he couldn't help the quirk at the corner of his lips growing more apparent.

The days flew by.

Chu Wanning didn't call him to the Red Lotus Pavilion again; Mo Ran's daily chores became idle things like washing the dishes, feeding the chicks and ducklings Madam Wang kept, and weeding the medicinal herb garden.

The month of confinement was over in the blink of an eye.

Today, Madam Wang called Mo Ran to Loyalty Hall. She asked while patting his head, "A-Ran, how are your injuries?"

Mo Ran responded with a smile, "Thanks for worrying about me aunt, I'm all healed now."

"That's good. Be more mindful in the future, don't make such big mistakes and anger your Shizun again, understand?"

Mo Ran was an expert at acting pitiful. "Aunt, I understand~"

“And one more thing.” Madam Wang retrieved a letter from the yellow rosewood small table. “It’s been a full year since you entered the sect, that means it’s time for you to take on exorcism duties. This letter from your uncle came by messenger pigeon yesterday; his instructions are for you to go down the mountain and complete this assignment once your confinement period ends.”

Sisheng Peak’s customs dictated that disciples had to go see the world and gain practical hands-on experience as exorcists after one full year in the sect.

On the first mission, the shizun would accompany the disciple and provide assistance as necessary; in addition, the disciple also needed to invite a fellow disciple along. This was to encourage camaraderie between the disciples, so that they understand the meaning of “loyalty of the heart evident, life or death unchanging”.

Mo Ran, bright-eyed, accepted the assignment letter, tore it open, read in a hurry and immediately started grinning in glee.

Madam Wang said, worried, “A-Ran, your uncle entrusted you with a heavy responsibility for your mission in the hopes that you will be able to make a name for yourself. Yuheng Elder is a powerful cultivator, but swords are indiscriminate in battle, and he may not necessarily be able to protect you. Don’t fool around too much, and make sure you don’t take the enemy lightly.”

“I won’t, I won’t!” Mo Ran waved his hands, grinning. “Don’t worry, aunt, I’ll take care of myself, no problem!” And he immediately ran off to pack.

“This child…” Madam Wang watched his retreating back, her gentle and graceful face lined with worry. “How is he so happy over just receiving a mission?”

How could Mo Ran not be happy?

The mission from his uncle was to look into an incident at Butterfly Town at the request of a certain Landlord Chen.

Who cared what kind of ghost or ghoul it was, what was important was that, in the last lifetime, this was where he had fallen under the influence of a demonic poison and, in an addled state, forcibly kissed Shi Mei within the illusory realm. It had also been one of the very few times Mo Ran had gotten to be so intimate with Shi Mei. He was so ecstatic he was practically on cloud nine.

On top of that, because he had been under the influence of the demonic poison, Shi Mei couldn’t even have complained. Free kiss! No consequences attached!

Mo Ran was so happy his eyes curved into crescents. He didn’t even mind the fact that Chu Wanning also had to come along on the mission.

He could just leave the exorcising to the master while he flirted with Shi Mei, who would say no to this kind of easy work?

After inviting Shi Mei and reporting to Shizun, the three made their way to the troubled Butterfly Town on galloping horses.

This town’s specialty produce was flowers. Fields of flowers stretched for many kilometers outside the residential area, and butterflies of all colors always fluttered about inside the town, thus the name.

It was already night by the time the three arrived, but the village entrance was bustling with activity. The beating of drums could be heard loud and clear as a procession of performers all dressed in red and playing the shawm turned out of an alleyway.

Shi Mei was puzzled. “Is this a marriage procession? Why is it at night?”

Chu Wanning said, “It’s a ghost marriage.”

Ghost marriage, also known as Yin marriage, was a tradition among the common people to match unmarried men and women who had died young in posthumous matrimony. This kind of tradition was rare in poorer areas, but Butterfly Town was quite prosperous, so the practice was common here.

The showy procession was divided into two lines, one carrying real satins and silks, the other carrying paper money and mock ingots, escorting a sedan decorated in red and white. The procession, lit with golden lanterns, made its way out of the village.

Mo Ran’s group reined in their horses and stood to the side to let the ghost marriage procession pass. The sedan came near; inside was not a live person, but a ghost bride made of paper. The ghost bride’s lips were painted a bright scarlet, two lines of red on her cheeks framing a deathly pale face, the smiling appearance extremely frightening.

“What kind of lousy tradition is this, is money burning a hole in this town’s pocket or what,” Mo Ran muttered under his breath.

Chu Wanning said, “The people of Butterfly Town are extremely superstitious, it is their belief that solitary graves will attract lone souls and stray spirits, bringing misfortune to the family.”

“…That’s not actually a thing right?”

“It is real as long as the townsfolk believe it to be.”

Mo Ran sighed. “I guess. Butterfly Town’s been around for hundreds of years already, if one were to now tell them that their superstitions don’t actually exist, they probably wouldn’t be able to accept it.”

Shi Mei asked in a quiet voice, “Where is the ghost marriage procession going?”

Chu Wanning said, “We passed a temple earlier. The one enshrined inside was not a god, and there was a Xi[21] character posted on the door. The altar was piled with red satin written with ‘match made in heaven’, ‘harmony in the afterlife’ and the like. I believe that’s probably their destination.”

“I also noticed that temple.” Shi Mei looked pensive. “Shizun, is the one enshrined within a ghost mistress of ceremonies?”

“That is correct.”

The ghost mistress of ceremonies was a ghost personage born of the imagination of the common people. They believed that marriage between the souls of the departed also needed to go through the proper customs and be witnessed by a mistress of ceremonies, to certify that the pair of deceased had become husband and wife. Since ghost marriage was a common tradition at Butterfly Town, it followed that they would make a golden body for the ghost mistress of ceremonies to be enshrined before the cemetery outside town. The families holding ghost marriages would stop by with the ghost bride to worship at the temple before the burial.

Mo Ran had rarely seen such ridiculous happenings before, and watched with great interest. But Chu Wanning only gave a brief, detached glance before turning his horse around. “Let’s go, we must check on the family that’s being haunted.”

“Three honored Daozhang,[22] I’ve suffered so much! You’ve finally come! If someone hadn’t come to take care of this soon, I-I wouldn’t even want to live anymore!”

The client who had requested Sisheng Peak to come and perform the exorcism was the richest merchant in the town, Landlord Chen.

The Chen family dealt in perfumed powder and had four sons and a daughter. After the eldest son’s marriage, he and his wife had sought to move out, as his wife disliked the noise in the family. The Chen family had riches and reputation to spare, so they’d purchased a large plot of land at a secluded area by the northern mountain; it even had a natural hot spring pond, quite a nice spot.

But the day they began building there, they had only gotten a couple shovels into it before hitting something hard. The wife had moved over to take a look only to immediately swoon from fright—they had somehow dug up a brand-new, red-painted coffin at the northern mountain!

Butterfly Town had a designated burial grounds, all the deceased were buried there, but this solitary coffin had inexplicably shown up at the northern mountain. Not only that, there was no grave or marker, and the entire coffin had been painted blood red.

Of course they didn't dare proceed any further, and hurriedly covered it back up. But it was already too late. Ever since that day, strange things kept happening to the Chens.

"First it was that daughter-in-law of mine," Landlord Chen lamented. "The fright affected her baby and she miscarried. Then it was my eldest son; he went into the mountain to collect medicinal herbs to help his wife recover, but slipped and fell, and by the time we found him, he was already dead… Hai!" He let out a long sigh and waved his hand, too choked up to continue.

Madam Chen dabbed at her tears with a handkerchief. "My husband is right, in the months after that, our sons met with mishaps, one after another. If not disappearance, then death——of our four sons, three are already gone!"

Chu Wanning's brows were furrowed as he glanced past the Chen couple, gaze landing on the pale-faced youngest son. He looked to be about the same age as Mo Ran, fifteen or sixteen, and had delicate features, but they were now twisted with fear.

Shi Mei said, "Would you mind telling us how the other sons…how they died?"

Madam Chen sighed. "Our second son went to look for his brother and was bitten by a snake on the way. It was just a regular grass snake, not poisonous, so no one paid it any mind at the time, but a couple days later he just fell over while eating, and then……" She let out a sob. "My son……"

Shi Mei exhaled, feeling terrible for having to push. "Then, were there signs of poisoning on the body?"

“Ha, what poison, our family’s definitely been cursed! The older sons are all dead, the youngest is next! The youngest son is next!”

Chu Wanning frowned, gaze moving to Madam Chen with lightning speed. “How do you know that the youngest son is next, and not yourself? Does this malicious spirit only kill men?”

The youngest son of the Chen family cowered to the side, legs shaking and eyes swollen like peaches. Even his voice squeaked and contorted as he said, “It’s me! It’s going to be me! I know it! The person in the red coffin is coming! He’s coming! Daozhang, Daozhang save me! Daozhang save me!”

He began to lose it as he spoke, scrambling over to try and hug Chu Wanning’s thigh.

Chu Wanning had always been averse to physical contact with strangers and immediately sidestepped it. He lifted his head to stare at the Chen couple. “What exactly is this all about?”

The couple exchanged a glance and spoke with a trembling voice: “There’s a place in this house, we, we’re afraid to go near it again——Daozhang will understand when he sees, it’s truly evil, truly…”

Chu Wanning interrupted them, “What place?”

They hesitated for a moment, then pointed toward the ancestral shrine room with trembling hands. “There…”

Chu Wanning led the way, followed closely by Mo Ran and Shi Mei. The Chen family trailed after at a distance.

Pushing open the door, the inside looked no different from the ancestral shrines of other big families, with rows of memorial tablets flanked on both sides by pale candle fire.

All the tablets in the room were painted yellow, with the names and positions of the departed engraved thereon.

The writing was neat and careful: Esteemed Spirit of So-and-So Ancestor, Esteemed Spirit of So-and-So Ancestor.

Except for a tablet right in the middle; the lettering on that one wasn't carved and painted, but written in a vivid red:

Spirit of Chen Yanji.

Erected by Living Person of the Chen-Sun Clan.

The Chen family, who had been hiding behind the Daozhang, peeked into the shrine room that was draped in fluttering white silks, perhaps hoping for a fluke. But the letters on the tablet were still there, as if written in blood, and they broke down immediately.

Madam Chen wailed loudly, and the youngest son's face was so pale he hardly even looked alive.

First, the lettering on this tablet did not conform to the traditional system of rites. Second, the writing was extremely messy, as if the person had been about to fall asleep and struggling to write, so much so that it was nearly illegible.

Shi Mei turned his head and asked, “Who is Chen Yanji?”

The youngest son, voice shaking with sobs, answered from behind him, “I-it’s me.”

Landlord Chen wept as he spoke. “Daozhang, it’s like this. Ever since our second son passed, we noticed that… that a new tablet had been added to the ancestral shrine, but that the names written on it were those of living people from our family. Once a name appears, that person will definitely meet with disaster within seven days! When our third son’s name appeared on the tablet, I shut him in his room and sprinkled incense dust by the door, and even got someone to come perform thaumaturgy. We tried everything, but— on the seventh day! He still died…no cause whatsoever, just died!”

He became more emotional and more afraid the more he spoke, even dropping to his knees as well. “I’ve never committed any wrongdoings in my life, why must the Heavens treat me so! Why!”

Shi Mei’s heart ached for him, and he hurriedly went to comfort the old man who was crying to the heavens. He looked up and called softly, “Shizun, this…...”

Chu Wanning hadn’t even turned around. He was still staring at that tablet with great interest, as if flowers were about to bloom from it.

Suddenly, Chu Wanning asked, “Living person, Chen-Sun clan, is that referring to you, Madam Chen?”

Author’s Notes:

Once upon a time there was a cold blooded demon Shizun, the demon Shizun had three disciples. They all had very Mary Sue titles. The Phoenix of Bashu Xue Ziming, The Restored Soul of the Corporeal Dragon Mo Weiyu, and The Dormant White Tiger Shi Mingjing.

The above titles are all bogus.

They should actually be: Bird thing Xue MengMeng, dog thing Mo Feed Fish (pun on Weiyu), and white lotus shimei. Shrugs :-D

Ch.11 This Venerable One Is Gonna Smooch, Rejoice!

“Y-yes, it’s me!” Madam Chen wept. “But I didn’t write on the tablet! Why would I curse my own child? I——”

“Indeed you would not have done it while awake, but that’s not necessarily true when asleep.”

Chu Wanning lifted his hand to pick up the memorial tablet as he spoke, channeling spiritual energy into his palm. Suddenly, blood-curdling screams erupted from the tablet, followed immediately by the heavy, festering scent of the blood trickling forth from it.

Chu Wanning’s eyes were cold and piercing, voice stern as he said, “Arrogant wicked spirit, daring to run thus rampant!”

Against the heavy spiritual power gathered in his palm, the writing on the tablet was actually forced to recede bit by bit, screaming. It soon became faded, and finally, vanished altogether. Chu Wanning squeezed with his pale, slender fingers, and the entire memorial tablet shattered!!

The Chen family, watching from the back, was stunned. Even Shi Mei was stunned.

He couldn’t help exhaling, “How impressive.”

Mo Ran also couldn’t help internally exhaling, how vicious.

Chu Wanning’s face turned slightly in their direction. His elegant features were devoid of expression, but there were a few specks of blood that had

splattered on his cheek. He lifted his hand to examine the blood on his fingertips before speaking to the Chen family. “All of you stay in the courtyard today, do not go anywhere.”

Of course none of them dared to do anything but comply after that display, and promptly answered, “Yes! Yes! We’ll obey Daozhang’s every instruction!”

Chu Wanning strode out of the shrine room, wiping the bloodstains off of his face indifferently. He lifted a finger to point at Madam Chen. “Especially you. Do not fall asleep under any circumstance. That thing is capable of possession, you must remain awake no matter how drowsy.”

“Yes…yes yes yes!” Madam Chen agreed repeatedly, then asked tearily, with a measure of hesitance, “Daozhang, then, my son…is…is he safe?”

“For now.”

Madam Chen stared blankly. “For now? Not always? Th-then what must be done to keep my son safe?”

Chu Wanning said, “Capture the demon.”

In her panicked worry, Madam Chen forgot her manners and threw courtesy aside to ask urgently, “And just when is Daozhang planning to go capture it?”

“Right now.”

Chu Wanning’s gaze swept over the Chen family. “Which of you knows the exact place that the red coffin was dug up from? Lead the way.”

The surname of the eldest son's wife was Yao. Despite being a woman, she was tall and gallant. Her face showed dread as well, but she was relatively calm compared to the others, and immediately offered, "I know the location, since that place was selected by my late husband and myself. I will guide Daozhang."

The three of them followed Chen-Yao, heading northward the entire way, and quickly arrived at the plot of land purchased by the Chens.

The area was already cordoned off. The plants were dark and overgrown, and there was nobody around for miles. It was completely silent, with not even the sounds of birds and insects present.

Halfway up the mountain, the space suddenly opened up into a clearing. Chen-Yao said, "Three honored Daozhang, this is the place."

There was a grave-suppression rock on top of where the red coffin had been dug up. Mo Ran burst out laughing at the sight of it. "What good is that crappy rock gonna do? Clearly the work of amateurs, toss it aside."

Chen-Yao was apprehensive. "But the Mister from the town said that the demonic beast inside holds the evil spirit down to keep it from getting out."

Mo Ran smiled sarcastically. "That Mister sure has been effective so far."

"……" Chen-Yao said, "Toss, toss toss toss!"

Chu Wanning said coldly, “No need.” He lifted his hand, fingertips glowing golden as Tianwen answered the call. A single flick of the willow vine, and the rock was cracked into pieces! Expressionless, Chu Wanning walked over to stand among the debris, and raised his hand once again in a threat. “What are you hiding for? Get the hell up!”

A strange ‘geh geh’ sound came from below. Suddenly, a twelve feet tall wooden coffin burst forth from the ground, spraying earth everywhere, sending dust flying.

Startled, Shi Mei said, “This coffin has such heavy demonic energy!”

Chu Wanning said, “Fall back.”

Tianwen struck the tightly sealed red coffin in a backhanded lashing, sending sparks flying. There was a moment of silence, then the lid of the coffin split open, and the object inside was revealed as the thick smoke dispersed.

Inside the coffin was a man, completely naked. He had a straight nose and handsome features, and would have looked as if he was merely asleep, if not for the paper-pale whiteness of his skin.

Mo Ran’s gaze zoomed below the man’s waist, then he made a show of covering his eyes. “Aiya, the stinky jackass isn’t wearing any pants.”

Shi Mei: “……”

Chu Wanning: “……”

Chen-Yao called out in surprise, “Husband!” She made to rush toward the coffin without a second thought. Chu Wanning reached out to hold her back, asking with a raised eyebrow, “This is your husband?”

“Yes! He’s my husband!” Chen-Yao was stricken with both fear and grief. “How did he end up here? We definitely interred him at the ancestral grave, fully dressed in burial clothes, how did he…”

She started wailing before she could finish, beating her chest in anguish. “How could this happen! So wretched——so wretched! My husband…my husband!!”

Shi Mei sighed. “Mistress Chen, please restrain your grief.”

Chu Wanning and Mo Ran both ignored the weeping woman; Chu Wanning didn’t know how to comfort people, and Mo Ran had no compassion to speak of. The two of them stared at the corpse in the coffin.

Mo Ran had already gone through this in the previous lifetime and so knew more or less what was coming. But he still had to act his part, so he noted, stroking his chin, “Shizun, something’s fishy about this corpse.”

Chu Wanning: “I know.”

“……”

Mo Ran originally had an entire speech planned out, ripped directly from Chu Wanning’s original explanation and analysis from the previous lifetime. He’d wanted to take it out this lifetime and give Chu Wanning a shock, but who would’ve thought that he’d just casually throw out an “I know”.

As a teacher, wasn't he supposed to encourage his disciples to speak their own thoughts, and give praise and reward for doing so??

Mo Ran wasn't giving up. He pretended not to have heard the "I know", and kept going. "There's no sign of decomposition on this corpse. Chen-gongzi died over half a month ago; in this kind of environment, he should've long since started festering and leaking pus, and there should already be a layer of corpse fluid accumulated in the coffin. This is the first point."

Chu Wanning shot a cold 'you may continue' kind of look at him: "……"

"Second." Mo Ran was unaffected, and continued to recite Chu Wanning's explanation from the previous lifetime. "The demonic energy coming off this red coffin was very strong before it opened, but conversely vanished after opening. Moreover, there is practically no demonic energy on the corpse itself, which is also quite abnormal."

Chu Wanning: "……"

"Third, have you noticed that, ever since the moment the coffin was opened, there has been a sweet fragrance in the wind?"

The scent was very subdued, one would not have noticed it at all without paying careful attention. At Mo Ran's words, Shi Mei and Chen-Yao realized that there was indeed a faint sweet smell in the air.

Shi Mei said, "You're right."

Chen-Yao sniffed, her face changing color. "This fragrance……"

Shi Mei asked, “Mistress Chen, what is it?”

Chen-Yao was so scared that even her voice changed tone. “This fragrance is my mother-in-law’s secret recipe, Hundred Butterfly Fragrance!”

No one spoke for a moment. That line written on the memorial tablet in the shrine room, “Erected by Living Person of the Chen-Sun Clan”, seemed to appear before their eyes.

Shi Mei spoke, “…Could it be that this whole thing really is Madam Chen’s doing?”

Mo Ran said, “It’s unlikely.”

Chu Wanning said, “It is not.”

The two spoke at nearly the same time, then looked at each other. Chu Wanning’s expression remained even. “You go ahead.”

Mo Ran spoke without modesty. “As far as I know, the Chen family made their fortune on the Madam’s unique Hundred Butterfly Fragrance. Its recipe is kept secret, but the finished product is not hard to obtain. Of every ten girls in Butterfly Town, five or six wear this fragrance. In addition, we looked into this beforehand, and it seems that Chen-gongzi also quite liked his mother’s Hundred Butterfly Fragrance, and often mixed it into his bathwater when bathing, so it’s not at all strange that his body carries this scent. What is strange is that…”

He turned his head back toward the naked man in the coffin as he spoke.

“He’s already been dead for half a month, but this fragrance is fresh as if it’s been freshly applied. Am I right, Shizun?”

Chu Wanning: “……”

“Could you just praise me a little if I’m right~”

Chu Wanning: “Mm.”

Mo Ran laughed. “You really don’t like to waste words.”

He’d hardly gotten two chuckles in before it was lost in a flurry of robes, billowing as Chu Wanning grabbed him and swiftly moved them back several feet. In his hand, Tianwen glowed brightly golden, fire light dancing.

“Look out.”

The smell of Hundred Butterfly Fragrance in the air suddenly thickened, a white fog materializing as the scent filled the air, spreading with alarming speed. The entire area became a sea of fog almost instantly, so dense that one could not even see the fingers on their own hand!

Mo Ran’s heart stirred.

The illusory realm was opening.

“Ah!!” Chen-Yao’s shriek was the first thing to be heard in the thick fog. “Daozhang hel——”

She did not get to finish speaking before the sound was suddenly cut off.

Chu Wanning’s fingertip glowed blue as he placed a tracking enchantment on Mo Ran’s forehead. “You be careful while I go check out the situation.”

Then he quickly disappeared into the thick fog, following the direction of the voice.

Mo Ran touched his forehead, laughing in a low voice. “Well well, even the position of the enchantment is exactly the same as in the last lifetime. Chu Wanning, you really haven’t changed at all.”

The fog had come fast but it dispersed just as quickly, and was completely gone before long. The scene that revealed itself before him, however, was even more startling than the fog was. At least, Mo Ran had gotten quite the scare out of it in the last lifetime.

When the fog disappeared, the desolate and overgrown mountain was gone.

In its place was a vast expanse of intricate and elegant landscape gardens, pavilions and winding verandas, rock gardens and verdant trees, with a cobblestone path stretching beyond what the eye could see.

The mere sight of this place made Mo Ran want to roll on the floor in joy.

This tyrannical jackass had been thinking about this very illusory realm the entire day. In the previous life, they’d all become separated here as well; Mo Ran had run into Shi Mei first, and under the hypnosis of the illusion, had kissed him for the first—and only—time in his life.

Unfortunately, that time, Shi Mei had run away as soon as Mo Ran had let go, perhaps out of fright. The sweet nectar had been taken away before he’d barely even got a taste of it, and he was left unsatisfied.

Later, after the illusory realm had been broken, Shi Mei hadn't even fussed over this matter with him. It was as if the kiss had never even happened, and neither of them had ever brought it up again. Sometimes, in the middle of the night, Mo Ran had wondered if it had just been a fantasy born of his deep obsession.

Fantasy or not, Mo Ran thought as he licked his lips, Shi Mei is not getting away that easily this time! I'm gonna get my fill of smooches all at once!

Author's Notes:

According to historical facts, courtesy names are received at age 20. However, In this cultivation world, one debuts and receives their courtesy name at age 15. I personally really like the three characters in Mo Weiyu (墨微雨), they look more beautiful than Mo Ran (墨燃). So I wanted to present them sooner, hahahaha.

Ch.12 This Venerable One Kissed the Wrong Person… WTF...

>>heads up moran kisses like a dog and doesn't ask permission before his paws wander

Even after having walked around for quite a while, he still couldn't tell which direction was which.

But the scent of the Hundred Butterfly Fragrance in the air was becoming stronger. This scent caused those exposed to it for too long to have heightened emotions and enhanced senses, and induced them to do all manners of unreasonable things.

Mo Ran gradually grew increasingly agitated and restless. It was as if a flame had been lit in his stomach and was slowly boiling the blood coursing through his body.

Water, he needed to find some water. Where was that spring again?

He knew there was a spring in the illusory realm. He was already parched and dizzy by the time he'd found it in his last life, and, having no other choice, had scooped and drunk several handfuls of the water, thinking that death by poison was still preferable to death by thirst.

He'd felt his consciousness becoming blurrier and blurrier after drinking the spring water. He'd been fading in and out of consciousness by the time Shi Mei found him; Shi Mei cultivated the healing arts and had promptly set about dispelling the poison in his body. And he, dizzy and addled, and

under the poison's influence at that time, had kissed Shi Mei on the lips as if possessed.

The ex-emperor of the human world was swift as the wind and forceful like thunder, and desperately wanted a repeat of his dream-like encounter with the person of his desires. He wandered around the illusory realm for a long while before finally hearing the tinkling of spring water. Overjoyed, he dashed over and drank to his heart's content without hesitation.

As expected, the spring water exacerbated the fretful agitation brought about by the scent even more. He uncontrollably wanted nothing more than to go deeper into the spring, and half his body was already submerged before he knew it.

And just like in the last lifetime, as Mo Ran was about to lose consciousness, a hand suddenly pulled him up, sending water flying everywhere. Air rushed back into his nose and Mo Ran gasped, eyelashes dangling with water droplets fluttering open to look at the figure in front of him.

The figure slowly came into focus, accompanied by a voice that sounded almost angry.

"What's wrong with you, drinking the water here, are you trying to die?"

Mo Ran shook the water off like a wet dog and breathed in relief when he confirmed who it was. "Shi Mei…"

"Stop talking and take this medicine!"

Mo Ran opened his mouth and obediently swallowed the purple pill, eyes staring at Shi Mei's incomparably beautiful face the whole time.

Suddenly, just like in the last lifetime, the intense feelings of agitation made him lose all restraint—not that he was any kind of an honorable man to begin with—and he captured Shi Mei's wrist, quickly pressing their lips together before the other could react.

Instantly, sparks flew everywhere and his mind went totally blank.

He was a man with a sordid history of promiscuity, but passion between the sheets needed no contact between the lips, no unnecessary affections. Hence, his carnal entanglements were many, but his kisses pitifully few.

Shi Mei hadn't expected to be attacked like this at all, and froze in shock until a tongue intruded inside, and only then did he finally react and start struggling.

"What are you do-…mmf!" He only managed half a sentence before his face was turned back roughly and his lips covered once again. Mo Ran kissed more intensely than he had in the previous life. The two tangled into a heap by the side of the spring, Mo Ran keeping Shi Mei pressed firmly under his body as he kissed those moist, somewhat chilly lips, the touch breathtaking just like how he remembered it, and his cheek, and his ear…

"Stop moving…" The huskiness of his voice surprised even himself.

Fuck.

The spring water's effect seemed somehow more intense than in the last life?

The way things had gone in the previous lifetime, he hadn't actually got to embrace Shi Mei for that long. Back then, the young Mo Ran had been stricken by his conscience after getting only a few pecks in; his grip had loosened and Shi Mei had immediately gotten up and fled by treading across the water with qinggong.[23]

But he was vile and shameless in this lifetime, with no conscience to strike him, only desire to urge him on. He kissed as much as he pleased, holding the other person down by the side of the spring.

Beneath him, Shi Mei struggled and cried out in anger, but his heart was already possessed, and he couldn't make out what the other was saying at all. He could only see that beautiful face swaying back and forth in his vision, that pair of moist, alluring lips opening and closing.

It felt as if a ball of fire had been ignited in his abdomen. Mo Ran gave in to his desires, his kisses growing increasingly more ravenous as he pried open the other's jaw and pushed his tongue in, plundering the sweetness inside.

His heart thudded like drumbeats in his chest.

Amidst the chaos, he had already ripped off Shi Mei's intricate outer robe and torn open his belt sash. His hand slid inside and caressed smooth, firm skin. The person underneath him jumped at the touch, but was again pressed back down by Mo Ran.

He bit at Shi Mei's ear, whispering, "Be obedient, it'll be good for both of us."

“Mo Weiyu——!!”

“Aiya aiya, are you that mad, to call me like a stranger?” Mo Ran smiled as he licked the other man’s earlobe, hand not remaining idle either, groping directly toward his waist.

Shitty jackass Mo Ran, the sixteen year old budding jackass of that time indeed couldn’t compare to the thirty two year old veteran jackass of the present!

This person’s face grew thicker with each passing day!

Shi Mei’s entire body was tense, and Mo Ran could feel him trembling slightly. Really, he looked like such a slender person, but the contours of his body were surprisingly toned under his hand.

His desires ran even more rampant, restraint slipping further as he pulled at the other’s inner robes.

Shi Mei finally hit the limits of his endurance.

“Mo Weiyu! You’re seeking death!!”

There was a loud bang, and a burst of powerful spiritual energy suddenly tossed him aside! Its power was ferocious, and Mo Ran got caught completely off guard. His entire body flipped over and slammed against a rock at the spring side, and he nearly spit out blood.

Shi Mei clutched at his disheveled clothing as he stood up, flustered. Golden spiritual energy crackled in a frenzy at his palm, sparks flying audibly, mirroring the fury in his eyes.

Mo Ran was dizzy from the impact, but still felt vaguely that something was wrong.

“Tianwen, come!”

Following the enraged bellow, a golden willow vine appeared in Shi Mei’s hand as Tianwen answered the call. The willow vine glowed piercingly bright, streaks of fire and bursts of gold coursing along its length, willow leaves swirling in the air.

Mo Ran was stunned.

When did Shi Mei learn how to summon Tianwen?

The thought hadn’t even settled in his mind before Tianwen ripped through the air toward him viciously! There was no restraint whatsoever behind the lashing, and the blood of the despicable scoundrel Taxian-Jun was spilt without mercy. If anyone like Rong Jiu who had suffered at Mo Ran’s hands were to see this scene, they would surely clap and cheer, “Nice one! Awesome! Do it again! Vanquish the evil! What a good deed!”

Mo Ran finally sobered up under this relentless storm of brutal lashings.

Shi Mei is so gentle, how could this be him?

To be this practiced at whipping people, who else could it be but Chu Wanning!!!!

Chu Wanning’s hand got tired from whipping, and only then did he pause to take a breath, rubbing his wrist. He was just about to continue when Mo Ran, leaning against the rock, suddenly coughed up a big mouthful of blood

“…No more, I’ll really die…”

Mo Ran coughed up more blood and felt his heart sink to the depths of the abyss. That was definitely the best, the most remarkable, the highlight of his history of debauchery.

Why the fuck was it Chu Wanning who’d come?

What’s more, Chu Wanning had Shi Mei’s face for some reason, and even his voice sounded exactly the same!

He wiped the blood from the corners of his mouth and looked up, panting.

Perhaps it was due to the beating, or perhaps it was because the medicine Chu Wanning had given him earlier was finally starting to work, but when he raised his head this time, the person before him was no longer Shi Mei.

Chu Wanning seethed from where he stood under the tree, face gloomy as he glared at Mo Ran with eyes like twin bolts of lightning.

This vicious and enraged look of his really was frightening.

But…

Mo Ran stared for a few seconds.

And noticed that he…had grown shamelessly hard.

Chu Wanning always dressed immaculately, with not a hair out of place, but his intricate white robes, usually worn with the collars high and tightly closed, were now a disheveled mess held up only by the tight grip of his pale, slender hand. His lips were red and swollen from kisses, and love

bites peppered the side of his neck. His expression was fierce, but that only added to the allure.

All those memories of Chu Wanning from the previous life, the insanity, the bloodlust, the hatred, the rampage, the conquest, the pleasure, all the memories that had piled up.

Mo Ran didn't want to think about it, hadn't planned on remembering any of it, but in this air, of the rusty tang of blood mixed with Hundred Butterfly Fragrance, the memories would not be subdued.

It swelled like the tide and flooded his thoughts.

Fuck, he absolutely cannot see Chu Wanning looking like this, after all.

Even if he loathed him, hated him, so much so that he wanted to chop him up and make him into wontons and eat him, Mo Ran still had to admit.

In the previous life, his most fervent entanglements, his most intense climaxes, all of it had been gotten off of Chu Wanning's body.

Hating him was one thing.

But as a man, especially a vulgar, shameless man like Mo Ran, the body's instinctive reaction was another matter altogether.

Chu Wanning let out a breath. He seemed truly furious, the hand holding Tianwen trembling slightly.

"Awake now?"

Mo Ran forced down a mouthful of blood: "…Yes, Shizun."

Chu Wanning seemed like he wasn't done with the beating yet, but he recognized that Mo Ran was under the influence of the illusion and shouldn't be blamed for all of it. He hesitated for a moment, but put the willow vine away in the end.

"What happened today…"

Mo Ran rushed to speak before he finished. "No one will know besides you and I! I absolutely won't say anything! Let the heavens strike me with lightning if I speak a word of it!"

Chu Wanning was quiet for a moment, then smiled grimly. "I've heard that swear of yours no fewer than a hundred times, and not a single time was serious."

"It's definitely serious this time!" Sure, his body had a reaction, but as far as Mo Ran was concerned, wanting to fuck Chu Wanning was like wanting to eat stinky tofu, neither should be brandished in public.

Just eat your stinky tofu in a corner away from others so they don't have to smell it. Wanting to bed Chu Wanning was the same.

Mo Ran had always loathed Chu Wanning. How could he let anyone know that he loathed him on one hand, but secretly wanted to fuck him on the other? What kinda disease was that?

And last life's sordid business with Chu Wanning? Spare him, he really didn't want to even mention it.

“This illusion’s influence is strong, whoever you meet inside takes on the appearance of the person your heart most wants to see.”

Chu Wanning explained as he walked alongside Mo Ran.

“You must remain calm and focused to avoid its influence.”

“Oh…”

Huh? Wait a second!

Mo Ran suddenly thought of something, and quivered.

If it was like that, then the Shi Mei that he’d met in the illusory realm last life also might not have been Shi Mei? What if that had also been——

He snuck a sideways glance at Chu Wanning, and shivered again.

No way!

If that had been Chu Wanning he’d kissed in the last lifetime, he definitely would’ve gotten a good old round of whipping! Or a slap at the very very least!

It couldn’t have been Chu Wanning! Definitely not!

As he was busy having an intense internal debate, Chu Wanning suddenly stopped and pulled Mo Ran behind him. “Quiet.”

“What is it?”

“There’s movement ahead.”

Things had turned out completely different from the events of the previous life, so Mo Ran didn’t know what to expect anymore. At Chu Wanning’s

words, he asked immediately, “Maybe it’s Shi Mei?”

Chu Wanning frowned. “While in this illusory realm, you absolutely must not imagine who you might meet ahead, or else whoever or whatever you meet will take on that person’s appearance. Remove distractions, focus your thoughts.”

“……” Mo Ran tried, but couldn’t do it.

Chu Wanning glanced at him. A dagger of concentrated spiritual energy formed in his hand, and jabbed unceremoniously into Mo Ran’s arm.

“Ah——!”

“Don’t yell.” Chu Wanning had anticipated this; his other hand was already touching Mo Ran’s lips with a golden light, and Mo Ran suddenly couldn’t make a sound. “Does it hurt?”

“……” What do you think! Why don’t you stab yourself too and see if it hurts!

Mo Ran nodded pitifully, eyes watering.

“Good. Focus on the pain and don’t think about anything else. Follow behind me, let’s go take a look.”

Mo Ran silently cursed Chu Wanning as he followed quietly behind him on the winding path. Unexpectedly, the sounds of chatter and laughter could be heard as they got closer, truly suspicious in such a desolate place.

After going around a tall, continuous wall, the two finally arrived at the place the voices were coming from——

It was a manor draped in vibrant colors, brightly lit, red silks swaying gently. There were well over a hundred banquet tables in the large courtyard, holding all manners of exquisite dishes. The place was bustling with activity, guests drinking and making merry.

Past the open gates of the main hall was a massive, eye-catching Xi[24] character in bright scarlet; it seemed to be a wedding banquet by all appearances.

“Shizun…” Mo Ran whispered. “Look at these people…they don’t have faces!”

Author’s Notes:

This dead dog has a question. In Mo Ran’s past life, who exactly did he smooch?

Ch.13 This Venerable One's Bride

Of course Chu Wanning had already noticed that without Mo Ran's comment.

The guests chattered cheerfully, but there was no way to tell where the voices came from. The people sitting, standing, playing party games or making toasts, every single one of them had a completely blank face, as if made of paper.

"What should we do? Don't tell me we should go in there and drink with them?"

Chu Wanning did not laugh at Mo Ran's bad attempt at a joke, and focused instead on the matter at hand, head lowered as he thought.

Suddenly, scattered footsteps came from a distance away, and two long lines of people appeared out of the fog, moving in procession and heading slowly toward the manor.

Chu Wanning and Mo Ran moved reflexively to hide behind a large rock in the garden. The lines approached, led by a smiling golden boy and jade maiden[25] with clear and colorful facial features; in the dim light of the night, they looked just like the little boy and girl paper dolls that were burned for the dead.

They each held a red candle; the candles were as thick as their arms and decorated with a dragon and a phoenix intertwining, and gave off a strong scent of Butterfly Town's powder as they burned. Mo Ran nearly lost his senses to the smell again, but thankfully the dull ache from the wound on

his hand where Chu Wanning had stabbed him earlier kept him grounded. He jabbed at the injury again for good measure.

Chu Wanning glanced at him.

Mo Ran: "... ahem, this is pretty effective."

He paused, then asked, "Shizun, how come you don't need to poke a hole in yourself to maintain your consciousness?"

Chu Wanning: "The scent has no effect on me."

"Ah? Why not?"

Chu Wanning, with an air of frost, "My cultivation base is strong."

Mo Ran: "……"

Led by the golden boy and jade maiden, the twin lines walked slowly up a flight of steps. Chu Wanning watched them for a while before quietly uttering a "Hm?"

He was rarely ever surprised; Mo Ran followed his gaze curiously, and was shocked as well.

The lines were made up of corpses. They retained their facial features from life, but their eyes were closed and their skin was deathly pale, and they swayed as they walked. Most of them were fairly young, likely below twenty, both male and female, and a silhouette among them looked especially familiar——

The eldest Chen-gongzi, who had been in the coffin earlier, had somehow appeared in this procession, and was walking slowly behind the strange scent of the candles with his eyes closed. All of the others in the lines were paired up, only he was different—there wasn't a person beside him, but a ghost bride made of paper instead.

As if Chen-gongzi wasn't enough, when the procession advanced further and they saw the people at the very end of the lines, color instantly drained from Mo Ran's face.

Shi Mei and Chen-Yao followed behind the lines of corpses with their heads hung low. Their eyes were also closed, faces pale, walking in the exact same manner as the corpses before them, and it was impossible to tell if they were still alive or not.

Mo Ran was about to lose his mind. He leapt up and tried to rush forward immediately, but was stopped by Chu Wanning's grip on his shoulder. "Wait."

"But Shi Mei——!!"

"I know." Chu Wanning watched the lines slowly advance, and whispered, "Don't be hasty. Look over there, there's an enforced barrier in place. If you rush over, it will start wailing, and things will be out of our hands if all the faceless ghosts in the courtyard attack at once."

Chu Wanning was a master in barriers; his barriers were formidable, and his eyes were sharp. Mo Ran looked over, and saw that there was indeed a nearly transparent veil at the entrance to the courtyard.

When the golden boy and jade maiden arrived before the courtyard, they blew softly at the candles they were holding to make the flames burn even higher, then slowly stepped through the barrier and into the yard.

Behind them, one by one, the men and women followed them through the barrier without any interference. The faceless people drinking inside the courtyard turned to watch them enter, and began to cheer and clap.

Chu Wanning spoke, “Go, follow behind them. Close your eyes and don’t breathe when you cross the barrier. Copy what the corpses do no matter what happens, and absolutely do not speak.”

Mo Ran was anxious to save Shi Mei and didn’t need him to say any more. The two slipped into the group of corpses.

Each line had the same number of corpses. Chu Wanning took his place behind Shi Mei, so Mo Ran could only line up behind Chen-Yao. The procession moved at an agonizingly slow pace. Mo Ran kept looking over at Shi Mei, but could only see the side of his pale face and a bit of snow-white neck drooping helplessly.

Finally reaching the barrier at last, they both held their breath and passed through without incident. The courtyard was even bigger from the inside than it looked from the outside. Aside from the three-storey manor decorated with lanterns and colored banners, the sides of the courtyard were also densely packed with at least a hundred small side rooms, each with a large scarlet Xi character on the window and a red lantern hanging by the door.

The faceless guests suddenly all stood up at once to the sound of firecrackers and shawms.

A faceless ceremony official stood before the manor, announcing with vacillating intonation, “The auspicious hour is upon us, the grooms and brides have arrived——”

Mo Ran was astounded, wha? These lines of corpses are grooms and brides?

He hurriedly looked to Chu Wanning for help, but the Beidou Immortal’s brows were tightly furrowed, lost in his own thoughts, and he didn’t even spare Mo Ran a glance.

…Mo Ran thought to himself that his uncle’s efforts were truly misdirected; going down the mountain to gain practical experience with this kind of teacher was doing more harm to his pride than not bringing the teacher along at all would have.

Suddenly a group of giggling children darted into the yard, dressed in bright red but with their hair tied in white strings. They crowded around the two lines of people like so many little fish, each tugging a person toward one of the rooms on either side.

Mo Ran, at a complete loss, mouthed toward Chu Wanning: Shizun, what to do?

Chu Wanning shook his head and pointed toward the corpses in front that followed obediently behind the little boys and girls. His meaning was clear

——go along with it.

Having no other options, Mo Ran could only stumble behind as a little boy with a topknot led him into one of the rooms. As soon as they entered, the boy waved his arm and the door slammed shut.

Mo Ran glared at the child, wary of what the faceless little ghost was going to do to him.

In the last lifetime, Chu Wanning had rescued Shi Mei and broken through the illusory realm all on his own. Mo Ran hadn't needed to do anything at all and the evil had already been vanquished. Afterwards, he'd been too busy dwelling on the sweet aftertaste of Shi Mei's lips to even pay attention to Chu Wanning's explanation.

That's why, with the situation having turned out differently, he had no idea what to expect next, and could only brace himself for whatever might come.

There was a dressing table in the room with a copper mirror, and a set of intricately embroidered black and red wedding clothes hanging neatly on a rack.

The child patted the bench, gesturing for Mo Ran to go sit.

Mo Ran observed that the ghosts here weren't too clever. Rather dumb, actually. As long as he didn't speak, they couldn't even tell the living from the dead. So he sat before the dressing table as directed, and the child toddled over to help him wash and change…

Suddenly, a haitang blossom[26] floated in from the window and gently landed on the water inside the wash basin.

Mo Ran's eyes brightened. That haitang was also known as Yuheng of the Night Sky, used specifically by Chu Wanning for silent communication.

He scooped the flower out of the water, the haitang blossoming andunfurling instantly in his palm to reveal a speck of mellow golden light in its center.

He picked up the speck of light between his fingertips and placed it in his ear. Chu Wanning's voice came from inside.

"Mo Ran, I used Tianwen to confirm that this illusory realm was indeed set by Butterfly Town's ghost mistress of ceremonies. It's managed to cultivate into an actual deity due to receiving the villagers' incense and worship for hundreds of years. Every ghost marriage makes it more powerful, so it delights in presiding over these ceremonies. The corpses in the lines are likely Butterfly Town's ghost couples from these past couple hundreds of years whose weddings it witnessed. It likes the merriment, so it calls the corpses back into the illusory realm every night to do it all over again, growing stronger each time."

Mo Ran thought——what a deviant!!

If other deities got bored, they might at most play matchmaker with young men and women. But this ghost mistress of ceremonies sure was something else; it might have the body of a deity, but it must have forgotten to grow a head, to have this kind of hobby, playing matchmaker

with corpses, and not even just once, but to summon them from their graves every night to do it over and over and over again.

Are corpse orgies that riveting?

This spinster deity, what a damn headcase.

Chu Wanning: “Its real body is not here. Don’t act carelessly, just follow the golden boy and jade maiden later, it will have to appear in person to absorb energy from the ghost weddings.”

Mo Ran wanted to ask, what about Shi Mei? Is he ok?

“There is no need to worry about Shi Mei. He and Mistress Chen are both just temporarily unconscious due to the powder.” Chu Wanning was very thorough, and had anticipated everything Mo Ran might ask. “Take care of yourself. I will handle everything.”

The voice faded away after that.

At the same time, the child also finished fussing over Mo Ran’s outfit. His reflection in the mirror was handsome; the corners of his lips curved naturally upwards, his facial features clear and bold. The collars of the fiery red wedding garment were neatly folded, and his long hair was done up with a white hairband, looking quite the part of the ghost groom.

The child made a gesture of invitation, and the tightly closed door creaked open.

A line of corpses dressed in wedding clothes stood in the corridor, male and female both. It looked like this ghost mistress of ceremonies and its mud head really didn't understand the way of things, it just grabbed any random pair to perform the wedding ceremony, not caring in the least if the couple was male and female, male and male, or female and female.

There was only one line of corpses in this corridor, the other line was across the courtyard on the other side, too far away to see if Chu Wanning and Shi Mei had come out yet.

The line moved slowly forward, and the ceremony official's voice could be heard now and again from the manor as the pairs completed the wedding ceremonies one by one.

Mo Ran looked at Chen-Yao standing in front of him, and felt that something wasn't quite right. He puzzled over it for a long while, the line growing shorter and shorter the whole time, and when only the last few pairs were left, this dumb scoundrel finally figured it out——

Ah! With the lines ordered like this, didn't that mean the woman in front of him was gonna get married with Shi Mei? And wouldn't he himself get matched with that wretch Chu Wanning? That wasn't acceptable!

This ex-emperor of the human world immediately grew upset. Lips pulling downwards, he yanked Chen-Yao back unceremoniously and jumped the line to stand in front of her.

The child next to him was flabbergasted, but Mo Ran immediately lowered his head and made like a hanged ghost, drooping along with the other

corpses. The golden boy and jade maiden's cultivation wasn't high; they were baffled for a bit but couldn't even figure out where the problem had happened, and so they ended up doing absolutely nothing about it, like a pair of dimwits.

Mo Ran was quite pleased with himself, and followed the line cheerfully as he waited to meet up with Shi Mei.

Concurrently.

Chu Wanning looked at Shi Mei standing in front of him. There was no way to tell what dangers might lie ahead.

He'd always had a sharp tongue but a soft heart; regardless of how much he might be resented for his harshness, in actuality, as long as he was here, he was not going to allow his disciples to be put in danger.

Thus, he also reached out and pulled the befuddled Shi Mei behind himself, switching their places.

It was his turn.

At the end of the corridor, an attendant stood holding a black and red tray, giggling as Chu Wanning approached, the tinkling of a young woman's voice coming from that face devoid of features.

"Congratulations my lady, felicitations my lady, first meeting yet as old friends, serenity until old age."

Chu Wanning's face darkened instantly.

L-lady…?? Do you not have eyes?

Taking another look at the ghost attendant's blank face, he restrained himself.

It, in fact, did not fucking have eyes.

The ghost attendant continued giggling as it lifted the red veil in the tray and covered Chu Wanning's face. Then its ice-cold hand reached over and gripped him lightly with a delicate laugh. "My lady, this way please."

Author's Notes:

Next chapter we enter the bridal chamber. If there is no bridal chamber I will livestream me eating turd. If you dare!

Let's answer yesterday's question 【Who did Mo Ran kiss in his past life?】

First, nothing changed on Chu Wanning's side. The order of actions is the same as the previous life. This means since he first saved Mo Ran in this life, and in the past life it was also in this sequence.

In Mo Ran's memory, his mentality was 【Defeating monsters depends on Shizun, flirting depends on yourself】. Chu Wanning had taken care of everything, and then came to look for him after saving Shi Mei.

If the two men's paths took a divergence here, then the following possibility is very high:

At that time, Chu Wanning actually searched for Mo Ran first. However, for some reason, he left under circumstances that Mo Ran was not aware of, and went to save Shi Mei instead.

Combined with the sequence of actions done by Chu Wanning in this life, then… it can only mean that the Mo Ran at that time, just like this time,

mistook Chu Wanning as Shi Mei. After being kissed, Chu Wanning immediately broke free. Since he was easily embarrassed, he couldn't calm down right away. He decided to not show himself just yet, as Mo Ran was out of danger anyway, he went to save Shi Mei instead. After this, he brought Shi Mei and met up with Mo Ran with feigned calmness. Since Mo Ran had all his attention on Shi Mei, he didn't notice the subtle unusual behaviour from Chu Wanning.

This also explains why after the illusory realm disappeared, Shi Mei acted like nothing had happened. Because to him, nothing really had happened…

So that year, the one who broke free from you was actually Shizun, Mo Ran you stupid top! Pitiful Shizun's first kiss in both lifetimes was stolen by you, while you thought the one you kissed was your Shi-Ge. Bye.jpg. Crying.

Ch.14 This Venerable One Gets Married

Chu Wanning could still see with the thin red veil hanging before his eyes, but the view was somewhat hazy. Face thus obscured, his expression was composed as he let the ghost attendant lead him to the reception pavilion.

When he looked up at the person standing there through the haze of red though, the temperature around Chu Wanning instantly dropped by several degrees.

Mo Ran was also stunned.

No but…shouldn't it have been Shi Mei?

A veil covered the face of the "bride", standing before him and attired in splendid red. He couldn't see the face behind the veil too clearly, but no matter how he looked at it, it was definitely Chu Wanning's handsome but icy face, currently glaring at him with an air of displeasure and full killing intent.

Mo Ran: "……"

He was stupefied at first, and then his expression began to grow increasingly complicated. All kinds of emotions flashed across his face before finally settling into a strange kind of silence as he stood face to face with Chu Wanning, both of them staring uneasily at each other.

It was then that the golden boy and jade maiden behind them giggled and clapped, and then started to sing.

"Water of the White Emperor,[27] waves sparkling and luminous;

Spirit amant birds greet, bearing blossoms between their beaks.

Within this coffin, two shall join;

Within this sanctuary, two shall lie.

Intent in life, revealed in death.

Henceforth two shall pass beneath the heavens;

Henceforth in death lone souls shall never part.”

But, beneath the ghastly verse was an undercurrent of sadness and regret.

If only he could speak, Mo Ran just wanted to say one thing.

——”Ugh.”

But he couldn’t speak.

There was a pair of paper dolls before the altar, one male, one female. They had no faces, but were lavishly and luxuriously dressed, probably to represent the parents of the ghost couples.

The ceremony official began to chant in a sonorous bellow, “The amorous new bride shies from words, glances tender from beneath lowered lashes, red silk shrouds a delicate smile, may the husband please lift the veil.”

“……” Mo Ran had originally been completely unwilling, but hearing these words, he nearly lost his mind trying to hold back his laughter.

Hahahaha, the amorous new bride shies from words, ahahahaha!

Chu Wanning’s face was ashen as he tried to suppress his anger, closing his eyes as if that could shut off his hearing too.

The ghost attendant giggled and handed Mo Ran a folding fan; the words for “fan” and “virtuous” were pronounced the same,[28] to indicate that this marriage was predestined by fate.

“Groom, please lift the veil.”

Mo Ran stifled his laughter and went along with it, using the fan to lift the silken veil hanging before Chu Wanning’s eyes. Even his eyelashes quivered with suppressed laughter as he peeked at the stirring expression on Chu Wanning’s face.

Seeming to have sensed his mocking gaze, Chu Wanning tried to endure it for a while, but ultimately failed. Fire and lightning danced in his eyes as they snapped open with a murderous aura.

But paired with the red veil clinging to his hair and the scarlet garment adorning his body, although he looked no less fierce, the slight hint of red at the corners of his eyes from the anger and grievance unexpectedly painted quite a uniquely enticing picture.

Looking at eyes like these, Mo Ran startled involuntarily, smile freezing on his face. The Shizun before him suddenly looked just like he had at a certain moment in the past life. The two overlapped in his vision, and he suddenly couldn’t tell when he was.

It was only for an instant, but it was enough to drench Mo Ran in cold sweat.

He had once committed three ruthless acts to Chu Wanning:

First: Murder. He had used the killing technique on Chu Wanning.

Second: Humiliation. He had forced Chu Wanning to sate his carnal desires.

Third……

The third had been the most gratifying thing he'd done in his previous life, but it had also been his greatest regret in the end.

Of course the emperor of the human world would never admit to regretting any of his actions, but he never did manage to escape the torment deep in his heart.

Damn. Why did he remember that insane past? Why did he remember the Chu Wanning from those days?

Mo Ran shook his head and bit his lips, arduously trying to erase the face of the Chu Wanning in his memories to look over the person before him now with fresh eyes.

Chu Wanning was still glaring at him with an "I'm going to kill you" kind of gaze. Mo Ran didn't want to provoke this difficult person further, so he could only smile apologetically with a helpless expression.

The ceremony official spoke, "Groom and bride, perform the woguan rite."

The woguan rite dictated that the newlyweds must first clean themselves individually, and then wash the other's hands afterwards.

The ghost attendant brought out a porcelain pot filled with clear water, lifting it in invitation for the two to wash their hands. The poured water flowed into a basin underneath.

Chu Wanning's face was full of loathing, having to wash himself and then the other. Mo Ran was absentminded, and silently washed Chu Wanning's hands without making a fuss, but Chu Wanning was ill-tempered and

unceremoniously poured the entire pot on Mo Ran, drenching half his sleeve.

"……"

Mo Ran stared at his drenched sleeve for a while. Who knew where his mind had wandered to, but he was so preoccupied that his face hardly even showed a reaction, only a faint light that drifted across the depths of his ink black eyes.

His heart beat wildly as he thought.

Chu Wanning hadn't changed, he'd never changed.

His every action, every thought, last life and this, all of it was exactly the same, not the slightest bit different…

He raised his head slowly, and for an instant, it felt as if he was back at Sisheng Peak, standing before Wushan Palace as Chu Wanning walked toward him on a long stretch of stairs. In the next moment, he would kneel before Mo Ran; that proud head would touch the ground, that upright spine would bend, and Chu Wanning would prostrate before Mo Ran's feet for a long time.

"Woguan rite complete."

The ghost attendant's abrupt chant roused Mo Ran from his memories.

Suddenly coming to, his eyes met with Chu Wanning's, whose pitch black pupils flashed with a cold light like the reflection of a sword, looking quite terrifying.

Mo Ran: "……"

…Uh, the past life was the past life, as for something like making Chu Wanning kneel before him, he would have to make do with just thinking about it in this life, the cost of making it happen was truly too great…

After the woguan rite was the tonglao[29] rite, and then the hejin[30] rite.

The ghost attendant chanted slowly, “Husband and wife share a cup of wine, henceforth together until the end of the world.”

Wine cups were exchanged in the hejin rite, and after that was the ritual bowing to heaven and earth.

Chu Wanning’s phoenix eyes narrowed dangerously; he looked like he really was about to lose it, he was so angry. When this was all over, Mo Ran wouldn’t be surprised if he chopped the ghost mistress of ceremonies into mud at the very least.

But he really couldn’t look too closely at Chu Wanning when he was like this.

Even just one extra glance and he risked falling back into those chaotic, filthy memories, unable to free himself.

“First bow——to heaven and earth——”

Mo Ran thought that even if they were playing along, with Chu Wanning’s proud temperament, there was no way he would kneel. But unexpectedly, in order to finish what he started, Chu Wanning closed his eyes, brows twitching, and actually knelt down. Together, the two touched their brows to the ground.

“Second bow——to parents——”

Fine then, kneeling for the faceless paper dolls. Could those even be called one's parents?

"Third bow——husband and wife to each other——"

Chu Wanning's thick eyelashes were lowered as he turned and knelt directly and swiftly without so much as sparing Mo Ran a single glance, but his teeth were tightly clenched.

Who would've known that the two had such poor coordination and had knelt a bit too close. As they bowed, their heads knocked together with a thud.

Chu Wanning sucked in a breath from the pain, holding his forehead and raising teary eyes to glare vengefully at Mo Weiyu, who was also rubbing his forehead.

"……" Mo Ran could only mouth soundlessly, "Sorry."

Chu Wanning didn't speak, face gloomy, and rolled his eyes.

After that was the jiefa rite, with the ceremony official chanting, "Cording hair to become husband and wife, conjugal love never to be doubted." The ghost attendant offered a pair of golden scissors, and Mo Ran couldn't help but flinch, worried that Chu Wanning might just stab him to death in his displeasure. The thought indeed seemed to have passed through Chu Wanning's mind, but in the end they only cut a lock of hair from each other and placed them into a brocade pouch presented by the golden boy and jade maiden, to be kept by the "bride" Chu Wanning.

Mo Ran really wanted to ask, I know you're pissed, but you wouldn't use my hair to curse me or make a voodoo doll or something, right?

The ceremony official chanted, “Ceremony——complete——”

They both sighed in relief and stood up. But unexpectedly, the ceremony official continued,

“The auspicious hour has arrived, enter the bridal chamber——”[31]

What. The. Hell!!!

Mo Ran froze instantly.

And nearly spat out a mouthful of blood!

What kinda joke was this, if he dared to consummate with Chu Wanning, this wedding really would become a fucking ghost wedding! Sure, the saying went that if one should die beneath a peony flower,[32] one would still be charming as a ghost, but in this lifetime he wanted…no wait, in both lifetimes he wanted the virtuous Shi Mei, not this cold-blooded demon Chu Wanning who would tie up anyone who coveted him and toss them into a mud pond!!

Was it too late to flee the marriage?

Author’s Notes:

Oh, about the wedding verses, originally I planned to search for ones from traditional customs, but I couldn’t find anything in depth. Also ghost weddings are not performed the same ways as normal weddings, therefore the lyrics must be different as well. Critics please don’t nitpick too much at it.

Also a few details have been deliberately added to the lyrics. Once the entire story is updated, those of you who are interested can come back

here and revisit. You will realize these wedding verses are not completely gibberish, there is deeper meaning.

Runs away. Look, bridal chamber time, I don’t have to livestream eating turd!

Ch.15 This Venerable One's First Time Seeing THIS Kinda Unveiling of the Wedding Night

Of course something like fleeing the wedding was just wishful thinking. Shi Mei was still here, so he couldn't just leave no matter what.

This damned ghost mistress of ceremonies though, wasn't it a little too fucking diligent?

Mo Ran was pale-faced from both anger and the effort it took to restrain himself. He grumbled to himself, isn't it enough to just oversee the wedding rites, how is the wedding night any of your fucking business? Besides! They were all corpses here! Rigor mortis! How the fuck would the wedding night even work !!!

As for what Chu Wanning's face looked like right now, Mo Ran was too scared to even look, too busy playing dumb with his eyes glued to the carpet. He really wanted to grab that ghost mistress of ceremonies, wherever it might be hiding, and roar in its face——FUCK! YOU! You sonuvabitch! You show me how it's done then!!

The golden boy and jade maiden crowded around them, shoving them toward the back of the hall.

A coffin lay there, painted a bright scarlet. It was humongous, twice the size of normal coffins, and looked exactly like the one they'd dug up before.

Chu Wanning murmured something under his breath in understanding.

Mo Ran also figured it out soon after, and let out a huge sigh of relief.

Of course dead people couldn't have an actual wedding night; this so-called wedding night probably just meant being sealed into the same coffin for joint interment, to be "together in death".

The golden boy and jade maiden confirmed their suspicions. "The bride, please enter the bridal chamber first."

Chu Wanning straightened out his wide sleeves and lay inside with a frosty expression.

"Next, the groom, please enter the bridal chamber."

Mo Ran grabbed the edge of the coffin and paused, blinking. Chu Wanning had already occupied more than half the space inside. The coffin might be spacious, but it was still a bit of a squeeze for two whole men. He climbed inside, and inevitably lay down on top of Chu Wanning's spread-out clothing, drawing an irate glare from the other man.

The golden boy and jade maiden circled the coffin and began to sing again, the same eerie yet sorrowful elegy as before.

"Water of the White Emperor, waves sparkling and luminous;

Spirit amant birds greet, bearing blossoms between their beaks.

Within this coffin, two shall join;

Within this sanctuary, two shall lie.

Intent in life, revealed in death.

Henceforth two shall pass beneath the heavens;

Henceforth in death lone souls shall never part.”

Song finished, the children stood one to the left and one to the right, and slowly pushed the lid of the coffin into place. A dull rumble, and they were surrounded by complete darkness.

Chu Wanning and Mo Ran were sealed inside the coffin.

The coffin was thick enough that they could speak quietly without being heard from the outside. Chu Wanning raised his hand and set a soundproofing barrier to ensure that they definitely wouldn’t be heard. Having done all that, the first thing he said was——

“Move over, you’re on my arm.”

Mo Ran: “……”

Aren’t there matters more pressing than “you’re on my arm” that should be discussed right now?

Despite the internal complaint, Mo Ran still scooted over.

“Move over more, there’s no room for my legs.”

More scooting.

“Move more! You’re right next to my face!”

Mo Ran whined, aggrieved, “Shizun, I’m up against the side already, what else do you want?”

Chu Wanning finally humph’d and went silent.

Mo Ran was crammed into the corner for a while before the coffin suddenly shook, lifted by people on the outside who started slowly moving in some unknown direction, the coffin rocking with their every step. Mo Ran strained to listen to the sounds from the outside as he seethed, thinking about how Shi Mei was probably trapped in a coffin with Chen-Yao right now, but there was nothing he could do about it.

Chu Wanning's barrier was powerful, preventing sounds from the inside from getting out while allowing sounds from the outside to pass through. The sounds of firecrackers and shawms could be heard through the wall of the coffin. Mo Ran asked, "This gaggle of ghosts and demons sure are bored, just where are they taking these coffins?"

It was too dark inside the coffin to see the other person's face, so he could only hear Chu Wanning's voice. "It's the same as Butterfly Town's tradition, the destination should be the temple outside town."

Mo Ran nodded and concentrated on listening for a while. "…Shizun, there seem to be more and more footsteps outside."

"Ghosts travel at night, all of the coffins will be carried over together. If my guess is right, the ghost mistress of ceremonies will appear in its true form at the temple to draw 'merits' from the newly wed couples."

Mo Ran asked, "Won't people notice hundreds of coffins being carried through town?"

"They will not," Chu Wanning answered. "The coffins are carried by ghost golden boys and jade maidens. Ordinary people cannot see objects carried by ghosts."

Mo Ran wondered, "How are you so sure about that?"

Chu Wanning said, “I used Tianwen to interrogate a ghost golden boy in the dressing room earlier.”

Mo Ran: “……”

They were silent for a while before he questioned, “What was the deal with that red coffin on the mountain then, the one with Chen-gongzi in it? And why do people keep dying in the Chen family?”

Chu Wanning: “Not sure.”

Mo Ran was slightly surprised. “The golden boy didn’t tell you?”

Chu Wanning: “The ghost golden boy said it also did not know.”

Mo Ran: “……”

It was quiet again for a bit, then Chu Wanning spoke, “But I think that family is hiding something from us.”

“Why do you say that?”

“Remember, although the thing enshrined in that temple exudes evil energy, it is still a being that has cultivated into a deity and depends on the people’s worship to grow stronger.”

Mo Ran had never paid attention to Chu Wanning’s lessons in his previous life, and so had ended up not having a lot of the basic general knowledge needed to handle certain matters later on. He thought that perhaps he should actually be modest and seek some instruction in this reborn life, and so asked, “What’s so significant about deities?”

“…What were you doing during last month’s lesson on the differences between deities, ghosts, gods, and demons?”

Mo Ran thought to himself, this venerable one was reborn, of course this venerable one wouldn’t remember what he was doing during some lesson from more than ten years ago! But he’d probably been either picking at his feet under the table, reading 《Bedroom Adventures of Nine Dragons and a Phoenix》, ogling Shi Mei while lost in thought, or staring at Chu Wanning’s neck while secretly gesturing the various ways of cutting that person’s head off.

Chu Wanning reprimanded him with, “Copy 《Record of Knowledge from the Six Kingdoms》 ten times as punishment when we return.”

“…Oh.”

All those times he'd skipped class had come back to bite him in the ass.

“Deities differ from gods. Gods can act as they please, but deities cannot meddle in mortal affairs without being beseeched to do so.”

Mo Ran felt a shiver run down his spine. “Which means that it killed the members of the Chen family at the behest of a person?”

Chu Wanning’s voice sounded ominous in the darkness.

“The beseecher may not necessarily be a living person.”

Mo Ran opened his mouth to ask more questions, but before he could, the coffin shook abruptly and tilted to the left, perhaps because the golden boy and jade maiden carrying the coffin came upon a hill or some such.

With the sudden jolt, the slippery inside, and the complete lack of anything to grab onto, Mo Ran tumbled over and smacked firmly into Shizun's chest.

"Nn…"

Mo Ran put a hand over his aching nose and lifted his head, disoriented, but a faint wisp of the fragrance of haitang flowers floated to his nose. The scent was as light as the fog at dawn, with a hint of a nighttime chill. Such scents ordinarily lulled people into a haze, but this one was clean and refreshing, clearing the head instead.

Mo Ran froze, then immediately became hard.

He couldn't be any more familiar with this fragrance. It was Chu Wanning's scent. But to Mo Ran, this scent had always been intertwined with desire.

All of a sudden, a certain deep-seated depravity, like a lightning-stricken forest fire, shot directly into his head.

Author's Notes:

Leader of the old age single men's foundation, #1 Boss ghost mistress of ceremonies, soon will be online.

Mistress of ceremonies has a special bridal chambers method. Lock this pair of dogs in a coffin. Boom! The only way to leave is to confess to each other, otherwise you can't come out. Hmmph!

Ch.16 This Venerable One Is Stunned

>>corpse orgy this chapter and next

Mo Ran really couldn't be blamed for being so beastlike; trapped in a tight space with someone you'd gone to bed with countless times regardless of whether it was heartfelt or feigned, out of revenge or fondness, smelling their familiar scent, anyone else's thoughts would waver too, in a situation like this.

Besides, Mo Ran was a reprobate to start with.

Shi Mei was his moonlight, he didn't have the heart to touch him, couldn't risk ruining him.

But he had no qualms about wrecking Chu Wanning. Toward Chu Wanning, he could vent all of his immoralities, bestial desires, and bone-deep savagery without restraint.

Grind this person into dust, pin him down, tear him apart, run him through, subject him to everything that he would never even think of doing to Shi Mei.

In the past life, every time he'd seen Chu Wanning with his head thrown back, neck bared and the jut at his throat moving, he'd felt like he might lose himself and turn into a bloodthirsty beast, consumed by the desire to rip open his throat, guzzle his blood, crush his bones.

He didn't care for Chu Wanning, and so he held nothing back.

Even his body developed a habit from all the profaning; just the smell of Chu Wanning's scent would light a fire in his abdomen and make his heart

itch, make him want to tie this person to the bed and fuck him.

Mo Ran's frenzied heartbeats could be heard in the silence of the coffin.

He knew that Chu Wanning's face was somewhere close, because he could feel his breaths. If he were to lunge forward with a bite now, Chu Wanning wouldn't be able to get away, but…

Nevermind.

Mo Ran shuffled backwards away from Chu Wanning, not without much difficulty because the coffin really was cramped.

"Sorry about that, Shizun." Mo Ran laughed awkwardly. "Didn't expect the coffin to sha——ke!"

As he was speaking, the coffin tilted again. Mo Ran rolled into Chu Wanning's arms once again.

Chu Wanning: "……"

Mo Ran scuffled backwards again, and the coffin lurched again. This repeated over and over.

"Did I get cursed or what." Mo Ran scurried back once more.

The golden boy and jade girl were probably going up a slope. It was too slippery inside the coffin, and Mo Ran rolled helplessly back into Chu Wanning again before long.

"Shizun…" Mo Ran bit his lip, putting on a pitiful air.

This guy was born with endearing looks, he could hide his wolf tail and pull a convincing puppy dog act if he put his mind to it.

Chu Wanning said nothing.

Mo Ran really did not want to get rolled around any more, so he simply gave up on fighting it altogether. “I’m really not doing it on purpose.”

Chu Wanning: “……”

Mo Ran continued in a small voice, “The wounds on my back hurt from hitting the wall…”

In the darkness, Chu Wanning seemed to sigh softly. The gongs and drums outside were too loud, and Mo Ran couldn’t be sure if he heard right.

But in the next moment, the smell of haitang flowers grew stronger as Chu Wanning placed his hand behind Mo Ran’s back to block off the gap so that Mo Ran wouldn’t bump into it again.

It wasn’t quite a hug—Chu Wanning held his arm at a distance and made sure not to make any contact with Mo Ran’s body, other than his clothes draping on Mo Ran—but this position was still a little intimate.

“Be careful, don’t hit it again.” His voice was deep, like porcelain submerged in a creek, steady and dignified. It would have been a striking voice to listen to, if one listened without a shroud of hatred.

“…Mn.”

No one spoke after that.

Mo Ran was still a growing teenager at this moment, not as tall as he would be as an adult. Right now, in Chu Wanning's arms, his forehead only reached Chu Wanning's chin.

This kind of feeling was very familiar, yet also very unfamiliar.

The familiar part was the person lying beside him.

The unfamiliar part was the position they were in.

In the previous lifetime, not so long ago, it had always been him lying in Sisheng Peak's Wushan Palace, a lonesome Taxian-jun with no one left to turn to, in a darkness so endless that he could hardly breathe, clutching Chu Wanning tightly in his arms.

He was already taller than Chu Wanning then, and stronger than his Shizun. His arms were like clamps, like shackles, latching onto the remaining bit of warmth in his arms, as if holding on to the very last ember of fire in this world.

He lowered his head to kiss Chu Wanning's inky black hair, then leaned in close, insatiable, and burrowed his face into the crook of Chu Wanning's neck, ruthlessly biting, gnawing.

"I hate you, Chu Wanning. I really hate you so much."

His voice was a little hoarse.

"But you're all I have left."

Mo Ran was none too gently jolted out of his memories by a series of crashes and bumps. The sound of gongs and drums stopped abruptly, and a deathly silence settled over everything.

“Shizun…”

Chu Wanning reached out and pressed a finger to his lips, cautioning in a low voice, “Don’t talk. We’re here.”

Sure enough, there were no more footsteps outside, only silence.

Chu Wanning’s fingertip lit up with a faint golden light. A quick slash on the coffin wall, and a narrow gap was cut open, just enough for them to peek outside.

They had indeed been brought to the outskirts of Butterfly Town. The front of the temple was already densely cluttered with coffins, and the heavy scent of Hundred Butterfly Fragrance in the air grew heavier still, drifting through the opening into the coffin.

Mo Ran suddenly realized that something was off. “Shizun, does it seem like this scent, and the one in the illusory realm too, aren’t quite the same as the scent in Chen-gongzi’s coffin?”

“…How so?”

Mo Ran had a keen sense of smell. “At the northern mountain before, when the coffin first split open, the scent that drifted out then was pleasant smelling and didn’t cause me any discomfort, that one was almost certainly the Hundred Butterfly Fragrance. But ever since we entered the illusory realm, I kept feeling like the smell, although similar, was somewhat different, but couldn’t quite put my finger on it, but now… I think I know what it is.”

Chu Wanning turned to look at him. “You dislike this smell?”

Mo Ran was still pressed against the opening, peering outside. “Mn. I’ve hated the smell of incense ever since I was little. The scent here and in the illusory realm aren’t Hundred Butterfly Fragrance at all, but the scent of the special incense that the people of Butterfly Town burn for the ghost master of ceremonies. Look over there——”

Chu Wanning followed his gaze, and saw three arm-thick incense sticks in the incense burner in front of the temple, their scent diffusing leisurely into the airflow.

The people of Butterfly Town made all kinds of scented products using flowers, and even their incense was locally produced. Since everything was made from the flowers grown around town, the resulting scents were quite similar to people who were unfamiliar with the art.

Chu Wanning pondered. “Could it be that the scent in Chen-gongzi’s coffin actually has nothing to do with the one in the illusion?”

Before he could finish mulling over this new detail, his thoughts were interrupted by a piercing red light from within the temple. They both looked in that direction to see the light shining resplendent, illuminating the whole area. A row of red lotus lamps, used for making wishes, sat on a stand by the side of the temple; one by one, they all lit up.

The ghost children escorting the coffins all knelt at once, chanting, “Mistress of Ceremonies descending, pray guide these lonely souls to escape suffering and find mates, joined in burial, partnered in afterlife.”

The statue of the ghost mistress of ceremonies inside the temple emitted a holy golden light amidst the thundering chant, then its eyelids lowered, the corners of its lips moved slowly, and it leapt gracefully from the altar.

Graceful movement, poised bearing.

Unfortunately the body, made of clay, was much too heavy, and the young maiden landed with a thud, smashing a huge crater into the ground.

Mo Ran: “Pfft.”

Chu Wanning: “……”

The ghost mistress seemed to be aware of it as well. It stared at the crater for quite a while before stepping out with slow, deliberate steps, rearranging its clothing.

Its appearance was that of a maiden draped in rich reds, face painted with makeup and a strand of cypress in its hair, looking quite festive. In the darkness of night, it turned its neck one way then the other, and came to a stop in front of the hundred coffins. The breeze was suffused with the stench of corpse rot; its mood seemed to improve, and it slowly spread out its arms, letting out a “ge, ge” sound of laughter.

“All who believe in me and worship me shall be granted a partner in marriage, fulfilling that which they were denied in life.” The delicate voice drifted in the night, and the ghosts and monsters all began to prostrate in gratitude.

“Mistress of Ceremonies bless——”

“Mistress of Ceremonies pray bestow the marriage——”

Such pleas came wave after wave; the ghost mistress seemed delighted as it weaved slowly between the rows of coffins, dragging its long, scarlet-

painted nails along them, the shrill sound ear-piercing.

Mo Ran wondered, “Shizun, I remember you mentioning before that monsters, deities, ghosts, gods, demons, and humans each occupied their own realms. Why’s this deity hanging out with the ghosts down here instead of living it up in the Ninth Heaven upstairs?”

“Because it is in charge of ghost marriages, and is sustained by the worship of ghosts,” Chu Wanning responded. “The ghosts provide it with immense merits, else it would not have cultivated into a deity in a mere few hundred years. With such an advantageous arrangement, it is naturally glad to keep the company of these Underworld ‘friends’.”

The ghost mistress circled around the cluster of coffins and returned to the front, and the delicate voice rang out once again. “Each coffin to be opened shall be bestowed a marriage. Starting from the left.”

Following its command, the first coffin on the left side slowly opened, a pair of golden boy and jade girl bowing respectfully by its side. The corpses inside climbed out unsteadily, their faces looking even more deathly pale against the vibrant red of their wedding garments.

The couple slowly made their way before the ghost mistress and knelt.

The ghost mistress put its hand between them and spoke. “As the Mistress of Ceremonies, I hereby confer thee with a posthumous marriage. Henceforth you are husband and wife, male and female joyous in the joining.”

Mo Ran rolled his eyes and muttered, “Don’t wax poetic if you don’t know how to. These wedding vows sound obscene.”

Chu Wanning commented coldly, “You have quite the indecent imagination.”

Mo Ran shut up.

But, before long, the ghost mistress promptly demonstrated that, in fact, the indecent one here was not Mo Ran, but this deity in charge of ghost marriages.

It was as if the pair of newlywed corpses had consumed aphrodisiacs; they were clearly already dead, yet they tore at each other’s clothing, kissing and hugging in a frenzied tangle right then and there, shamelessly out in the open in front of everyone.

Chu Wanning: “……”

Mo Ran: “……”

“As the Mistress of Ceremonies, I hereby grant thee the joys of the natural order. Yin and Yang may mate, life or death no matter!”

The ghost mistress’s shrieking grew increasingly shrill and haughty.

The corpses’ movements also grew increasingly exaggerated. The male corpse divested himself of clothing and was ridiculously vigorous, no different from a live person.

Mo Ran was totally stunned. “…You can’t just…fucking…do that???”

Ch.17 This Venerable One's Shizun Got Injured, This Venerable One Really …

What was this ghost mistress even doing being a mistress of ceremonies! Change your career and sell aphrodisiacs instead! Other people's aphrodisiacs can maybe at best make a wilted live person show off some male prowess, but these gods and deities are truly something else, a slight wave of the hand and even a dead person can get it up, truly miraculous!

Just as he was getting really into the show, Chu Wanning suddenly reached out and covered Mo Ran's ears.

Mo Ran: "Eh?"

Chu Wanning's expression was frozen over. "Don't look at such obscenity."

"But why are you covering my ears instead of my eyes?"

Chu Wanning said, expressionlessly, "Don't look or listen, you can close your eyes yourself."

Mo Ran: "Pfft. Shizun, you're really…" Take a look at your own blushing face, even your ears are red, the one who should be closing their eyes here is clearly you.

Mo Ran couldn't help his amusement. Chu Wanning was a person made of ice and snow, who'd never even seen a single erotic painting; to have to witness a coupling at such close quarters now, he just might choke to death.

The dead couple almost seemed to come alive as they screwed. Even their stiff throats that shouldn't have been able to produce any noise at all

somehow started making lifelike moaning and panting sounds.

Chu Wanning turned away from the sight, too disgusted to continue looking.

Mo Ran's amusement only grew. With a mischievous grin and full teasing intention, he reached out to turn Chu Wanning's face back.

Chu Wanning flinched back immediately as if stung. "What are you doing?"

"Nothing whatsoever." Mo Ran's voice was honey-sweet with a hint of mockery as he looked at him.

How old are you already, still red-faced at this stuff…

Oh, wait, it's more like green and red-faced at the same time. Pretty hilarious actually.

"Shizun, didn't you teach us to always make sure of the opponent's capabilities before engaging? You have to at least look and see the ghost mistress's capabilities."

"What's there to see. I'm not looking."

Mo Ran sighed. "How is your face this thin."

Chu Wanning shot back, "Filthy debauchery, harmful to the eyes!"

"Guess I'll have to look then." Mo Ran said as he lay there cheekily, peering outside and providing a running commentary of "ah", "wow", "awesome", "aiyo", and so on. Chu Wanning was so furious he was about to explode, and bellowed in a low voice, "Look if you want, don't talk!"

Mo Ran played innocent. "I thought you'd want to know."

Chu Wanning finally couldn't take it anymore. Gripping Mo Ran by the neck, he hissed through gritted teeth, "If you make one more sound, I will throw you out there to feed the zombies!"

Mo Ran'd had his fun; with Chu Wanning, you really couldn't push him too far unless you wanted the full service from Tianwen, and so Mo Ran showed some restraint and obediently lay there watching without a sound.

As the ghost couple's pleasure peaked, the male corpse let out a low roar and spasmed on top of the female corpse. A wisp of green smoke suddenly rose from their bodies, and the ghost mistress opened its mouth, greedily sucking it in until every last tendril of smoke was consumed. It wiped the corner of its mouth with satisfaction, eyes shining.

That would be the "merit" from the ghost marriage couples that increased its cultivation.

"Haha, hahaha——" Having had a taste, the ghost mistress was beaming all the more. When it spoke again, its faint drifting voice had become much clearer; it shouted, bellowed, sharp voice sounding as if it could rip through the endless night. "Get up! Get up! All you single men and unwed women! I grant you the blessings of intimacy! You shall provide me worship in return! Up! Up! All of you, up!"

Mo Ran's heart thumped: Shit.....

What was it planning to do?!

The simultaneous shaking of the hundreds of coffins around them confirmed Mo Ran's worst fears. The ghost mistress was going to call on the couples in all of the coffins to screw so that it could consume all the merits at once!

This was no joking matter. Mo Ran pulled at Chu Wanning. “Shizun!!!”

“What is it this time!”

“Hurry! We have to get out there! Shi Mei is trapped with that Chen woman!” Mo Ran was beside himself with panic. “We have to hurry and save him!”

Chu Wanning glanced outside. Who would’ve thought the ghost mistress would have such an appetite, skipping individual pairings to eat it all at once!

The coffins around them shook more and more violently as the ghost marriage couples inside were compelled to do the deed. Chu Wanning gagged at the thought, color draining from his face even more. Just then, the beaming ghost mistress seemed to feel something; its head twisted abruptly, a pair of pure black, pupil-less eyes passing over all the rest to stare directly at Mo Ran and Chu Wanning’s coffin.

It might not be smart, but it could feel the absence of the familiar venereal energy from that coffin.

There was no worship.

There was no…

They were alive!!!

Its back arched abruptly and it charged, shrieking, with its clothing billowing behind it, and a pair of blood-red and razor-sharp claws pierced directly through the wood and into the coffin.

The attack was too sudden, Mo Ran had no time to dodge or defend, and besides, there was hardly any room for movement inside the coffin to start with. Just as five new holes were about to be added to his head from the boney claws, he was suddenly shifted lower——Chu Wanning had swiftly gathered him into his arms, covering him with his own body. The ghost mistress's five claws sunk viciously into Chu Wanning's shoulder!

Deep to the bone!

"……"

Chu Wanning let out a muted groan, but endured it without crying out. His uninjured hand glowed with a silencing spell as he pressed a finger to Mo Ran's lips, blocking off the sound that he was about to make.

The ghost mistress's claws dug into Chu Wanning's flesh, scratching and tearing.

It had clay for a head, and could only tell the living from the dead by sound. The situation being like this, Chu Wanning really didn't make a single noise as blood poured from his shoulder. Mo Ran couldn't see his injury from where he was pressed against his chest, but he could clearly feel Chu Wanning trembling…

Alive…or dead? There was no way a living person would still not make a sound at this. The ghost mistress couldn't make sense of things, and her claws in Chu Wanning's shoulder brutally continued digging, tearing.

Chu Wanning trembled from the pain, shuddering, robes drenched in cold sweat.

But still he did not falter, biting his lip as he protected the disciple in his arms, as if he had really become a corpse, blocking the opening in the coffin like forged metal.

The ghost mistress finally seemed satisfied that the people inside couldn't possibly be alive. It abruptly pulled out its claws, and blood splattered, accompanied by the sticky sound of fingers sliding against flesh and bone, making one's hair stand on end.

All the strength drained out of Chu Wanning's tense body at once. He let go of Mo Ran, panting quietly.

The smell of blood inside the coffin was suffocating.

Mo Ran lifted his head. By the dim light streaming through the holes, he could see Chu Wanning's lowered eyelashes, and beneath them, unshed tears in those silent, stubborn eyes.

Those phoenix eyes were blurred with pain, but even more of it was fierce and headstrong, layered in wetness…

Mo Ran wanted to talk, but Chu Wanning shook his head and maintained the silencing spell on his lips. A while passed before he let out a slow breath and wrote on the back of Mo Ran's hand with a trembling fingertip:

The barrier has been breached, do not speak.

Outside, the ghost mistress tilted its head, unable to understand why the people inside were definitely not alive yet refuse to obey its commands, not sensing any worship from them.

Chu Wanning glimpsed at it through the crack, a golden light enveloping his uninjured hand as a willow vine appeared, fire light coursing through it.

He narrowed his eyes, Tianwen in hand.

And in the next moment burst out from the coffin!!!

The coffin split apart and Chu Wanning flew up like lightning, Tianwen lashing out with perfect accuracy to wrap around the ghost mistress's neck as it let out an ear-piercing screech——

"Who are you! How dare you!"

Chu Wanning's answer was one word: "Scram!"

Crimson wedding robes bellowed like waves of clouds. He had endured everything to make this one hit count, and Tianwen wrung with savage brutality, directly snapping the ghost mistress's neck!

A dense red mist mixed with a strange perfumed scent welled out from the severed neck. Chu Wanning drew back rapidly to avoid it, calling out an order: "Mo Ran! Thousand Strikes!"

Mo Ran was waiting at the ready. Hearing the command, he channeled spiritual energy into the hidden blade in his sleeve and directed the strike at the ghost mistress's body that was groping around for its head.

The body of clay cracked open, revealing within it the ghost mistress's translucent true body, radiating red light. Chu Wanning raised Tianwen again and ripped the ghost mistress's celestial spirit right out. A scream came from within that headless body: "How dare you! How dare you! —— Get up! Get up! Kill them! Kill them——!!"

Blood-red eyes suddenly lit up on the featureless faces of the golden boys and jade girls, hundreds of them shrieking as they charged toward Mo Ran and Chu Wanning.

The coffins on the ground also shattered one after another, the corpses inside standing and rushing toward the two like a tide.

Mo Ran's gaze darted rapidly between the crowd, looking for Shi Mei. Chu Wanning said harshly, "What are you doing, making eyes at zombies! Hurry and fend them off!"

In the chaos of the battle with the ghost mistress, they had ended up standing on a coffin, with the slow-moving corpses gathered all around them. Mo Ran lit up a handful of exorcism talismans and tossed them out, explosions following, but there were just too many of them, one defeated wave rapidly replaced by the next.

Mo Ran was losing his mind. "Why are there so many dead people at Butterfly Town? Just how many ghost marriage couples are there?!!"

Aggravated, Chu Wanning said, "Look at this ghost mistress's cultivation, of course there wouldn't be this many young people dying of natural causes! Eight or nine out of ten were probably bewitched by it to commit suicide! Attack over here!"

Mo Ran flung another talisman in the direction Chu Wanning indicated, and white bone and rotten flesh flew in the resultant explosion.

"How is this ghost mistress not dead from that?"

"Normal weapons cannot hurt it."

"Then what about Tianwen?"

Chu Wanning was incensed. "Do you not see that Tianwen is binding it right now! This thing is extremely fast, if I release the bind, it'll probably have escaped before the next lash!"

More and more corpses gathered. Mo Ran kept an eye out for Shi Mei in the crowd as he purged them for fear of accidentally injuring him. A golden boy threw itself at him and bit him savagely on the leg, he cursed under his breath and flung a talisman on its face before kicking it into the crowd of corpses where it exploded with a loud bang.

Chu Wanning said, “Do you see Shi Mei and Mistress Chen yet?”

Mo Ran searched frantically before finally spotting two swaying figures in the distance. He exclaimed, “I see them!”

“Get the hell over there and pull them back! As far away as you can!”

“Got it!” Mo Ran answered, then paused. “What are you going to do?”

Chu Wanning said, exasperated, “I can’t lift my other arm to summon another weapon, so I’ll have to use Tianwen. I’m going to destroy this entire area as soon as I release the ghost mistress, so get lost if you don’t want to die!”

Ch.18 This Venerable One Once Begged You

Tianwen had a killing technique with no blind spots. Its name was simple, just one word, “Wind”. Once activated, it obliterates everything it touches in the surrounding area.

Of course Mo Ran had personally tasted the ferocity of “Wind” before; he was also well aware of Chu Wanning’s capabilities, and knew that there was no need to worry. He glanced one last time at that pale-faced man draped in wedding robes red like blood, and tossed out the last of his exorcism talismans to buy Chu Wanning some time. He then leapt to the side, holding Shi Mei in one arm and grabbing Mistress Chen with the other to take both unconscious people to hide at a distance away.

Chu Wanning, bearing through the searing pain, forced his other hand to move. Tianwen lit up immediately with a dazzling golden light, and Chu Wanning drew the willow vine back with a sharp movement.

Once released from the restraint, the ghost mistress’s face twisted as it leapt up and headed straight for Chu Wanning.

Chu Wanning’s robes danced like flames in the wind. With a fierce expression and blood soaking through half his robes, he raised his hand toward the heavens, Tianwen’s golden light intensifying menacingly as he began to whirl it.

The willow vine suddenly grew in length by several dozen feet as it spun into a golden vortex, drawing in everything from its surroundings. The ghosts, corpses, golden boys and jade girls, and even the snarling ghost

mistress, all of it was pulled into the center of “Wind” and instantly minced by Tianwen’s swift ferocity!!!

“Wind” was indiscriminately destructive, even the grass and trees in the area were uprooted, nothing escaped its onslaught.

With Chu Wanning as its center, a resplendent golden storm of immense proportions blanketed the skies, and coffins and corpses alike were swept into the gale.

It consumed everything in reach, all of it drawn into the storm and torn apart by the swift whirling of Tianwen.

Shredded into so much debris…

When the dust had settled, Chu Wanning was left standing in the middle of a barren wasteland.

Other than his solitary figure standing amidst the ruins, shrouded in brilliant scarlet like a blooming red lotus, a fallen haitang blossom, there was only the ground, covered in shattered white bone, and a terrifying Tianwen with golden light still coursing along its length.

Looking at this, it was pretty clear that Chu Wanning really was being quite considerate when he whipped the disciples.

Considering the preceding demonstration, he definitely could have pulverized every single one of them at the Platform of Sin and Virtue in an instant if he felt like it…

The golden light gradually faded.

Tianwen turned into sparkling stardust and returned into Chu Wanning's palm.

He exhaled deeply, brows furrowed, and slowly walked toward his disciples in the distance, ignoring the pain in his shoulder.

"How is Shi Mei?"

Chu Wanning asked when he reached their side, still enduring silently.

Mo Ran looked down at the unconscious beauty Shi in his arms, still not awake. His breaths were shallow and his cheek cold to the touch. This scene was much too familiar, a nightmare that Mo Ran once could not escape in life or death.

That time, Shi Mei had also been lying in his arms, just like this, when he gradually stopped breathing…

Chu Wanning leaned down to press his fingers against Mistress Chen and Shi Mei's necks, feeling for their pulse. He murmured, "Hm? How is the poisoning this deep?"

Mo Ran's head snapped up. "Poison? Didn't you say it was nothing to worry about? Didn't you say they were merely hypnotized?"

Chu Wanning's brows were furrowed. "The ghost mistress uses the fragrance in its hypnosis, it's a kind of poison. I expected only minor poisoning, not something of this magnitude."

"……"

“Take them back to Chen Manor first,” Chu Wanning continued. “It’s not difficult to draw out the poison, what’s important is that they’re alive.”

He spoke with a flat, indifferent tone. Even though this was how Chu Wanning usually spoke, in these current circumstances, it made him seem callous and dismissive.

Mo Ran was violently thrust back into his memories of the snowstorm that year, when he’d knelt in the snow holding Shi Mei in his arms as his life drained away bit by bit. His face had been stained with tears, and he’d screamed himself hoarse as he begged Chu Wanning to turn around, to spare his disciple a glance, begged Chu Wanning to lift a hand and save his disciple’s life.

But what had Chu Wanning said then?

In a dismissive voice with an impassive tone, like so.

Just like this, he had refused the only time Mo Ran had ever knelt and begged in his life.

Amidst the falling snow, the person in his arms had gradually grown cold, like the snowflakes that fell on Mo Ran’s shoulders and clung to his eyelashes.

That day, Chu Wanning had killed two disciples with his own hands.

One was Shi Mingjing, who he could have saved but had not.

One was Mo Weiyu, whose heart had drowned in grief as he knelt in the snow.

His heart was suddenly overcome with dread, with viciousness, with unreconciled malice and savagery that slithered like a snake.

For an instant he felt a violent urge to close his hands around Chu Wanning's neck, to shed this amiable disguise and bare his demonic appearance, to turn into a vicious ghost from the past life and tear into Chu Wanning's flesh, wring some answers, exact his revenge.

Revenge for the lives of those two helpless disciples in the snow.

But when he looked up, his gaze landed on Chu Wanning's bloodstained shoulder.

The bestial roar died in his throat.

He didn't make another sound as he stared at Chu Wanning's face with a gaze bordering on hatred, but Chu Wanning didn't notice. After a while, Mo Ran lowered his head to look at Shi Mei's pale face.

His mind grew blank.

If something happens to Shi Mei again, then…

" Cough cough cough!! "

The person in his arms suddenly let out a fit of coughs. Mo Ran startled, heart quivering… Shi Mei slowly opened his eyes and murmured in a hoarse, feeble voice.

"A…Ran…?"

"Yes! It's me!" Relief and joy washed away all his anxieties. Mo Ran's eyes opened wide as he pressed a hand to Shi Mei's cold cheek, eyes flickering

over him. “Shi Mei, how are you feeling? Does it hurt anywhere?”

Shi Mei smiled lightly, expression soft. He looked around: “…How did we get here…did I pass out…Ah! Shizun…cough cough, this disciple was incompetent…this disciple…”

Chu Wanning said, “Don’t speak.”

He fed Shi Mei a pill. “Since you’re awake, hold this poison-cleansing pill in your mouth, don’t swallow it.”

Shi Mei did so obediently, then startled, even more color draining from his already pale face. “Shizun, how did you get injured? You’re covered in blood…”

Chu Wanning answered in that same infuriatingly flat and indifferent voice, “It’s nothing.”

He stood and glanced at Mo Ran.

“You, figure out a way to take them back to the Chen Manor.”

Now that Shi Mei was awake, Mo Ran’s dejection had completely dissipated. He nodded amenably. “Alright!”

“I’m going to head back first, there’s something I need to ask the Chen family.”

Chu Wanning turned and left. Facing the boundless night, with nothing but withered grass in all directions, he finally couldn’t hold it in anymore, and furrowed his brows, letting the pain he felt show on his face.

His entire shoulder had been pierced by the five claws, the flesh and tendons torn. The ghost mistress's claws had cut deep to the bone. However much he might have feigned composure and endured it, sealing the veins so that he wouldn't pass out from blood loss, he was still only human.

He still felt pain…

But, so what if it hurt .

One foot in front of the other, wedding robes fluttering in the air.

All these years, everyone respected him, feared him, but never did anyone dare to stand by his side, never did anyone concern themselves with his well-being. He was already used to it.

Yuheng of the Night Sky, Beidou Immortal.

Unloved from head to toe, uncared for whether alive, dead, sick, or suffering.

It seemed like, from birth, he had never needed another's support, never needed anything to depend on, and never needed anyone for company.

So there was no need to say it hurt, and even less point in crying. He would just go back and wrap it up himself, cut off the torn and dead flesh, apply some salve, and it would be fine.

It didn't matter that no one cared about him.

He'd already come this far by himself anyway. All these years, it'd been fine. He could take care of himself.

He arrived at the gates to the Chen Manor, but before he could step into the yard, a burst of shrill screams came from within.

Heedless of his wounds ripping open, Chu Wanning rushed inside——only to see Madam Chen with a head of disheveled hair and both eyes closed, chasing her son and husband all over the place. Only the young daughter of the Chen family was spared; she stood nervously to the side, small body cowering in fear and shaking uncontrollably.

Seeing Chu Wanning, Landlord Chen and his youngest son threw themselves at him with terrified cries. “Daozhang! Daozhang save us!”

Chu Wanning shielded them behind himself, gaze sweeping over Madam Chen’s closed eyes. He berated them, “Didn’t I say to keep your eyes on her and make sure she doesn’t fall asleep!”

“We couldn’t watch her all the time! My wife’s health is weak, so she usually sleeps early. After you left, she tried to stay awake at first, but then dozed off and started going berserk! Yelling something…yelling…”

Landlord Chen cowered behind Chu Wanning, shaking, and completely did not notice that the Daozhang was wearing wedding robes, or the gaping wound on his shoulder.

Chu Wanning frowned. “Yelling about what?”

Before Landlord Chen even opened his mouth to respond, the crazed Madam charged over with her teeth bared, but the mournful cry that came from her lips was in the voice of a young girl——

“Heartless and dishonest! Heartless and dishonest! Pay me back with your lives! I want all of you to die!”

“…Ghost possession,” Chu Wanning said. He looked back at Landlord Chen and demanded in a harsh voice, “Do you know this voice?”

Landlord Chen’s lips trembled, and his eyes darted this way and that. He swallowed nervously as he said, “I don’t know, I’m not familiar, I don’t recognize it! Daozhang please save us! Daozhang please exorcise the ghost!”

By this time Madam Chen was mere steps away. Chu Wanning lifted his uninjured arm and pointed at her, and a bolt of lightning instantly struck the skies and trapped Madam Chen inside a barrier.

Chu Wanning spoke coldly with a sidelong glance, “You truly do not recognize it?”

Landlord Chen cried repeatedly, “I truly do not! I truly do not!”

Chu Wanning didn’t bother wasting any more words. He swung out Tianwen and bound Madam Chen inside the barrier.

He really ought to have bound Landlord Chen instead, it would have been both more convenient and easier to interrogate. But Chu Wanning had his own principles; he did not lightly use Tianwen to interrogate normal people. So he skipped over the easy target to interrogate the ghost in Madam Chen’s body instead.

Interrogating ghosts was different from interrogating people.

When interrogating a person with Tianwen, the person would be unable to bear the torment and directly confess.

But when interrogating a ghost with Tianwen, a barrier would be formed with only Chu Wanning and the ghost inside, where the ghost would regain

its appearance in life and divulge the information to Chu Wanning.

Tianwen suddenly ignited into flames, which surged along the vine from Chu Wanning's side all the way to Madam Chen.

The Madam shrieked and started twitching as the red flames on the willow vine suddenly turned into an eerie blue ghost fire that burned from the Madam's side back to Chu Wanning's side.

Chu Wanning closed his eyes. The flames burned along the willow vine to his hand, but the ghost fire couldn't hurt him, even as it burned up the length of his arm to his chest, and then went out.

"……"

The Chen family watched on with horror and apprehension, unsure what Chu Wanning was doing.

Chu Wanning's eyelashes fluttered lightly, both eyes still closed, but a beam of white light slowly appeared before his eyes, followed by a fair-skinned foot stepping out of the beam, and a young girl of about seventeen or eighteen appeared in his view.

Ch.19 This Venerable One Will Tell You a Story

The girl was fair-skinned and tidy, with an oval face and large, round eyes, very charming. She wore a light pink ruqun and her hair was bound up, bearing the innocent and inexperienced appearance of a new wife. She rubbed her eyes dazedly in the dark, looking around.

“Where…am I?”

“You are within the Truth Restoration Barrier I have set,” Chu Wanning replied.

The girl was shocked and asked, bewildered, “Who are you? Why is it pitch black here? I can’t see you, who is speaking?”

“Have you forgotten? …You’re already dead,” Chu Wanning said.

The girl’s eyes widened. “I’m already…I…”

Then, gradually, she remembered.

She bowed her head, and crossed her hands over her chest. There was no undulating beat there. She “ah”-ed softly and murmured, “I’m…I’m already dead…”

“Only souls can come to this Truth Restoration Barrier. Hatred is erased here. Those who have passed, no matter if they’ve transformed into a menacing ghost or a regular ghost, they will maintain the character and appearance of when they were alive. Hence, ‘Truth Restoration’.”

Stunned, the girl was lost in thought for a moment, as if she was gradually recalling her past life in the world. Then, suddenly, she lowered her face

and started weeping silently.

“Do you…have grievances?” Chu Wanning asked.

The girl’s voice was thick with tears. “Are you the King of the Underworld? Or are you the Greeter of the Dead?[33] Are you here to bring me justice?”

Chu Wanning rested a hand on his temple. “…I’m not the King of the Underworld, and neither am I the Greeter of the Dead.”

The girl wept softly. Chu Wanning remained silent for a while and didn’t speak, waiting until she brought herself together before he spoke again. “However, I am certainly here to bring you justice.”

Hearing this, the girl looked up. Though her breathing was still labored, she exclaimed in both joy and anguish, “You really are the Lord King of the Underworld!”

“……” Chu Wanning decided not to continue that subject with her and asked instead, “Do you know what you’ve been doing after you died?”

“I don’t know…it’s not clear. I only remember I was very sad, very sad. I wanted revenge…I wanted to find them…then I wanted to find him…”

When souls were first aroused, there would be many things they could not recall temporarily, but that was fine. Chu Wanning asked patiently, “Who did you want to find?”

The girl replied softly, “My husband, Chen Bo'huan.”

Chu Wanning was taken back. Chen Bo'huan——wasn’t that the name of the eldest son of the Chen family?

“What…is your name? Where are you from?” He asked.

Tianwen’s powers filled this world of illusion behind the barrier, and most of the deceased who came within would converse with Chu Wanning truthfully and honestly. Thus, the girl responded, “This lowly one is named Luo Xianxian, from Butterfly Town.”

“Before I came I reviewed the ancestry scroll of Butterfly Town, and this town only has about five hundred some households, none of which are named Luo. Who was your father?”

The girl took her time to recall the details, and the anguish in her eyes grew. “My father used to be a scholar in this town, and was an intimate friend to my father-in-law. Several years ago, he contracted an illness of the lungs and passed away. Afterwards, there was only me in the household.”

“What did you die for?”

The girl was taken aback, then wept harder. “Other than death, I had no other path. They— they deceived my papa and made him leave behind the secret formula for the fragrance. They also beat me and yelled at me, threatened me, made me leave Butterfly Town. I…I’m a weak woman, where else could I have gone? I have no other relatives left in this world… the world is so big but where could I go? Other than the Land of the Dead, where else would take me in…”

Once her memories of the past life returned, her heart seemed to brim with endless sufferings and anguish, anxious to tell another. Even though Chu Wanning did not pursue any further inquiries, she slowly continued to speak on her own.

It turned out that this Luo Xianxian had lost her mother when she was very young, and through her papa's words, she'd learned that she had an elder brother. However, her brother had gone missing during a riot in the Lower Cultivation World, and they'd never seen him again, and did not know if he was alive or dead. When her brother went missing, she hadn't yet reached one year of age, had still been wrapped in swaddling clothes. Later, when she tried to remember this elder brother of hers, she still couldn't recall any impressions.

The house of Luo thus only had Xianxian and her father left, the two depending on each other to survive. They'd drifted everywhere before finally building a small house in Butterfly Town where they settled.

That year, Luo Xianxian had been five. The eldest son of the house of Chen, Chen Bo'huan, had been older than her by two years.

At the time, the house of Chen hadn't yet struck it rich. The entire family had lived squeezed together into a small earthen cottage with two rooms, and next to the low wall in the yard there was a clementine tree. When autumn came along the tree would bear fruits, and the dense branches growing past the low wall would peek into the yard of the Luo family.

Luo Xianxian had looked up with her head raised; the branches dangling with clementines were like the lanterns lit on the Lantern Festival. She was an introverted child and didn't play with others, would only sit quietly upon her little folding bench, peeling soybeans while sneaking glances at the clementines peeking overhead from Chen's yard.

The clementines were jaunty and enticing; against the sun, it was easy to imagine their full, brimming, sweet and sour, juice.

Luo Xianxian would stare at them fixedly, swallowing hard from time to time, her cheeks sore from gluttony.

However, she had never extended her hand to pick them. Her father was a mediocre and ineffectual scholar who had failed the exams; however, he'd never failed in his dignity and integrity. The soured scholar was probably broken in the head, and had constantly admonished his daughter to be a 'man of integrity'.

Luo Xianxian had already known by the age of three that wealth was not to be misused and poverty was not to move wills. Her eyes might be greedy but her hands had never come close to an inch of those clementines.

One night, taking advantage of the moonlight, Luo Xianxian sat in the yard to wash clothes, humming as she worked.

Her father's health wasn't great, and he'd long since gone to rest. Impoverished children learned to take care of households early; the little girl had her sleeves rolled up, her thin little arms soaked in the wooden bucket, cheeks puffed out as she rubbed and kneaded with vigour.

Suddenly, a hoarse, coughing noise came from the front door, and a young man, covered in blood, stumbled in, glaring at her.

The little girl was petrified, so much so that she even forgot to scream.

The young man's face was covered in blood and grime yet his brows were strong and handsome. The two of them watched each other, one big and one small, frozen in their places. Finally, the young man couldn't hang on anymore, and slowly slid down a wall and into a sitting position. His breathing was laborious as he croaked, "Give me some water."

Maybe it was because that young man didn't have the looks of a villain, or perhaps it was Luo Xianxian's own kindness, but although she was afraid, she still ran inside and filled a teapot, and brought it to the lips of the young man.

The young man didn't hold back either, and gulped down the water soundly. When he'd finished he wiped at the corners of his lips, eyes lifted to stare at Luo Xianxian's charming face. His gaze was a little intent but he didn't say a word.

He didn't speak, and so Luo Xianxian didn't speak either. She only blinked at him anxiously, staying at a distance she deemed safe, holding her hands not too close and not too far away, looking over this stranger.

"…You look a lot like someone I once knew." The young man's lips suddenly curled up, his eyes curving into crescents as he smiled coldly at her. With all that blood on his face matching the smile, he looked somewhat savage. "Especially the eyes, big and round. It just makes people want to dig them out, poke them through with a finger and swallow them whole, one by one."

Such terrifyingly sinister words were so blandly and casually said, and there was even a little laugh to go with them. Luo Xianxian shivered even harder, and covered her eyes without thinking.

"Heh, what a smart little girl," the young man said. "Keep covering your eyes like that, don't stare at me. Otherwise I can't say what my hands will do."

When he spoke, his tongue curled; his accent was from the north.

Moonlight spilled in the yard. The young man was licking his cracking lips when he suddenly spotted the clementine tree in the yard. For some reason his eyes lit up, his pupils shimmering brightly, but that glow didn't last before it faded. He rubbed his chin, then gestured.

"Little girl."

Luo Xianxian: "……"

"Pick a clementine and peel it for me."

Luo Xianxian finally moved her lips to speak, her voice tiny and quivering but without hesitation as she said, "Da gege, that fruit tree doesn't belong to my family. It's someone else's, I can't pick it."

That young man was taken aback. He seemed to remember something again and his face slowly turned dark.

"If I said pick then go pick. I want to eat clementines, so go pick them for me right now!" The last bit was growled out aggressively, like the sound had been gnawed into pieces between his teeth before they were spat out. Luo Xianxian was shaking from fright, but she still remained stubbornly where she was.

The little girl had a soft personality but her spine was as extremely rigid as her father's.

"I won't."

That young man suddenly squinted his eyes, arched his nose and his expression changed like the weather. "Foul wench! Do you know who you're talking to?!"

“If you want water, I, I’ll pour you some. If you want food, there’s some in the house too. But the clementine tree doesn’t belong to my family, I can’t pick it. Papa said, to take without asking is to steal. I’m a man of integrity, wealth is not to be misused, poverty is, is not to move gills……”

In the midst of nervousness, she misspoke and said ‘gills’ instead of ‘wills’, a tiny little girl playing pretend, her face red and puffy, stubbornly hanging on to the teachings of her father, sputtering and stuttering, dumping everything she wanted to say, yet under the intent gaze of that young man, she was already trembling so hard her feet were crossed.

That young man was silent.

If it wasn’t for the wrong timing, hearing from the lips of this kid, and a little girl kid at that, the words “to take without asking is to steal”, “wealth is not to be misused, poverty is not to move wills”, and——“I’m a man of integrity”?? Pfft, he really wouldn’t be able to hold back his laugh.

But he couldn’t laugh.

Instead, there was a violent, soaring anger trampling within his chest like so many horses, stomping on his heart.

“I hate people like you the most, the so called…” Holding onto the wall, he shakily rose to his feet, words squeezing out from his lips, “Man of compassion, man of integrity, man of charity, heroes.”

Under the terrified gaze of Luo Xianxian, he painstakingly shuffled his injured feet and went beneath that clementine tree. He raised his head, sniffing at the scent of clementines with greedy yearning, then a hateful crimson flashed in his eyes, and before Luo Xianxian knew what was

happening, he'd climbed onto that tree and started violently shaking it, kicking it, knocking at it, beating it.

Branchfuls of clementines were soundly shaken off the tree, tumbling to the ground, rolling to the side. The smile of that young man was twisted as he yelled recklessly, "So much for taking without asking is stealing! So much for wealth is not to be misused! So much for strength is not to be exploited!"

"Da gege! What are you doing! Please stop! Dad! Papa!"

Luo Xianxian hadn't wanted to call for her father, who was weak in health, a scholar with no strength in his body. Even if he'd come out, there wasn't much he could do. Still, she was a little girl after all. Having held on to this point, she was finally scared and breaking down.

"What are you yelling for! If your dad comes out, I'll chop him down too!"

The little girl was terrified, tears welling up in her big, round eyes.

The Chen family next door had gone to visit relatives in the neighbouring village, and so no one in the family was home. There was no one around to stop this little lunatic.

The little lunatic shook until all the clementines had fallen from the tree, but even then his madness couldn't be stopped, and he stomped heavily on the ground, crushing many of the fruits. Then, with a sudden aggression and using a burst of strength from who knew where, he leapt up and flipped into the Chen's yard, found an axe, and chopped down the tree. Then he flipped back over and laughed heartily.

He laughed and laughed, then stopped abruptly and squatted down. He started spacing out, his eyes unfocused.

Suddenly, he twisted his head over and beckoned Luo Xianxian over. “Little girl, come here.”

“……” Luo Xianxian didn’t move. She stayed where she was, shuffling her little cloth shoes embroidered with yellow flowers.

The young man saw that she was hesitating and softened his tone, speaking with as much kindness as he could muster, “Come. I’ve got something good for you.”

“I…I don’t want to…no, I’m not coming over…” Luo Xianxian mumbled, but before she could finish her sentence, that young man erupted in rage again ——

“If you don’t come here right this instant, this I’m[34] gonna go into your house and chop your dad into minced meat!”

Luo Xianxian shuddered violently and finally, little by little, she shuffled towards him.

That young man looked askance at her. “Hurry up, I ain’t got time to watch you do the Yangko dance.”[35]

Luo Xianxian drew closer to him, head bowed. When she was still a few steps away, he suddenly reached his hand out and yanked her over. Luo Xianxian let out a squeal, or tried to, because before the sound could leave her mouth, it was shoved back inside by an object. The young man had stuffed a clementine in her mouth, unpeeled and unwashed, still covered in mud.

How could Luo Xianxian possibly eat a clementine with just one bite? The young man forcefully stuffed it in. The clementine ripped as it was crushed against her, juice and mud smeared over half her face. The lunatic was still cackling, squishing the fruit on her face, trying to shove it past her tightly shut lips.

“Aren’t you a man of integrity? Weren’t you not going to steal? Then what are you eating right now, huh? WHAT ARE YOU EATING RIGHT NOW?”

“Wuuu…no…I don’t want it…papa…papa…”

“Swallow it.” The young man’s eyes curved into crescents, and he stuffed the last bit of fruit into Luo Xianxian’s mouth. His eyes shone darkly as he said, chilling and cold, “Swallow the goddamn thing!”

The young man watched Luo Xianxian as she was forced to swallow the clementine, sobs choking from her throat as she cried for her father weakly. He was quiet for a moment and then he suddenly smiled.

That smile was more terrifying than his savage expression.

He ruffled Luo Xianxian’s hair, satisfied, and said warmly as he continued to squat there, “Why call papa? Shouldn’t you call da gege? Is the clementine gege gave you sweet? Is it good?”

Then he picked up another one from the ground.

This time, he didn’t try to force it into her mouth. Instead he attentively peeled off the skin, even picking out the white fibres sticking on the meat before he wiped his hands, pulled out a piece and brought it to Luo Xianxian’s lips. He said with a chiding, gentle voice, “If you like it then eat some more.”

Luo Xianxian understood that today, she'd run into someone who was mentally disturbed. Left without any choice, she bowed her head and wordlessly munched on the clementine that the lunatic passed over. Its sweet and sour juice diffused in her throat, causing turbulent waves in her stomach…

The young man continued to squat there, feeding her clementines piece by piece, seeming to be in a good mood again, even humming a tune.

His voice was rough and coarse like a damaged basket with breeze blowing through the holes, fuzzy and unclear, but some of the words floated into Luo Xianxian's ears.

"Three four drops of petals upon the pond,

One two cries of strings rang from ashore

Youthful years before crowing be the best of years,

Hooves light horses fast,

See the ends of the world…"

"Little girl," he suddenly said.

"……"

"Tsk." He clicked his tongue and cupped Luo Xianxian's little face with his hand. "Let me take a look at your eyes."

Luo Xianxian was trembling, but without any power to retaliate, she could only allow that young man to examine her eyes thoroughly, letting those bloody fingers rub over her brows inch by inch.

“So alike,” he said.

Luo Xianxian whimpered as she shut her eyes, scared that this lunatic would pick her eyes out the way he had the fruits, all on a whim.

But the young man didn’t pick.

He only said to her in a somber, chilling voice, “Didn’t you teach me “wealth shan’t be misused, poverty shan’t move wills”? Da gege has something to say to you too.”

“Sob…”

“Open your eyes.”

Luo Xianxian’s eyes were tightly shut. That young man laughed in exasperation, and said, voice hoarse, “I won’t dig out your eyes, now open them!”

“…Do you think I won’t be able to poke your eyes out if you have them closed?!”

Luo Xianxian could only obey. She opened her large, round eyes. Her long, soft lashes trembled, and large beads of tears fell. The fearful and pitiful expression on her face seemed to somehow please the mysterious young man. He suddenly loosened the hand that was squeezing her cheek. It hovered in the air for a moment, then gently patted her head.

He stared at her eyes intently, a trembling smile curling from the corner of his lips. His grin was seven parts twisted, two parts savage, and one part sorrow.

He said, “There was a man from Linyi whose heart died at twenty.”

Then, done speaking, he turned around and his figure slowly disappeared into the shadows.

The only indication that there had ever been such a person, appearing in the depths of nighttime all covered in blood, was the mess left behind on the ground.

Ch.20 This Venerable One Will Tell You a Story (Pt. 2)

The next morning, the Chen family came back from visiting their relatives. They noticed the clementine tree had fallen over, and its fruits spread all over the ground. There weren't a lot of residen ts around the area, and only the Luo family was close by. They remembered the way Luo Xianxian had looked gluttonously at the clementines, and at once concluded——

The clementines must have been stolen by that unlucky child, Luo Xianxian!

Not only had she stolen, out of jealousy, she'd even chopped down the tree!

The Chen family immediately went to Scholar Luo, full of accusations. Of course Scholar Luo wasn't about to handle this kind of humiliation and he promptly called his daughter over, asking angrily if the clementines had been stolen by her.

Luo Xianxian cried as she answered it wasn't her.

Then she was asked if she'd chopped down the tree.

Luo Xianxian continued to answer that it wasn't her.

And then she was asked if she'd sneakily eaten any clementines.

Luo Xianxian didn't know how to lie, and could only answer that she had.

Before she even had time to explain, her flustered and exasperated father ordered her to kneel down. He disciplined her with a ruler in front of the Chen family, and as he beat her he said, "Raising girls is inferior to raising

boys! How could you commit this kind of deceitful act at such a young age! Ridiculous! An embarrassment to your father! As your punishment, you will not be allowed to eat today. Face the wall for three days, painstakingly repent until you can start anew——”

“Papa, it wasn’t me! It really wasn’t me!”

“Don’t you dare talk back to me!”

Nobody believed her. Although the lower cultivation world was in a disorderly state, Butterfly Town was an exception. The residents of this town had always lived simple and honest lives, and nobody even locked their doors at night. To say that a lunatic covered in blood had turned up in the middle of the night? Who would believe that?

The skin on Luo Xianxian’s hands was left raw and bleeding from all the ruler’s striking.

The Chen family watched on coldly. Only the oldest boy was different; he tugged on the corner of his mother’s clothing, as if wanting to say something.

His mother didn’t pay him any attention. Left with no choice, he furrowed his rather well proportioned face, and stood off to the side, unwilling to continue watching.

That night, Luo Xianxian, too afraid to return inside, crouched under the roof of her house and miserably carried out her punishment.

Her father was a scholar, and thievery was the most intolerable thing to him. He tended to dwell on things, and was nothing but stubborn. There was no point talking to him, as he refused to listen to reason.

After a day of hunger, Luo Xianxian was beginning to feel faint. Suddenly, a small voice called out to her, “Miss Luo.”

Luo Xianxian turned around, and noticed a head with well proportioned facial features sticking out over the earthen walls. It was the boy that had tried to plead for her earlier that day, the eldest son from the house of Chen, Chen Bo'huan.

Chen Bo'huan looked around, and after making sure no one was around, he climbed over the earthen wall. He took out a hot mantou from within his robes, and stuffed it into her hand without any explanation.

“I saw you standing by the foot of this wall for the entire day, with nothing to eat. This mantou’s for you, eat it fast.”

“I…” Luo Xianxian was shy by nature; though she had lived here for quite a few months already, she had barely exchanged any words with the boy next door. Right now, looking at him at such close proximity, she couldn’t help but back away a couple of steps, hitting her head against the wall with a bonk. She stammered, “I can’t take it…Papa won’t let me…He said…“

She spoke incoherently, and couldn’t form any full sentences the entire time.

Chen Bo'huan said, “Aiya, your father only knows how to speak like a book, why do you bother with him this much? You’ll get sick from this kind of starvation; eat up, before it gets cold.”

The mantou was white and tender, soft and fluffy, still hot enough to steam.

Luo Xianxian lowered her head and stared at it for a moment, and she swallowed her saliva with a gulp.

However, she really was too famished. Regardless of gentleman behaviour this or gentleman behaviour that, she grabbed the mantou and stuffed her face with it, and in no time, it was all gone.

After she finished, she looked up with her round eyes. The first full sentence she said to Chen Bo'huan was, “The clementine tree wasn’t chopped down by me, and I didn’t want to steal.”

Chen Bo'huan was taken aback for a moment, then he slowly started to smile. “En.”

“But none of them believed me…” Under his gaze that held no contempt, Luo Xianxian gradually began to open up. Her grievances, like ice and snow melting, began to pour out. She opened her mouth and let out a “Wah”, and began to wail as she wiped her tears. “None of them believed me…I didn’t steal…I didn’t steal…”

Chen Bo'huan patted her frantically. “I know you didn’t steal. Aiya, you stood under the tree everyday, never taking a single clementine, if you wanted to steal you would have done it a long time ago…”

“It wasn’t me! It wasn’t me!” She wailed even harder, tears and snot trickling down.

Chen Bo'huan continued to pat her. “It wasn’t you, it wasn’t you.”

The two of them began to grow more familiar with each other just like this.

Later, a homicide occurred in the neighbouring village. A couple of nights ago, a blood soaked bandit broke into a house, and demanded for a room

to stay the night. The owner refused, and so the bandit killed the entire family. Then he casually slept through the night in the corpse-filled room, and didn't leave until the next day. But he didn't leave just like that. Using blood, he wrote a long and eloquent essay on the walls. He documented all the wonderful deeds that he'd done, as if he was afraid that the world wouldn't know about the existence of such a fiend.

The news spread like wildfire, and soon reached Butterfly Town. After comparing the times, it was the exact night that Luo Xianxian had met the "lunatic-gege".

Scholar Luo and the Chen family were all left speechless.

The two families got a lot closer after the misunderstanding was resolved. The Chen couple realized Luo Xianxian was really cute, and a hard working and thoughtful beauty. Considering their own family circumstances, it was probably difficult to find a better daughter-in-law. And thus they arranged for an engagement between Chen Bo'huan and Luo Xianxian. Once they reached adulthood, they would formally have a ceremony.

Scholar Luo thought his daughter and Chen Bo'huan were a pretty good match, and thus he happily agreed.

Time passed day by day. If Scholar Luo hadn't been interested in the art of fragrance, perhaps the two families would have led the modest but content life they had initially imagined for themselves.

If there was anyone to blame, it was Scholar Luo for creating, even accidentally, the "Hundred Butterfly Fragrance".

The fragrance's scent was nothing special, not particularly different from the ones commonly found in town. But it had a benefit that the other

fragrances did not have——

The scent lasted for a hundred days, lingering endlessly.

The Hundred Butterfly Fragrance stayed scented for a very long time, and was exactly the type of high quality and inexpensive product that every household sought after.

Scholar Luo believed in “Everything is inferior, only knowledge is superior”. Although he created the fragrance, he wasn’t willing to sell it, and believed it would ruin his identity.

He wouldn’t sell it, but of course someone else would have their mind on it.

Madam Chen tried to obtain the recipe from Scholar Luo, and encouraged him to open up a store, only to be rejected by him. After a few times, Madam Chen didn’t want to keep making a fool of herself, so she no longer brought up the matter. However deep down in her heart, she firmly remembered this.

The year that Luo Xianxian turned fifteen, an opportunity came. Scholar Luo, who had always been sickly, contracted tuberculosis, and eventually passed away after a few months of suffering. As Luo Xianxian’s mother-in-law— even though they hadn’t officially married yet, the sentiments were there—she helped carry out the funeral, busying back and forth.

Luo Xianxian was moved to tears. However, she didn’t realize that Madam Chen harboured hidden intentions. While she organized Scholar Luo’s belongings, she quietly swiped the recipe for the perfume.

That night, Madam Chen lit up an oil lantern, full of excitement and ready to read the recipe. However after only one glance, she was left dumbfounded.

Scholar Luo's writing was like a dance between a dragon and a phoenix; the characters were written in an elegant, confident, cursive script. After staring at it for half a day, she still could not understand a single word.

Left without a choice, she could only quietly put the recipe back.

After a few months, after Luo Xianxian had calmed down, she invited the girl over for a meal. During their casual chatter, she "unintentionally" brought up Hundred Butterfly Fragrance.

Luo Xianxian thought to herself, the recipe had no use if it was just tucked away in the house. Madam Chen had always been kind to her; if she wanted it, she could give it to her.

So she took out her father's possessions, and even helped Madam Chen interpret the writing. Little by little, she sorted out the complex recipe.

Madam Chen was over the moon. Once she obtained the recipe, she began to plan for the opening of a fragrance powder shop with her husband.

Of course, at that time, Madam Chen still treasured this gentle and sensible future daughter-in-law. The older she got, the more beautiful she became. Even though her family had met misfortunes, her appearance was one in a hundred. Quite a few young men from the town had begun to notice her.

Complications could arise the longer they waited, Madam Chen thought to herself. They needed to take care of this matter as quickly as possible.

However, Luo Xianxian had just lost her father. According to the traditions of Butterfly Town, if both of one's parents passed away, one could not marry within three years.

But how could Madam Chen wait for three years? She thought it through and through, and came up with a solution——

That day, Luo Xianxian was braiding the hair of the youngest daughter from the Chen family. She had a close friendship with this girl. Every day it was Luo-jiejie this, and Luo-jiejie that, the youngest daughter following her around like a little tail.

Madam Luo stepped into the courtyard, and called Luo Xianxian into the inner hall. She said to her, "Xianxian, you and Bo'huan are childhood sweethearts, and also had an engagement. Now that your father has passed, you are all alone, and life has been quite difficult. You were supposed to marry into our family this year, but the three years rule has to be met, and now you can't even marry. So I thought, after these three years, how old would you be?"

Luo Xianxian lowered her head, and didn't say anything. But she was clever, and could guess at what Madam Chen was about to say next. Her cheeks began to turn pink.

Sure enough, Madam Chen continued.

"Living alone is difficult and tiring. Why not this—— Marry into our family first; we can do the ceremony behind closed doors, keep it quiet from outsiders. If anybody asks, you can tell them I'm just looking after you. This way we can carry out the customs and not be scrutinized by others. Your

father below will be at ease as well. Once the three years are over, we shall have a proper ceremony in style. Is that alright?”

These words all sounded like they were all for the sake of Luo Xianxian. As someone who had no bad intentions and would therefore never imagine others to have them, she agreed.

Later, through the sales of Hundred Butterfly Fragrance, the Chen family became wealthy. They moved out of their old home, and purchased a large piece of land in town. With much building and renovations, they became a big influential family.

And Luo Xianxian thus became a shadow hidden within this big family, as someone who hardly showed her face.

Everybody in town really thought that the reason why Luo Xianxian lived with them was purely because Madam Chen was kindly looking after her. They didn’t know that she and Chen Bo'huan had already been married.

Although a little unhappy about this kind of lifestyle, Luo Xianxian only thought her mother-in-law had done it to avoid rumours, and it was all for her own good, so she didn’t have any complaints. Plus, Chen Bo'huan treated her with sincerity, and their time spent together was sweet and loving. They were only waiting for the three years to pass, when everything would return to normal.

But the day of the official marriage ceremony, the day that Luo Xianxian was waiting for, never came.

The Chen family's business was flourishing, and Chen Bo'huan was quite handsome. Soon enough, it wasn't just the girls in Butterfly Town who noticed; even the daughters of rich families in the neighboring villages started eyeing the eldest Chen-gongzi. Bit by bit, Madam Chen began to waver.

When she'd arranged the engagement between the kids back then, it was because they had been a peasant family and weren't going to find any better, and so she had hurriedly laid claim to Luo Xianxian.

Who could've anticipated this reversal in fortune, that the Chen family would one day become this wildly successful? When she looked at Luo Xianxian now, she felt that the girl wasn't pretty enough, or clever enough, that she was dumb and dull like her damned dry tree-root of an old man. The more she looked, the more she found the girl irritating.

She regretted it a little.

Until Mistress Yao's appearance turned her "a little" into "completely".

Mistress Yao was the governor's pampered daughter, tomboyish and with a preference for martial attire. One day, returning from the hunt atop a fine horse, she passed by a fragrance store and stopped to look. But rather than picking out any fragrances, she instead picked out the handsome and hard-working young man inside the shop.

That young man was none other than Chen Bo'huan, Luo Xianxian's husband in all but name.

Author's Notes:

Chu Wanning (serious expression): This incident teaches us that secret engagements are not advisable. WIthout any legal documentation, it's very easy to cut ties, with no liability involved.

Mo Weiyu (innocent expression): Eh? I think a few chapters ago someone had a marriage ceremony with me in secret, but I can't remember clearly, who was he? I was planning on taking responsibility for this, but since he doesn't want this, then nevermind. (Smile)

Ch.21 This Venerable One Will Tell You a Story (Pt. 3)

The governor's precious daughter Yao had a spirited personality. She even forgot about food and drink once she got home, and spent all her time pestering her Papa to go ask around about this Chen Bo'huan person. Although Chen Bo'huan was already married, the ceremony had been done behind closed doors; who on the outside would know? The townspeople didn't even know about the arranged betrothal between the Luo and Chen families from way back.

And so it was that the precious mistress Yao was informed that this Chen-gongzi was "unmarried".

The governor spared no effort in looking into this person, and in the end decided that this young man Chen was a capable man with a gentle temperament and a satisfactory family situation, so he sent a messenger to the Chen couple with a marriage proposal.

On hearing this, Landlord Chen was so full of regret that his intestines near turned blue. They politely told the governor's messenger that they need some time to think it over, closed the door, and immediately started arguing with each other.

Landlord Chen yelled, "Look where your rushing got us! That broke scholar died early, so his daughter should've been in mourning for three years, if you hadn't urged them to get married ahead of time, our son could have still gotten out of it! Look at this mess now!"

Madam Chen was just as anxious. "Oh so you're blaming me now? Weren't you the one who wanted to arrange the betrothal back then? This is the

governor's precious daughter we're talking about here! How could that Xian… that Luo Xianxian even hope to compare?"

The pair of old bastards argued behind closed doors til they were red in the face and out of strength, both breathing roughly across the table.

Landlord Chen asked, "What should we do? Maybe we should turn the governor down."

Madam Chen said, "…Absolutely not. Our family is counting on this precious mistress for fame and fortune."

Landlord Chen shot back angrily, "Do you really think the treasured daughter of the Yao family would be willing to be a concubine? Do you? Our son already has someone, how are we to squeeze in another? And besides, look how in love they are!"

"……" Madam Chen was quiet for a while, then her eyes lit up and she muttered, "Say, old Chen, the way I see it, no one outside our family even knows about this thing between Luo Xianxian and our son…"

There was silence for a moment while Landlord Chen stared blankly, before suddenly understanding his wife's meaning.

He was shaking a little, half from apprehension, half from excitement.

"Y-you mean…"

"If no one knows about it, then the marriage never happened," Madam Chen said. "We'll chase her out one way or another. If asking doesn't work, then we'll just use force. Everyone knows our son is yet unmarried. And do you remember that incident where she stole clementines when she was

younger? As long as all of us stick to the story, even if she grows extra mouths to cry about it, who would believe her!”

Landlord Chen strode to the door to make sure it was closed tight, then sidled over. The two had been arguing like a pair of fighting cocks a mere moment ago, but now they were huddled together, scheming in quiet whispers.

Landlord Chen said, “I don’t think it’ll work.”

“Why not?”

“Our son will never agree to it. He’s liked Luo Xianxian ever since he was little, but now you want him to just up and ditch her, do you think he’ll go along with that?”

Madam Chen thought for a while, then patted her husband’s hand and said, “Don’t you worry, I’ll take care of it.”

Before long, Madam Chen suddenly came down with a grave illness. It was a strange illness; the doctor couldn’t find anything wrong, but she was unhinged day in, day out, muttering nonsense and insisting that she was being possessed by a ghost.

Landlord Chen was worried sick. He invited a taoist priest who carried a horsetail whisk and an air of taoist propriety. The priest pinched his fingers together and discerned that there was something in the Chen family that meant ill towards Madam Chen, and that if not resolved, she would not live to see next year.

Chen Bo'huan was very filial, and anxiously asked, “What bears ill will toward my mother?”

The priest walked around for quite a while in an enigmatic pretension before saying it was “a beauty who never sees the sun”.

Everyone in the room was shocked. One by one, the Chen brothers all turned to stare at Luo Xianxian.

Luo Xianxian was just as shocked.

Ever since she had been little, others had always said such things about her, that she was unlucky, that she brought misfortune on all those around her, that she had killed her mother at birth, then her brother, and then her father.

Now, the fingers were pointing at her again, saying that she was going to kill her mother-in-law.

Distressed, the Chen brothers took turns talking to her, asking her to leave, saying that no one outside knew that she was married, her reputation was still intact, they would give her some money and she could go find another family.

Luo Xianxian was anxious and frightened, worried that she really was the one cursing Madam Chen, and she cried day after day.

Chen Bo'huan’s heart ached, watching his mother grow weaker by the day, stuck between the two; he didn’t want Xianxian to leave, but also didn’t want his mother to suffer. He lost weight rapidly.

Eventually, the Chen brothers had had enough. One day, while their eldest brother was out, they went to find their sister-in-law. Luo Xianxian was in the greenhouse making Hundred Butterfly Fragrance when they found her. They rushed in and smashed all her tools. She was covered in the powder; it was as if the heavy scent soaked into her bones, impossible to wash out.

The brothers surrounded her at first, sermonizing about principles and such, “women’s duty” this, “parents before wife” that. But Luo Xianxian was resilient; she was timid but stubborn, crying that she didn’t want to leave, begging them to please think of another way.

The second Chen brother grew agitated. He stepped up and slapped her, demanding, “You harbinger of disaster, you’re going to curse our mother to death! If there was another way, would your dad have died? Would your mom? What about your brother, living or dead unknown?”

With his one hit, the others took their cue, rushing in as well and closing in around her with punches and kicks, yelling “get the fuck out”, “unlucky pest”, “bringer of death”.

These brothers were of one mind with their mother, and have been in on her plan since long ago. Jumping on this chance while the eldest brother was out, they worked together to drive Luo Xianxian out, threatening to beat her every day if she dared to come back—she had no family anyway, even if they beat her to death, no one would care to get justice for her.

That night, it was snowing. Luo Xianxian was tossed out into the snow, her entire body covered in blue and purple; one shoe had even fallen off.

She crawled forward slowly, choked with sobs like the cries of a dying cub.

The night grew deeper. With the snow falling like this, everyone was staying inside. She crawled in the endless snow, not knowing where to go, not knowing where she could go.

The Chen brothers were right.

She had no family, no father, no brother, no one to turn to, no one who would shelter her.

This pure white world was vast, but it had no place for her.

Her body was frail to start with, and she wasn't wearing much when she had been chased out. Shivering, her legs and feet quickly became numb and lost all feeling.

She crawled to the outskirts of the town, to the temple of the ghost mistress, taking shelter inside, curling into herself, lips blue from the cold, heart cold from the sorrow.

She looked up at the painted, splendid clay idol, and couldn't help the tears rolling down her cheeks. She thought about the customs of the lower cultivation realm, where marriages should be witnessed by a master of ceremonies.

But back then, all she'd had was a red flower tucked behind her ear when she, smiling, had knelt across from Chen Bo'huan and bowed to the ground.

Had the ceremony behind closed doors been no more than a dream, had the blushing face in the copper mirror that day been a mere reverie born of her deepest desires.

She knelt before the statue of the ghost mistress, dragging her frozen body that grew heavier by the minute, kowtowing again and again, tears mixed with laughter.

“Cording hair to become husband and wife, conjugal love never to be doubted. Joy…in this…eve…”

She grew dizzy, vision blurring.

It was as if a sheen of moonlight lit up a mirage of that year, in the yard, when she’d cried: “It wasn’t me, it wasn’t me, I didn’t steal the clementines.”

But repeated rumor becomes fact, gossip is a frightful thing; no one would listen to her side of the story.

Even now, she knew that, even if she were to go and cry to people, even if she were to swear up and down that she was Chen Bo'huan’s properly wedded wife, no one would believe her. She was still the little girl by the low wall that no one would listen to, just the same as back then.

Nothing had changed.

At least that time, there was still someone who would climb over the wall and press a steamy white mantou into her hands, and say to her, “You must be hungry, hurry and eat.”

But…where was that person now…

When he returned and couldn’t find her, would he fret, or would he secretly breathe a sigh of relief because his mother wouldn’t be cursed by her anymore?

Luo Xianxian curled up in the temple, the tears she shed slowly drying. She whispered, “Mistress of Ceremonies, I want to be with him. I’m his wife… there was no one to witness our wedding... you are a ghost mistress, and don’t deal with living people, but I… I can only… I can only talk to you…”

Her last words came out a broken sob. “I didn’t lie…”

I didn’t lie.

The snow continued falling without a sound in the long, silent night.

The next day, some townspeople passing by the temple found Luo Xianxian’s ice-cold body.

Author’s Notes:

Chu Wanning: Don’t block my way, let me kill their entire family, if the sect leader asks it’s on me!

Mo Weiyu🐶: (grabs onto) Your honor, please calm down. Your honor, please return to the bench.

Ch.22 This Venerable One's Shizun is About to Get Angry

Chu Wanning, having heard this much, was already livid. He wished only that he could withdraw the willow vine and direct it with vigor toward the Chen couple instead. But he couldn't open his eyes to curse them out just yet, because the restoration illusion would disappear immediately if he were to do so. A ghost could only be trapped by the Truth Restoration Barrier once; if interrupted, he would never be able to hear the rest of what Luo Xianxian had to say.

So he could only bear with the burning rage as he listened to the rest of Luo Xianxian's story.

After death, her spirit went to the Underworld, numb and disoriented.

She remembered only a lady dressed in resplendent colors, who looked quite like the ghost mistress in the temple, standing before her and asking in a soothing voice, "You and Chen Bo'huan could not lay together in life, but do you wish to be buried together in death?"

She answered in a panic, "I do… I do!"

"Then I will have him come keep you company right away, alright?"

Luo Xianxian almost blurted out an eager agreement without thinking, but suddenly remembered something, and paused. "Am I dead?"

"Yes. I am the Ghost Mistress of Ceremonies of the Underworld, I can bestow you a good match, fulfill your longtime wish."

Luo Xianxian said in a daze, “Then, if he comes to keep me company, will he… also die?”

“Yes. But the heavens are compassionate, life or death is insignificant, merely a closing of the eyes, what’s the difference?”

Chu Wanning thought to himself that, as expected, this ghost mistress used trickery to lure people into making wishes on the lives of others, truly an abominable deity.

Although Luo Xianxian had died a wrongful death, she was not a malicious ghost. She shook her head repeatedly. “No, don’t kill him, it wasn’t his fault.”

The ghost mistress gave a melancholic smile. “Such kindness, but what will you get in return?” But it didn’t try to change her mind; as a deity, coaxing people into making malevolent wishes was fine, but coercion was not. Gradually, its figure faded away and its voice became blurry.

“The soul returns on the seventh day.[36] When you go back to the living world on the seventh day, go see what the Chen family is up to. Then, I will come ask you again, and see if you are still without regrets at that time.”

Seven days later, on the day of return.

Luo Xianxian’s spirit regained awareness and returned to the world of the living.

She followed the familiar roads to the Chen Manor, eager to see her husband one last time.

Unexpectedly, the Chen Manor was festively adorned with lanterns and banners, the reception area was piled high with betrothal gifts,[37] and there

was a massive “Xi”[38] character in the main hall. Madam Chen’s entire face was glowing, no sign of any illness whatsoever, as she smilingly directed servants to pack the betrothal gifts with red silk and ornate decorations.

Who was… getting married?

Who was… preparing betrothal gifts?

Who was… sparing no expense, how very grand.

Who was...

She weaved between the busy crowd, listening to the drone of voices.

“Madam Chen, congratulations on the engagement of your son with Governor Yao’s daughter, when’s the engagement feast?”

“Madam Chen is truly blessed.”

“Mistress Yao really is the Chen family’s lucky star! The betrothal was just settled, and Madam Chen is already looking much better.”

“Your son and Mistress Yao are as gold and jade, a match made in heaven. I’m so envious, hahahaha.”

Your son…your son…

Which son?

Who is getting married with the daughter of the Yao family?

Frantically, she roamed the familiar halls and yard, looking for that familiar silhouette between the chatter and laughter.

She found it.

Chen Bo'huan stood before the peonies in the rear hall, his face wan, cheeks sunken. But he was dressed in red—not wedding robes, but Butterfly Town's traditional butterfly-embroidered red robes, worn by the son-in-law when he goes to the bride's house to propose.[39]

He was…going to propose…?

All of these lavish gifts, full of gold, silver, and pearls, all of it had been prepared by him… by Chen Bo'huan, her husband, for the daughter of the Yao family?

She suddenly recalled when the two of them had got married.

There had been nothing, just two people, one heart, and nothing else.

No master of ceremonies, no bridesmaid or best man, no gifts. The Chen family had not yet prospered, and didn't even have so much as a single decent set of jewelry. He had walked to the clementine tree in the yard that they'd planted together and plucked a delicate blossom, carefully tucking it in her hair.

She had asked him, "How do I look?"

Beautiful, he had said. Then he had been silent for a moment before stroking her hair apologetically. "You deserve better."

Luo Xianxian had smiled and said she didn't mind.

Chen Bo'huan had said to her, that when he formally married her in three years time, he would definitely make it up to her with a grand ceremony, and everyone would be invited. He would go pick her up with a big sedan carried by eight men, adorn her in gold and silver, and the reception would be filled with betrothal gifts.

The promise made that year rang in her ears. Here and now, the ceremony was grand, and everyone was invited.

But he was marrying somebody else.

Anger and sorrow washed over her. Luo Xianxian screamed as she tore at the red silks and brocades in the room.

But, being a ghost, she couldn't touch any of it.

As if sensing something, Chen Bo'huan looked back, gaze hollow as he stared blankly at the silks in the room, drifting despite there being no wind.

His little sister walked over. There was a white jade hairpin in her hair; she was mourning secretly for someone.

She said, "Da-ge,[40] please go eat something, you haven't eaten properly for days, and you still have to travel to the governor's residence to propose later, your body won't hold up like this."

Chen Bo'huan suddenly asked out of the blue, "Xiao-mei,[41] do you hear someone crying?"

"...Huh? No? Da-ge, are you…" She grit her teeth and didn't finish the thought. Chen Bo'huan continued to stare at the place where the silks drifted.

"How is Mother, is she in a good mood? Has she recovered from her illness?"

"…Da-ge."

“…It’s good that she’s recovered.” Chen Bo'huan stood there spacing out for a while, then mumbled to himself, “I’ve already lost Xianxian, I can’t lose Mother too.”

“Da-ge, please go eat…”

Luo Xianxian cried, screamed, held her head and wailed in anguish.

Don’t…don’t go…don’t leave…

Chen Bo'huan said, “…Alright.”

The exhausted figure turned a corner and disappeared.

Luo Xianxian stood there alone in a daze, fat droplets of tears rolling down her cheeks. By chance, the voices of the Chen brothers who had caused her death drifted over, the second and youngest brothers whispering to one another.

“Mother is overjoyed, sigh , things are finally falling into place.”

“You don’t say? It took half a year of pretending to be sick to finally force that unlucky pest out, how could she not be happy?”

The youngest brother clicked his tongue, then suddenly said, “I can’t believe she just up and died though. We only threw her out, it’s not like we wanted to kill her. How stupid was she, did she not even know to go find help?”

“Who knows, maybe she’s just thin-skinned like her sourpuss father. It’s not our fault that she died. Mother may have duped her, but things are

difficult for us too. Just think about it, between the governor's daughter and some peasant girl, only an idiot would choose her. Besides, if we offend the precious daughter of the Yaos, things won't end well for us."

"You're right, she's just a dumbass. If she wants to freeze to death, that's on no one."

The words drifted to her ears.

Only in death did Luo Xianxian finally understand that the so-called "bringer of misfortune" just meant that she was poor and low-status, and couldn't compare with the governor's honored daughter.

Only an idiot would choose the peasant girl.

She finally lost it.

She returned to the temple of the ghost mistress, heart filled with hatred and resentment.

She had died there, weak and helpless. She returned there now, bitter and stone-hearted.

She had once been so kind and good-natured, but now she called up all the hatred in her lifetime, and all the wickedness in her character that she had never let loose before. She screamed herself hoarse, eyes red, soul quivering.

She screamed, "I, Luo Xianxian, am willing to give up my soul to become a malicious ghost, I beg the Ghost Mistress only for vengeance! I want the entire Chen family——to die miserably!!! I want her… I want that mother-in-law of mine, who is worse than a beast, to kill her sons with her own hands! All of them!!! I want Chen Bo'huan to come keep me company in

hell!! To be buried together with me!!! I refuse to accept this!! I hate! I HATE!!!!”

On the shrine, the clay idol lowered its eyelids, the corner of its lips curving into a smirk.

A voice echoed inside the temple.

“Your worship has been accepted, and your wish will be fulfilled. Henceforth you are a malicious ghost——go forth and slaughter——all who have wronged you——”

A piercing, blood-red light flashed, and Luo Xianxian remembered nothing after that.

But Chu Wanning already knew what happened next. The ghost mistress controlled the malicious ghost Luo Xianxian to possess Madam Chen and murder the Chen family one by one.

And the reason Chen Bo'huan was in that red coffin dug up at the mountain was also to fulfill Luo Xianxian’s wish——”I want Chen Bo'huan to be buried together with me”. On top of that, it had intentionally placed the coffin where he and his new wife were going to build their house to both curse and avenge.

As for the scent inside Chen Bo'huan’s coffin, it was that of the Hundred Butterfly Fragrance that had been on Luo Xianxian’s body when she died. The coffin was filled with both strong resentful energy and heavy fragrance because Luo Xianxian’s soul slept inside with Chen Bo'huan.

Luo Xianxian had no family left. When such a person dies, they are customarily cremated rather than buried. Thus, she no longer had a body,

and could only take on her form inside the ghost mistress's coffin. Back then, when Chu Wanning had split open the coffin with a whip, Luo Xianxian's soul had lost its shelter and scattered, temporarily unable to reconvene. That was the reason why the coffin's resentful energy was strong when closed, but faint once opened.

Still, in the illusory realm, why were all the corpses matched in pairs except for Chen Bo'huan, who was matched with a paper ghost bride?

Chu Wanning pondered for a moment, and figured it out:

The ghost mistress wouldn't break its own promise; that ghost bride was meant to be Luo Xianxian's "corporeal body", or a medium in other words, since only Luo Xianxian could be buried together with Chen Bo'huan.

Everything became clear.

Chu Wanning looked at the helpless girl in the illusion. He wanted to say something, but didn't know what to say.

Yuheng Elder really was bad with words — everything he said came out stiff — so the silence stretched on, and he ended up saying nothing after all.

The girl stood in the endless darkness, her soft but bright eyes round.

Chu Wanning looked at her eyes, and suddenly didn't have the heart to bear it anymore. He wanted to leave, unable to bear another glance. He was just about to open his eyes and leave the Truth Restoration Barrier when the girl suddenly spoke.

“Yanluo-gege,[42] th-there’s something else I wanted to tell you.”

Chu Wanning: “…Mn.”

The girl lowered her head and started crying into her hands. Softly, she said, “Yanluo-gege, I don’t know what I did afterwards, but, I…I really don’t want to get my husband killed. I don’t want to be a malicious ghost. Really…”

“I didn’t steal the clementines, I really am Chen Bo'huan’s wife, and my whole life, I really, really never wanted to harm anyone.”

“I really didn’t want to hurt anyone, please, I beg you, please believe me.”

Her trembling voice was broken with sobs.

“I…didn’t…lie…”

I didn’t lie.

Why is it that my whole life, hardly anyone ever believed me.

She sobbed miserably. Chu Wanning’s voice rang out in the darkness. He didn’t say much, but it was without hesitation.

“Mn.”

Luo Xianxian’s small body jolted.

Chu Wanning said, “I believe you.”

Luo Xianxian tried to wipe away her tears but couldn’t stop crying. In the end, she covered her tear-streaked face with her hands and bowed deeply

toward the person she couldn’t see in the darkness.

Chu Wanning opened his eyes.

He said nothing for a long while.

Time passed differently inside the barrier than it did in reality. He was inside for a long time, but it was a mere instant to those on the outside. Mo Ran hadn’t arrived yet, and the remaining members of the Chen family were still watching him apprehensively.

Chu Wanning suddenly put away the willow vine, and spoke toward Madam Chen, “I will voice your grievances, you can sleep now.”

Madam Chen stared blankly with blood-red eyes, then suddenly collapsed to the ground with a thud, unconscious.

Chu Wanning lifted his head again, his gaze sweeping across Landlord Chen’s face and then landing on the youngest son. His voice was flat and cold.

“I will ask one last time.” He spoke slowly, clearly enunciating each word. “You really do not know whose voice that was?”

Ch.23 This Venerable One Couldn't Stop Him

The youngest son quivered uncontrollably, both legs shaking as he looked up at his father.

Landlord Chen's eyes darted left and right; after a while, he insisted, "D… don't know it. D-don't recognize it!"

Chu Wanning's face was cold like frost. He spoke in a low voice, "Liar."

He had a severe appearance to begin with; now, with his eyebrows lowered and an aura of fury, he looked even more murderous, even scarier than a malicious ghost.

Landlord Chen unconsciously took two steps back. Suddenly, Chu Wanning struck the ground with Tianwen, and sparks danced from the vine as leaves flew into the air. Landlord Chen promptly fell on his ass.

"Was the Hundred Butterfly Fragrance really made by your family? Was that your eldest son's first marriage? Does Luo Xianxian ring a bell? Just how shameless are you, at this ripe old age?!"

Landlord Chen's mouth opened, closed, then opened again, but couldn't manage a single word in the end as his face turned from ashen to scarlet.

The young daughter of the Chen family, who had been cowering off to the side this whole time, heard the name "Luo Xianxian" and immediately started crying.

She stumbled over to kneel before her mother, shaking that unconscious body. "Luo-jiejie![43] Luo-jiejie, was it all you? I know you were wronged,

that you can't accept it, but please I beg you, if only for me, please spare my family…Luo-jiejie…"

Chu Wanning leaned over, Tianwen glowing golden in his hand, and used its hilt to lift Landlord Chen's face.

He had a phobia of touching people he found disgusting; it gave him goosebumps.

"Do you really think I can't tell when someone's lying to me?" He spoke coldly, staring into Landlord Chen's face and seeing his own reflected in those frightened eyes.

It is indeed an unlikeable face, cold and harsh, like a blade covered in frost.

But so what.

Yuheng of the Night Sky never needed affection from other people.

"Daozhang, Daozhang, Sisheng Peak sent you, and I'm the client, how could you pry into my private business like this, I——"

Chu Wanning said, "Fine, I'll get out of your business then. You can die."

"Wait! Waitwaitwait! You can't——"

"I can't?" Danger flickered in Chu Wanning's narrowed eyes. "I can't what?"

"I'm…you're…you…"

“If someone like you were a disciple of my sect,” Chu Wanning said as he stroked Tianwen. “I’d whip you bloody and snap your bones right here.”

Hearing that, Landlord Chen finally gave up on trying to play dumb. Seeing Chu Wanning’s vicious demeanor, without a hint of the compassion one would expect from a cultivator, his legs began to shake involuntarily and he knelt down, throwing all self-respect out the window to wail, “Daozhang, w-we had no other choice, we couldn’t afford to offend the governor’s daughter! We, we were so worried we could hardly eat, Daozhang——”

He reached out to hug Chu Wanning’s thighs while wailing.

Chu Wanning’s phobia flared up. Seeing that Landlord Chen was about to touch himself, he brought the willow vine down without a second thought, exclaiming in disgust, “Don’t touch me!”

“Aah!” The back of his hand got lashed by Tianwen, and even though there was no spiritual energy behind the strike, Landlord Chen still howled in pain, shouting, “Unbelievable! Sisheng Peak’s cultivator beats up commonfolk!”

“You——!”

When Mo Ran, supporting the two invalids, stepped into the Chen Manor, the sight that greeted him was that of Landlord Chen crying snottily where he was kneeling on the ground, pointing at Chu Wanning with a shaky finger, yelling, “Which other sect does that? Your Sisheng Peak took the fee, and, and not only did you not protect the client, y-you attacked me

instead! It's so, it's so——very shameless! I-I'm gonna tell everyone! I'll announce it to the world! I-I'll make sure everyone knows about your sect's…your sect's attitude! I'll destroy your sect's reputation, and make sure you never get paid another copper!"

Chu Wanning snarled, "So what if you have money? Does money allow you to flip right and wrong, to repay kindness with cruelty? Does money let you do whatever you want, break all your promises?"

The Chen family's youngest son spoke up timidly from the side, "It's not like we killed that Luo Xianxian, we just knocked her around a bit and chased her out, she's the one that didn't want to live, it's not our fault she didn't look for shelter from the snow, can you blame us for that? We didn't kill anyone, you can't just point fingers as you please just because you're some mighty cultivator."

His words were extremely crafty. Technically, the Chens hadn't broken any laws; even if Chu Wanning were to drag them to court, at most the official might rebuke them for being heartless and dishonest, but none of them would be convicted of anything.

"'I didn't kill uncle, but uncle died because of me'.[44] Well you've certainly cleaned up after yourselves."

Chu Wanning's hand, clenched around the willow vine, shook with anger.

Landlord Chen, that old weasel, had already picked up his wits from where they had been scattered by the initial scare. He had been afraid that Chu Wanning would ditch them without taking care of the ghost before, but thinking about it again, this barbarous Daozhang was still sent by Sisheng

Peak. As the foremost sect of the lower cultivation realm, since they'd already collected the fee, they would definitely finish the job, that was common knowledge.

Once he came to this realization, he stopped being quite so afraid.

He held onto his own hoof with a tiny cut on it, all tears and snot as he cried, "Cleaned up? Us Chens, we've never done anything heinous, no murder and no arson. If Luo Xianxian didn't want to live, how was that any of our fault? I-if you don't properly exorcise this ghost today, I'll go to Sisheng Peak and file a complaint about you immediately! Who does things like you people? If you take someone's money you gotta take care of their problems, how do you not understand something that basic, and you——"

Before he'd even finished, Chu Wanning took his own wallet and threw it on the ground before him without blinking. "Your payment to the sect, I've returned in full. As for complaining, feel free!"

Tianwen glowed brightly, willow leaves sharp as knives.

Caught off guard, Landlord Chen yelped and squealed, covering his head and scurrying about like a rat, even dragging his own daughter over to block the lashes in his frenzy.

Luckily, Chu Wanning was a practiced hand at whipping people, and Tianwen was one with his mind, the willow vine pulling back immediately to avoid hitting the Chen daughter before circling around and heading directly for Landlord Chen's face. Immediately, there was a loud shriek, and blood splattered instantly.

Landlord Chen hadn't expected Chu Wanning to be so completely unfazed by his posturing, and his air of arrogance melted instantly into a puddle of

mud, leaving him scared shitless as he fled and wailed, “Wait wait wait hold the whip! Hold the whip! Daozhang! Daozhang I was just talking nonsense! Just nonsense! Ah! Daozhang spare me! Aiyo please I’m begging you, I’m getting on in years, I can’t bear this! Daozhang have mercy, it was our fault! It was our fault!”

Chu Wanning wasn’t even listening to him. His chest was stuffy with anger, phoenix eyes harshly narrowed as Tianwen danced in the air and Landlord Chen rolled around on the ground in pain, crying snottily.

Mo Ran stood at the gate, stunned: “……”

He had never seen Chu Wanning whip a commoner with Tianwen before, and so ruthlessly too, as if he was whipping a beast, the willow vine moving so fast it was barely visible.

What kinda mess was this? The contractor beating up the client, whether in the upper or lower cultivation realm, would definitely destroy that cultivator’s reputation for good. No matter how bad Chu Wanning’s temper was, or how much he let his heart rule his head, how could he have gone so far as to commit this big of a blunder?

This was way more serious than his “thieving and debauchery”.

Shi Mei’s face was pale from shock. He pulled at Mo Ran in a panic. “H-hurry and stop Shizun!”

Mo Ran handed the still unconscious Chen-Yao—that is, the treasured daughter of the Yao family—over to Shi Mei, and stepped forward to grab Chu Wanning’s wrist, alarmed and apprehensive. “Shizun——you——what are you doing?”

Chu Wanning was in a terrible mood, brows furrowed. He bellowed, “Let go.”

“Shizun, this is against the rules——”

“As if I need you to tell me? Which of Sisheng Peak’s seven hundred and fifty rules do I not know better than you? Let go!”

Mo Ran raised his voice. “Then why aren’t you stopping?”

Chu Wanning didn’t feel like wasting his breath with him, abruptly ripping his hand away instead, and another lash landed ruthlessly on Landlord Chen.

“Shizun!!”

Chu Wanning growled, eyes frosty, “Get lost!”

Landlord Chen saw that Mo Ran looked handsome and amiable, definitely a good person, and so hurriedly crawled over, cowering behind Mo Ran and tugging at the corner of his clothing. “Daozhang, please talk to your Shizun, I, my old bones, even if I was wrong, even if I was wrong, my old bones can’t take this kind of beating…”

But, contrary to his expectations, when Mo Ran turned around and saw his snot and tears- covered face, he felt not pity but disgust, moving quickly away with an “Ah” and muttering in disdain, “Don’t touch me.”

“……” Landlord Chen saw that this one could not be relied upon, and his gaze moved on to Shi Mei, who was helping Chen-Yao into a chair not too

far away. Holding onto his last bit of hope, he crawled toward Shi Mei, wailing and crying.

“Daozhang, Daozhang, please show some kindness, show some mercy, I know I was wrong, it was my bad, all my bad, please I beg you please talk to your Shizun, I was wrong, I admit my fault…I…I…I’ll do whatever you say, just please don’t hit me anymore, I’m old, my body can’t bear it…can’t bear it…”

He cried pitifully, genuinely begging for his life as he crawled to Shi Mei’s side and tugged at his clothes.

“……” Shi Mei was filled with pity, and turned to implore Chu Wanning. “Shizun, since the old man already knows he’s wrong, please show some mercy and spar——”

Chu Wanning: “Out of the way.”

Shi Mei: “……”

Chu Wanning said harshly, “Did you not hear me!?”

Shi Mei shuddered in fear and moved out of the way.

Tianwen ripped through the air with a woosh, headed directly for Landlord Chen, who covered his head with both arms and let out a frightened cry. The sound was really too pitiful, and Shi Mei couldn’t help but step back in front, blocking the hit for him.

The lash landed resoundingly.

Shi Mei moved too fast; Chu Wanning tried to pull back, but it was too late.

Droplets of blood flew. In his weakened state, Shi Mei promptly fell to his knees from the strike. He covered his delicate cheek, but couldn't stop the blood trickling out from between his fingers…

Author's Notes:

Forum category: World of Relationships

OP ID: Wise monarch of this generation Mo Weiyu

Question: Ex-boyfriend (sort of counts as) accidentally struck the man of my dreams, what to do? Urgent, waiting online for an answer.

Location: Butterfly Town, Chen Manor

Post 1: This depends on if OP wants to get back with the ex-boyfriend, or if OP wants to pursue the man of your dreams.

Post 2: Beat up the ex, ex's favorability minus 10, white moonlight's favorability plus 10. Pretend you saw nothing, ex's favorability doesn't change, white moonlight's favorability minus 10. OP's gotta decide on the game plan yourself.

Post 3: Self-destruct and play dead kid.

Post 4: I'm pretty curious, what does (sort of counts as) mean? How can someone sort of count as an ex-boyfriend? Could it be that OP used force?

Post 5: Choose to forgive him of course.

Post 6: Our shop sells Heavenly Fragranced Lubrication Oil, marriage between yin and yang,[45] secret to dual cultivation. If there is a need for it,

please add 48481438 as a friend. Contact person, Ms Wang of Sisheng Peak.

Ch.24 This Venerable One Declares Cold War on Him

>>uh lil bit gory toward the end

For a moment, everyone was silent, and only Landlord Chen's sobs could be heard.

Shi Mei's head was lowered, hand covering his cheek, but his eyes were earnest when he looked up at Chu Wanning. "Shizun, please stop this. If you keep going, it's Sisheng Peak that's going to get the blame…"

Mo Ran's soul was about to fly out of his mouth. He might be a reprobate, but he was still utterly devoted to Shi Mei. In this reborn life, he had sworn to himself to treat Shi Mei carefully and to protect him well, but it had only been a couple of days and Shi Mei was already injured and lashed, how could this be!

He didn't even have it in him to settle the score with Chu Wanning right now, hurrying instead to Shi Mei's side to check on the wound on his cheek.

Shi Mei said softly, "I'm okay…"

"Let me see anyway."

"It's really nothing."

Shi Mei tried to resist, but Mo Ran still managed to pull the hand covering the wound away.

His pupils contracted instantly.

It was a deep gash, raw and bloody, stretching all the way to his neck, blood still running…

Mo Ran saw red. He bit his lip and glared for a long time before whipping around to yell at Chu Wanning, “Are you quite done yet?!”

Chu Wanning, face gloomy, was silent. He did not apologize or approach, only standing there rooted to the same spot, holding Tianwen without channeling any spiritual energy.

“……”

Mo Ran felt like there were countless frenzied demons in his chest.

Who could tolerate their beloved person, who had already died once in a past life, suffering time and again like this?

He and Chu Wanning stared each other down, neither backing off, neither giving in. Mo Ran’s eyes began to become bloodshot; he’d hated Chu Wanning for so many years that the hatred had already seeped all the way into his bone marrow—why was this person always going against him!

Back when he had first joined the sect, he had done something wrong and nearly gotten whipped to death by Chu Wanning. Later, when Shi Mei had been injured, Chu Wanning, who only had three disciples in his entire life, merely stood and watched. Then, Shi Mei died, Sisheng Peak was destroyed, and Mo Weiyu became the sole overlord of the cultivation world, every person under the sun grovelling before him. Only Chu Wanning had stood against him at every turn, getting in his way left and right, stabbing him in the conscience——a constant reminder that no

matter how mighty Emperor Taxian-jun was, underneath it all he was just a lunatic abandoned by everyone who was close to him.

Chu Wanning.

Chu Wanning…

In life and in death, it was always him!

The two of them were still dressed in matching wedding robes, red and red, face to face, but it was as if the space between them was split by a gaping chasm.

Chu Wanning finally put Tianwen away.

Landlord Chen let out a huge sigh of relief, and knelt in front of Shi Mei, kowtowing nonstop. “So kind, so kind, the good Sir is truly a living buddha, our savior, thank you for saving my entire family Sir, thank you Sir, thank you Sir.”

It always ended up like this.

He was the one who took care of the evil spirit, but he was also the one who dealt the vicious lash. Chu Wanning did what he was supposed to but also what he was not supposed to, and in the end someone else was the compassionate savior, and he was the villain.

It had always been this way

He was ill-tempered, he was already resigned to it.

He didn’t regret it, either.

Having accidentally whipped his own disciple, of course he felt bad about it, but he had a thin face and couldn't bring himself to go up and say some warm, gentle words, so he walked away and went to stand before the young daughter of the Chen family instead.

The little girl looked at him and subconsciously stepped backwards in fear, quivering.

Of the entire Chen family, she was the only one with any kindness. Chu Wanning softened his tone. "Your mother suffered ghost possession, and her lifespan has been reduced by at least twenty years. If she doesn't repent and continues being immoral, she will be plagued by negative energy and die even sooner. When she wakes, tell her to handcraft a memorial tablet for Miss Luo using red peachwood, and clearly acknowledge her status thereon. Luo Xianxian was Chen Bo'huan's properly wedded wife, this fact that your family has kept hidden for years must also be made public to fulfill her life's wish."

He paused, then handed her a scripture book.

"Additionally, your whole family must kneel and recite the 'Incantation of Deliverance' three times a day to help Miss Luo's soul find peace and purge the spirits haunting your family. This must be done for ten years without stop, or else Miss Luo will return for vengeance."

The little girl's voice shook as she said, "…Yes, th-thank you Daozhang…"

Chu Wanning turned to glare at Landlord Chen and his son, gaze sharp as a snow-covered dagger. "When Chen-Yao awakens, the two of you must tell her everything and let her make her own decision. If you try to hide anything at all, I'll rip out both your tongues!"

These two were no more than posturing cowards who dared not put up any resistance now that things had come to this. They both prostrated on the ground, swearing up and down to follow every instruction.

“As for Hundred Butterfly Fragrance, it was created by Mr. Luo alone, but you shameless lot claimed it as your own formula. You know what you have to do, I will waste no more breath on you.” Chu Wanning swept his sleeves and made to leave.

“W-we’ll definitely go make corrections in the store and clarify that this fragrance was made by …by Mr. Luo…”

After everything was taken care of, Chu Wanning instructed Mo Ran to take Chen-Yao inside so as to draw out the poison.

Although Mo Ran held hatred in his heart, he knew well that in his youth he was still more respectful than defiant toward Shizun, so he did not protest, only squeezing Shi Mei’s hand and whispering, “Go take care of your face and stop the bleeding. I’ll take her inside.”

There was still a big red “Xi” character in the eldest Chen son’s room. Everything had happened so fast that they’d probably forgotten to take it down in the rush. At this time, with Chen Bo'huan already turned into powder, it looked exceedingly mocking.

Chen-Yao was collateral damage in this ridiculous farce riddled with avarice. What would she choose when she woke up?

As a commoner, she wasn't as tenacious as Shi Mei. Chu Wanning drew out the poisoned blood and fed her a pill in silence. The whole time, Mo Ran stood to the side holding a basin of water and handing over towels, but the two of them did not speak to one another, did not even so much as look at one another.

As he was leaving, Chu Wanning's gaze swept past the wall with indifference before suddenly realizing something, gaze shifting back to peer at the poem hanging on the wall.

The columns of letters were in regular script, neat and upright; the ink had not been dry for long, and the edges of the paper had not yet begun to yellow.

Written was——

Hands of a delicate tint

Pour golden wine

The city all in spring, and she,

the willow behind the palace wall

And east wind, full of malice

Brought thin joy

And a skein of sorrows —

Years of separation —

Wrong, wrong, wrong

Spring still spring

It's we, without reason, waste away

Tears streak rough, stain silks

Peach blossoms fall

Your room by the pond, empty —

What good our vows have stood like mountains?

With even letters barred —

And nothing, nothing, nothing[46]

Chu Wanning’s heart suddenly felt stifled. The writing was neat and careful, signed by Chen Bo'huan, the three characters glaringly conspicuous.

Chen-gongzi had married the daughter of the Yao family against his wish, and could only keep the misery in his heart to himself. Had he spent the final days of his life standing by the window, brush in hand, helpless but to transcribe 《Chai Tou Feng》, [47] an ode to loss and partings?

He didn’t want to remain at the Chen Manor even a moment longer. Ignoring the searing pain in his shoulder, he turned and left.

Chu Wanning and Shi Mei were both injured, unfit to ride back to Sisheng Peak right away, and Chu Wanning especially disliked travelling by sword, so they decided to stay the night at an inn. This way they could also go take a look at the temple the next day, to ensure that things would be properly taken care of.

Even though the demons and corpses had been pulverized by Chu Wanning's "Wind", it was still only their bodies that had been destroyed, not their spirits. There was no harm in staying a few days to make sure that nothing had slipped past to continue causing trouble.

Chu Wanning walked ahead in silence, his two disciples following behind.

Shi Mei seemed to have suddenly remembered something, and asked, "A-Ran, the clothes you and Shizun are wearing…what…what's going on?"

Mo Ran was taken aback before remembering that he and Shizun were still wearing the wedding robes. He was deathly afraid that Shi Mei might misunderstand, and hurriedly made to take it off.

"This…uhm, the illusion from before, don't think too much of it, I…"

Halfway through his words, he took another look and realized that, since Shi Mei had also been dragged through the ghost wedding, he too was wearing wedding robes. It was just that his had a different design, and didn't look too recognizable due to the rips and tears.

But no matter what, it was still wedding robes.

Standing side by side with Shi Mei like this, he could imagine that it was Shi Mei whose hands he had held back then in the ghost mistress's illusion, who he had bowed with, who he had shared the wine with.

He didn't want to take it off anymore, and stared at Shi Mei in a daze.

Shi Mei smiled warmly. "What is it? You didn't finish your sentence."

Mo Ran mumbled, "…It's nothing."

Chu Wanning was a few steps ahead of them. It was unclear how much he'd heard, but he stopped and turned around.

The sky was starting to brighten. After a night of commotion, the first light of daybreak emerged from the horizon, the sun crimson like a torn and bleeding heart struggling out from the abyss of darkness, painting the skies in splendid colors.

Chu Wanning stood, backlit, as the end of the long night grew bright, as the rising sun lit up the clouds.

He stood sideways, wedding robes red like blood, the rising sun casting a golden halo behind him, blurring the expression on his face.

Suddenly, spiritual energy surged forth, ripping the wedding robes into pieces.

Fragments of red fluttered like so many petals of wilting haitang blossoms. The wind picked up, scattering the pieces everywhere.

The white robes underneath flowed in the wind together with his ink black hair.

Blood on his shoulder.

Pieces of fabric in the wind.

The bloodstain where he had been injured protecting Mo Ran was all the more vivid and conspicuous on those white robes.

A long while passed before Chu Wanning sneered coldly, as if in ridicule. "Mo Weiyu, what is there between you and I to be misunderstood?"

He called Mo Ran Mo Weiyu whenever he was angry, cold and unfamiliar, a distant sort of polite address with not a hint of warmth.

Mo Ran choked, caught off guard, and had nothing to say.

Chu Wanning turned and walked away.

There was no one around at this hour, he walked ahead by himself as the earth and sky seemed to blur together.

His harsh and mocking expression fell apart as soon as he arrived at the inn room and closed the door.

Chu Wanning grit his teeth, a pained expression on his face as he lifted a hand to touch his shoulder.

The ghost mistress's claws were a kind of celestial body, no lesser than Tianwen; both were extremely powerful weapons. His entire shoulder was torn up, but there had been no time to take care of it during the demonic onslaught. By now, it had already gotten infected and was beginning to fester, the pain unbearable.

Standing in the room, Chu Wanning exhaled slowly and tried to take off the robes, but the fabric stuck to his skin where the blood had already dried, and the tug sent bolts of pain through his body.

Mo Ran's room was right next door. The inn was hardly soundproof, and he didn't want anyone to know, so he bit down on his lip and ripped the cloth off in one ruthless motion.

"Ngh……!!"

Chu Wanning let out a stifled grunt, then slowly let go, blood on his teeth and lips where he had bitten too hard. He gasped for breath, face completely devoid of color, body covered in cold sweat.

He lowered his long lashes, trembling slightly as he looked down to take in the damage.

It wasn't too bad.

Still manageable…

Holding onto the table for support, he slowly lowered himself into the chair. Bit by bit, enduring the pain, he used the water and towel he had the inn's attendant bring to wipe the wound clean with his uninjured hand.

Then, using a sharp knife, cut out the dead flesh.

After that, apply the salve that Madam Wang made.

And finally, slowly, with difficulty, wrap the bandages around his shoulder by himself.

He wasn't used to showing weakness in front of others. He had gone through this kind of pain many times before, and every time he had gotten through it on his own.

An injured animal will find a place to hide and lick its wounds. Sometimes he felt like he was no different from those beasts, and that this solitary existence would probably continue into the future as well.

He knew he was unlikeable, so he didn't want to beg pitifully for anyone's help. He had his dignity.

But when he took off his robes, a brocade pouch fell to the floor.

The red satin was embroidered with silk tree flowers. His fingers shook from the pain as he slowly opened it. Inside were two locks of hair, corded together.

His and Mo Ran's.

Chu Wanning's mind went blank for a moment. He wanted to hold the pouch to the candle flame and burn it together with its ridiculous contents. But he couldn't bear to do it in the end.

Cording hair to become husband and wife, conjugal love never to be doubted.

He could almost hear the golden boy and jade girl's quiet giggles.

He was aware of the throbbing deep in his own heart, and loathed himself all the more for it. He clenched the soft pouch tightly in his hand and slowly closed his eyes.

He couldn't accept these thoughts he held toward Mo Ran. He wished only that he could dig out his own heart and cut out the despicable thoughts inside, tear, rend, and throw them out.

Where was his decency, his propriety?

Was Mo Weiyu someone he ought to think about? What kind of a teacher was he? Truly worse than a beast!

Tap tap tap .

Knocks came from the door all of a sudden. Chu Wanning, in the middle of berating himself, startled, eyes opening wide as he hurriedly tucked the brocade pouch away in his sleeve. His face settled back into an ill-tempered expression.

“Who is it?”

“…Shizun, it’s me.” Mo Ran’s voice came from the outside, and Chu Wanning’s heartbeat sped up a little. “Can I come in?”

Ch.25 This Venerable One Really Can't Stand Him!

Chu Wanning was silent for a long while, face full of doom and gloom, the words "get the hell out" stuck in his throat the whole time before they reluctantly came out as "get the hell in" in the end.

"Eh? Your door isn't locked?" Mo Ran was trying to make up with him after an entire day of playing cold war, so he pushed the door open and walked in acting like nothing was wrong. Chu Wanning glanced at him without any expression from where he sat by the table.

Speaking from the heart, Mo Ran really was good-looking, brightening up the whole room with his presence alone. The youth's firm skin almost seemed to glow, and the corners of his lips held a natural curve, such that he looked like he was smiling even with a neutral expression.

Chu Wanning kept his composure firmly under control as he moved his gaze away from Mo Ran and lowered his long lashes, raising a hand to extinguish the stick of incense on the table before asking impassively:

"What are you doing here?"

"I came to…check on your injury." Mo Ran cleared his throat, then his gaze landed on Chu Wanning's shoulder and he paused. "You've already taken care of it?"

Chu Wanning said mildly, "Mn."

Mo Ran was speechless: "……"

It was true that he held grudges against Chu Wanning, and that he was also mad at him for hurting Shi Mei. But once he calmed down, it wasn't like

Mo Ran didn't have any conscience at all; hate was one thing, but he hadn't forgotten how Chu Wanning's shoulder had been injured.

Inside that stifling coffin, Chu Wanning had held him tightly in his arms, using his own body to block the ghost mistress's claws, refusing to let go even as his whole body shook from the pain…

Mo Ran definitely loathed Chu Wanning.

But apart from the loathing, for some reason, there were always some other complicated feelings mixed in as well.

He was a crude person who had not received an education in his youth. Even though he studied and somewhat made up for it later on, he still had a hard time wrapping his head around many of the more delicate matters, especially those relating to emotions.

For example, when it came to Chu Wanning, Mo Ran had scratched his head and mulled it over for a long time, but he just could not figure out what this emotion was.

He only recognized simple emotions: like, dislike, hate, happy, unhappy.

But several emotions mixed together gave the brilliant and powerful Emperor Taxian-jun vertigo, made him see stars.

Don't get it, makes no sense, what is this, save me, ow my head.

So Mo Ran simply didn't bother to think about it any longer; he didn't care to waste that kind of energy on anyone besides Shi Mei.

Inwardly, he put the earlier incident on Chu Wanning's tab and secretly plotted to pay him back double, whenever he got the chance to settle the score. But at the same time, he also felt guilty. He'd warred with himself internally before finally knocking on Chu Wanning's door in the end.

He didn't want to owe him.

But Chu Wanning was even more headstrong than he had thought.

Mo Ran stared at the pile of blood stained bandages on the table, the crimson-colored water in the washing bowl, and the knife that had been casually tossed aside, bits of bloody flesh still clinging to its tip. He felt a headache coming on.

Just how had he managed to treat his own injury?

Had he really just cut unblinkingly into the dead flesh around his wound with his own hand, just like that? Mo Ran's scalp felt numb just thinking about it. Was this guy even human?

Shi Mei had whimpered softly from the pain with tears in his eyes when Mo Ran had cleaned his wound just now; regardless of how much he disliked Chu Wanning, he couldn't help mentally bowing to him——

Yuheng Elder was indeed boss as fuck, impressive, truly impressive.

Mo Ran stood there for a bit, then broke the silence first. He lightly coughed twice, toeing the floor, and mumbled awkwardly, "Earlier, at the Chen Manor… sorry, Shizun."

Chu Wanning said nothing.

Mo Ran stole a glance at him. "I shouldn't have yelled at you."

Chu Wanning continued to ignore him, a face of indifference as always. He'd never say it, but deep inside, he did feel wronged.

Mo Ran walked over. Only up close did he see that Chu Wanning had made a mess of the bandaging, the gauze wrapped around his shoulder like he was tying a crab.

"……"

Then again, what did he expect from someone who didn't even know how to do the laundry?

Sighing, Mo Ran said, "Shizun, don't be mad anymore."

"Which of your eyeballs saw me being mad?" Chu Wanning shot back angrily.

Mo Ran: "……"

A while passed.

"Shizun, that's not how you bandage…"

Another tart retort. "You think you know better than me?"

Mo Ran: "……"

He lifted his hand, wanting to redo the bandages for Chu Wanning, then looked at his expression and hesitated, gauging that the probability of getting slapped in the face for daring to touch him was quite high.

The hand lowered, then it raised. This repeated several times. Chu Wanning grew irritated and shot him a sideways glare. "What, you wanna hit me or something?"

“……” He did indeed want to hit him, but not right now.

Mo Ran grinned in exasperation and suddenly reached out to press his hand against Chu Wanning’s shoulder, consequences be damned. Dimples appeared in his cheeks. “Shizun, here, I’ll help you redo the bandages.”

Chu Wanning originally wanted to refuse, but Mo Ran’s warm fingers were already on him and his mouth was suddenly dry. His lips moved slightly but he said nothing in the end and just let Mo Ran do as he wanted.

The gauze unwrapped layer by layer, already soaked through with blood, until the five spine-chilling holes were revealed.

Just the sight of it made him shudder; the damage was much worse than the cut on Shi Mei’s face.

Mo Ran stared for a bit, and then, for some reason even he himself did not understand, asked softly, “Does it hurt?”

Chu Wanning, long lashes downcast, only said mildly, “Not too much.”

Mo Ran said, “I’ll be gentle.”

Chu Wanning didn’t know what he was thinking of, but his earlobes turned a little red and he got mad at himself again, thinking he must be losing his mind to be having such absurd thoughts. So his expression grew even stiffer, mood even worse, and he muttered dryly, “Do as you will.”

The candle flame crackled. By its dim yellow light, Mo Ran could see that the medicinal salve hadn’t even been applied to some places. He was truly speechless; it must be by some kind of miracle that Chu Wanning had managed to live to this day.

“Shizun.”

“Hm?”

“What happened at the Chen Manor today? Why did you beat them up?” He asked while applying the salve.

Chu Wanning was silent for a moment before answering, “I was angry, is all.”

Mo Ran asked, “What made you so angry?”

Chu Wanning didn’t feel like bothering with his junior right now, so he briefly told Mo Ran about Luo Xianxian. Mo Ran shook his head when the account was done. “That was silly of you. Something like this, no matter how mad it makes you, you still shouldn’t have confronted them like that. If it was me, I’d just make some stuff up, fake the exorcism, then dust my hands and leave, let things run their course. You gotta adjust for the situation sometimes, you know. Look at you, made such a big mess over some worthless wretch, and even accidentally hit Shi Mei——”

Mo Ran caught himself halfway through the rant. He shut up and watched Chu Wanning.

He had been too focused on doing the bandages and had forgotten himself for a moment there, had unwittingly spoken to Chu Wanning in the impudent tone of his thirty two year old self.

Chu Wanning had clearly noticed it too. He was glaring coldly at Mo Ran from the corners of his eyes, the gaze alone conveying that familiar line ——“I’m going to whip you to death”.

“Erm…”

He was still scrambling to think of an excuse when Chu Wanning spoke first.

He said impassively, “Do you think I wanted to hit Shi Mingjing?”

As soon as Shi Mei was mentioned, reason left Mo Ran’s brain and willfulness took over, and even his tone grew prickly. “Did you not hit him?”

Chu Wanning regretted the strike too, but his face was thin and he was mortified about it, so he scowled and said nothing.

Chu Wanning was headstrong, Mo Ran was lovestruck, and sparks flew where their glares collided in mid air. The atmosphere that had only just eased up a little bit once again became a hopeless impasse.

Mo Ran said, “It’s not like Shi Mei did anything wrong. Shizun, can’t you at least apologize for accidentally hurting him?”

Chu Wanning’s eyes narrowed dangerously. “Are you interrogating me?”

“…No.” Mo Ran paused. “I’m just upset that he was wrongfully injured, but didn’t even get a ‘sorry’ from Shizun.”

Under the candlelight, the handsome youth finished dressing Chu Wanning’s wounds and carefully tied a knot. The scene still seemed somewhat tender as it had a moment ago, but both their moods were already vastly different. Especially for Chu Wanning, it was as if an entire

jar of vinegar had toppled over inside his chest, the sour taste of jealousy swelling without stop, getting under his skin.

Sorry?

How do you write sorry? Someone more apologetic please teach him.

Mo Ran continued, “It’s gonna take at least half a year for that cut on his face to fade, but earlier when I was helping him apply medicine, he still said not to blame you. Shizun, it’s true that he doesn’t blame you, but even so, do you really think you’re in the right?”

His words only added fuel to the fire.

Chu Wanning tried and failed to bear with it. He growled in a low voice, “Get the hell out.”

Mo Ran: “……”

Chu Wanning snapped, “Out!”

Mo Ran got thrown out, the door slammed in his face and nearly on his fingers. Mo Ran’s hackles rose too. Look at this, just look! What was his problem? It was just an apology! That face of his sure was precious, how hard was it to just say sorry? Even this venerable Emperor Taxian-jun knew to apologize, but the mere Beidou Immortal had to throw a hissy fit for no goddamn reason!

No wonder no one wanted him despite his handsome face!

A fucking waste, is what it was. He was gonna be single for life, and it served him right!

Since Chu Wanning had closed the door in his face and paid him no heed, the high and mighty Taxian-jun, Emperor of the human realm, obviously wouldn't just roll around outside the door like some shameless mutt. He was extremely persistent, clinging like sticky candy and impossible to peel off, but the one he clung to was Shi Mei, not Shizun.

He couldn't care less, and immediately left to go keep Shi Mei company.

"Back already?" Beauty Shi Mei[48] was lying down resting when Mo Ran came in. He paused before sitting up, long black hair draping down his body. "How is Shizun?"

"He's just fine, and so is his temper."

Shi Mei: "……"

Mo Ran pulled up a chair and straddled it backwards, hands propped on its back, a lazy smile playing on his lips as he took in the sight of Shi Mei with his long, soft hair loose.

Shi Mei said, "Maybe I should go check on him after all…"

"Wah, don't do that to yourself." Mo Ran rolled his eyes. "He's throwing a fit right now."

"Did you make him mad again?"

“Does he even need someone to make him mad? He can even get mad at himself. The guy’s probably made of wood, catches on fire at the slightest spark.”

Shi Mei shook his head, caught between laughing and crying.

Mo Ran said, “Go back to rest, I’m gonna go downstairs and borrow the kitchen to cook something for you guys.”

Shi Mei asked, “Going to so much trouble? You were up all night too, shouldn’t you sleep?”

“Haha, I’m plenty awake.” Mo Ran laughed. “But if you don’t want me to leave yet, I can keep you company till you fall asleep?”

Shi Mei hurriedly waved a hand and said gently, “No need, I won’t be able to sleep with you here watching. You should try to get some rest too, don’t push yourself.”

Mo Ran was a little dejected, and the smile on his lips went a little stiff.

Shi Mei was kind to him, yet always seemed to maintain a certain indiscernible distance. He was right in front of him, but he was also like the illusion of the moon in the mirror, the flower reflected in the water, in sight but unattainable.

“…Okay.” He did his best to cheer up, forcing the smile back on his face. Mo Ran had a radiant smile, and he was silly to the point of being cute when he wasn’t being mischievous. “Just call if you need anything, I’ll be right next door, or else downstairs.”

“Mn.”

Mo Ran lifted a hand, wanting to pat Shi Mei’s hair, but he managed to restrain himself and turned his hand back around to scratch his own head instead.

“I’m off then.”

Once outside, Mo Ran couldn’t resist a sneeze.

He sniffled.

Butterfly Town specialized in producing fragrances, and incense of all kinds were quite cheap, so the inn wasn’t stingy about it. A long stick of specialty incense burned in every room, one to keep out evil spirits, another to remove moisture, and a third to make the rooms smell nice.

The smell of incense made Mo Ran uncomfortable, but Shi Mei liked it, so he endured it.

Downstairs, Mo Ran swaggered over to the innkeeper and slid a silver ingot over, eyes squinted in a smile. “Hey innkeep, do me a favor.”

Seeing the silver ingot, the innkeeper’s smile was even more courteous. “What does the good sir need?”

Mo Ran said, “I don’t see many people here for breakfast anyway, can I trouble you to turn away the other guests and lend me the kitchen for the morning?”

How many coppers was breakfast worth? Even half a month’s worth of breakfast wouldn’t earn a single silver ingot. The innkeeper agreed eagerly, all smiles as he led Mo Weiyu, still swaggering, to the inn’s kitchen.

“Is the sir going to cook himself? Why not have our chef do it, he’s really good.”

“No need.” Mo Ran grinned. “Have you heard of the House of Drunken Jade in Xiangtan?”[49]

“Ah…the famed entertainment house that burned down a little over a year ago?”

Mo Ran: “Mhm.”

The innkeeper peeked outside to make sure his wife was busy with work and not listening in before giving a sneaky grin. “Who hasn’t heard of that place? It was the most famous theater by the River Xiang, and even produced a star songstress, known far and wide. Too bad it’s so far, or I’d go listen to her play too.”

Mo Ran laughed, “Well, thanks for the compliment, on her behalf.”

“On her behalf? On her behalf?” The innkeeper was puzzled. “You know her or something?”

Mo Ran replied, “More than just know her.”

“Wow…wouldn’t have known that just looking at you, eh? But can you cultivators even…uh…”

Mo Ran cut him off with a laugh. “Besides the star songstress, do you know anything else?”

“Um…I heard the food there was also unparalleled.”

Mo Ran's lips curved into a cheery grin as he picked up the kitchen knife with an air of familiarity. "Before I was a cultivator, I worked as an assistant in the kitchens at the House of Drunken Jade for many years. Who do you think cooks better, your chef or me?"

The innkeeper was even more amazed, stumbling over his words. "The good sir is truly… truly…"

He kept mumbling "truly" but couldn't find the word.

Mo Ran glanced at him sidelong, with a smug smile on his face and an air of self-assured laziness. "Alright, out you go then, this venerable chef is gonna get to work."

The innkeeper had no idea he was currently speaking to the ex-lord of darkness, and shamelessly implored, "I've long heard about the delicacies at the House of Drunken Jade, perhaps when the good sir is done, might this lowly one ask to try some?"

He thought it was a small request, and that Mo Ran would definitely agree.

Who knew that Mo Ran's eyes would squint in an impish smile. "You wanna try?"

"Yeah!"

"Keep dreaming!" Mo Ran hmph'd with an air of arrogance, muttering, "Did you think this venerable one's gonna cook for just anyone? This is for Shi Mei, if not for him, this Venerable One wouldn't even step into the kitchen…"

He picked out a radish and started cutting it as he muttered to himself.

"……" Shot down, the innkeeper could only stand awkwardly to the side, rubbing his hands and simpering for a while before quietly slipping away.

He also muttered to himself on the inside.

What was all that with 'this Venerable One'? The boy was so young, he probably hadn't even formed a spiritual foundation yet. Listening to him rambling on it was shimei this shimei that, but there wasn't even a single girl in his group today.

The innkeeper rolled his eyes.

Must be crazy, and not just a little.

Mo Ran busied himself in the kitchen for four whole hours; it was nearly noon before he finished. He ran upstairs expectantly to wake Shi Mei up.

His footsteps slowed down as he passed Chu Wanning's room.

Should he call him to eat too…

Thinking of Chu Wanning's nasty temper, Mo Ran frowned in distaste.

Nope, he only made a little bit anyway, none for him!

Ch.26 This Venerable One's First Meeting With Him

The sun climbed higher in the sky, and more and more people came by the inn to eat. Mo Ran found it noisy downstairs, so he had the attendant bring the dishes he'd made up to his room.

He did invite Chu Wanning in the end. Shizun was the highest ranked, after all; Mo Ran was no emperor of the human realm right now, so he had to play by the rules.

Three bowls of steamy noodle soup sat on the square beech table. He'd made the noodles himself, smooth and chewy, much better than what you could buy outside. Thick-cut slices of beef were piled on top, along with fried sausage, fresh and tender pea shoots, plump napa cabbage, and golden colored egg floss, the colorful ingredients artfully arranged.

But the most noteworthy thing was not the dewy greens, the generous cuts of meat, or even the abundance of ingredients, it was the broth that had been simmered on a low fire for four hours. The milky white broth had a layer of sesame chili oil on top; Mo Ran had ground the hot and numbing spices himself in a stone grinder and simmered it with the broth for a rich taste and tantalizing aroma.

He had used copious amounts of both chili oil and peppers, thinking about Shi Mei's love of spicy foods. Watching Shi Mei dig in with relish now, Mo Ran's grin stretched even wider. He stole a few glances and couldn't resist asking, "Is it good?"

Shi Mei said, "It's delicious."

Chu Wanning said nothing, still wearing a gloomy face like the heavens owed him a hundred mountains made of gold and silver.

Mo Ran was quite pleased with himself. “Then just let me know whenever you want to eat it again, I’ll make it for you.”

Shi Mei’s eyes were watery from the spiciness when he looked up to smile at Mo Ran, expression gentle. Faced with such a beauty, if it weren’t for Chu Wanning sitting on the side freezing half the room with his mere presence, it might have been difficult for Mo Ran to decide between eating the noodles in his bowl and eating Shi Mei.

Shi Mei didn’t eat much of the pea shoots and sausage, but the beef and cabbage were quickly gone.

Mo Ran, who had been watching quietly from the side, reached out with his chopsticks and moved the pea shoots and sausage into his own bowl, then moved several pieces of beef from his bowl into Shi Mei’s.

Sisheng Peak’s disciples all ate at Mengpo Hall, often exchanging dishes with one another, so Shi Mei smiled and thought nothing of it. “A-Ran doesn’t like beef?”

“Mhm, I like pea shoots.”

Then he started chowing down. The tips of his ears were a little red.

Chu Wanning, expressionless, picked out the pea shoots in his bowl and tossed all of it into Mo Ran’s bowl.

“I don’t like pea shoots.”

He also tossed all the beef in his bowl into Shi Mei’s. “I also don’t like beef.”

Then he stared at the rest of the food in his bowl with furrowed brows, pressed his lips together and said nothing.

Shi Mei asked carefully, “Shizun… is it not to your taste?”

Chu Wanning: “……”

He didn’t respond, only lowered his head and silently picked up a piece of cabbage, taking a small bite. His expression instantly grew worse and he put his chopsticks down with a ‘pa’.

“Mo Weiyu, did you spill an entire jar of hot sauce into the soup?”

Mo Ran paused and looked up, a noodle still dangling from his mouth; he hadn’t anticipated that the breakfast he had worked so hard on would receive such harsh criticism. He blinked at Chu Wanning, bewildered, unable to believe his own ears for a moment, before slurping down the noodle in his mouth. “Wha?”

Chu Wanning was even less courteous this time. “Is this even food for people? Is it even edible?”

Mo Ran blinked several more times before it finally clicked that this prick Chu Wanning was roasting him. He shot back indignantly, “How is it not people food?”

The space between Chu Wanning’s eyebrows twitched as he remarked, “It’s truly unpalatable.”

Mo Ran choked. No matter what, his skills had been sneakily learned from the best of the best at the House of Drunken Jade.

“Shizun aren’t you…a little too picky.”

Shi Mei also piped up, “Shizun, you haven’t eaten for a whole day, even if you don’t like it, still try to eat some.”

Chu Wanning stood up and said coldly, “I don’t eat spicy foods.”

Then he turned and left.

The two left at the table fell into an awkward silence. Shi Mei was dumbfounded. “Shizun doesn’t eat spicy foods? How come I didn’t know that…A-Ran, you also didn’t know?”

“I…”

Mo Ran stared blankly for a while at the noodles that Chu Wanning had left basically untouched, then nodded.

“Mn. I didn’t know.”

That was a lie. Mo Ran knew that Chu Wanning couldn’t eat spicy food.

It was just that he’d forgotten.

He had been tangled with this person for the greater part of his previous life, after all. He knew exactly what foods Chu Wanning liked and disliked.

But he didn’t bother to keep it in mind, so he never remembered.

Chu Wanning returned to his room and lay down, still dressed. He faced the wall with his eyes wide open, unable to sleep.

He had lost a lot of blood and used too much spiritual energy. On top of that, he hadn’t had a single bite to eat since yesterday, his stomach had

long been empty and felt awful.

This person didn't know how to take care of himself at all. He was in a bad mood, so he simply didn't eat, as if he could fill his stomach with anger instead.

He didn't know what he was angry about. Or rather, he didn't want to know.

But in the silence, a face appeared before his unfocused eyes, lip corners curled softly into a brilliant smile, light flickering in a pair of clear black eyes, gentle with a hint of purple.

Warm and comfortable, and somewhat lazy.

Chu Wanning gripped the blanket, joints of his fingers pale from the force. He didn't want to sink into it, and closed his eyes in an attempt to escape that face and its careless laughter.

But the past surged forth even more with his eyes closed, and washed over him like a tide…

The first time he'd met Mo Ran had been in front of the Heaven-Piercing Tower on Sisheng Peak.

The sun was fierce that day, and all twenty elders were present, talking amongst themselves in low voices.

Yuheng Elder was an exception, naturally. He wasn't so foolish as to go stand over there with the rest of them to bake in the sun. Instead, he stood under a flowering tree by himself, preoccupied with examining the flexibility of the newly-made finger claw of a black metal gauntlet on his hand.

Of course he himself had no need for such things; he was forging these claws for the lower level disciples of Sisheng Peak.

The lower cultivation realm bordered the ghost realm, and so was often dangerous. It wasn't uncommon for the lower level disciples to get injured or even lose their lives. He never said anything about it, but Chu Wanning had been trying to work out a solution; he wanted to make a weapon that was light, nimble, and easy to learn.

The others stood to the side, chattering.

"Did you hear? That long-lost nephew of the Sect Leader was barely saved from a fire. No one else survived the place burning down. If the Sect Leader had been even a step slower, the nephew probably would've turned to dust too, it was truly a stroke of luck."

"Must've been his late father protecting him from the other side. It's heartbreaking that he became separated so young, and went through so many hardships, sigh …"

"The child is named Mo Ran? Fifteen years old, right? It's time for him to receive a courtesy name then, does he have one?"

"Xuanji Elder, the child grew up in a music house, he's lucky to even have a name, much less a courtesy name."

"I heard the Sect Leader already thought of a couple, and is just choosing amongst them now. Wonder what he's going to pick in the end."

"The Sect Leader sure does value this nephew of his."

“You don’t say? Not just the Sect Leader, either, even the Madam dotes on him endlessly. Heh, probably the only person in the entire Sisheng Peak to be displeased is our very own darling of the heavens——”

“Tanlang Elder! You mustn’t speak with such indiscretion!”

“Haha, my bad, I slipped! But our darling of the heavens runs wild and pays little mind to propriety, disrespects elders, and lazes about idly all day with an air of born entitlement, he truly does lack some discipline.”

“Tanlang Elder, how much have you had to drink today…” The person at his side gave him a meaningful look, gesturing with his chin toward Chu Wanning who was standing a distance away, his meaning obvious.

The darling of the heavens, Xue Meng, was Chu Wanning’s disciple. To say that Xue Meng lacked discipline was just an indirect insult of Chu Wanning’s teachings.

This Yuheng Elder was composed and refined in appearance, as if he was above the matters of the mortal realm, and surrounded by a lofty air. But everyone knew about his volatile temperament; if anyone rubbed him the wrong way, they might as well just wash their neck clean and wait for death by whipping.

Chu Wanning heard every word of their gossip.

But he paid them no mind. He had less interest in what others had to say about him than he did in the decorative patterns on the finger claw.

Speaking of which, the finger claw was pretty good, but not quite tough enough, and might not be able to rip through the thick hide of some

demons in one strike. He would try adding some dragon bone powder when he got back, that should help.

The other elders saw that Chu Wanning didn't react, so they relaxed a little and went back to their chatter.

"The Sect Leader probably summoned all of us here today in order to pick a teacher for that Mo-gongzi, huh?"

"That's strange, why doesn't the Sect Leader teach him himself?"

"Supposedly, the little nephew's cultivation nature is incompatible with the Sect Leader's cultivation method," someone mumbled. "But even then, isn't it a bit much to gather all the elders for the young master to pick and choose from?"

Lucun Elder let out a soft sigh and brushed aside his smooth, graceful long hair, bemoaning, "My humble self feels like a cheap napa cabbage right now, laid out in the stall for little Mo-gongzi to pick."

Everyone: "……"

Could this fop please not blurt out the whole truth without a hint of finesse like this?

They waited for quite a while before the Sect Leader finally came. He walked up the thousand steps to arrive before the Heaven-Piercing Tower, a youth trailing behind him.

Chu Wanning only glanced over briefly, and didn't even bother to see clearly before looking away to continue examining his finger claw without a second glance.

Sisheng Peak's procedure for seeking apprenticeship under a teacher was well and truly unconventional. In every other sect, the teacher was high and mighty, and would rest his hand on some new disciple's head and utter, "Young man, your aptitude is satisfactory, henceforth you shall be my disciple."

The disciple wouldn't even get a chance to say "no".

Or else the teacher would wave his sleeve with a face of cold derision, and declare, "Young man, your forehead is too big, your eyes too dull, and the back of skull protrudes too much, not the proper appearance for my sect. You and I are not fated to be, I will not accept you as my disciple."

The disciple wouldn't even get a chance to prove himself before the teacher would zoom away on his sword, hightailing it outta there faster than a dog.

Things were different here on Sisheng Peak: the teacher and disciple mutually chose one another.

What did that mean?

Sisheng Peak had twenty elders. When a new disciple entered the sect, they would first spend a period of time living alongside everyone and weighing their options before delivering a letter of intent to an elder, expressing their desire to seek apprenticeship.

If the elder accepted, then everything worked out perfectly.

If the elder declined, the disciple could continue badgering until either the elder gave in or the disciple gave up.

By all appearances, Chu Wanning was exceptionally skilled and handsome to boot, so one would expect his front yard to be filled to the brim at all hours of the day with hopeful disciples relentlessly pursuing him as a teacher. But the reality was far different.

Chu Wanning's appearance was elegant, but his temper was so bad it made people's hair stand on end. Rumor had it that when he got angry, he could whip female disciples like one would male disciples, and sink his male disciples directly into the pond. Not many people were brave enough for this kind of shizun.

Thus, Yuheng Elder's residence was quiet and lonesome.

Other than the darling of the heavens Xue Meng, and Xue Meng's close friend Shi Mei, he had never accepted any other disciples.

Everyone would rather call him a respectful "Elder" than an intimate "Shizun".

Chu Wanning wore a lofty expression and insisted that he wasn't bothered by it at all. His head was lowered as he continued to tinker with the ice cold weapon in his hands, as if he couldn't care less. Everything he designed, from the sleeve-hidden weapons to the emergency whistles, were for others. The sooner he finished, the more people might avoid suffering.

So he didn't expect it at all when Mo Ran chose him without hesitation.

At the time, his brows were furrowed as he stroked the thorns on the finger claw, pondering on how to improve them and not even paying any attention to what the Sect Leader and everyone else was saying.

Without him noticing, everything had grown quiet.

Only after having thought of a method of improvement did Chu Wanning suddenly realize that the surroundings that had been buzzing with conversation a moment ago seemed a little too quiet.

So he finally moved his gaze away from the finger claw, and looked up with some impatience and incomprehension.

That was when he saw a face.

So brilliantly lit by the sun as to be nearly dazzling.

A handsome youth, head tilted back, was looking up at him. The corners of the youth's lips were curled into a faint, lazy smile, and a pair of dimples decorated his cheeks; a bit of a marketplace's smell of smoke and fire, and a bit of guileless innocence. A pair of purple-tinted black eyes stared unblinkingly at him, filled with fervor and curiosity both.

He was new and didn't know the rules, and stood so close that it was almost impudent.

Having someone appear so suddenly right in front of him, Chu Wanning was startled and reflexively stepped backwards as if burned. The back of his head met the trunk of the tree with a thump.

The youth's eyes widened slightly. "Ah…"

Chu Wanning: "……"

The youth: "……"

Chu Wanning said, "What are you doing?"

The youth grinned. “Xianjun xianjun,[50] I’ve been watching you for so long already, why won’t you pay attention to me?”

Author’s Notes:

Everyday I feel like Weiyu 🐶 is a dumb husky with a bizarre mind, while Shizun is like a pretentious and reserved on the outside but gentle on the inside samoyed.

Ah, suddenly want to change the name to 《Dumb Husky and his Samoyed Shizun》

Ch.27 This Venerable One Will Make You a Bowl of Noodles

Chu Wanning's head reeled.

It was his own fault for being too preoccupied and not keeping his guard up while at Sisheng Peak, to the point that he didn't even notice that someone had gotten so close.

What was happening? Where'd the kid come from? Ah, wait is he that Mo something…Mo what again? Mo Shao? Mo Zhu? Mo…Yu?[51]

He arranged his expression into one of "Strangers Do Not Approach" with practiced ease, quickly sweeping the startle and fluster from his phoenix eyes to be replaced with his customary lofty standoffishness.

"You——"

He was just about to open his mouth and deliver a scolding out of habit when his hand was suddenly grabbed.

Chu Wanning was flabbergasted.

All his life, no one had ever dared to casually grab him by the wrist like this. He was frozen in place for a moment, face full of gloom, with no idea how to react.

Rip his hand out, followed by a backhand slap?

…All he needed to do was yell "Molester!" and he'd be the very image of an offended lady.

Then, rip his hand out, no slap?

…Wouldn’t he seem a little too easygoing then?

Chu Wanning was still frozen with indecision when the youth grinned. “What’s this on your hand? It’s so pretty, do you teach how to make this stuff? Everyone else already introduced themselves, you’re the only one who hasn’t said anything yet, which elder are you? Ah, is your head okay? From the tree just now?”

Getting pummeled with so many questions in a row, Chu Wanning’s head wasn’t hurting before, but it was now.

His head throbbed like it was about to split open…

In his agitation, a faint golden glow began to gather in his other hand, Tianwen just about to appear. The other elders were horror-struck——was Chu Wanning out of his mind? Did he dare to whip even Mo-gongzi?

But Mo Ran grabbed that hand too.

Now both of his hands were captured by the youth. Mo Ran had no idea just how much danger he was in as he stood before Chu Wanning, holding his hands and looking up with a smiling face. “I’m Mo Ran, I don’t know anyone here, but based on face alone, I like you best. How about you be my teacher?”

No one had anticipated this turn of events, and everyone grew even more horrified; a few of the elders’ faces already looked as if they had turned to stone and cracked in half.

Xuanji Elder: “Eh?”

Pojun Elder: “Wow!”

Qisha Elder: “Oh?”

Jielu Elder: “Uh…”

Tanlang Elder: “Hah, this is hilarious.”

Lucun Elder, in his full foppish glory, twirled a strand of hair around a finger and batted his peach blossom eyes. “Aiya, the little gongzi sure is bold, truly young and courageous, to dare grope even Yuheng Elder’s ass.”

“…Could you please not say it so nauseatingly like that?” Qisha said with disdain.

Lucun gracefully rolled his eyes, humming. “Hm, I’ll say it in a more refined manner then, truly young and courageous, to dare grope even Yuheng Elder’s derrière.”

Qisha: “……” Just kill him and be done with it.

Out of all the elders, the kind and gentle Xuanji Elder was the most popular. His cultivation method was easy to learn, and he was magnanimous and upstanding, so most of Sisheng Peak’s disciples studied under him.

Chu Wanning thought that Mo Ran would be no exception. Even if he didn’t choose Xuanji, he would definitely go for the forthright and spirited Pojun; in any case, whoever he chose, it surely wouldn’t be himself.

But it was him that Mo Ran stood in front of, mere inches away, face full of intimacy and fondness, things that he was wholly unfamiliar with. He felt like he’d been designated the comic relief role out of the blue, and found himself suddenly flustered for no reason at all and at a complete loss for what to do.

Chu Wanning only knew how to deal with “respect”, “fear”, and “loathing”. Something like “fondness” was far too difficult.

He rejected Mo Ran immediately and without thinking.

Mo Ran stood in place, stunned, the pair of eyes under those long eyelashes unexpectedly dejected yet unresigned. He thought about it for a long while with his head down, then mumbled stubbornly in a small voice, “Well it’s gonna be you anyway.”

Chu Wanning: “……”

The Sect Leader watched from the side with amusement, and couldn’t resist asking with a laugh, “A-Ran, do you even know who he is?”

“How would I know, he hasn’t told me.”

“Haha, if you don’t even know who he is, then why are you so set on him?”

Mo Ran, still holding onto Chu Wanning’s hands, turned and answered with a smile, “Cause he looks the gentlest and the most easygoing of course!”

In the darkness, Chu Wanning’s eyes flew open abruptly, vision swimming.

…What the actual hell.

He wondered what exactly had been wrong with Mo Ran’s eyes back then, to find him gentle. He wasn’t alone in that, either; the entire Sisheng Peak heard about the incident, and everyone had looked at Mo Ran-gongzi with concerned expressions of “what a foolish child”.

Chu Wanning lifted a hand to press against his throbbing temple.

His shoulder hurt, his thoughts were a mess, his stomach was empty, his head was dizzy.

This nap wasn't happening.

He starfished in a daze in bed for a while before sitting up. He was just about to light a stick of incense to help calm him down when knocks came from the door again.

It was Mo Ran again.

Chu Wanning: "……"

He ignored it, didn't say get the hell in or get the hell out.

But this time, the door opened by itself.

Chu Wanning lifted his head gloomily, but the already-lit match between his fingers paused in mid-air without touching the incense, and after a while, went out by itself.

Chu Wanning spoke, "Get the hell out."

Mo Ran got the hell in.

He had a bowl of steamy noodles in his hands, freshly made.

It was simpler this time, plain noodles in pure white broth, sprinkled with chopped onions and white sesame seeds, some pork spare ribs on top, napa cabbage, and a poached egg lightly crisped around the edges.

Chu Wanning was starving, but his face remained impassive. He looked at the noodles, looked at Mo Ran, then turned his face away without saying a word.

Mo Ran set the bowl down on the table and said softly, “I had the inn’s cook make these noodles.”

Chu Wanning lowered his eyelashes.

Of course Mo Ran hadn’t made it himself.

“Try to eat some,” Mo Ran said. “This bowl isn’t spicy, and there’s no beef or pea shoots.”

Then he left, closing the door on his way out.

He felt bad about Chu Wanning’s injury.

But this was about all he could do.

Inside the room, Chu Wanning sat by the window, lost in thought, his arms crossed as he stared at that bowl of spare rib noodles from far away, until the steam disappeared, until the noodles grew cold, with not a hint of warmth left.

Only then did he finally walk over and sit down, picking up the cold, already congealed noodles with chopsticks and slowly beginning to eat.

The case of the haunting of the Chen Manor was concluded.

The next day, they picked up their black horses from the boarding stables and headed back to the sect along the same road they’d taken coming here.

All over town, from the tea stands to the food stalls, everyone in Butterfly Town was talking about what had happened with the Chen family.

In such a middling town, a scandal like this was enough to be the talk of the town for at least a year.

“Who would’ve thought that Chen-gongzi had already married Miss Luo behind closed doors, sigh , poor Miss Luo.”

“If you ask me, this wouldn’t have happened if the Chens didn’t strike it rich. You really can’t let men get rich, or all the bad waters[52] in their bellies will flood out and drown the whole city.”

A man was dissatisfied hearing that. “Chen-gongzi did nothing wrong, it was all on his dad and mom. I hope that bastard Landlord Chen’s future kids and grandkids get born without assholes.”

Someone else said, “The dead are pitiful for sure, but what about the living? Look at Chen-Yao, treasured daughter of the Yao family, she got the shortest end of the stick no matter how you look at it. That old, black-hearted Chen bitch swindled the poor girl, what should she even do now?”

“Remarry of course.”

The person rolled his eyes, scoffing. “Remarry? Would you take her?”

The peasant that got scoffed at grinned toothily, picking at the gap between his teeth while saying, “If my woman’s fine with it, then sure, why not. Miss Yao’s real pretty, I ain’t gonna mind the widow thing.”

“Puh, keep dreaming, even as second-hand goods she’s way out of your league.”

Mo Ran's ears were perked up where he sat on his horse, energetically listening over here and peering over there. If not for Chu Wanning with his eyes closed and brows furrowed, "too damn noisy" all but written on his face, Mo Ran might have even scooted over to join in on the gossip.

Riding side by side, they finally made it out of the town proper and arrived at the outskirts.

Shi Mei suddenly let out a surprised noise and pointed to the distance. "Shizun, look over there."

A large group of farmers in coarse clothes were gathered in front of the destroyed temple, busily ferrying bricks around. They seemed intent on rebuilding the temple and reconstructing the statue of the ghost mistress of ceremonies.

Shi Mei said, worried, "Shizun, the previous ghost mistress is gone, but they're making another. Will this one cultivate into a deity and cause trouble too?"

Chu Wanning said, "I don't know."

"Should we go and try to talk them out of it?"

Chu Wanning answered, "Butterfly Town's ghost marriage tradition has been around for generations already, it's not something that can be changed by anything we say. Let's leave."

Then he galloped off, clouds of dust trailing behind.

It was already evening by the time they got back to Sisheng Peak.

At the main gate, Chu Wanning instructed his disciples, “The two of you go report in at Loyalty Hall. I will go to the Discipline Court.”

Mo Ran didn’t understand. “What are you going there for?”

But worry was written plainly on Shi Mei’s face: “……”

Chu Wanning’s expression was impassive. “To receive punishment.”

The saying went that a crime was a crime, whether committed by a peasant or the emperor, but which emperor had ever actually been thrown in jail to await beheading for killing a man? It was no different here in the cultivation realm.

A transgression was a transgression whether committed by a disciple or an elder——these were just empty words in the vast majority of the sects.

In reality, an elder that committed a transgression might at most write an apology letter. Which idiot would actually go and obediently receive their round of whipping or some dozen strikes?

That was why Jielu Elder’s face was green by the time he finished listening to Chu Wanning’s confession.

“No it’s just that, Yuheng Elder, you really…you really hit the client?”

Chu Wanning replied mildly, “Mn.”

“You’re really too…”

Chu Wanning looked up to shoot him a glare. Jielu Elder shut up.

“In accordance with the rules, the punishment for this transgression is two hundred strikes, three days of protracted kneeling in YanLuo Hall, and

three months of confinement," Chu Wanning stated. "I have no disputes, and I am prepared to receive the punishment."

Jielu Elder: "……"

He glanced left and right, then hooked his finger. The doors to the Discipline Court closed with a thud, leaving only the two of them standing face to face in the silence.

Chu Wanning said, "What is the meaning of this?"

"How to say… Yuheng Elder, it's not like you don't know, the rules may be rules, but they don't really apply to you. The doors are closed, this stays between you and I, what say you we just let it slide? If I actually strike you, and the Sect Leader finds out, he'll have my old hide."

Chu Wanning didn't feel like wasting his breath on him, so he simply said, "I hold others to the rules, and I will hold myself equally to the same."

Then he knelt down right there in front of the hall, facing the plaque above the door that read "Discipline".

"Carry out the punishment."

Author's Notes:

About the creation of the new book title.

Me: I want to change the title to 《Dumb Husky and His Samoyed Shizun》.

Friend: …Samoyed? Aren't samoyeds smiling angels? Is Shizun a smiling angel? Can he smile?

Me: …Guess that makes a lot of sense.

Friend: Make it cat.

Then it was changed to 《Dumb Husky and his White Cat Shizun》, after typing these words, my mind kept playing, Oh Oh Oh, Black Cat Detective, Oh Oh Oh, Black Cat Detective~[53]

In the future we can make animal personification mini theatres~

Big white cat Shizun, japanese spitz Shi Mei, husky Mo Moran, little peacock Xue Meng.

Ch.28 This Venerable One's Mind Is in a Bit of a Mess

The news that Yuheng Elder was being punished for breaking the rules spread as if it had sprouted a pair of wings; it didn't even take until the next morning, practically everyone in the sect found out that very night.

Two hundred strikes would probably beat an ordinary person to death. Even for a cultivator, it would still be quite unbearable.

Xue Meng jumped to his feet when he heard. "What?! Shizun went to the Discipline Court?"

"Young master, please hurry and talk to the Sect Leader, Shizun is already injured, how could he possibly endure two hundred strikes?"

Xue Meng was so anxious he was just about to lose it. "My dad? That won't do , he's still not back from Taxue Palace yet; a message by bird won't arrive until tomorrow at the earliest. Why didn't you guys stop Shizun?"

Mo Ran and Shi Mei exchanged a glance.

Stop Chu Wanning?

Who in this entire world was capable of that?

"Damn it, I'm gonna go after him right now." Xue Meng dashed off toward the Discipline Court in a hurry. He hadn't even entered the courtyard yet when he spotted a group of Jielu Elder's disciples crowded around the doors to the main hall, whispering amongst themselves.

"What're you all doing standing there? Get out of my way! Move!"

“Young master!”

“Ah, the young master is here.”

“Make way for the young master.”

The disciples quickly parted to the sides to let Xue Meng through. The doors of Clearsky Hall stood open. Chu Wanning knelt inside with his back straight and eyes closed, not speaking a word. Jielu Elder, holding a metal rod, was reading the rules of Sisheng Peak aloud, each rule accompanied by one brutal strike of the metal rod to Chu Wanning’s back.

“The ninety first rule of this sect: do not injure the innocent, do not use cultivator techniques against the common people. Under the rod, do you have any complaints?”

“No complaints.”

“The ninety second rule of this sect: do not act rashly of one’s own accord, do not indulge in self-gratification. Under the rod, do you have any complaints?”

“No complaints.”

Jielu Elder did not dare to go easy in the punishment. Ninety-some strikes and Chu Wanning’s white robes were already soaked through with blood.

Xue Meng held Chu Wanning in the highest esteem. His eyes became instantly bloodshot at the sight, and he called out at the top of his lungs, “Shizun!”

Chu Wanning pretended not to hear; his eyes remained closed, a slight furrow between his brows.

Jielu Elder glanced over to the door and said quietly, “Yuheng Elder, the young master is here.”

“I’m not deaf, I heard.” Blood trickled out from the corner of his lips, but he still did not look up. “He’s just being a noisy child, pay him no mind.”

Jielu Elder sighed. “…Yuheng, is this truly necessary?”

“It can’t be helped that my disciples are always being disobedient.” Chu Wanning spoke mildly. “If I do not receive my due punishment today, how will I have the face to discipline anyone else in the future?”

“……”

“Please continue.”

“ Sigh … ” Jielu Elder looked at Chu Wanning’s pale, delicate neck, exposed above the open collars, drooping gently down like thin mist, and couldn’t help but suggest, “Then at least go easier?"

“…That would be no different from deception,” Chu Wanning said. “Don’t worry, it’s just two hundred strikes, I can handle it.”

“Yuheng Elder…”

“Jielu, there is no need to say any more, continue.”

The metal rod fell once again.

Even Xue Meng’s voice became distorted. “Jielu Elder! Are you still not fucking stopping? Have you no regard for your young master? That’s my Shizun you’re hitting!! My Shizun!!!”

Jielu Elder could only force himself to pretend not to hear.

Xue Meng's lungs were about to explode from anger. "Have you gone deaf, you shitty old man? Your young master is ordering you to stop! If, if you dare to hit him again, I, I, I——"

He got stuck on "I" and couldn't think of what to say. He was only a fifteen year old youth after all, "darling of the heavens" or not, his strength and status were still far below the elders. In the end, red faced, he could only choke out an obstinate——

"I'll tell my dad!!!"

Jielu Elder: "……"

Chu Wanning let out a nearly imperceptible sigh.

Ninety seven strikes. Ninety eight strikes. Ninety nine strikes. One hundred strikes…

Even the fabric became ripped from the strikes. The blood was appallingly red.

Xue Meng couldn't handle any more. Eyes red with panic, he made to recklessly charge into the hall, but Chu Wanning suddenly opened his eyes and brandished a hand, and a barrier immediately split the space in two, blocking off the door and forcing Xue Meng back away several steps, falling to the ground.

Chu Wanning coughed blood, a pair of narrowed phoenix eyes harsh as lightning.

"Disgraceful. Go back where you came from!"

"Shizun!"

Chu Wanning said harshly, “Since when could Sisheng Peak’s young master order Jielu Elder to bend the rules? Hurry and get lost!”

Xue Meng stared wide-eyed at him, a shimmer of wetness in his eyes.

Mo Ran stood to the side stroking his chin, the corners of his lips still curled. “Aiya, oh no, the little phoenix is gonna cry.”

At these words, Xue Meng whipped his head around and glared at Mo Ran. His eyes were rimmed in red, but he stubbornly refused to let the tears fall.

He didn’t complain, and didn’t talk back.

Only crawled up from the ground and dusted himself off with head lowered and teeth gritted, then knelt facing Clearsky Hall. “Shizun, this disciple was wrong.”

Chu Wanning was still enduring the strikes, back held ramrod straight and never once bending, but his face was pale and there was a sheen of cold sweat on his forehead.

Xue Meng continued stubbornly, “But I’m not leaving. I’m going to keep Shizun company.”

Saying so, he knelt and refused to get up.

Mo Ran’s eyes were about to roll out of their sockets. Xue Meng, Xue Ziming, darling of the heavens, would only lower himself to this extent in front of Chu Wanning. He was a phoenix to everyone else, but a quail to Shizun. If Mo Ran wasn’t so certain that Xue Meng had no interest in men, he’d probably wonder if he had a crush on Chu Wanning, to be so hell-bent

and without regret. If Shizun were to slap him, the little quail would humbly turn the other cheek.

Alright, alright.

Brown-noser extraordinaire.

His heart felt contempt, but his mouth tasted sour[54] for some reason. Mo Ran glared at Xue Meng for a while, growing more agitated the longer he looked, thinking that he couldn't let him be the only one to show devotion.

Chu Wanning already didn't like him, with this trick that Xue Meng was pulling, wouldn't he be even more biased in the future?

So he felt as well, next to Xue Meng.

"I'll keep Shizun company too."

Naturally, Shi Mei followed suit as well, and all three disciples knelt outside, waiting. The other elders' disciples, hearing the news, all found some excuse or another to come to the Discipline Court and watch the show.

"Heavens, how could it be Yuheng Elder…"

"I heard he beat up a common person in a fit of rage."

"Ah! So scary?"

"Shh, quiet, if Yuheng Elder hears you'll be next on the whipping block!"

Someone else: "But why is the young master kneeling?"

"Mo-gongzi too…"

Mo Ran was handsome and charming, and had earned the favor of countless female disciples in his daily life. Quite a few of the onlookers felt sorry for him, whispering, “Poor Mo-gongzi… what to do, should we go make a plea on his behalf?”

“We probably shouldn’t meddle in their master-disciple affairs. You can go if you have the guts, but I don’t wanna die yet. Did you already forget that one shijie who got whipped some hundred times by Yuheng Elder…”

“……”

The two hundred strikes finished.

The barrier was finally withdrawn.

Xue Meng scurried up from the ground and stumbled frantically into Clearsky Hall. When he got close and saw Chu Wanning’s condition, he let out a furious “AH” and turned to grab Jielu Elder by the collars, screaming, “You shitty old man! Don’t you fucking know to at least hold back!!!”

“Xue Ziming.” Chu Wanning’s eyes were closed, blood-stained lips opening and closing, his voice hoarse but commanding.

“……”

Xue Meng’s joints cracked audibly as he let Jielu Elder go and shoved him aside. Mo Ran arrived too at this moment, still smiling, thinking that Jielu Elder would have definitely held back on his strikes in consideration of Chu Wanning’s status. But that smile froze abruptly on his face when he looked down at Chu Wanning’s condition.

Had he seriously not told Jielu Elder about the injury on his shoulder?!

The majority of those two hundred strikes had landed unsparingly on that shoulder.

New wounds on top of the old.

Chu Wanning, you…

Have you lost your mind?!

Mo Ran's pupils contracted, a tidal wave of intense detestation washing over him.

He didn't know what exactly it was that he detested, or just what he was so angry about, only that a raging inferno was soaring through his stomach and burning through all of his organs. He was used to Chu Wanning being tormented to the breaking point at his own hands as he crushed his dignity and defiled his purity. But Mo Ran couldn't stand Chu Wanning being bruised and scarred at the hands of another!

Maybe it was because he couldn't forget what happened in the previous lifetime, but Mo Ran subconsciously felt like this person belonged to him, for him to let live or let die, to be loathed or to be hated, all of that belonged to him.

He originally didn't mind Chu Wanning being punished, thinking that he was an elder so the two hundred strikes definitely wouldn't be with any real force.

Or at the very least, that the strikes would avoid the yet-unhealed wounds on his shoulder.

But Chu Wanning actually hadn't spoken up about it! He hadn't spoken up about it! What was this crazy person being so stubborn about? What was

he forcing himself through all this for? What the fuck was this stupid idiot trying to prove?!?

Head a complete mess, Mo Ran lifted a hand to go support Chu Wanning, but Xue Meng beat him to it and was already helping him up.

"……" Mo Ran's hand paused in mid air, then lowered back down after a while.

He watched them walking away, Xue Meng supporting Chu Wanning, an unknown feeling in his chest.

He wanted to follow, but couldn't move his feet.

Everything that had happened in the previous lifetime was in the past.

Now, Chu Wanning was only his Shizun.

None of the muddled, hateful, gentle entanglements between them had happened.

He shouldn't be having these thoughts. It didn't matter to him who Chu Wanning got hit by, who he was supported by, who he spent time with, or even if he got killed by someone. None of it had anything to do with him.

Shi Mei walked up beside him. "Come on, let's go with them and take a look."

"I'll pass, Xue Meng has it covered. I can't help anyway, and too many people will just add to the mess." Mo Ran's expression didn't change, but his mind was in a bit of a mess.

He really, truly could not understand what it was that he felt right now.

Was it hate?

Author’s Notes:

Bonus character card, #2

Xue Meng

Courtesy name: Ziming

Nickname: This person hasn’t died yet.

Occupation: His father is the king of the mountain, he is the young master of the mountain king.

To put it simply: Child of an entrepreneur.

Social Appearance: A cultivation talent that has yet to finish his apprenticeship.

To put it simply: Unemployed young adult.

Current favorite: Someone to boast about him, praise him, boast about him to death.

Favorite food: Hotpot, the abnormally spicy kind.

Dislike: No one to boast about him.

Height: At the moment 169, after he’s fully grown 178

Ch.29 This Venerable One Doesn't Want You to Die

That night, Mo Ran lay in his bed on Sisheng Peak with his hands behind his head, staring at the roof beams above, completely unable to sleep.

The events of the past played out in his mind, one by one, until finally, in the end, every bit, each fragment was Chu Wanning's face, elegant to the point of being cold.

If truth be told, Mo Ran never understood just how he felt about this person.

The first time he'd seen him had been under the flowering tree in front of the Heaven-Piercing Tower. He was wearing a loose robe with wide sleeves, the only one out of the twenty elders who was not dressed in the fetching silver-blue armor of Sisheng Peak.

That day, fiddling absentmindedly with the armored claw on his hand with his head lowered, his profile had looked focused yet gentle, like a white cat bathed in warm, golden sunlight.

Mo Ran had stared from afar, and couldn't look away.

His first impression of Chu Wanning had been positively glowing.

But it had not held up against the negligence, the punishments, and the cold harshness that had followed, one after the other. That white cat's sharp teeth and claws had left him covered in wounds.

He'd been barely hanging onto life by a thread when Uncle had saved him from the sea of fire. He'd thought that, once at Sisheng Peak, he would have a shizun to treat him with compassion, to care for him with sincerity.

But however hard he tried to please, however much work he put in, it was as if Chu Wanning saw none of it. Conversely, the smallest mistakes earned him a round of ruthless lashings, and he came out raw and bleeding every time.

Later, he learned that Chu Wanning looked down on him from the bottom of his heart——

“Deficient by nature, beyond remedy.”

Was this what that person standing under the flowering tree, robes white as snow, thought of him?

He’d once regarded Chu Wanning as the cold moon in the ninth heaven, had wholeheartedly revered him, adored him. But what was he to that cold moon, really?

A disciple he had no choice but to accept.

A lowlife who was lowly to the bone.

A no-good child raised in a brothel, a filthy reprobate.

Mo Ran always laughed it off like he didn’t care, but he’d slowly begun to hate Chu Wanning, a kind of hatred mixed with an aggressive unwillingness to yield.

He refused to accept it.

Ever since, holding onto the resentment he felt that grew by the day, he’d kept provoking Chu Wanning in attempts to get his attention, his praise, his astonishment.

During that time, if Shi Mei had praised him with “well done”, he would’ve flown into the sky with happiness.

But if Chu Wanning had been willing to give him a “not bad”, he would’ve gladly given his life.

But Chu Wanning never praised him.

No matter how hard he tried, how diligent he was, how well he did, that aloof person never gave more than a slight nod before turning his face away.

Mo Ran was about to lose it.

Heaven knew how much he wanted to grab Chu Wanning by the face back then and make him turn around, force him to look at himself, to see himself, to take that “deficient by nature, beyond remedy” back!

But he could only kneel before Chu Wanning like a docile stray dog, lowering his head and saying with the utmost respect, “This disciple will keep Shizun’s teachings in mind.”

In front of Chu Wanning, Mo Weiyu was lowly to the bone.

Even if he was a “young master”, he was still worthless.

He finally understood that someone like Chu Wanning would never look at him with anything but contempt.

Even later, after many things had happened.

Mo Ran took over Sisheng Peak, then took aim at the top and became the first ever emperor of the cultivation world. Underneath his dark banner,

everyone trembled with fear and dared not even speak his name in more than the quietest of whispers. No one remembered his stain, his unmentionable origins——

Henceforth, there was no more Mo Weiyu, only Taxian-Jun.[55]

Taxian-Jun.

Everyone hated him, hated him to the extreme. Monstrous Mo Weiyu, may he be damned to eternity without rebirth or redemption![56]

TaxianJunMoWeiyuTaxianJunMoWeiyuTaxianJun——

…Ta. Xian. Jun.

But so what if they were scared? Sisheng Peak still reverberated with the rumble of voices shouting in unison as thousands prostrated before him in front of Wushan Palace, all those heads bowing to him in veneration.[57]

“Long Live Emperor Taxian-Jun.”

He felt fantastic.

Until he saw Chu Wanning’s face in the crowd.

Chu Wanning’s cultivation had already been abolished by then. He was tied up below the hall, reduced to a mere prisoner beneath the steps.

Mo Ran had already decided to execute him. But he didn’t want Chu Wanning to have a quick and easy death, so he’d shackled his limbs, cut a small gash in the artery of his neck, and enchanted the wound to not congeal. Blood trickled out drop by drop, life drained away bit by bit.

The sun blazed overhead. The coronation ceremony had been underway for a while, and Chu Wanning's blood should have been nearly drained.

With this person's death, Mo Ran would finally be freed from his past; thus, he purposefully arranged to have him bled out at his coronation.

This way, when he became the master of the cultivation world, Chu Wanning would be a lifeless corpse.

And everything that happened in the past would be wiped clean.

Perfect.

But why, even at the gates of death, was this person still so indifferent? Still so elegant as to be cold…his face was entirely without color, but his expression was still impassive. When he looked at Taxian-Jun, there was neither praise nor fear.

Only revulsion, disdain, and——

Mo Ran thought he must have gone mad. Or else Chu Wanning must have gone mad.

And a hint of pity.

Chu Wanning, who was on the verge of death, who had been defeated by him, pitied him! He actually pitied him, he who stood at the apex above all else, who held boundless power. He, he actually——he actually dared!!!

The rage that had piled up over more than ten years finally drove Mo Ran mad. Right there at Loyalty Hall—already renamed Wushan Palace by then—in front of the thousands of people gathered there, surrounded by the

thundering of their acclamation and flattery, he abruptly stood up, black robes billowing, and walked down the steps.

In front of all those people, he grabbed Chu Wanning by the jaw, a sweet yet menacing smile on his twisted face.

“Shizun, today is a happy occasion for this disciple, why aren’t you celebrating?”

The thousands of people fell instantly into a deathly silence.

Chu Wanning was neither deferential nor domineering, his expression cold as ice as he said, “I have no disciple like you.”

Mo Ran burst out laughing, the sound of his unrestrained laughter circling the stoa of the golden hall like so many vultures.

“Shizun is so heartless, this Venerable One is disappointed.” He laughed as he spoke, voice resounding. “You have no disciple like me? Who taught me my cultivation then? Who taught me my martial skills? And my cold-blooded ruthlessness——who taught me that?! And the whip scars all over my body that still will not fade——let me ask you, who gave me those!”

He stopped smiling, voice suddenly vicious, a cold light in his eyes.

“Chu Wanning! Are you that ashamed of having a disciple like me? Are my bones too lowly or is it my blood that’s too filthy? Let me ask you, Chu Wanning, let me ask you——what does ‘deficient by nature, beyond remedy’ mean?”

He was going out of his mind, voice twisting as he bellowed.

“You’ve never seen me as your disciple, never thought anything of me! But I——but I once——really did see you as my teacher, really did respect you, adore you! Why did you treat me like this? Why did you never spare me so much as a single word of praise, why is it that no matter what I did, I could never get even the slightest bit of approval from you?!”

Chu Wanning’s entire body shuddered, face growing even paler.

Those phoenix eyes widened slightly as he stared at Mo Ran. His lips moved, as if wanting to say something, but nothing came out in the end.

Everyone who used to be at Sisheng Peak was gone by now; the last two left from those bygone days stared at one another just like this.

Mo Ran seemed to finally calm down in the uncomfortable silence that followed. He closed his eyes, and when they opened again, he once again wore that detestable smile that made people shiver.

He said gently and cordially, “Shizun, haven’t you always looked down on me, always thought I was lowly?”

He paused, gaze sweeping across the thousands kneeling before his palace like so many crouching dogs, all in acknowledgement of him as the overlord of the cultivation world, above mortal affairs.

Mo Ran smiled. “How about now? Before you die, let me ask you again. In this world, just who is the lowly one, and who is the respectable one? Who’s the one stepping on whom? Who won in the end? Who lost?”

Chu Wanning’s eyelashes were lowered, as if still lost in Mo Ran’s confession from a moment ago. Finally, Mo Ran gripped his jaw and forcefully tilted his face up.

But in that instant, Mo Ran suddenly froze.

It was the first time he'd ever seen regret on Chu Wanning's face.

That expression was far too unfamiliar; Mo Ran abruptly pulled back his hand, as if burned.

"You…"

Chu Wanning's expression was pained, as if silently enduring some kind of agony that dug into the bones, some sort of anguish that tore apart the organs.

His voice was quiet.

It floated in the wind, heard by Mo Ran alone.

He said, "I'm sorry, Mo Ran. It was this master's fault…"

Suddenly the world fell silent. The sound of the wind, the rustling of the leaves, the billowing of robes, all of it faded away.

There was only Chu Wanning's face looking up at him. It was the only thing in the entire world that was clear, all that he could see.

Much should have passed through his mind at the time. Glee, smugness, ecstasy.

But none of it did.

There was but one strange thought in his mind then, and only one——

When had he gotten…so much taller than Chu Wanning?

A lot of time really had passed.

And many things had changed.

Mo Ran's lips moved haltingly in a whisper. "What…did you just say?"

But Chu Wanning only smiled, a smile that Mo Ran knew yet also did not, and in that pair of phoenix eyes he saw the reflection of his own twisted expression.

Then those eyes slowly closed, and Chu Wanning fell backwards——Mo Ran gripped his shoulders in that same instant, his crazed, angry bellow like that of a beast falling to pieces.

"Chu Wanning! Chu Wanning what did you say? Say it again!!"

The person in his arms did not reply, lips pale as pear blossoms. That handsome face had always looked so aloof, but now, moments before death, it was frozen into a sad smile, a slight curve at the corners of the lips, just like the face in Mo Ran's memories of when he'd first seen him in front of the Heaven-Piercing Tower.

A small, gentle smile.

"Chu Wanning!!"

That gentleness shattered, haitang flowers withered and scattered all over the ground.

He finally got what he wanted, treading Shizun's life underfoot as he climbed to the top of the world.

But what was this? What was this!!

The anguish and hatred in his chest only grew worse, what the fuck was this ?

A faint black fog gathered in Mo Ran's hand as he quickly tapped Chu Wanning's meridians, sealing the last remains of his life.

"Were you hoping to die just like this?" Mo Ran's eyes bulged, his expression vicious, "I'm not done with you, Chu Wanning, I still have a score to settle with you, I'm not done! I'm not fucking done yet! If you don't say it to me clearly——I'll crush Xue Meng, Kunlun Taxue Palace, and all the people left that you wanted to protect!! I'll rip them all to shreds!! You better think again!!"

Forget about the ceremony, screw the thousands of people still kneeling there.

He changed his mind. He didn't want Chu Wanning to die anymore.

He hated him, he wanted Chu Wanning to live——live…

He picked up that person who had lost too much blood in one sweeping motion and, evoking his qinggong,[58] jumped onto the tall overhanging eaves in one leap, robes fluttering like a lone eagle unfurling its wings. He flew rapidly across one roof after another, headed straight for the southern peak——straight for the Red Lotus Pavilion, where Chu Wanning had once lived.

That place had an abundance of spiritual energy and numerous medicinal herbs. He was going to bring Chu Wanning back.

A person must be alive to be hated; if that person died, there would no longer be a reason to hate them. Had he been out of his mind earlier,

wanting to kill Chu Wanning with his own hands?

If Chu Wanning died, then what did he even have left in this world…

Lying in bed, the taste of past memories on his tongue.

It was already late at night, but he couldn't sleep at all.

Mo Ran got up, washed his face, got dressed, and with a lantern in hand, headed toward Yanluo Hall.

Chu Wanning had definitely just carelessly bandaged his wounds before going there for his punishment by kneeling. Mo Ran knew how he was, stubborn to a fault and unyielding to boot, never giving even an iota of consideration to whether his own body could take it, and Xue Meng couldn't stop him even if he tried.

Sure enough, a small lamp could be seen from outside Yanluo Hall, burning by itself, candle wax dripping slowly.

Chu Wanning knelt with his back facing the door, figure straight and upright like a pine.

Mo Ran regretted it a little when he saw this figure. It was the middle of the night, what was he doing? Coming here to see Chu Wanning? Had he gone mad?

But he was already here, and it would feel silly to just turn around and leave again.

He thought for a moment, and settled on a compromise. Lightly, he set the lantern down by his feet. He wouldn't leave, but he wouldn't go in either.

Standing outside the window, he propped his elbows up on the frame, rested his cheeks in his hands, and stared at Chu Wanning from far away.

The copper bells hanging from the corners of the roof swayed gently, and the sweet fragrance of the flowers and plants filled the night air.

The two of them—one standing, one kneeling—separated by a red lattice window, separated by the empty silence of the hall.

If this had been before the rebirth, Mo Ran would have had the authority to stride into the hall and order Chu Wanning to stop reflecting and go back to rest.

If Chu Wanning refused, he would have had the capacity to seal the movement of his limbs and forcefully carry him off.

But right now, he had neither the authority nor the capacity.

He wasn't even as tall as Chu Wanning.

Mo Ran's head was all messed up. He watched that person from outside the window, but the person inside never noticed. He couldn't see Chu Wanning's face, and Chu Wanning couldn't see his.

And so the white cat knelt all night, never turning around.

And so the dumb dog stood all night, never once leaving.

Author's Notes:

Once upon a time there was a little puppy. He was dirty and stupid, so nobody liked him, and thus he could only drift around here and there.

One day, the little puppy was found by his uncle, and was carried back to his nest. The new nest was warm and spacious, the little puppy was very happy about this. Especially the big white cat that was curled up on the cushion sleeping, he looked so gentle. The little puppy howled with an awoo, and joyfully burrowed himself into the white cat's fluff.

However, when awake, the big white cat was very different from his imagination. He always watched the little puppy with icy gaze, likewise ignored the puppy's whimpering affection. When he was unhappy, he wouldn't even remember to retract his claws before swatting the puppy across the face.

Slowly, the little puppy grew up. The big white cat gradually became a small white cat right in front of his eyes.

The big dog wanted to teach the white cat a lesson. And so, he bit into the little white cat's throat, then he proudly trod the ball of snow white under his foot.

He'd originally thought the other animal hard as a rock, but he now suddenly realized this white cat's body was of such softness. He couldn't help but to remember the night when he'd first entered his new nest, when he'd hidden and fallen into a slumber in the warmth and softness of this kitty's fluff.

However he would never find out, that night, the white cat opened his glass-like eyes.

Where had this little thing come from? How dirty…

The white cat thought. And then he used his spiked pink tongue, and quietly groomed the little puppy's fur clean.

The puppy stirred as he was groomed, bleary eyed, and thought that this was all a dream. He dreamed that his drifting life had finally come to end, and there was a big cat that treated him with much, much kindness.

Ch.30 This Venerable One Does Not Want to Eat Tofu[59]

“Hey hey, did you guys hear yet? Yuheng Elder’s gonna be kneeling at YanLuo Hall for three days as punishment for breaking the rules.”

Morning classes the next day, the disciples were gathered at the Platform of Sin and Virtue to meditate. The disciples were all rather young, teens and twenty-somethings; something like sitting in meditation, heart at peace like still water, was an impossible task for them, and they chitter-chattered in hushed voices as soon as the teacher looked away.

The news of Chu Wanning getting punished spread like wildfire.

The disciples who witnessed it yesterday shared the gossip without reserve.

“Wow, how do you not know about it? Ohh…… had to go collect night dew flowers in the mountain with Lucun Elder yesterday huh? Well——let me tell you what you missed! Last night at Clearsky Hall, blood splattered the ground, utter carnage! Yuheng Elder took over two hundred strikes! Over two hundred! And every hit was brutal too, totally ruthless!”

That disciple punctuated every sentence with an exaggerated expression, quite pleased with himself amidst the gasps of the shidi and shimei gathered around him.

“Can you even imagine two hundred-something strikes of the rod? Even a big sturdy man might not survive that, much less Yuheng Elder. He passed out right then and there! That young master of ours nearly lost his shit, he ran right in there and started brawling with Jielu Elder, wouldn’t let him touch so much as a hair on Yuheng Elder, man what a scene that was——”

Face scrunched up like a meatbun in animated excitement, he held up a finger and wagged it in conclusion: “Tsk tsk tsk.”

A little shimei paled immediately: “Oh no! Yuheng Elder fainted?”

“The young master seriously fought with Jielu Elder?”

“No wonder Yuheng Elder wasn’t at morning classes today…… that’s awful…… which rule did he break though?”

“I heard he beat up a client in a fit of rage.”

“……”

The idle gossip drifted into Xue Meng’s ears now and again. The young master of Sisheng Peak inherited his Shizun’s terrible temper, but unfortunately for him, everyone at the Platform of Sin and Virtue—not just one or two people—was chattering about Yuheng Elder getting punished; the clamor ruffled his feathers but he could do nothing about it.

The vein on Xue Meng’s forehead throbbed incessantly, while Mo Ran yawned non-stop, having not slept a wink all night.

Xue Meng had no other outlet, so he grumbled spitefully at Mo Ran: “Morning is the most important time of the day, what are you doing being a lazy mutt first thing in the morning! Is this how Shizun taught you?”

“Hah?” Mo Ran, bleary-eyed, yawned again, “Xue Meng are you that bored or something, Shizun lecturing me is one thing, but who the hell are you? Show your older cousin some respect you cheeky brat.”

Xue Meng, venomously: “My older cousin is a dog, but hey, if you insist!”

Mo Ran laughed: “What a bad child, being rude to your big bro like this, Shizun would be so disappointed if he knew.”

“How do you even have the nerve to bring up Shizun! Why didn’t you stop him from going to the Discipline Court yesterday?”

“Mengmeng, that’s Shizun you’re talking about, Yuheng of the Night Sky, Beidou Immortal? I’d like to see you stop him.”

Xue Meng exploded with rage, eyebrows drawn together in anger as he leapt to his feet and drew his sword: “The fuck you just call me?!!”

Mo Ran grinned, cheek in hand: “Mengmeng, be a good boy and sit back down.”

Xue Meng roared: “Mo Weiyu, I’m going to kill you!!”

Caught between the two and their routine bickering, Shi Mei let out a long-suffering sigh and rubbed his temples, trying to focus on his book instead: “Fill the vessel day and night; the spiritual core shall be formed in time. The heavenly order is absolute; life and death shall remain separated as the stars of Shen and Shang……”[60]

Three days passed in a flash. Chu Wanning completed his punishment by kneeling in reflection.

In accordance with the rules, next was three months of confinement, during which he cannot leave Sisheng Peak, and must perform odd jobs like helping out with the chores at Mengpo Hall, cleaning the pillars on Naihe Bridge, sweeping the stairs at the gate, and other such.

Jielu Elder fretted: “Yuheng Elder, to be honest, I think you should just skip this part. You are an eminent cultivation master,[61] after all, things like

washing the dishes and wiping the floor…… are truly beneath you.” He tactfully opted not to voice the rest of his thoughts——

Most importantly, this old man really doubts you even know how to do basic functions like sweep the floor, cook a meal, or wash clothes!

Chu Wanning, on the other hand, went to report in at Mengpo Hall without even a hint of doubt in his own abilities.

Everyone at Mengpo Hall, from the attendants to the supervisor, all turned pale in fright and alarm upon hearing that Chu Wanning was coming to do chores as punishment, as though a formidable foe cometh.

Chu Wanning arrived, white robes floating.

His handsome face was calm and composed, completely devoid of any expressions. Add a cloud beneath his feet and a horsetail whisk in his arm, and he would look no different from the immortals in paintings.

The Mengpo Hall supervisor felt exceedingly awkward and uneasy about having to use such a beautiful man for things like washing veggies and cooking.

But Chu Wanning, totally unaware of his beautiful man status, simply stepped into the kitchen. The people working inside couldn’t help but take a step back as his cold gaze swept over them.

“.....” Chu Wanning got straight to the point, “What should I do?”

The supervisor fiddled sheepishly with the edge of his clothing and thought about it for a while before carefully saying: “Would the Elder mind washing the vegetables?”

Chu Wanning: “Sure.”

The supervisor let out a sigh of relief. Originally, he really didn’t think Chu Wanning’s elegant hands were suited for grunt work and that he might be unwilling to do things such as cleaning. However, all the other work that didn’t involve getting dirty required some level of skill, and he was worried that Chu Wanning would not be able to manage the tasks well. Seeing that Chu Wanning agreed to wash the vegetables so candidly, he thought he had no more need to worry.

As it turned out, this supervisor was too naive.

There is a small, clear stream in front of Mengpo Hall. Chu Wanning, hugging a basket of deep green cabbage, went up to the stream and rolled his sleeves up to start washing them.

Since this area belonged to Xuanji Elder, his disciples would occasionally pass by. When they saw that Chu Wanning was actually there washing vegetables, they were all shaken to the point of not being able to do anything but stammer out incomplete sentences. After rubbing their eyes three or four times and confirming, yes, their eyes were not mistaken, they stuttered out, “Y-Yuheng Elder , m-m-morning.”

Chu Wanning glanced up. “Morning.”

The disciples of Xuanji Elder shook in place and then fled frantically.

“.....”

Chu Wanning didn’t bother wasting his time with them and just focused on his cabbage, rinsing and then throwing them into the basket.

He washed with utmost seriousness, carefully peeling the cabbage open leaf by leaf and painstakingly washing each one over and over. What resulted from this method was that, by the time noon came around, the basket of cabbage still had yet to be washed.

The attendants waited in the kitchen, pacing back and forth in distress. “What should we do? If he doesn’t come back, neither will the cabbage; how are we going to make sautéed beef and greens ?”

The supervisor looked at how high the sun was in the sky at this point and said, “Forget it, don’t wait anymore; just change the dish to braised beef.”

And so, by the time Chu Wanning returned, Mengpo Hall’s beef was already stewing in a savory pot and absorbing all of the rich flavors. There was clearly no more need for cabbage. Chu Wanning cradled the cabbage he worked so long on in his arms and frowned unhappily, saying, “Why did you have me wash cabbage if you weren’t even going to use it?”

The supervisor broke out into a cold sweat, grabbing some paper to wipe his forehead with. In his panic, he said words that he would end up regretting forever: “That’s because, we were hoping the Elder would make a pot of tofu and cabbage stew!”

Chu Wanning held his cabbage expressionlessly, saying nothing but contemplating in silence. “.....”

The supervisor added hurriedly, “If the Elder does not want to, that’s absolutely fine — ”

Before he could finish, Chu Wanning bluntly interjected, “Where is the tofu?”

“.....Yuheng Elder, do...you know how to cook?”

“I’m not completely ignorant of it. I can try.”

When noon came, the disciples sauntered into Mengpo Hall as they usually did, cheerful and talkative. They found their places in groups of three to five, and went up to the counter for their meals.

The food had always been delicious and rich; they didn’t expect today to be any different.

The braised beef had the perfect fattiness, the savoury shredded pork was rich in color and fragrance, the farmer pork strips were golden and crispy, and the peppered fish was a beautiful and appetizing red. The disciples all rushed in to line up to grab their favorite foods, hoping the chef would give them an extra sweet and sour rib, or add some gravy or chili oil onto their rice.

The fastest in line were always the disciples of Lucun Elder. The youngster in front sported a huge zit on his face, but still eagerly anticipated his mapo tofu. He gingerly carried his tray to the end of the line and said, without even looking up, “Chef, I want a bowl of tofu.”

The chef’s elegant and pale fingers handed him a generous serving of tofu.

However, it wasn’t the mapo tofu he was used to. Instead, it was a bowl of some black substance, an indiscernible mass of abomination.

The disciple stared in alarm. “What the hell is this?”

“Tofu and cabbage stew.”

Mengpo Hall started to fill with murmuring. The disciple neglected to take time to recognize the voice of the person who replied, saying angrily, “Were you trying to make some kind of immortality potion?! In what world is this thing tofu and cabbage stew?! I don’t want this, take it back!”

In the middle of his tirade, he looked up to glare at the chef, but as soon as he saw who it was standing behind the counter, the disciple shrieked in terror and almost knocked over the entire tray.

“Yu, Yuheng Elder!”

“Mn.”

The disciple was nearly in tears. “No, I...that is...I didn’t mean that, just now… I…”

“If you won’t eat it, hand it back,” Chu Wanning said utterly expressionlessly. “Waste not.”

The disciple robotically picked up the bowl and stiffly handed it to Chu Wanning, then awkwardly shuffled away.

By now, everyone knew that Yuheng Elder stood at the end of the counter, so the once-lively Mengpo Hall descended into silence.

Like dogs being pulled along by their scruff, the disciples stood properly in line and filled their plates in a panic. They walked deferentially to the end of the counter, stammered out broken greetings to the elder, and then ran off as fast as they could.

“Greetings, Yuheng Elder.”

“Mn.”

“Good day, Yuheng Elder.”

“Good day.”

“Thank you for your trouble, Yuheng Elder.”

“.....”

The disciples were all respectful and cautious to the extreme, so Chu Wanning accepted all of their nervous greetings...but not one of them asked for the tofu and cabbage stew in his pot.

Slowly, the line grew shorter and shorter, and the food in front of all the other chefs was almost gone. Only the pot in front of Chu Wanning was filled to the brim, the food inside gone cold, and still no one wanted any part of it.

Chu Wanning’s face betrayed nothing, but he felt a some kind of way in his heart. He’d worked hard to wash it for the entire morning…

At this time, his three disciples walked in. Xue Meng, dressed in his usual silver-blue light armor uniform , came over energetically. He happily sidled up to him and said, “Shizun! How are you doing? Do your wounds still hurt?”

“No,” Chu Wanning said calmly.

“Then, then that’s good,” Xue Meng replied.

Chu Wanning glanced at him and said, suddenly, “You want to eat tofu?”

“.....”

Author’s Notes:

Chu Wanning: You want to eat tofu?

Disciple A: N-no.

Chu Wanning: You want to eat tofu?

Disciple B: I-I-I'm allergic to tofu!

Chu Wanning: You want to eat tofu?

Xue Meng: What! … (Suddenly face and ears turn red) I'm straight! I, I wouldn't eat Shizun's tofu!

Chu Wanning: … What were you thinking about? Go to Clearsky Hall and reflect upon yourself! Go now! Stop hanging out with Mo Weiyu from now on! (Angrily flips table)

Ch.31 This Venerable One's Uncle

In order to show Shizun his sincerity, the young master of Sisheng Peak asked for three whole servings of charred tofu, and promised to eat every single piece without waste.

Chu Wanning was very pleased, a seldomly-seen approval in his eyes.

Mo Ran, seeing this, was very displeased. Emperor Taxian-Jun had an inexpressible fixation with Chu Wanning's acknowledgement, and immediately asked for three servings of tofu as well. Chu Wanning glanced at him: "Can you eat it all?"

Mo Ran absolutely had to get the better of Xue Meng: "Three servings is nothing, even three more is no problem."

Chu Wanning, mildly: "Alright."

He gave Mo Ran six servings of tofu, and said: "You too, waste not."

Mo Ran: "……"

Since the other two did it, Shi Mei naturally followed suit with a smile: "Then…… Shizun, I'll have three servings as well."

And so, on the first day of Yuheng Elder's period of confinement, all three of his disciples got the runs from food poisoning. On the second day, Jielu Elder sought out Chu Wanning and tactfully conveyed that Mengpo Hall has no need for extra helpers, and to please go sweep the fallen leaves and wipe the pillars at Naihe Bridge instead.

Naihe Bridge connected the main areas of Sisheng Peak with the disciples' living quarters, wide enough for five horse carriages to pass through side by side. It was a majestic structure, with nine beasts of white jade representing the nine sons of the dragon[62] atop its main pillars, and three hundred and sixty low pillars decorated with lion heads.

Chu Wanning quietly swept the ground, then set about diligently wiping down the jade beasts.

The task took most of the day. As the sky started getting dark, it began to rain.

Most of the disciples returning from their classes didn't have umbrellas, squawking as they scampered toward their quarters, splashing through water puddles on the ground. Drops of rain pitter-pattered on the stone steps. Chu Wanning glanced at the disciples in the distance, the young boys and girls were drenched through and through but the smiles on their faces were bright and carefree.

"....." Chu Wanning knew that those smiles would vanish the moment they saw him; he looked around, and went to stand under the bridge.

The disciples who ran ahead and arrived at the bridge first couldn't help uttering "eh?" as they took in the sight before them.

"A barrier?"

"Why is there a barrier over Naihe Bridge?"

"It was probably set up by Xuanji Elder." One of the disciples guessed, "Xuanji Elder is always so nice to us."

The translucent golden barrier covered Naihe Bridge, extending resplendent all the way to the main walkway of the disciples' quarters, sheltering them from the rain the rest of the way.

"This is definitely Xuanji Elder's work, he's in charge of this area right?"

"Xuanji Elder is the best."

"What a pretty barrier, Xuanji Elder is incredible."

The disciples shook the water out of their dripping hair, shoving playfully at one another and laughing as they ducked under the barrier and continued toward their quarters, chattering the whole way.

Chu Wanning stood under the bridge, listening as the commotion above passed by, until the disciples were all gone and everything became quiet once more, before slowly putting away the barrier and leisurely walking out.

"Shizun."

He was surprised to hear someone calling for him.

Chu Wanning looked up abruptly, but there was no one on the shore.

"I'm over here."

Following the voice, he saw Mo Ran sitting sideways on the white jade bridge, dressed in the customary silver-blue light armor of the sect, a leg draped lazily over the edge.

The youth had striking features, eyelashes long and thick like a little pair of fans hanging over his eyes. He held an oil paper umbrella, and almost

seemed to be smiling, yet also not, as he gazed at Chu Wanning.

One on the bridge, leaves rustling in the wind; one under the bridge, rain splashing in the river.

For a moment, neither spoke, both simply looking at the other.

The misty rain blurred the line between heaven and earth almost poignantly. Fallen bamboo leaves drifted between the two of them now and again, carried by the wind and rain

Finally, Mo Ran laughed and said teasingly: “Xuanji Elder, you’re getting drenched.”

Chu Wanning spoke at nearly the same time, coldly: “How did you know it was me?”

Mo Ran pressed his lips together, dimples deep and eyes curved in a smile: “A barrier this big is beyond Xuanji Elder, right? Who else could it be but Shizun?”

Chu Wanning: “.....”

Mo Ran knew that he couldn’t be bothered to put up a barrier for himself, but an idea popped into his head, and he tossed the umbrella over.

“I’ll give this to you, catch.”

The bright red paper umbrella drifted slowly down. Chu Wanning caught it. The glossy, jade-green bamboo handle still held a remainder of warmth, droplets of rain sliding along the top of the umbrella and sparkling as they fell. Chu Wanning looked up at him: “Then what about you?”

Mo Ran grinned deviously: “Won’t I get back perfectly fine if Shizun just uses a little spell?”

Chu Wanning let out a hmph, but his hand still lightly waved in his sleeve, a translucent golden barrier spreading out immediately above Mo Ran. He looked up and laughed: “Haha, how pretty, it’s even got peony patterns. Thanks.”

Chu Wanning shot him a look: “Those are haitang flowers, only five petals.”

Then he left, white robes under a scarlet umbrella, leaving Mo Ran in the rain to count the flower petals by himself: “One, two, three, four, five…… ah, it really does only have five petals……”

When he looked back up, Chu Wanning had already walked far away.

Standing under the barrier, Mo Ran narrowed his eyes, the childlike grin on his face slowly fading away to be replaced by a complicated expression.

He didn’t understand just what he was thinking about, all of a sudden.

If only his feelings toward another could be simply fondness or simply loathing.

The rain didn’t stop for four days. When the clouds parted at last, an entourage of horses and carriages, bells jingling, splashed through the water puddles, breaking apart the skies and clouds reflected on the ground, and stopped in front of Sisheng Peak’s main gate.

The bamboo screen lifted up, and a folding fan with a red tassel peeked out from inside.

Immediately after, a pair of silver-trimmed blue battle boots stepped out onto the ground with a heavy thump, sending dust flying.

It was a burly man with thick eyebrows, big eyes, and a full, well-kept beard, about forty years of age, wearing a full set of silver-blue light armor. He looked gruff, but those large hands waved a delicate, scholarly fan, making for quite the strange sight.

The fan opened with a pop. On the side facing others was written——

“Xue is beautiful.”

But on the side facing himself was written——

“Others are ugly.”

This fan was known throughout the realm, both for the martial prowess of its owner and the extreme awkwardness of the writing on it.

One side boasted about the owner, while the other side mocked everybody else.

A light wave of the fan, and everyone within a hundred li[63] could smell the owner’s narcissism. Every single person in the cultivation realm knew of this fan.

But who was the owner? It was none other than the master of Sisheng Peak who had been away for more than two months, Xue Meng’s father, Mo Ran’s uncle, Sir Xue, Xue Zhengyong.

The saying went that dragons bear dragons, phoenixes bear phoenixes, a mouse’s son digs holes.

It was just as true in reverse: the old man of a peacock son was just as prone to showing off his tail feathers.

Xue Meng's delicate looks were completely different from his brawny old man, but the same stuff ran in their bones——

Both felt that "Xue is beautiful, others are ugly."

Xue Zhengyong stretched, shook his limbs out, cracked his neck, and grinned: "Aiyo, finally home, my ass is numb from all that sitting."

Inside Loyalty Hall, Madam Wang was busy blending medicine, with Mo Ran and Xue Meng sitting by her sides.

She said softly: "Four taels[64] of staunching herbs, and a shouyang ginseng, please."

"Here you go, Mom, already weighed." Xue Meng handed the herbs over from where he sat cross-legged next to her. Madam Wang held the staunching herbs up for a smell, and said, "These are no good, they've been tainted from being stored with patchouli for too long, the decoction won't be as effective using these. Please go fetch some fresh ones."

"Alrighty." Xue Meng got up to go dig through the medicine cabinet in the inner room.

Madam Wang continued: "Three qian[65] of wulingzhi, and one qian of dodder."

Mo Ran passed the materials over deftly: "Aunt, how long will it take to boil the medicine?"

“No need to boil, this one can just be brewed.” Madam Wang answered, “When I’m done grinding the medicine, could A-Ran bring it over to Yuheng Elder?”

Mo Ran didn’t want to at first, but shooting a glance in Xue Meng’s direction, he knew that if he didn’t do it, then Xue Meng will.

For some reason, he simply disliked the idea of Xue Meng spending time alone with Chu Wanning, so he said: “Sure.”

A pause, then he asked: “Oh yeah, is it bitter?”

“Somewhat. Why do you ask?”

Mo Ran grinned: “No reason.” But he grabbed a handful of candy from the fruit bowl and stuffed it into his sleeve.

The people inside the hall were hard at work making the medicine when suddenly a burst of bold, unrestrained laughter came from the door. Xue Zhengyong strode into the hall, grinning radiantly: “Wifey, I’m back! Hahahahaha!”

He arrived completely unannounced despite his status as the sect master, startling Madam Wang so much that she nearly spilled all the powdered medicine in her spoon. Her pretty eyes widened: “Husband?”

Mo Ran also stood up in greeting: “Uncle.”

“Ah, Ran-er is here too?” Xue Zhengyong’s appearance was powerful and imposing, but his manner of speech was kindly. His big hand smacked Mo Ran’s shoulder, “My boy, I haven’t been gone that long, did you get taller again? How’d it go at Butterfly Town?”

Mo Ran grinned: “Went alright.”

“Good, good good good! I knew nothing could go wrong with Chu Wanning there, hahahaha——oh yeah, where is he by the way? Cooped up by himself fiddling with those playthings again?”

Hearing that, Mo Ran was a little uneasy: “Uh, Shizun……”

His uncle had a fiery temperament, and was prone to acting impulsively. His death in the last lifetime was mostly caused by this temperament of his. Of course Mo Ran didn’t want to directly tell him that Chu Wanning ate two hundred strikes and got confined for three months on top. He was just pondering how to break the news when an “ah” came from behind him.

Xue Meng had returned holding a pile of staunching herbs in his arms, and was ecstatic to see his father: “Dad!”

“Meng-er!”

Mo Ran secretly let out a sigh of relief. Any time this father and son pair met, a bout of mutual flattering was unavoidable, which gives him plenty of time to think of a way to tactfully break the news about Chu Wanning getting punished.

Sure enough, the pair of peacock father and son spread their tail feathers and busied themselves plastering each other with praise.

“My son got even more handsome in these last two months! You’re looking more and more like daddy!”

Xue Meng took entirely after his mom and looked nothing like his dad, but he took his word for it: “And dad got even buffer!”

Xue Zhengyong waved his big hand, grinning: “The whole time I was at Kunlun Taxue Palace, I kept thinking about how none of the youngsters out there can even hold a candle to my son and nephew! Aiyo, I got so tired of looking at that gaggle of femmy boys. Meng-er, do you still remember Mei Hanxue?””

Xue Meng immediately took on a look of contempt: “The chubby one that’s been training in seclusion for like a dozen years, I heard he’s the eldest disciple of Taxue Palace? Did he finally come out?”

“Hahaha, what a good memory, that’s him. The kid stayed with us for a while way back when, you two even shared a bed.”

“.....How could i forget, fat like a dog, and kicked in his sleep too. I got kicked off the bed so many times. You saw him?”

“I saw him, I saw him.” Xue Zhengyong twirled his beard, and seemed to be musing about something. Xue Meng was the darling of the heavens, competitive to a fault, and asked impatiently: “And?”

Xue Zhengyong laughed: “Of course you’re better. The boy’s master taught him stuff like instruments and dance for some godforsaken reason, even just using qinggong made flower petals fly everywhere, your dad almost died laughing, hahahaha!”

Xue Meng wrinkled his nose, as if disgusted.

A little porky with baby fat, playing instruments and dancing while petals flutter about……

“Then how’s his cultivation?” Mei Hanxue had trained in seclusion for more than ten years, after all; he only just came out these last few months,

and hadn't made much noise in the world yet.

Since he already won in terms of "looks", Xue Meng was going to compare "cultivation" next.

Xue Zhengyong didn't answer immediately this time. He thought for a while, then said: "I didn't get to see his skills much. No matter, Meng-er will surely get to cross swords with him at the Spiritual Mountain Competition anyway."

Xue Meng's eyebrow twitched: "Hmph, who knows if that stupid porky will even get to challenge me."

Madam Wang finished blending the medicine and got up, patting Xue Meng's head with a smile: "Meng-er must not be so arrogant, remember to be modest and respectful."

Xue Meng said: "What's the point in being modest? That's for weaklings, I'd rather be forthright like dad."

Xue Zhengyong chortled: "See, this tiger dad ain't got no pup for a son."

Madam Wang was displeased: "This is all your doing, teaching him all these bad habits and none of the good, I can't believe you."

Xue Zhengyong saw irritation in her expression, and knew that she really was a bit unhappy. He immediately checked his grin, scratching his head: "Wifey, I was wrong. We'll go by whatever wifey says, don't be mad~"

Mo Ran: "……"

Xue Meng: "……"

Madam Wang was a disciple of Guyue'ye in her early years, and rumor had it that Xue Zhengyong stole her. Who knows if that rumor was true or not, but what Mo Ran does know is that his uncle is deeply in love with his aunt, so much so that his bones of iron would turn into soft threads to wrap around her finger. But Madam Wang was not quite so passionate toward her husband; she was a gentle person, but would often get mad at him over little things.

The years went by bumpily like this. Anyone with eyes could see who felt more deeply for the other between this couple.

Of course Xue Meng wasn't gonna hang around to watch his own parents flirt. A little grossed out, he clicked his tongue and turned to leave.

Madam Wang was quite embarrassed, hurriedly calling: "Meng-er?"

Xue Meng waved his hand and left briskly.

Mo Ran also didn't want to cut into the couple's reunion, and used this excuse to conveniently dodge his uncle's questions as well. The topic of Chu Wanning's punishment was better brought up by Madam Wang, after all. He sure didn't want to be the one to deal with it. After collecting the medicine on the table, he made his escape with a smile on his face, even closing the door for them.

Medicine in hand, he strolled leisurely over to the Red Lotus Pavilion.

Chu Wanning's body was weak these days due to his injury, so he took down the barriers that usually surrounded the pavilion. Thus he had no way of knowing if someone came in.

And so, it was under these circumstances that Mo Ran saw this scene…...

Chu Wanning, bathing in the lotus pond.

It would've been one thing if he was just bathing by himself, but in that lotus pond for the sole use of the virtuous and incorruptible Yuheng Elder, were the silhouettes of two other people……

Ch.32 This Venerable One Will Baby You a Bit, Will That Do

>>blood + injury care

Behind the myriad of lotus leaves, Mo Ran stood appalled and unmoving as if he'd been struck by lightning. Something inside of him shattered, and it showed in the cracked expression on his face.

Shock, indignation, jealousy, and irritation exploded like fireworks in his head. He moved his lips, but no words came out. He didn't even know what he was raging over. Only one thought ran through his mind——

How dare anyone else touch that which has been claimed by this venerable one?!

Chu Wanning, you two-faced, cheating whore! You dare...you dare to……

He forgot that the Chu Wanning of this era had no intimate relations with him at all. In that moment, all sense left his mind.

It had been ten years—a lifetime, from birth to death—after all.

He could set it aside and maintain control when he was lucid.

But under these circumstances, with his head in disarray, he subconsciously felt that Chu Wanning was his. Only now did he realize just how clearly he remembered even the taste of Chu Wanning's lips, to say nothing of the passion and desire as they entwined, the ecstasy that ate at his very being……

After he'd been reborn, he did everything he could to not think about those things.

But now, seeing Chu Wanning's naked back, that familiar figure with broad shoulders and long legs, taut muscles, and a slender but strong waist submerged in the clear water…

All the memories and emotions he tried so hard to suppress rushed back without warning.

Even Mo Ran's scalp went numb.

……His body, too, reacted to these things.

It was the kind of involuntary reaction so fierce he could do nothing to stop it, and his lower body burned as he watched.

By the time he realized what he was doing, he was already raising his voice angrily and shouting, "Chu Wanning!"

Chu Wanning actually had the gall to ignore him.

It was hard to see the two people supporting his shoulders because of the mist settled on top of the lotus pond, so he couldn't make out their appearances. But they stood extremely close to him, the distance between them barely distinguishable.

Mo Ran hollered and barged right into the pond, wading through the water towards Chu Wanning——and as he grew closer, he realized——

Those, those two "people" were actually golems made of metal and cedarwood!

Even worse, it seemed like they had been using the lotus pond to transfer energy to Chu Wanning, and Mo Ran had broken the spiritual bounding field when he recklessly rushed into the water……

He wasn't sure what kind of array Chu Wanning was using, but he was in an unconscious daze and leaning against the golems as light continuously poured through their palms into the wound on his shoulder. Looking back on the situation, he was clearly in the middle of healing himself.

When Mo Ran rushed through the boundary, the light dispersed. To his horror, the array actually started to reverse.

As soon as the light scattered, Chu Wanning's wound began to quickly eat away at itself. He frowned, letting out a noise of discomfort, and coughed up a mouthful of blood. Then, all the scars on his body began to tear open again. The blood that poured out drenched the pool red in an instant.

Mo Ran was dumbfounded.

This was Chu Wanning's "Flower Spirit Sacrifice Technique"!

He realized that he may have...made a grave error……

Chu Wanning's spiritual energy was of both the metal and wood elementals.[66] Metal element spiritual energy, including "Tianwen", was used for offense, while wood element spiritual energy was used for healing.

The Flower Spirit Sacrifice Technique was one such; Chu Wanning could manipulate the spiritual essence of flora to mend wounds. However, if anyone else was to enter the array during this process, the flora spirits would immediately scatter, and not only would there be no healing effect,

it would conversely worsen the injury. In the worst case, the flora spirits could even devour Chu Wanning's spiritual core.

Fortunately, Mo Ran had a passing familiarity with the Flower Spirit Sacrifice Technique from the last lifetime, and he acted immediately to cut off the flow of energy. Having lost the support of the golems holding him up, Chu Wanning tipped forward. Mo Ran caught him and held him steady.

Shizun's unconscious face was pale, lips blue, body as cold as ice.

Without thinking about much else, Mo Ran lifted him out of the pool. Half carrying and half dragging, he took Chu Wanning back to his room and placed him on his bed.

"Shizun? Shizun!"

He called several times, but Chu Wanning didn't move so much as an eyelash. He looked no different from the dead, save for the shallow rise and fall of his chest.

Seeing Chu Wanning like this reminded Mo Ran of the past.

Inexplicably, he felt his throat close up and his heart start to panic.

In his past life, two people died in his arms.

Shi Mei. Chu Wanning.

One was the love of his life whom he thought about day and night. The other was his mortal enemy whom he had entwined with for a lifetime.

When Shi Mei died, Mo Weiyu disappeared from the world.

And when Chu Wanning died……?

Mo Ran didn't know. All he knew was the feeling of the person in his arms slowly growing colder and colder on that day. He didn't cry, nor did he laugh; joy and sorrow both grew out of reach.

When Chu Wanning died, Mo Weiyu no longer knew what the world even was anymore.

By the candle light, he saw Chu Wanning's bare torso.

Usually, Yuheng of the Night Sky wore clothing that showed as little skin as possible. He wore high collars and wrapped his belt sash around three times, a picture of dignity and propriety.

Because of this, no one even saw what kind of injury those two hundred strikes had left on his body……

Even though Mo Ran had seen the wounds on Chu Wanning's back with his own eyes on the day of the punishment, all he knew was that his flesh had suffered severe damage. Seeing Chu Wanning on his feet and walking around like normal in the days afterwards, he thought it couldn't have been that bad after all.

Now he realized that Chu Wanning's wounds were far worse than he had imagined.

The five wounds left by the ghost mistress were torn open, and in the worst parts he could see all the way through to the bone.

Chu Wanning probably never asked anyone to help him change his bandages, and tried to do everything by himself. The salve wasn't evenly applied, and the places he couldn't reach were already infected and festering.

Not to mention all the blue-purple bruises from the rod strikes. They spread out across his entire back, leaving no part of his mottled skin unbroken. On top of them, the torn scars from the spiritual rebound earlier washed his back in blood. It flowed ceaselessly, drenching the sheets under him in red.

If Mo Ran hadn't seen it with his own eyes, he would never have believed that the man who had insisted on wiping down pillars near the bridge and creating a huge barrier to shield disciples from the rain was this—this same man in front of him whose wounds were so severe and terrible he belonged in an infirmary, under intensive care.

If not for the fact that Chu Wanning was unconscious, Mo Ran would have really liked to grab his collar and shake him, demanding——

Chu Wanning, what the hell is wrong with you and your stupid pride?

What's anyone going to do if you show a little weakness for once in your life? Why are you so fucking stubborn? You're a grown man, and you won't even take care of yourself? Treat yourself a little better??

Why didn't you ask anyone to help you dress your wounds?!

How come you'd rather make golems to use your stupid healing system than to just open your mouth and call for help?!

Chu Wanning, are you a fucking moron?!

As he cursed him in his head, he worked quickly to staunch the bleeding. Then he drew a pail of warm water and wiped the blood from Chu Wanning's back……

Sterilizing a knife in the flame, he set about cutting off the flesh that had completely decayed.

At the first cut, Chu Wanning groaned in pain, body jerking. Mo Ran held him down and muttered heatedly, “The hell do you have to groan about! Gonna curse me out? If you utter another sound I’ll stab this knife right through your chest. You won’t a feel a goddamn thing once you’re dead! Problem solved!”

It was only now that Mo Ran could let his real, vehement nature show though, yelling at him like he did in the past.

But there were too many wounds that had festered, the skin gone white and dead. Chu Wanning breathed heavily as he hacked away at it little by little.

Even unconscious, this person stifled his voice and refused to cry out in pain, but he broke out into a cold sweat, drenching the body that had just been wiped clean.

After what felt like hours, Mo Ran finally finished applying medicine and bandaging the wounds.

He helped Chu Wanning into some robes, then found a thick quilt and laid it over his feverish Shizun, and only then did he sigh in relief. Remembering Madam Wang’s medicine that was still sealed in a paper bag, he got up and brewed a bowl of medicine, carrying it back to Chu Wanning’s bedside.

“Come on, time for your medicine.”

With one hand, he lifted the sleeping person up into his arms and leaned him against his shoulder. He used the other to bring the bowl of medicine

to his lips, lightly blowing the steam off and taking a sip to test it first.

Mo Ran grimaced and made a face. “Ugh, so bitter.” Still, he let it cool off and fed it to Chu Wanning.

But he only got half a spoonful in before Chu Wanning couldn’t handle it and coughed it all out, getting most of it on Mo Ran’s clothes.

“.....”

He knew that Chu Wanning didn’t like bitter things, so much so that it could be said he hated bitter things.

But Yuheng Elder was stubborn as a mule; if he was awake, he would definitely endure it and drain the whole bowl in one gulp without complaint. At most, he’d discreetly sneak a piece of candy afterwards.

Unfortunately, Chu Wanning was currently unconscious.

There was nothing to be done about it; it’s not like he could lose his temper at an unconscious person. He just had to suck it up and patiently feed him small mouthfuls, even using a towel to wipe the corners of his mouth at times.

Something like this wasn’t difficult for Mo Ran. After all, in his past life, there was a period of time when he’d fed medicine to Chu Wanning like this every day. Back then, Chu Wanning had even tried to resist him, so he would slap him across the face before seizing him by the jaw and pressing their lips together roughly, tongue pushing past to ravish his mouth, the coppery scent of blood……

In an effort to stop thinking about that as quickly as possible, the last few spoonfuls that Mo Ran fed him were a little rushed, and most of it ended

up being coughed out again. Then he laid him back down in the bed, and tucked him in none-too-gently.

“I’m doing this out of the generosity of my heart. Don’t you dare kick this quilt off in the night, you’re already feverish and you’ll catch a cold……”

Halfway through his speech, his temper suddenly flared up and he kicked the leg of the bed.

“Whatever, why should I care if you catch a cold or not! I hope you do. I hope it’s terrible and you die from it.”

He turned around and stalked off.

He got to the door, but had a feeling he still couldn’t put to rest, so he turned back and squinted into the room. After figuring out what was bothering him, he went over and blew the candle out. Then he left again.

This time, he got all the way to the lotus pond. Seeing the flowers that had grown and bloomed after absorbing Chu Wanning’s life blood, the irritation in his heart only worsened.

He was filled with aggravation, but still marched, stiffly, out of rhythm, with arm and leg on the same side moving together, back into the bedroom.

Clanking like a rusty, old golem, he dragged his feet in a circle around the entire room until he finally, reluctantly, came to stand at Chu Wanning’s bedside.

Moonlight shone in softly from the half-open bamboo window, illuminating Chu Wanning’s peaceful face.

His lips were pale, and his eyebrows were slightly drawn together.

Mo Ran considered it for a while, then shut the window for him. They live in a humid place, after all; it isn't good for health to leave the window open while sleeping. After doing this, Mo Ran put his foot down and swore:

If he comes back through that door one more time, he will be a dog!

Just as he reached the doorway, he heard a thump. Chu Wanning actually tossed the entire quilt off of himself.

"....."

What's he going to do about this person's habit of throwing off his covers when sleeping??

So that he wouldn't be a dog, the sixteen-year-old Emperor Taxian-Jun endured the situation with much tolerance and left.

He will not go back on his word; he absolutely will not go back through that door again!

So, after a while.

——The brilliant and powerful emperor opened the window and vaulted into the room that way.

He picked up the quilt off the ground and laid it back over Chu Wanning. Hearing Chu Wanning's pained, labored breathing and seeing his back shuddering where he was curled into the corner of the bed, Mo Ran couldn't muster up any of the anger he usually held toward him.

He could say "serves you right" all he wanted, but his heart still ached for him.

He sat by Chu Wanning's bedside, keeping watch to make sure he doesn't throw the quilt off again.

Late as it was, with the long day Mo Ran had had, the exhaustion finally settled in. His head slowly drooped, and he dozed off.

This sleep wasn't restful in the slightest. Chu Wanning kept tossing and turning, and Mo Ran could hear him groaning under his breath through the haze of slumber.

In his hazy, light sleep, Mo Ran couldn't tell what hour it was, or when he had ended up lying next to Chu Wanning on the bed, hugging the trembling man in his arms. Still half asleep, he held him and gently stroked his back, murmuring, "Shh… shh… pain pain go away..."

In his sleep, Mo Ran felt as if he had returned to the Sisheng Peak in his past life, to the empty, somber Wushan Palace.

After Chu Wanning's death, he never slept holding anyone ever again.

Whether because of the burning resentment or lingering feelings, thinking about those emotions in the endlessly cold days of loneliness afterwards made his heart hurt. Wishful thinking consumed him.

But no matter how hard he wished for it, Chu Wanning wasn't coming back.

He had lost the last flame of his life.

Mo Ran held Chu Wanning the entire night. Between the dreams and the haze of sleep, at times he knew clearly that he had been reborn, yet felt as if he was still in his past life at others.

Suddenly, he was almost afraid to open his eyes. He was afraid that when he woke up in the morning, it would be to a cold, empty pillow and drafty curtains. And, for the rest of his life, he would be utterly alone.

He was certain that he hated Chu Wanning.

But, holding him in his arms, he felt wetness gather at the corners of his eyes.

This was a warmth that the thirty-two year old Taxian-Jun once thought he would never have again.

“Wanning, you’ll be okay……”

It was in this hazy state, stroking the hair of the man in his arms as if he were the Mo Ran of the past, that such a tender phrase escaped his mouth.

He was so tired that he didn’t realize what he had said, or what he’d called the other person. The words slipped out naturally and he didn’t think much on them. Mo Ran breathed out, and fell into a deeper slumber.

The next morning, Chu Wanning’s eyelashes fluttered as he slowly came to.

Because of his strong cultivation, the high fever he had last night already receded.

Chu Wanning idly opened his eyes, mind still foggy with sleep. But when he tried to get up, he found that there was someone else lying in bed with him.

M-Mo Weiyu???

He was startled to say the least. Chu Wanning paled, but couldn't for the life of him remember what happened the night before. Even worse, his movements woke Mo Ran up too.

The young man yawned, youthful face lightly flushed from sleep. He squinted into the morning light, glanced over at Chu Wanning and said vaguely, "Ah……let this Venerable One sleep for a while longer……Since you're already awake, why don't you go make me egg and meat congee……"

"……"

What kind of nonsense was this? Sleeptalking?

Mo Ran's mind was still fuzzy. When he saw that Chu Wanning was not getting up to make him breakfast, he didn't press the matter. Instead, he smiled lazily and reached out, pulling Chu Wanning's face closer, and pressed a chaste kiss to his lips.

"If you don't want to get up, that's fine too. This Venerable One just had the most terrible dream. In it……ah…..nevermind." He sighed, hugging the person who had gone stock still by this point. He rested his chin against the head of the man in his arms, muttering, "Chu Wanning, let me hold you a little while longer."

Author's Notes:

Candy candy candy, the candy that you asked for!

About why Mo Ran calls him 【Wanning】, it's not a slip of the tongue, he really called Shizun this later in his past life. As for why he would address

him with such intimacy, to be continued in… uh, donno how many chapters later! Runs away.

Ch.33 This Venerable One Is Off to Fetch His Weapon

Chu Wanning was so shocked by the sudden kiss that he couldn't even process what Mo Ran was saying. It all sounded like a distant murmur to him, as if a heavy rain had started to pour down against his head.

Mo Ran, on the other hand, obliviously muttered a few more words and fell back to sleep.

"....."

Chu Wanning wanted to shake him awake.

However, there was a haitang tree swaying in full bloom outside the window. Just as Chu Wanning lifted his hand, a light pink flower petal landed gently on the tip of Mo Ran's nose.

"....."

Mo Ran rubbed his nose a little in discomfort, but was sleeping so sweetly that he didn't wake up. The arm Chu Wanning stretched out to shove him changed its course, for no reason discernible to himself, and picked up the flower petal between his fingers to examine it.

As he lost himself in thought staring at the petal, some things slowly came back to him.

He remembered that, yesterday, Mo Ran had dressed his wounds and fed him medicine.

Afterwards, Mo Ran held him in his arms, gently stroking his hair and back long into the night and whispering softly into his ear.

Chu Wanning was baffled. That had to be a dream, right?

The tips of his ears went red, the bright color not unlike the haitang petal between his fingers.

The scolding words died in his throat.

He really……didn't even know how to start.

"How did you end up in my bed?"

That sounds like a young maiden who had made a mistake.

"Get the hell out, who let you sleep here!"

That sounds like a she-devil who had made a miscalculation.

"How dare you kiss me?!"

If one really thought about it, it was only the touch of two lips. Compared to that time in the illusion, it could barely even be called a kiss. Making a fuss out of it would only make it look like he really did have something to hide.

"……"

Yuheng Elder, at a complete loss, could only roll over and bury his face into the quilt. His slender fingers grasped at its corner in irritation and embarrassment.

In the end, he decided to pry Mo Ran off of himself, sit up and get immaculately dressed first, and then shake the other awake.

And so, when Mo Ran blearily opened his eyes, the sight that greeted him was that of Yuheng Elder sitting on the edge of the bed with an unreadable, chilly look on his face.

He broke into a cold sweat immediately.

“Shizun, I——”

Chu Wanning responded expressionlessly, “You broke my Flora Spirit Boundary yesterday?”

“I didn’t mean to……”

“Forget it,” Chu Wanning said curtly and waved his hand like it was nothing. “You should get up. Morning classes.”

Mo Ran was about to lose it. He scratched his head in agitation: “How did I fall asleep here……”

“You look tired,” Chu Wanning was perfectly calm. “Don’t look like you got much rest yesterday.”

He glanced at the medicine on the table and said, “In the future, don’t barge into Red Lotus Pavilion on your own. If you need something, tell me in advance.”

“Yes, Shizun.”

“You may leave.”

Taxian-Jun felt like he’d narrowly escaped death, and hurried to run as far away as possible.

After he left, Chu Wanning lay back down on his bed and lifted his arm up, stretching out his hand. From the space between his fingers, he watched as the radiant blossoms outside of his window drifted and fell like snow in the wind.

The soft colors of the haitang petals were just like the hazy memories of last night.

Delicate. Hard to distinguish truth from wishful thinking.

He decided that he'd rather die before ever bringing up what happened yesterday.

It was far too embarrassing!!!

Yuheng Elder cared about his pride above all else; he'd rather save his face than his life. So the next time Mo Ran saw Chu Wanning a few days later, Yuheng Elder was elegant and composed in the usual manner, white robes billowing gracefully.

Neither of them brought up that night. But sometimes when their eyes met, Mo Ran's gaze seemed to linger on Chu Wanning a bit longer before habitually chasing after Shi Mei.

And what about Chu Wanning?

As soon as his gaze met Mo Ran's, he would turn away immediately and coldly. But then, when he thought Mo Ran wasn't looking, he would steal another glance as if entirely by accident.

Xue Zhengyong quickly found out about Chu Wanning's punishment.

As expected, the master of Sisheng Peak was protective to a fault, and immediately threw a fit. But he couldn't rightfully direct it at anyone in particular, and could only close his door and sulk by himself.

——If he had known that this would happen when they first made the rules, he would've added one more: the rules don't apply to the elders.

Madam Wang steeped a pot of tea and spoke soothingly with Xue Zhengyong for quite a while before he finally calmed down. He said: "Yuheng Elder is really too stubborn, if he tries to do this again in the future, please help me talk him out of it. The sects of the upper cultivation realm couldn't even beg him into joining them, but such an eminent cultivation master ended up suffering like this over here, how am I to live with myself?"

Madam Wang sighed: "It's not that I didn't try. You know how he is, stubborn to a fault."

Xue Zhengyong said: "Ah, forget it. Wifey, give me some of those painkillers and tissue-regrowth medicines you made, I'm gonna go check on Yuheng."

"The white one is to be taken orally, the red one is for applying externally." Madam Wang gave him two small porcelain bottles, then said, "Ran-er mentioned that Yuheng Elder's been wiping down the lions at Naihe Bridge lately, you should be able to find him there."

Xue Zhengyong tucked the bottles into his pocket and rushed over to the jade bridge.

Chu Wanning was indeed there. It was shortly past noon, the disciples were all busy practicing their cultivation, and few people passed by Naihe

Bridge. Chu Wanning stood alone on the gentle curve of the bridge, his figure tall and straight.

Leaves rustled softly on the shores; his white robes amongst the graceful bamboo was a picture of refinement.

Xue Zhengyong walked over, grinning: “Yuheng Elder, watching the fish?”

Chu Wanning’s face turned his way: “Sect Leader must be joking, this river connects to the yellow springs of the Underworld, there is no fish.”

“Haha, just pulling your leg. You’re all elegance no humor, I really worry about how you’re gonna find a wife!”

Chu Wanning: “……”

“Here, medicine. My wife made them. Take the white one orally, apply the red one externally. Super effective. For you.”

“.....” Chu Wanning didn’t want it at first, but seeing how proud Xue Zhengyong was, as if his wife’s medicine was the most precious thing, he couldn’t refuse, so he accepted with a mild “Thanks.”

Xue Zhengyong was a crude man, but he was rather more reserved in front of Chu Wanning, and did not simply blurt things out. He thought for a bit before settling on a topic: “Say, Yuheng, the Spiritual Mountain Competition is coming up in three years. Young talents from every sect will gather to vie for for the top. What do you think Meng-er and Ran-er’s odds are?”

Chu Wanning replied: “Three years is a long time; I can’t say at the present. But right now, Mo Ran lacks the drive to improve, and Xue Meng is overly

conceited and prone to underestimating his opponents. Neither has the right attitude."

His words were blunt and cutting, straight to the heart of the matter.

Xue Zhengyong was a little embarrassed, mumbling: "Aiya, they're just young……"

Chu Wanning said: "They've already come of age, not young anymore."

Xue Zhengyong: "You're not wrong, but still, they're not even twenty yet, I can't help being a little biased as their father and uncle, haha."

Chu Wanning: "An undisciplined child is the fault of a neglectful father and an irresponsible teacher. If the two of them end up walking the wrong path in the future, that blame will fall directly on you and I. How will you be biased then?"

"....."

Chu Wanning continued: "Does the Sect Leader still remember Linyi Rufeng Sect's two darlings of the heavens[67] some years back?"

Xue Zhengyong's heart dropped at the mere mention.

Twenty-some years ago, there were a pair of brothers from Rufeng Sect, the foremost sect of the upper cultivation realm. The both of them were immensely gifted and exceedingly skilled at a young age; by the age of ten they could each individually take down hundred-year old demons, and by fifteen, they were already capable of devising new spells and even starting their own sect had they so desired.

But the cultivation world wasn't big enough for the both of them. The brothers were both far too exceptional, and eventually ended up falling out with one another. At the Spiritual Mountain Competition that year, the younger brother even stole the older brother's secretly-developed technique, and was censured by all sects and scorned by every elder for it. As soon as the competition ended, the younger brother was immediately punished by their father. His pride couldn't bear it. Henceforth he bore a deep grudge and cultivated in unscrupulous methods, and in the end became a crazed monster.

To bring this up now, Chu Wanning was undoubtedly trying to remind Xue Zhengyong that Xue Meng and Mo Ran may be exceptional, but the heart was far more important than skill.

Unfortunately, Xue Zhengyong was hard on himself, serious with his disciples, but hopelessly addled when it came to his son and his nephew, to the point of spoiling them. So he didn't really take Chu Wanning's words to heart, only laughing as he said: "They won't end up like those brothers with Yuheng Elder guiding their way."

Chu Wanning shook his head.

"Human nature is set, not so easily changed without tremendous resolve."

Xue Zhengyong couldn't help feeling a little uneasy at Chu Wanning's words, unsure if they had a hidden meaning. He hesitated for a while, but ended up asking after all: "Yuheng, do you…… aie, don't get mad, but do you perhaps look down on that dumb nephew of mine?

Chu Wanning hadn't meant that at all. The unexpected misunderstanding caught him so off guard that his words choked up in his throat.

Xue Zhengyong continued worriedly: “Actually, I don’t really care if they come out on top at the competition or not. Especially Ran-er, it really wasn’t easy for him, growing up, it can’t be helped if he’s a little difficult or disobedient. I hope you don’t dislike him for having been raised in an entertainment house. Aie, he’s all I have left of my da-ge, I can’t stop feeling guilty for not having been there for him all those years……”

Chu Wanning interrupted him: “Sect Leader is mistaken. I do not look down on him at all. If I minded his background, I wouldn’t have accepted him as a disciple.”

He spoke directly and certainly. Xue Zhengyong was relieved: “Good, good.”

Chu Wanning’s gaze fell back to the river currents coursing beneath the bridge, surging and crashing, and said no more. Unfortunately, the conversation between them, and Chu Wanning’s confession, were swallowed up by the billowing waters just like in the previous lifetime.

That he did not dislike or look down on Mo Ran, was never heard by a third person.

Three months of confinement passed by.

This day, Chu Wanning called his three disciples to the Red Lotus Pavilion, and said: “Since your spiritual cores have now stabilized, I’ve called all of you here today to take you to Dawning Peak, where you may attempt to summon your own weapons.”

Both Xue Meng and Shi Mei’s eyes widened, their faces ecstatic.

Dawning Peak was a sacred mountain located in the upper cultivation realm, thousands of feet tall, cliffs steep and fathomless.

According to legend, Dawning Peak was where Gouchen the Exalted once forged weapons. Gouchen the Exalted, the god of weaponry, oversaw the northernmost and southernmost ends of the heavens and controlled all the weapons of the world.

During the Heavenly Emperor's war to rid the realm of demons, Gouchen the Exalted forged the first true "sword" of the world using the mountains as the material, the seas as the smelting pool, and his own celestial blood as the forging flames. This sword pierced the heavens and the earth alike, and with one strike, split the land into pieces and caused the seas to flow in reverse.

"Sword" in hand, the Heavenly Emperor suppressed the demon race beneath the earth, henceforth unable to rise up, using only two strikes.

Those two strikes cut horizontally across the human realm, rending a pair of deep gashes into the earth. After the war, the skies wept and ghosts howled through the nights, flooding and desolation plagued the realm as torrential rain poured down for a thousand years, filling the pair of gashes, which became the Yangtze and Yellow Rivers that nurtured countless lives.

And Dawning Peak, the birthplace of the holy sword, hence became a sacred place, with many cultivators making pilgrimages thereto. Even now, the spiritual energy left behind by the ancient gods remain strong there, and countless mysterious creatures roamed the mountains where all kinds of peculiar flora thrived. Dawning Peak was also the location where many cultivators reached enlightenment and ascended to the heavens.

But to most people, the biggest appeal of this incredible mountain where the holy sword was forged was its “Jincheng Lake”.

The icy lake at the summit of the peak was frozen over year-round, glimmering as it reflected the light of the rising sun.

Legend had it that when Gouchen the Exalted cut open his palm and used his own blood to forge the holy sword, a drop fell into the dent at the summit. That drop of blood, yet to be exhausted even after a thousand years, became Jincheng Lake, its waters so clear one could see to its very bottom.

Regardless of whether the legend was true or not, Jincheng Lake’s wonders were real. Although it was covered by three feet of ice all year round, some few cultivators were able to use the power of their own spiritual core to temporarily thaw the lake. At that time, an ancient mythical beast would leap ashore, holding a weapon in its mouth, and offer it to the person.

Xue Meng asked excitedly: “Shizun, what kind of mythical beast came up when you went to get your holy weapon?”

Chu Wanning answered: “Kunpeng.”[68]

Xue Meng’s eyes sparkled: “Awesome! I can’t wait to see a Kunpeng!”

Mo Ran jeered: “Don’t count your Kunpengs before you thaw that lake.”

“What’s that supposed to mean? You think I can’t thaw Jincheng Lake or something?”

Mo Ran laughed: “Aiya, don’t get your feathers so ruffled, I said no such thing.”

Chu Wanning said: “It won’t necessarily be a Kunpeng. It is said that hundreds of mythical beasts lived inside the lake, guarding the holy weapons. Whichever one takes a fancy to you will be the one to come offer you a weapon it had acquired. Additionally, each mythical beast has its own unique temperament. It will make a request of you; if you cannot complete its request, it will take the weapon and return to the lake.”

Xue Meng pondered: “So that’s how it is? Then, Shizun, what did the Kunpeng request from you?”

“It said it wanted to eat a meatbun,” Chu Wanning replied.

The three disciples were silent for a moment, and then broke out into laughter. Xue Meng laughed: “You scared me, I almost thought it would be something challenging.”

Chu Wanning also smiled a little and said: “I just got lucky. The requirements these mythical beasts have are bizarre; they could ask for anything. I once heard of someone who summoned a Xishu.[69] That small rat asked him to give it his wife’s hand in marriage. He refused, so the rat took the weapon back and left. In the end, that man never got another opportunity to acquire a holy weapon ever again.”

Shi Mei murmured: “That’s such a pity……”

Chu Wanning glanced at him and said: “What is there to pity? Honestly, I respect him for his noble character.”

Shi Mei hurriedly corrected himself: “Shizun misunderstands, I didn’t mean it that way. Of course, one’s wife can’t be replaced with even the most powerful weapons. I just think it’s a pity that he missed out on such a godly weapon.”

“It’s just a rumor, anyway,” Chu Wanning said. “Unfortunately, I didn’t get to see a man like that for myself. Rather, many years ago at Jincheng Lake, what I saw were repulsive things that dirtied my eyes.”

He paused, as if reminiscing about something, expression darkening as his brows furrowed.

“Nevermind, forget it. These thousand years, who knows how many instances of unwavering loyalty this lake had borne witness to, and how many instances of chilling heartlessness. Truly, how many people are even capable of resisting the allure of a holy weapon, of abandoning their chance at advancement, just to stay true to their heart……? Heh.”

Chu Wanning let out a cold chuckle, as if perturbed by something in his memories, before rearranging his features back into their customary impassiveness. But his brows were knitted just the slightest bit, as if in disgust, and he pressed his lips tightly together, speaking no more of the matter.

“Shizun, it’s said that all of Jincheng Lake’s holy weapons have a temper of their own. Was it easy for you to get the hang of yours when you first got it?” Xue Meng saw that he looked unhappy, and asked him to change the topic.

Chu Wanning raised an eyebrow and said tonelessly, “This teacher has three holy weapons, which one are you asking about?”

Author’s Notes:

Today’s mini theatre is centered around white cat teacher’s last line, “This teacher has three holy weapons, which one are you asking about?” Expanded through various abridged versions!

If this is a school life novel ——

Discipline inspector Xue Mengmeng, “Class president! I don’t know how to correct this question qaq I remember you have a perfect score, lend me your test paper and let me have a look!”

Class president Chu Wanning raised his eyes, indifferently said, “I have three tests with perfect score, which one are you asking about?”

If this is a CEO novel.

Second generation rich Xue Mengmeng, “CEO Chu, my dad asked me to send this gift to your beach side vacation mansion, could you let me know your address?”

Dictatorial CEO Chu Wanning raised his eyes, indifferently said, “I have three beach side mansions, which one are you asking about?”

If this is a harem novel. (Hey hey hey!)

Young prince Xue Mengmeng: “Royal Imperial Uncle! Your concubine! She, she, she bullied me! She scratched me with her nails while you weren’t around!”

Dissolute royal imperial uncle Chu Wanning raised his eyes, indifferently said, “Oh? This emperor I have three concubines, which one are you asking about?”

If this is live news: (...)

CCTV news reporter Xue Mengmeng, “Secretary Chu, under your leadership, H City’s appearance, citizen happiness level all rapidly advanced. The city water pollutions decreased and the traffic congestion

has visibly improved as well. At the award ceremony after G20, Mayor Mo especially gave his approvals and thanks towards your work, and awarded you with Knight's Medal of Honour. Could you show us your medal?"

Chu Wanning raised his eyes, indifferently said: "Comrade, I have three medals of honour, which one are you asking about?"

If this is…

Chu Wanning, "Shit!!! I quit!! Have you had enough? You didn't even give me today's lunch box!"

Meatbun, "... last one, this is the last one."

If this is gourmet food novel.

Foody Xue Mengmeng, "Owner! Owner! I heard your buns were featured in A taste of China! And in the 69th Jincheng Lake Cooking competition, judge Kunpeng praised it as "Meatbun that moved the big bird's conscience" Owner could you tell us what's in the filling? How much is it for one steamer basket? Can you give one a basket?"

Chu Wanning, "Human meat, thirty thousand, no."

Meatbun, "... Hey, you need to follow the script…"

Chu Wanning raised his eyes, indifferently said, "I have school life, CEO, harem, CCTV, four scripts, which one are you asking about?"

Meatbun, "....."

Ch.34 This Venerable One Falls Out of Favor

Only Chu Wanning could say something so earth-shatteringly astonishing like that in such a matter-of-factly calm manner. The three disciples each had their own thoughts on the matter.

Xue Meng's were the simplest, just a single exclamation: Ah!

Mo Ran's were a little more complicated as he stroked his chin with a hand and recalled some certain things from the previous lifetime, he thought that he definitely never wants to see Chu Wanning's third weapon in this lifetime.

As for Shi Mei, he tilted his head, a faint light flickering in that pair of hazy peach blossom eyes, as if in reverence or fascination.

"Did you get Tianwen from Jincheng Lake?"

Chu Wanning: "Mn."

"Then the other two……"

Chu Wanning: "One was also from here, but not the other. Weapon temperaments don't tend to be too fierce, so it should be manageable. There is no need to worry."

Xue Meng sighed with admiration: "Wish I could see Shizun's other holy weapons too."

Chu Wanning said: "Tianwen is more than enough for most purposes. As for the other two, it would be best if I never have to use them."

Xue Meng reluctantly made a noise of agreement, but a light still danced in his eyes. Chu Wanning noticed; he knew that Xue Meng was combative by nature, and that such things were not so easily suppressed, but luckily his heart was in the right place, so with some guidance there should be little reason for concern.

Mo Ran, standing to the side, was still stroking his chin, expression smiling yet not.

The purpose of a weapon was to take the life of another; a righteous man would only resort to such if there was truly no other option. Chu Wanning…..be it this life or the last, this righteousness of his was his downfall.

All that bullshit about justice always triumphing over evil was just words in books, but this idiot insisted on taking that stuff seriously. For all his exceptional talent and martial prowess, it served him right to end up as a mere prisoner beneath the steps, bones in the dirt.

“Shizun.” Shi Mei’s voice cut off his musing.

“This disciple heard that hundreds, if not thousands climb Dawning Peak every year in search of a weapon, but only one or two are able to thaw Jincheng Lake. On top of that, no one had managed to at all in the last few years. This disciple’s cultivation is weak……there really……isn’t any chance at all. A-Ran and the young master are both outstanding, but maybe I should just stay behind and practice my basics.”

Chu Wanning: “……”

He did not speak, face like fine porcelain layered with a faint mist, as if deep in thought.

In the last life, Shi Mei also turned down the chance to go to Dawning Peak due to low self-confidence. Seeing this, Mo Ran immediately put on a grin: “There’s no harm in trying. Even if it doesn’t work out, just think of it as taking a trip. Better than staying cooped up at Sisheng Peak all day, why not go out and see the world instead.”

Shi Mei only became even more nervous: “No but, I really am too weak, and there are so many people at Dawning Peak, if disciples from another sect challenged me to a fight, I’ll definitely lose and embarrass Shizun……”

Chu Wanning lifted his eyes: “Is that what you were afraid of?”

The words were strange, as if questioning, yet also as if merely rhetorical. The other two didn’t sense anything off, but Shi Mei felt a creeping chill in his heart, and when he looked up, his eyes met Chu Wanning’s cold, biting gaze.

“Shizun……”

Chu Wanning’s expression remained still as he spoke: “You specialize in healing; fights are not your forte to begin with. If someone bothers you about it, simply refuse, there is no shame in that.”

Mo Ran grinned: “Don’t worry Shi Mei, you have me.”

And so the three of them packed for the trip and set off.

The destination this time was quite far, all the way in the upper cultivation realm. Riding horses there would be too exhausting, and Chu Wanning still didn’t want to travel by sword, so they went by carriage at a relaxed pace for more than ten days before finally arriving at a city by the foot of Dawning Peak.

The three disciples had already climbed out of the carriage, but Chu Wanning still didn't feel like moving just yet. He lifted up the carriage's bamboo screen and said: "We'll stay the night here. A little more travelling tomorrow and we'll be at Dawning Peak."

Their rest stop was called Dai City; not an overly large city, but affluent and bustling. The women wore silks and jades, and the men were dressed in expensive brocades. It was easily more opulent than even the richest locales of the lower cultivation realm.

Xue Meng clicked his tongue: "Look at these upper cultivation realm mutts, the scent of meat and wine wafting out of the doors of the rich while the poor starve and freeze to death in the streets."

Mo Ran disliked it as well, and so didn't quibble with Xue Meng for once. Instead, he made fun of the scene before him with a sweet smile on his face: "No kidding, I'm so jealous. No wonder so many people are so desperate to move to the upper cultivation realm. Even being a common person and not a cultivator here is still a much better life than down there."

Chu Wanning took out and donned a silver mask before leisurely getting out of the carriage. He looked around at the hustle and bustle, thinking about something or another.

Xue Meng was puzzled: "Why is Shizun wearing a mask?"

Chu Wanning replied: "This is Linyi Rufeng Sect's area. It's best if I don't show my face here."

Seeing the lingering confusion in Xue Meng's expression, Mo Ran sighed: "The lil phoenix must have left his head back home, to forget that Shizun used to be Linyi Rufeng Sect's guest master."

His words jolted Xue Meng's memory, but the darling of the heavens wasn't about to admit that he really did forget. So, face red, he rolled his eyes instead: "O-of course I knew that! But Shizun was only a guest master there, it's not like they bought him or anything, there's no reason he can't just up and leave. Even if the Rufeng Sect people do see him, what're they gonna do, drag him back?"

Mo Ran said: "You blockhead, have you seriously never heard? Ever since Shizun left Rufeng Sect, basically no one from the upper cultivation realm even knows where he went. Whenever we get asked who we're apprenticed under while out on exorcism missions, haven't we always just said Sisheng Peak without specifying our teacher?"

Xue Meng was taken aback for a moment before comprehension dawned on him: "Oh so Shizun's whereabouts is a secret here? But Shizun is so strong, why the need to hide?"

"It's not that I'm carefully hiding, I just don't want to be bothered." Chu Wanning said, "Let's go find an inn."

"Welcome, will the good sirs be staying with us?" The inn's attendant jogged over, greasy face gleaming.

Xue Meng said: "Four rooms."

The attendant forced a smile while twisting his hands: "So sorry sir, all the inns in the city have been pretty full recently, so I'm afraid we don't have four rooms to spare, would the good sirs be ok with two?"

There's nothing to be done about it, they'll just have to share.

But a small problem came up when it came to assigning rooms.

——

“I’m gonna room with Shi Mei.” Mo Ran stated firmly where the three disciples were gathered while Chu Wanning paid the bill.

Xue Meng wasn’t having it: “Like hell you are.”

Mo Ran feigned shock: “Eh? I thought you liked sticking to Shizun?”

“Th-that doesn’t mean I want to——”

He felt the utmost respect for Chu Wanning, but he was also afraid of him. Truth be told, even he couldn’t say if he felt more adoration or fear toward the man.

Looking at Xue Meng’s reddened face, Mo Ran grinned smugly: “Lil bro, why do I get the feeling that it’s not that you don’t want to sleep with Shizun, but that you’re too scared to?”

Xue Meng’s eyes were round as orbs: “It’s not like Shizun’s gonna eat me, why would I be scared!”

“Oh.” Mo Ran’s shit-eating grin only widened, “But Shizun hits people in his sleep, did you know that?”

Xue Meng: “.....”

Xue Meng stammered, face going from pale to blue and back again, before he suddenly realized something and shot back in a rage: “How do you know what Shizun’s like in his sleep! Have you slept with him before?”

That was a bit ambiguous, even though Xue Meng definitely didn’t mean it that way. Mo Ran sneered to himself, not only had this venerable one slept

with him before, this venerable one had slept him before.

But real men don't flaunt past conquests, so he only continued grinning: "If you don't believe me, go ahead and see for yourself tonight. Oh yeah, don't forget to bring a bottle of salve, you're gonna need it."

Xue Meng was just about to rage when Chu Wanning finished paying and came over.

He glanced mildly at them and said: "Let's go."

The three youths followed Shizun upstairs like three little tails. Standing in front of the rooms, all three of them looked down meekly and waited for Chu Wanning to speak, despite the bickering just now.

Their bickering didn't actually carry any weight at all. When it came time to actually assign the rooms, they all shut up and waited for Chu Wanning to decide.

Chu Wanning paused before saying: "There are only two rooms, which of you……"

He hesitated, feeling a little self-conscious.

How to say——"which of you wants to be with me?"

It sounds a bit cautious and pitiful even to him, far too unbefitting of Yuheng Elder's style.

How should he say it then?

"Mo Weiyu, you're coming with me." Like that?

……Forget it. Add a spiked club and a tiger pelt, and he'd be no different from some shady bandit stealing a family's young daughter. He was a respected cultivation master, he had to save his face.

Besides, ever since that one night at Red Lotus Pavilion, both of them felt awkward and avoided being alone together.

Chu Wanning's face remained impassive, but a thousand thoughts barreled through his mind. A good while passed before he, calm and collected, lifted his chin and nodded slightly toward Xue Meng.

"Xue Meng will room with me."

Xue Meng: "……"

Mo Ran's smile dropped off his face, dumbfounded.

He did indeed hope for Xue Meng to be with Chu Wanning so that he could be with Shi Mei. But to hear this choice come out of Chu Wanning's mouth somehow made him very irate.

He was utterly unaware of this, but he was just like a stray pup that didn't know how tall the sky was. The stray pup met a man. That person wasn't exactly the nicest to him, but would at least toss him some bone to gnaw on for each meal of the day.

But the stray pup disliked this mean guy. He chewed the bone, and, when done, would only lick his paw and bark endlessly at him. He didn't see this guy as his owner at all.

For some reason unknown to the pup, one day when this man came out with a bowl in hand, it no longer held the bone he was familiar with, but millet seeds instead. A beautiful bird with bright plumage flew down and

perched on his shoulder, beady eyes staring at him as it rubbed its beak affectionately against his cheek.

The man turned to look to the side, patting the bird while patiently feeding it.

The stray pup was dumbfounded.

After all, he was so certain that Chu Wanning would choose himself……

Author’s Notes:

Dogs who are too spoiled will fall out of favor! Owner doesn’t want you anymore! Owner now prefers to keep birds! (hey hey hey!) Owner would rather play with birds than you! Go cry!

Ch.35 This Venerable One Slips

That night, Mo Ran stared at the wall, cheek in hand.

On the other side of that wall was Chu Wanning and Xue Meng's room.

Shi Mei liked cleanliness, so he had left a change of clothes folded neatly on the bed and gone downstairs to ask the attendant to bring up hot water for bathing.

The walls of the inn weren't very soundproof. In the quiet, he could faintly hear the sounds from the adjacent room.

Chu Wanning seemed to have said something, he couldn't hear clearly. But he heard Xue Meng's voice loud and clear——

"Seems a little tight."

Mo Ran's ears stood up like a dog's, wiggling a little.

Across the wall, the little phoenix said: "Shizun, does it hurt?"

".....It's fine, you can keep going."

"I'll be gentle, let me know if it hurts."

"You talk too much. Do it or don't."

Mo Ran's eyes widened in alarm: "???"

Surely there was no way no how between those two, but what kind of exchange was this ? What're they doing ?

The pup's ears were practically pressed against the wall. There was the faint sound of clothes rustling, and if he strained, he could even hear Chu Wanning's stifled groans.

He had heard Chu Wanning make this kind of sound in bed countless times before. That Shizun of his didn't like to make any noise when it felt really good or really painful, always biting down hard on his lower lip as unshed tears gathered in his eyes. At that time, all he had to do was push just a little bit harder to rip soft pants of breaths from his throat……

"W-wait." Chu Wanning's voice was low and rough, "Don't…… touch there."

"Alright." Xue Meng hesitated, then said in a small voice, "Then…… Shizun will do it himself?"

"Mn."

Where ?

What nonsense is this? Don't touch where? Do what himself? Just what are they doing!

Mo Ran's entire face darkened.

By the time he realized what he was doing, he had already knocked on the neighboring door.

A flurry of rushing noises came from inside. Pup's expression grew even darker. He raised his voice: "Shizun, what are you——"

The door opened with a creak.

Xue Meng stood there, fully dressed, hand still holding a piece of blood-stained gauze. He narrowed his eyes as he glared at Mo Ran with puzzlement.

“What do you want, making such a ruckus this late at night? Trip over a ghost or something?”

Mo Ran’s mouth opened then closed stupidly. He glanced past Xue Meng to where Chu Wanning sat by the table with medicinal salve and fresh bandages on it.

“What were you guys……”

Xue Ment continued glaring: “Applying medicine, of course. Shizun’s shoulder injury hasn’t healed yet. The dressing hasn’t been changed for a few days, and some of the wounds got infected again.”

Mo Ran: “.....”

He asked dumbly: “Th-then what was too tight……”

“Too tight?” Xue Meng thought for a while, brows drawn together, “Oh, the bandages. They were wrapped too tightly before, some bits got stuck to the wounds with blood and almost wouldn’t come off.”

He stopped talking suddenly and glanced at Mo Ran with suspicion.

“You were eavesdropping ?”

Mo Ran rolled his eyes and scrambled to save his sorry face: “Who’s eavesdropping! The walls here are so thin you can even hear breathing sounds if you lean against them, go see for yourself if you don’t believe me.”

“Oh. Really?” Xue Meng nodded, but then a moment later felt like something was off, “——Wait, how do you know that? Were you leaning against the wall to listen?”

Mo Ran: “.....”

Xue Meng, angrily: “Mo Weiyu, you are such a freak!”

Mo Ran, just as angry: “Who knows what beastly things you might do to Shizun!”

Xue Meng was a pure person who knew nothing of such matters. He had no idea what Mo Ran was even on about, so he only got angrier: “What nonsense are you yapping about!” And turned to complain, “Shizun, he ——”

Chu Wanning put on his outer robe, holding it closed with one hand while straightening out his hair with the other as he calmly walked over and glanced Mo Ran up and down.

“Did you need something?”

“I……I heard……” Mo Ran fumbled for words, “Um, that stuff, so I thought Xue Meng was bullying you……”

“What?” Chu Wanning didn’t understand at all, eyes narrowing, “Who’s bullying me?”

Mo Ran wanted to slap himself: “.....”

They were in the middle of staring awkwardly at one another when Shi Mei came upstairs.

“A-Ran? What are you doing outside Shizun’s room?”

“I……uh……” Mo Ran stammered, “That, um, there was a misunderstanding.”

Shi Mei smiled: “Well, has it been resolved?”

“Yeah, yeah.” Mo Ran said hurriedly, “Shi Mei, didn’t you go ask the attendant for hot water? Shizun probably hasn’t bathed yet either, I’ll go ask them to bring extra.”

Shi Mei said: “No need.” He took out four bamboo tablets, smiling, “The attendant said there’s a natural hot spring by the inn which the innkeeper built into a bath. These tablets are passes, I got one for everyone.”

Mo Ran thought that he, a cutsleeve,[70] probably shouldn’t go soak in the hot spring with the other three.

Xue Meng was whatever; Shi Mei was pure and divine in his eyes, and he dared not even think any dirty thoughts about him. But Chu Wanning… he was well aware, from the couple times of close contact they had since his rebirth, that he’d probably lose his mind if he saw that person undress.

Mo Ran covered his face with a hand: “I’ll pass.”

Xue Meng, shocked: “You don’t bathe before bed? Gross!”

Mo Ran said: “I’ll ask the attendant to send some hot water up.”

Shi Mei was baffled: “They don’t boil hot water here, since all the guests go to the hot spring.”

Mo Ran: “.....”

Having no other choice, Mo Ran could only grab a change of clothes and go to the hot spring with everyone else. This inn was pretty diligent at currying favor; it knew well that most people who come to stay are cultivators headed to Jincheng Lake hopeful for a weapon, and so named the bath “Daybreak’s Reflection in Jincheng” to invite some luck.

Mo Ran was scared stiff of losing his senses, and dared not even touch the other two. He changed in a rush, wrapping the towel tightly around his waist, and ran off by himself to the hot spring first to find a secluded spot.

It was already rather late, so there weren’t many people in the bath, and the ones who were there were scattered distantly. With a square of white towel on the top of his head, Mo Ran sank into the water, leaving only half his face above, and let out a breath, ‘gulugulu’ blowing bubbles.

The first person to finish changing strode out with long, bare legs.

Mo Ran snuck a glance and let out a breath in relief. Thank the gods, it was only Xue Meng.

Xue-gongzi may be handsome, but he wasn’t Taxian-Jun’s type no matter how you cut it. Their gazes met, and Xue Meng pointed at him: “You, stay away from me.”

“What gives?”

“You’re dirty.”

Mo Ran: “Hehe.”

The bath was misty with water vapor. After a while, Xue Meng paused in the middle of scrubbing himself to call out: “Shizun, over here!”

Mo Ran, with half his face underwater, nearly choked. He knew damn well that he shouldn't look, but his gaze still couldn't help wandering over.

That single glance nearly killed him. He was so startled that he swallowed two whole mouthfuls of bath water and didn't even have time to be grossed out, hurrying instead to sink even deeper into the water until only his eyes were above the water.

He totally didn't expect Chu Wanning and Shi Mei to come out together.

Shi Mei was slender and softly beautiful, with long, ink-black hair draped over his shoulders, and wrapped in a towel.

By all rights, Mo Ran should've wanted to sneak a look at him the most, but his glance darted quickly past him. He truly respect Shi Mei like the bright moon above, and dared not stare at him in public.

Chu Wanning, on the other hand, was tall and coldly handsome, with broad shoulders and a narrow waist, toned body and firm skin. He had his hair up in a high ponytail, and wore a large, white bathrobe that covered his whole body, except for the front where it was too wide to be pulled close and revealed a large expanse of smooth, firm chest.

Staring at him, Mo Ran felt like he was going to suffocate and boil in the water.

He wanted to look away.

But his traitorous eyes refused to listen, and his gaze fixed itself there without moving even the slightest bit. His ears slowly turned red.

Across the heavy mist, Chu Wanning seemed to have glanced at him, or perhaps not. He put a layer of waterproofing barrier over his bandages and

stepped into the water. His legs could be seen between the floating robes, long and slender, balanced with tight contours.

Mo Ran: "……"

He really couldn't take any more, closing his eyes and sinking all the way into the water.

Even covered by the towel wrapped around his waist, his reaction was really too……

Mo Ran felt extremely wronged.

He really didn't like Chu Wanning, he truly hated Chu Wanning.

But his body remembered their fervent love-making, those frenzied intertwinements that could turn even bones of steel into tenderness, and all of the absurd things between the two of them that made his face redden and his heart race.

The jut of his throat bobbed as a celestial war raged within.

Mo Ran was really about to cry.

It was the first time in his life that he loathed himself so——why was he like this? Shi Mei was right there, what the fuck was he doing losing his damn mind over Chu Wanning?

Even if they had pressed together skin to skin as they entwined in the previous life.

All that was in the past.

No matter how hung up he was over Chu Wanning's body, how could he do this to Shi Mei? This was too disrespectful to him, he deserved better.

Mo Ran lowered his head and focused on dispelling those wicked thoughts for quite a while before finally managing to suppress the fire in his abdomen. He burst out of the water and shook off the droplets, wiped his face with the towel, and opened his watery eyes.

And came face to face with Chu Wanning.

Even worse, the water he had just shaken off all splashed right onto Chu Wanning's face. He watched as a droplet leisurely made its way down into his sharp black eyebrow, and then slowly slid lower, nearly about to get into that beautiful phoenix eye.

Chu Wanning: "……"

Mo Ran: "……"

This was truly the worst. He couldn't see the surroundings earlier when he was submerged underwater holding his breath.

Chu Wanning also had no idea Mo Ran was under the water here, and was just minding his own business coming over here to fetch the box of fragrance bars. He didn't even get to the box before he got splashed with a faceful of water.

The hotspring was quite deep, the buoyancy of the water strong. Mo Ran, head swimming, tried to back away, but ended up slipping and falling right into Chu Wanning's arms instead.

"Ah!"

“.....”

Author’s Notes:

Today’s mini theater 《The world in your ear is different from mine》

Phoenix chick: Seems a little tight.

Little pup: !!??!!

Phoenix chick: Shizun, does it hurt?

Big white kitty: .....It’s fine, you can keep going.

Phoenix chick: I’ll be gentle, let me know if it hurts.

Big white kitty: You talk too much. Do it or don’t.

Little pup: Arf arf arf!!! What are you doing!!! Angry!! Arf arf arf!!!

Phoenix chick: ...ah? I’m massaging shizun’s shoulders.

Little pup: Then a little tight means...

Phoenix chick: Tight in the shoulder muscles, what did you think it was?

Little pup: …

Many years later.

Handsome and mighty dumb husky (Does this kind of creature exist?): Seems a little tight.

Phoenix chick: !!??!!

Dumb husky: Shizun, does it hurt?

Big white kitty: ......It’s fine, you can keep going.

Dumb husky: I’ll be gentle, let me know if it hurts.

Big white kitty: You talk too much. Do it or don’t.

Phoenix chick pondered by the door for a moment, concluded the dumb husky must have been massaging shizun’s shoulders.

Sigh, idiot husky has so much strength in his hands. The little phoenix rolled his eyes and thought—— it was just a shoulder massage, shizun’s voice sounded a bit hoarse, one star review.

He shook his feathers and walked away, and he did not realize he missed an opportunity to become a heroic bird (shrugs)

Ch.36 This Venerable One Has Probably Lost His Mind

>>mature content(?)

Without thinking, Chu Wanning reached out to steady him. As the two of them stood plastered against each other in the warm spring water, Mo Ran felt a spark go through his entire body, goosebumps crawling up his skin.

Even though he'd already held a near-naked Chu Wanning at the Red Lotus Pavilion back then, the circumstances at the time had been dire. There wasn't any time to dwell on the situation, so he hadn't thought much of it.

But right now, with one hand against Chu Wanning's chest and the other unconsciously supporting his Shizun's waist, their legs tangled together under the water, with the spring making their skin feel warmer and more slippery, Mo Ran's head short-circuited entirely.

He, to Chu Wanning……

Without even doing anything but touching the other's waist……

His body reacted with the intensity of a rushing river.

"Sh-shizun, I——"

As he frantically tried to get up and away, his red-hot lower parts made contact with the other person in the struggle.

Chu Wanning's eyes suddenly widened, his beautiful face stricken with horror, and he backed away immediately. At the same time, the droplet of water that had been clinging to his eyelashes dripped down into his eye.

He grew more and more agitated, squeezing his eyes shut and rubbing at them, but he didn't have a bath towel to wipe the water with.

"Shizun, use, use mine."

Mo Ran's face burned red, mortified to absolute death. Still trying his best to pretend that nothing was wrong, he used his own towel to wipe the water droplets off of Chu Wanning's face for him.

When Chu Wanning finally opened his phoenix eyes again, he still had a baffled look of distress on his face, with a hint of panic underneath. But it only lasted a moment before he quickly forced himself to calm down. He pretended he hadn't felt anything at all and said, hoarsely: "The fragrance bar, pass it to me."

"Oh……oh okay."

Mo Ran crabwalked stiffly to the edge of the pool and picked up the box of fragrance bars sitting on the bank.

"What scent does, does Shizun want?"

"Whatever."

Mo Ran's head swam in a daze. After staring blankly into the box for a long time, he turned back and said sincerely, "There's no scent here called 'Whatever.'"

"....."

Chu Wanning sighed heavily. "Plum blossom, haitang."

"Okay."

Mo Ran took two fragrance bars and handed them to Chu Wanning.

As soon as their fingertips touched, there was another burst of tremors.

No matter how badly he wanted to, it was impossible to shake off all those memories from the past.

If this was in the past, he'd already be fervently tangled with him at the side of the pool by now. A vision appeared unbidden before his eyes, of Chu Wanning half-kneeling on the ground as he endured his fiery, ferocious passions, eyes half-lidded and body trembling uncontrollably as he took it, but still got screwed until climax washed over him……

Mo Ran was unable to stand it anymore; those carnal desires made his eyes see red. He didn't dare to look at Chu Wanning at all. He felt that even looking at Shi Mei right now would be safer than looking at Chu Wanning.

How……could this be……

How could this happen?

He quickly finished washing himself and, taking advantage of the fact that the other three were still soaking in the pool, Mo Ran said some vague words to the effect of him being sleepy and that he'd turn in first.

Once he got back to his room, he bolted and locked the door.

Mo Ran couldn't take it anymore, and moved to relieve himself. He didn't want to think about Chu Wanning's appearance at a time like this. He'd even rather soil Shi Mei's pure image; at least that would be easier for his confused heart to accept.

But neither his body nor his mind wanted to listen, and every sight that flashed before his eyes was that of him and Chu Wanning in the past, neck to neck as they sought pleasure in one another. It was like the floodgates had opened tonight, all those torrid memories came rushing back into his mind in a frenzy, along with wave after wave of trembles.

He treated himself almost roughly, as though he was on top of that man's body, and on the very edge of ruin, he threw his head back as if he refused to accept it, yet his breaths came out in muddled gasps and pants.

He breathed out the name without realizing it.

"Wanning……"

Calling this name, he let out a stifled grunt, trembling slightly as he came without holding anything back, covering his palm in sticky wetness…...

Once he finished, Mo Ran leaned over to rest his forehead against the cold wall. His eyes were awash with confusion.

Shame, guilt, loathing, arousal.

He never expected he'd still have such strong reactions to Chu Wanning even after being reborn.

He was suddenly filled with disgust toward himself.

Since he never attained Shi Mei in his past life, he vented all his passion into other frivolous relationships. But even though he made it seem like passionate love, it didn't really mean anything to him.

After the candlelight was extinguished, it was all just sex, all the same no matter who it was with.

Even the way his heart moved towards Rong Jiu was just because he bore some resemblance to Shi Mei.

But the kinds of feelings he had toward Chu Wanning were completely different. He realized, as he thought about it harder, that even though they weren't doing anything sexual, the intense pleasure he got from it was unlike anything he was ever able to feel with those prostitutes. It wasn't just physical, and……

He refused to dwell on it.

He was in love with Shi Mei, always had been, and always will be too. His feelings absolutely wouldn't change.

After repeating this to himself a few times, Mo Ran calmly slowed his breathing, frowned, and then shut his eyes.

He felt anxious, annoyed, and aggrieved all at once.

He didn't want this.

In matters of lust, he couldn't help but think about Chu Wanning. When the lust subsided, he didn't want to think of anything to do with Chu Wanning, whether it was a hair on his head or a fleeting look.

He frantically thought to himself, almost to the point of paranoia, that the one he likes, the one he loves deeply……

……is Shi Mei……

Chu Wanning's mind was in the same state of distress.

Totally unexpectedly, he had seen and, moreover, felt Mo Ran's desire. The young man's body was already quite mature, already much too overwhelming, hard and so hot as to be scalding when excited, like hot iron waiting to be forged.

Even though Chu Wanning quickly schooled his face into a blank calm, and refused to bring anything up afterwards, the encounter had made his head go numb and filled him with disbelief.

To make matters worse, his own body had reacted too.

Fortunately, he had a thin face and so always wore a bathrobe even in hot springs. It covered his whole body and no one saw anything, otherwise he would really never be able to show his face again.

But why would Mo Ran……

As he lay in bed that night, he ruminated quietly for hours. He dared not even imagine——that, maybe, Mo Ran also liked him.

That kind of thought was entirely too delusional and shameful.

Even the cautious thought of "maybe Mo Ran also likes——"

The word "me" didn't even have time to surface in his mind before Chu Wanning furiously pinched himself. That pair of clear, bright phoenix eyes flickered as if trying to hide.

He didn't even dare to entertain the whole thought.

Besides, his personality was harsh, he was quick to hit people, his words were poisonous and he had a bad temper, he was nowhere near as beautiful as Shi Mei in appearance, and not to mention he was not young

anymore. Even if Mo Ran liked men, he wouldn't be blind enough to like him.

On the outside, he was aloof and haughty.

But on the inside, the truth was that he'd been treated coldly by others for so long, been feared for so long, that as he walked this long and lonely road, his opinion of himself had slowly crumbled into dust.

They woke up the next day.

Mo Ran and Chu Wanning met in the hallway of the inn, both holding secrets in their hearts. Both of them looked at each other, but neither deigned to speak first.

In the end, it was Mo Ran who first carried on as if all was normal. He smiled toward Chu Wanning and said: "Shizun."

Chu Wanning was relieved; he really didn't know how to deal with this situation. Seeing as Mo Ran chose not to mention anything that happened yesterday, he was perfectly willing to go along with it. He nodded once, lightly.

"Since we're already up, we should go wake up Shi Mei as well. After packing up real quick, we can depart for Dawning Peak."

Dawning Peak was covered in snow all year round, and exceedingly cold. Even for a cultivator, it would be difficult to endure such cold weather. Chu Wanning went to the tailor to buy winter cloaks and gloves for the disciples, so that they could wear them when the temperature dropped.

The shopkeeper smoked her pipe and smiled, lips drawn up in a bright red and welcoming customers. When she saw Mo Ran she said, "What a

handsome young fellow! Look at this black cape with a golden dragon on it; the embroidery is of the highest quality. You see the light in its eyes? It took me more than three months to complete it!”

Mo Ran gave an embarrassed laugh. “Miss’s words are very sweet, but I’m just going into the mountains to seek a weapon. There’s no need for me to wear something so formal and ornate.”

Seeing that this prospect failed, the shopkeeper instead turned to Shi Mei. “Oh, this young prince is beautiful beyond compare, even more lovely than the most beautiful girl in this city! Sir, if you would allow me, this red butterfly and peony cloak would suit you perfectly. How about you give it a try?”

Shi Mei forced a smile. “Miss, aren’t those women’s clothes?”

Xue Meng hated shopping for clothes, so he refused to come along and just waited in place. Chu Wanning chose a black cloak with purple lining for him, with white rabbits embroidered around the brim.

The shopkeeper said, “Sir, this cloak is a bit small for you. It would be better suited for a teenager.”

“It’s for my disciple,” Chu Wanning said expressionlessly.

“Oh, ooh!” The shopkeeper realized her mistake and quickly smiled. “What a great teacher.”

It may have been the first time Chu Wanning had ever been called a “great teacher.” He went still, and his face betrayed nothing, but his steps were out of sync when he walked away, with arm and leg on the same side moving together for quite a few steps.

In the end, Mo Ran chose a light gray cloak, Shi Mei a moonlit-white one, and Chu Wanning a plain white one with dark purple lining. After they made their purchases, they went back to Xue Meng.

When Xue Meng saw his cloak, his eyes widened.

“What is it?” Chu Wanning said, not understanding his reaction.

“It, it’s nothing.”

When Chu Wanning walked far enough away that Xue Meng thought he couldn’t hear, he looked at the lining on the cloak and muttered, “Purple? I don’t like purple.”

He didn’t expect to hear Chu Wanning’s voice saying coldly, “So much nonsense. If you won’t wear it you can climb up naked.”

“.....”

They leisurely traveled to the end of the road, and the four of them reached the foot of Dawning Peak before nightfall.

Dawning Peak was rich in spiritual power, and home to many beasts and monsters. Even cultivators would not dare to rush in carelessly unless they were significantly strong.

Since Chu Wanning was there, though, they didn’t have to worry about things like that. Chu Wanning conjured three haitang petals from thin air, giving them spirit-repelling properties and tucking them into the waist sashes of his three disciples. “Let’s go,” he said.

Mo Ran looked out at the peaks hidden in the night sky, like a huge, ancient beast crouching deathly still, and a myriad of emotions poured into

his heart.

In the past, it was on Dawning Peak where he declared to the sun and moon, ghosts and demons, that he, Mo Ran, was not satisfied with the current cultivation world, and would instate himself as the new ruler.

It was the same year in which, at Dawning Peak, he had taken a wife and a concubine.

He still remembered the face of that wife, Song Qiutong, a real unparalleled beauty. From certain angles, she looked very much like Shi Mei.

He was not a person who cared much for etiquette or honor, and didn't even bother with those tedious rites of marriage. At that time, he just took Song Qiutong's delicate hand, pulled the red-veiled woman up a flight of thousands of stairs, and they walked for over an hour.

Eventually, Song Qiutong's feet hurt too much to walk.

Mo Ran had a bad temper, he lifted her veil and was about to yell at her.

But, under the light of the moon, Song Qiutong's sorrowful eyes made her look just like that person who had long since passed.

The angry words died in his mouth and, after drawing a shaky breath, he finally said:

"Shi Mei, I'll carry you."

In terms of seniority, if Song Qiutong had been his peer, she would indeed have been his shi-mei.[71] So she only paused slightly at this kind of address, reasoning that since Mo Ran had wiped out the entire Rufeng Sect, it was

naturally now part of Sisheng Peak. That being the case, it wasn't like it was wrong for him to call her shi-mei, so she just smiled and said, "Okay."

And so, for the last several thousand steps, Taxian-Jun, Master of the Mortal Realm, Ruler of the Shadows, steadily, one foot in front of the other, carried his red-adorned bride to the peak.

He lowered his head and watched their oddly shaped shadows moving on the ground, overlapping with each other.

He laughed a little, and said through a dry throat, "Shi Mei, I'm the Master of the Mortal Realm now. From this day on, no one will be able to hurt you."

The woman on his back didn't know what to say to this, hesitated a little, and finally just said "Mm."

The voice was soft. Perhap because it was too soft, it was hard to distinguish it as a feminine voice, and the tone was vague.

Not a soul could see Mo Ran's face as his eyes grew red. He murmured, "I'm sorry, I've kept you waiting for this day too long."

Song Qiutong thought that Mo Ran was saying he'd had feelings for her for a long time, so she replied softly, "Husband……"

This woman's voice was clear and crisp, like morning dew, pleasing to hear.

But Mo Ran's feet suddenly slammed to a halt.

"What's wrong?"

"......Nothing."

As he started to walk again, Mo Ran's voice grew firm again and lost its hoarseness.

After a pause, he said, "In the future, it's better if you call me A-Ran."

Song Qiutong was caught off guard, and didn't quite dare to call Taxian-Jun this. "Husband, this…… I'm afraid……"

Mo Ran's voice grew harsh and violent. "If you don't listen, I'll throw you off of this mountain!"

"A, A-Ran!" Song Qiutong quickly changed her speech. "A-Ran, I was wrong."

Mo Ran said nothing else.

He lowered his head again, silently walking forward.

The shadows on the ground were still shadows.

Looking back at it, it was easy to see that it, really, was just a shadow.

The rose-tinted things he'd wanted to see were all fake.

In the end, what he had was nothing more than an illusion.

It was all in vain.

"Shi Mei."

"Mn?" The person walking beside Mo Ran turned his head and asked. The sounds of shifting leaves, rustling grass, and the light of the moon all reflected onto this person's face. "A-Ran, what is it?"

“Are you……tired from walking?” Mo Ran glanced at Chu Wanning and Xue Meng who were walking in front of them and whispered, “If you’re tired, how about I give you a piggy-back ride?”

Before Shi Mei could reply, Chu Wanning turned his head to look back at them.

He glared coldly at Mo Ran and said, “Are Shi Mingjing’s legs broken? Does he need you to carry him?”

“Shizun,” Shi Mei said hurriedly, “A-Ran was just joking, don’t be angry.”

Chu Wanning frowned, eyebrows drawing together into a severe expression. “Ridiculous. What do I have to angry about.”

As soon as he finished speaking, he whirled back around with a flick of his sleeve.

Mo Ran: “……”

Shi Mei: “……”

“Shizun seems mad……”

“You know how he is,” Mo Ran whispered into Shi Mei’s ear. “His own heart is smaller than a needle tip, cold-blooded and heartless. Can’t even stand to see other people doing good things for their peers.”

He wrinkled his nose and lowered his voice even further, concluding, “Seriously the worst.”

Suddenly, Chu Wanning’s voice rang out from in front of them. “Mo Weiyu, if you say one more word, you’ll find yourself thrown down the mountain!”

Mo Ran silenced himself as if in obedience, but secretly grinned over at Shi Mei and mouthed, ‘See, what’d I say?’

Author’s notes:

Today a teacher from cultivation school assigned homework for the students, use “Impossible” in a sentence.

Mo Ran: To like someone, is it just liking his body? Impossible.

Chu Wanning: To like someone, is it something that must be said out loud? Impossible.

Shi Mei: My appearance, is it like a girl’s? Impossible.

Xue Meng: As a straight man, would I be willing to wear lavender[72] coloured cloak? Impossible.

Mrs Wang: As a straight man, would you not wear it and climb up the mountain naked with three gay men? Impossible.

Xue Zhengyong: Yuheng Elder is this ghey, would there be any straight men under his wing? Impossible.

Song Qiutong: As a canon fodder, would the emperor marry me in this lifetime? Impossible.

Meatbun: Dumb husky was a scum today, would there be no little angels scolding him in the comments? Impossible.

Ch.37 This Venerable One Meets a God

“The cold moon reflects upon the frosty snow; the frozen mountain embraces the icy lake. The tallest of the tall cannot be crossed, and the despair of the world is in this timely moment.”

Xue Meng wiped snow off of the large boulder, wearing deer skin gloves on his hands, as he read aloud the cinnabar inscription upon it. He looked back and said, “Shizun, we’re here.”

Dawning Peak was embellished by storming snow all year long. At that moment, a luscious crescent moon was high in the sky, a shimmering glow looking upon the icy lake. Cold air pierced through thick forest leaves in an absolute world of ice. Jincheng Lake was frozen without traces of snow, as if there were jewels made of glass across the sky and earth, the Milky Way itself fallen upon mere mortals, falling stars seen as far as ten thousand miles, a scene peerless in magnificence. It was as if one had truly journeyed to the end of humanity, to a world covered in beautifully untainted snow.

The group went to the lake, the surface smooth like a mirror and filled with a magnificent, glimmering light. A stone embankment went through all the way to the center of the lake. There was a stone tablet next to the embankment covered in frost. Intersecting patterns spread across the stone, and on it was written only “The Path Forward is Difficult” in powerful calligraphy. After thousands of years, the words were still clear, and it seemed like people often repainted it over.

Chu Wanning stopped in front of the stone embankment and said, “Only one person can go into Jincheng Lake at a time to seek a weapon. Which of

you will go first?”

Xue Meng could hardly contain himself before blurting out, “Shizun, I’ll go first!”

Chu Wanning looked at him, thought about it for a moment, and shook his head. “You’re too rash, I’d be ill at ease.”

After that, Shi Mei laughed a little at his side and said, “Shizun, how about I go in first, since I probably can’t break through the icy lake anyway.”

Shi Mei went along the stone embankment on top of the icy lake that which only let one person through at a time. He slowly walked to the end.

In accordance with the customs, he produced a ball of spiritual energy in his hand, and then leaned over to place his palm against the ice——Shi Mei’s spiritual energy traveled ceaselessly down along the surface of the ice, and they could see a white light flickering from the distance.

Mo Ran stood from afar and held his breath, clenching his hand into a fist.

But no matter how long Shi Mei tried at the lake, the ice did not budge at all. He gave a forced smile as he gave up and walked back, saying to Chu Wanning, “Shizun, my apologies.”

“No matter, try again after cultivating a few more years.”

Mo Ran sighed a little, somehow more disappointed than either of them, but still went to comfort Shi Mei and said, “It’s fine, you’ll get more chances. Next time I’ll come with you to try again.”

Chu Wanning said, “Don’t yap so much. Step up, it’s your turn now.”

In his past life, when Mo Ran went to seek a weapon, it was during his most carefree days of youth. He had nothing but boundless enthusiasm toward the prospect of a holy weapon. In this life, it was nothing more than coming to pick up a weapon; he already knew what kind of things would be waiting ahead of him. There was none of that anxiousness or expectation. On the other hand, he did feel a kind of warmth, as if he was about to reunite with an old friend.

He walked along the stone embankment, and knelt before the icy lake.

Bending down, he pressed his palm against the surface of the ice.

Mo Ran closed his eyes.

His scabbardless long blade……

That sinful, vicious blade which saw with him all the world's flowers, and tasted all the blood in the human realm——

Mo Ran opened his eyes, and whispered to the surface of the lake, "Bu'gui, I'm here."

As if sensing the call of its destined master, a huge black shadow suddenly appeared under the surface of Jincheng Lake's ice. The shadows gathered under the ice, becoming more and more clear, more and more vivid.

Suddenly, the thousands of feet of ice loudly shattered, and Mo Ran could hear Xue Meng's distant shout of alarm come from the shore.

"The ice is gone!!"

The lake's water surged up, waves crashing. A huge, turquoise-black dragon broke through the surface, each scale on its body seven feet wide. In an

instant, Jincheng Lake's surface flooded over, a heavy fog rolling over it. The dragon shimmered brilliantly under the moonlight and spouted a breath from its nose.

At the same time, an ancient barrier fell around the edge of the lake, separating Mo Ran from Chu Wanning and the others.

Inside of the barrier, human and dragon regarded each other.

Mo Ran squinted his eyes through silver mist and looked up at the dragon.

He could see that the dragon held a scabbardless blade in its jaws. Though ancient, the blade was still thick and sharp, capable of carving iron and smashing gold. The dragon transformed the blade into a size usable to a human, and slowly lowered its radiant, vibrantly colored serpentine body to the ground, placing the blade in front of Mo Ran.

It didn't lift its head immediately, instead turning its eyes, golden and as large as a grown man's body height, to stare at the other.

The dragon's eyes were like two great, bronze mirrors, Mo Ran's reflection shining clearly within them. Mo Ran stood still with bated breath, and waited for it to speak.

If nothing was different, then all he needed to do was retrieve a plum blossom from the foot of the mountain and bring it back. He ended up being let off easy because the old dragon sought only peace and elegance.

Little did he know, he'd find after waiting a long while that this was not the same dragon as the one in his past life who gave the weapon to him so easily. Its beard fluttered as it narrowed its two enormous golden eyes, then lifted its front claw to write two words in the snow before Mo Ran:

Mortal one?

Mo Ran stared.

He clearly remembered that the dragon in his past life could speak. How come it's mute in this life?

After the mute dragon wrote these two words, he immediately wiped the writing away with a scaly claw to write another sentence:

No, a mortal would not have such strong spiritual energy. Then, are you a god?

Mo Ran: "……"

The dragon thought for a moment, then swiped its hand once more and wrote:

Not a god; you have evil energy in your body. Are you a kind of demon?

Mo Ran yelled in his head, what kind of nonsense was this?! This Venerable One was just reborn, there's nothing to deliberate back and forth about. Just give this Venerable One his blade already!

The old dragon seemed like it could sense his impatience for his weapon, and suddenly lifted its scaly claws and pressed the blade underneath its foot. With one foot on the blade, it used its other to wipe its writing and continue on another patch of snow:

No need to take offense. I saw two other shadows in your body. I have never seen anything like it in my life. So tell me, are you a mortal or ghost? God or demon?

Mo Ran raised an eyebrow and replied, “Of course I’m a human. Is this something that even needs to be said?” He was just a human who had already died once.

The old dragon paused for a moment, then wrote: One human soul, split like this. This really is never seen before, unheard of.

The dragon shook its head back and forth in a puzzled manner, and Mo Ran couldn’t help but find it funny. “What’s so strange about that? Anyway, Elder, what’ll take it for you to give me this blade of yours?”

The old dragon sized him up for a while and wrote:

Then, you stand there and don’t move. Let me use a technique to peer into your soul, and I’ll give the blade to you. How is that?

“……”

He didn’t expect to be given such a request. Under that profound stare, he started to feel a little bit of hesitation.

He then thought, what if this old thing could see into his past life? What would happen then?

But Bu'gui was almost within his grasp. This blade possessed a strong, fierce power; it was one of the rarest holy weapons in existence. If he refused now, he’d never have a chance to get his hands on it again.

With little pause, Mo Ran looked up and said, “That’s fine and all but, Elder, will you give me the blade no matter what you see inside of me?”

The old dragon drew on the ground:

These are the terms; I will naturally follow through on my words.

“No matter whether I was good or evil in the past?”

The old dragon paused for a moment, and then wrote:

Even if you were evil in the past, I will not stop you. I can only hope that you will pursue goodness in the future.

Mo Ran smiled into his hand and said, “Alright, since the Elder says so, I don’t have any objections. Please examine all you like then, Elder.”

The old dragon lifted itself slightly. Its radiant, serpentine body bowed and it blew a breath from its nose, and then both of its eyes started to emit bright red haze.

But this time, Mo Ran was astounded to find that, reflected in the dragon’s eyes, there were two other hazy and indistinct shadows in addition to himself. One to his left, one to his right, standing faintly behind him.

Mo Ran immediately whipped around in shock, but behind him there was only emptiness and unceasingly falling snow. Where did the other figures come from?

As he turned back again, he saw the figures in the dragon’s eyes become more and more clear, as if something sunken in water was slowly floating up to the surface.

Mo Ran kept staring, and suddenly realized that the two silhouettes were extremely familiar——he couldn't stop himself from taking a step forward, and immediately the closed-eyed figures before him snapped open their eyes!

Shi Mei!

Chu Wanning?!

He never expected that that it would be them. Moran stumbled from being startled by such a thing, staggering backwards and stuttering so much he couldn't form whole sentences. "How——This is——"

The three people in the old dragon's eyes stood quietly, expressions calm and without a hint of emotion, staring like this into the distance.

Mo Ran was stunned. After a while, the blood red fog rose again and the figures in the dragon's eyes started to blur until they finally disappeared altogether.

The old dragon blew a huff from its nose, shook out its body, and then wrote quickly:

I can not make sense of it. I have seen much in my lifetime, but I have never seen a person's soul with the imprints of two other people upon it. Certainly, utterly perplexing.

"My, my soul……has their imprints in it?"

Yes.

After writing that one word, the old dragon paused. Then, it resumed:

I do not know what happened to you. How deep must an obsession run, for another person to be entangled so tightly in one's own soul?

Mo Ran stared at the messy lines in the snow, and his face started growing red as if he were being suffocated.

His obsession with Shi Mei ran so deep through his bones, that even if he was imprinted upon his soul, and even if the dragon could also see Shi Mei when he looked at him, he wouldn't think much of it.

But……what the hell was up with Chu Wanning?

What kind of heartfelt obsession did he have towards Chu Wanning?

Was extreme hatred also obsession enough to count as entanglement?

This human and dragon were so immersed in contemplation, that they did not notice when the surface of Jincheng Lake started to ripple unnaturally.

When the water rushed up and the waves broke through, it was too late.

All they saw was the water in Jincheng Lake split apart, as if sliced in half by a sword, the water on both sides rushing up toward the sky. Two tightly packed groups of beasts rushed out from between the waves. They had the bodies of leopards and the heads of oxen. Though they were not as large as the old dragon, the horns on their head shone coldly, and all of their claws were sharp and menacing. Although hundreds were gathered, the old dragon did not show any fear. He looked askance at them with his golden eyes.

"What happened?" Mo Ran said.

The old dragon paused, and then wrote: the Exalted Gouchen .

When he read those four words, Mo Ran immediately felt as if he'd been struck by lightning. Gouchen the Exalted is the god of weapons, lording over all the weapons in the world. This founding god created the first sword in the world, helping Fuxi[73] lay waste to his demonic enemies.

That awe-inspiring primal god was actually these hundreds of cows?

The thought was too horrifying for Mo Ran to accept. As he stared blankly, uncomprehending, he suddenly heard the sounds of an ocarina coming from a far distance.

The ocarina was an ancient instrument. Not many people in their age still knew how to play it. As the sounds of the ocarina came closer, the raucous group of beasts slowly stilled and bent their forelegs, one by one, until they kneeled along both sides. A man wearing splendid robes and carrying a long sword rode atop a qilin[74] through the path made by the beasts.

The man had a handsome face, with delicate and wholly benign features.

He stood in the wind as snow fell onto him and his robes gently billowed. The clay ocarina in his hands was smooth and deep in color. His fingers were placed lightly over the holes as he held it to his lips to play.

When the music finished playing on a soft note, the hundreds of ox beasts suddenly dissolved into water, revealing that they had only been transfigured creations. The man put down the clay ocarina, ran his eyes over Mo Ran for a moment, and then gently smiled: "Truly a strange person, the likes of which one may never encounter in millenia. No wonder you piqued Wangyue's interest. I am Gouchen the Exalted, who lives within

Jincheng Lake. All of the weapons in this lake were forged by myself. Just things of little consequence; please excuse my humble work."

Even though the old dragon wrote it, and this man said it himself as well, Mo Ran still couldn't believe it. His face paled as he said, "You're Gouchen the Exalted?"

The man smiled patiently and replied, "Yes, I am he."

Mo Ran was on the verge of choking. "......God of a Thousand Weapons? That guy?"

"Correct." Gouchen the Exalted raised his eyebrows delicately, laughter in his eyes. "The later generations do seem to call me that, how embarrassing. I just grind a few paltry swords and tie a few little whips when I'm bored, yet people idolize me so."

Mo Ran: "……"

Strong people acting humble was the most grating thing on earth. Chu Wanning matter-of-factly said "I have three holy weapons," but this Exalted Gouchen was even more irritating. He actually went around calling the weapons he created "paltry swords" and "little whips"; why doesn't he call Emperor Fuxi "lil' old man" while he's at it?

Mo Ran took a while to process this and finally said, "Then, then that, then shouldn't you be in the heavenly realm? How could you be in this……this lake……"

"I like to fight and spar, so I often ended up disturbing the Emperor's peace and quiet. After being on the receiving end of his stink eye, I figured I might as well just descend."

……

“Then how long have you been here?” Mo Ran said, dumbfounded.

Gouchen looked thoughtful. He then smiled and said, “Not too long, only a few hundred years.”

“.....A few hundred years,” Mo Ran repeated, and then laughed drily. “Doesn’t the Exalted God think that’s a bit long?”

Gouchen’s expression was placid as he smiled, nonchalantly waving his sleeves.

“It’s not too long. Besides, forging a sword for the Heavenly Emperor used up much of my spiritual power. And staying in such an abundantly opulent heavenly realm gets rather boring; it’s much better here.”

Although Mo Ran was extremely curious to know more about this god of weapons from legend, it wasn’t really his place to keep prodding about personal matters. He thought about it and decided there were more important matters at hand, so he said instead, “Exalted Elder, you didn’t just come out to see me today because you thought my soul was special, right?”

“Why not? Your spiritual power is rare, hard to ever come across,” Gouchen smiled. “I worry that if I give you this blade, it would be wasted potential.”

“Haha, it’s not too bad,” Mo Ran replied. “This blade seems like it would suit me.”

“I thought that at first as well,” Gouchen continued pleasantly. “But upon closer examination, I found that it isn’t the case. You have a rare talent, so

it made me curious. I came out today because I wanted to invite you to the bottom of the lake to chat. I would like to see which among those millions of blades would be best suited for you."

"……"

This was no small matter in and of itself. Even though Taxian-jun had experienced a whole array of things in his life, he still choked a bit.

The God of a Thousand Weapons actually invited him to…...pick a weapon?

Gouchen the Exalted took his silence to mean he was reluctant to go out of fear. "There's no need for you to worry, even though there are many monsters under the water, they all answer to me. I guarantee they will not harm you. Wangyue can testify to it."

The old dragon said nothing, and slowly bowed at the side.

When Mo Ran saw that he was really being given a genuine invitation, he couldn't help but feel a jolt in his heart. He then said, "Then, if I go, can the Exalted God grant me a request?"

"What kind of request?"

"The person who sought a weapon before me is a close friend of mine." As Mo Ran spoke, he pointed to the shores beyond the barrier, and brought his attention to Shi Mei. "He was denied just now, so I'm thinking, if I grant the Exalted God's wish, then can the Exalted God grant my wish as well and give him a weapon?"

"What am I? Something like that is effortless for me." Gouchen laughed. He suddenly flicked his hand, and the ancient barrier covering the sky immediately disappeared.

“This is a very simple matter. Let all three of them come over, then. If any weapon catches their eyes, it is as good as theirs.”

Mo Ran was delighted by the unexpected turn of events. He never thought that he’d come across a way to solve the issue he wrestling with so effortlessly. He was more excited at the possibility of Shi Mei receiving a holy weapon than the prospect of his own upgrade. He immediately agreed to the Exalted Gouchen’s invitation, and brought Shi Mei and the others over. As he relayed what was going on to the other three, Shi Mei and Xue Meng’s eyes grew larger and larger, and even Chu Wanning reacted slightly.

Gouchen the Exalted watched from the side and abruptly said, “Hm?” as if he suddenly realized something. He stared at Chu Wanning.

“It’s you?”

Ch.38 This Venerable One Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea

Chu Wanning's indifference extended to even gods and immortals. He said, mildly: "Does the Exalted God recognize me?"

"How could I not." Gouchen smiled in a refined manner, "Many years ago, when you came to Jincheng Lake in search of a weapon, the depth and purity of your spiritual strength was such that I almost couldn't resist coming out to see you. So how is it, is the weapon to your liking?"

"Which weapon is the Exalted God referring to?"

"......Ah." Gouchen startled slightly, then said with a smile, "How absentminded of me, to forget that I gave you two."

Chu Wanning said: "No matter. Tianwen works very well."

"Tianwen?"

"The willow vine."

"Oh. I see." Gouchen smiled, "So you named it Tianwen? And what about the other one? What's that one called?"

Chu Wanning answered: "Jiu'ge."

"And how is Jiu'ge?"

"It has a chilling nature, I rarely use it."

Gouchen sighed: "What a shame."

Chat over, Gouchen turned around and said languidly: "Wangyue, I'll be taking them down below. It's not good for your body to be up here above

the water where the spiritual energy is so thin, so head back soon yourself."

The old dragon nodded, raising a large wave as it dived back into the lake, scales glittering.

Meanwhile, Chu Wanning busied himself casting water-repelling charms on the other three. Gouchen the Exalted watched with interest and thought to himself: this level of proficiency is rare amongst cultivators, wonder who his teacher is?

But Chu Wanning had an air of aloofness that didn't welcome small talk, and Gouchen the Exalted knew better than to pry.

Once all the preparations had been made, the group waded into the freezing waters of Jincheng Lake together.

Owing to the charm, they moved unhindered in water as on land. A boundless underwater world slowly came into view as they approached the bottom.

The bottom of the lake was covered in fine white sand, water plants drifted gently in the flow, and rows upon rows of finely detailed buildings lined the sides of criss-crossing streets. All kinds of monsters and beasts came and went on the streets and in the alleys; even some creatures that normally couldn't coexist lived in harmony here.

Gouchen said: "Jincheng Lake has plentiful spiritual energy, and thus embodies a kind of paradise. The creatures that make their homes here stay for generations without ever leaving, so many things are quite a bit different from what you might expect to see in the human realm. You're welcome to look around if you wish."

As he spoke, a snow white rabbit spirit with scarlet eyes rode past on a tiger. The rabbit was dressed in white robes, all pomp and poise with a look of arrogance as it ceaselessly berated the tiger to go faster. The tiger, on the other hand, was meek and obedient, without so much as a hint of dignity.

The group watched, speechless: "……"

Gouchen the Exalted led them along the main path. Countless shops crowded both sides of the street, and all kinds of creatures passed them by. Soon enough, they arrived at the center of the city where even more demons were gathered, making for quite the strange sight.

"Jincheng Lake rarely has any contact with the outside world, but you can barter for nearly anything you need here."

Xue Meng asked: "Legend has it that Jincheng Lake was formed from your blood, so wouldn't that make you the master of this place, then, since it's your spiritual energy that's sustaining everything here?"

"I wouldn't go that far." Gouchen smiled a little, "Besides, that's all in the past already. I left the realm of gods long ago, and my spiritual strength is nothing like what it used to be. Thinking back now, those heaven and earth-shattering things seem almost like they happened in a dream, what relation does any of it have with the current me? Right now, I'm just a mere swordsmith."

He showed them around the city center as he spoke. The creatures at the bottom of the lake, having lived with Gouchen the Exalted all this time, seemed to have forgotten his status as a founding god, and didn't have

much of a reaction even when he walked by them, busy minding their own business peddling their wares.

“Fish blood mantou, freshly made!”

“Skin of Shuairan Snake, premium clothing material, only three feet left! Once it’s all gone you’ll have to wait for my next shedding~”

“Selling squid ink brow filler, made with fresh ink spat just this morning by yours truly, it’ll do wonders for your eyebrows——hey, hey wait, miss, don’t leave!”

The market was inundated with the sounds of various creatures hawking their wares, and the unusual sights were no less to be marveled at.

A headless ghost sat by its stall, selling combs and makeup. It held a comb between two fingers with long, scarlet-painted nails as it brushed the hair on its own bloody head that was resting on its knees, offering in a soft voice: “High quality bone combs, take one home with you today.”

Xue Meng’s eyes were wide as he glanced left and right. He saw an apothecary to the side staffed by merfolks selling all kinds of medicinal herbs that he’s never even seen before and was just about to go over and see if he could bring some home for his mother when an ear-piercingly shrill voice rang out from behind him: “Make way, make way! Let me through!”

Xue Meng’s foot froze mid-step, but there was no one there when he turned to look. Gouchen smiled: “Look carefully, under your foot.”

Sure enough, Xue Meng squinted and saw a pile of tiny rocks moving on its own.

“Well that’s new, even rocks can walk here. Is it a rock spirit or something? Xue Meng mumbled.

Chu Wanning corrected him: “Bug.”[75]

"Bougie?”

“.....” Chu Wanning shot him a look, “It’s one thing for Mo Ran to not pay attention in class, but you too?”

Xue Meng dived into martial arts with his whole being, yet couldn’t even concentrate when it came to things like literature and history. He sat straight and proper at Chu Wanning’s lectures, half in fear of his imposing aura, but everything went in one ear and out the other. His entire face burned at having been caught in the act by Shizun.

Mo Ran laughed: “Shizun’s words aren’t fair to me, I totally listened in that lecture.”

Xue Meng wasn’t about to back down: “Oh? You explain it then.”

“Fuban is a type of bug, very greedy by nature. It tries to gather up any and all pretty rocks it sees, and usually ends up crushed to death under its pile of rocks.”

Mo Ran looked expectantly at Chu Wanning with a grin on his face.

“Shizun, am I right?”

Chu Wanning nodded, and said: “This bug had already gone extinct in the outside world. I didn’t expect to see one here.”

Gouchen explained with a smile: “This one just lucked out, it’s only still alive thanks to the local apothecary. Watch, here he comes.”

They watched as the bug trudged to the steps of the apothecary with great effort, where it suddenly yelled: “I can’t take it anymore! Hurry and save me doctor!”

A turquoise-colored sea dragon quickly came swimming out. He was clearly used to handling this situation, smiling leisurely as he took out a white porcelain bottle and poured golden red liquid medicine on the bug like it was the most normal occurrence: “Hello smart one, good harvest today?”

The “smart one” huffed, voice lazy while it enjoyed the medicinal bath: “Hmph, not too bad, not too bad. One hundred more tomorrow, and I’ll have four million eighty five thousand six hundred and seventeen rocks at home.”

Mo Ran: “……”

Chu Wanning: “……”

Shi Mei mumbled: “That’s…… quite a hoard.”

The dragon finished pouring the medicine and said: “Remember to come earlier tomorrow, any later and even this strengthening dew won’t save you.”

“Yeah, yeah, I’ll come earlier.” The bug replied half-heartedly, but then a light yellow rock in the corner caught its eye, and it started hollering, “Hey lil eel——I meant, Dr. Dragon, might I please trouble you to put that pretty rock over there on my back? That way I’ll have four million eighty five thousand six hundred and eighteen rocks tomorrow.”

Xue Meng couldn't resist walking over to ask: "What do you need so many rocks for? Are you building a house?"

The bug's shrill, conceited voice came from under the pile of rocks: "What the? A normie? Aiyo, I haven't had to see one for so long——how is it any of your business why I'm gathering rocks? Of course it's not for building a house, I ain't that bored!"

Shi Mei was also curious: "What for then, if not that?"

The bug said self-righteously: "To count, of course!"

"……"

Everyone was rendered totally speechless.

Anyway, after strolling around for a bit, Gouchen took them back to his residence.

In a corner of the street stood an enormous seashell, like a folding screen in the outside world, and behind it was a large courtyard divided into six sections, magnificent and spacious. Halls and corridors led to side wings and flower gardens, and bead curtains made of pearls and kelp swayed gently in the water. Some of the side rooms were dark while others were lit with candle light, faint notes of harp and ocarina drifting barely audibly.

Just like in the apothecary, all the servants in the god's residence were merfolks.

Some kept their dragon tails, while others had changed their tails into legs, preferring to walk instead, but they didn't seem to like shoes much, as all of them walked barefoot.

Seeing the confusion on their faces, Gouchen smiled and explained airily: “I live with my good friend Wangyue, who was once the crown prince of the eastern seas. These are the servants he brought with him when he took up residence here.”

Wangyue was the name of that old dragon.

Mo Ran was rather fond of that black dragon, since he got his holy weapon from it in the last life, so he couldn’t help asking with a grin: “Where is he, anyway? He probably assumes a different form down here right? He’s so ginormous, I doubt he’d be able to fit here otherwise.”

Gouchen nodded and said cheerfully: “That’s a matter of course, but he gets tired easily in his old age, and is probably already resting now after going above water earlier. You’ll have to wait for him to wake up if you want to see him.”

Just then, a merman with long brown hair floated over and bowed deeply to Gouchen, then said in a soft, graceful voice:

“Exalted God, welcome back. Wangyue-dianxia has already told this humble servant everything, would the Exalted God like to take the guests to the holy weapon arsenal forthwith?”

Gouchen didn’t answer immediately, instead looking politely to the guests first, only nodding when he saw that they didn’t mind: “Yes, very well. Please have the kitchen prepare food and wine, we shall dine when we return from the arsenal.”

They passed through the courtyards to the deepest section. In the center of this courtyard stood a massive weeping willow that towered toward the skies. This willow must be a different species from those in the outside

world, its trunk was so thick that it would take ten adult men standing hand to hand to wrap around it, its bark ancient and twisting, thousands of willow vines hanging like an emerald curtain.

Xue Meng's voice was a little dry: "Wow, how old is this tree?"

Gouchen replied: "I haven't kept count, but at least a hundred thousand years."

Xue Meng, startled: "What kind of tree is it, to live that long?"

"Trees naturally live longer than humans, and this one in particular was nourished by the spiritual energy of Jincheng Lake, so it's not really unexpected. Anyway, please follow closely, the entrance to the arsenal is in the hollow of this tree." Gouchen suddenly stopped and looked at Xue Meng.

"Please don't touch the branches. This tree has already cultivated into a spirit, it can feel pain."

But he spoke a little too late; Xue Meng had already plucked a leaf.

"Ah!" He yelped at the same time a faint groan reverberated in the empty air, as if a raspy voice was sighing softly——"ow".

Xue Meng paled and hurriedly threw the leaf away, as if struck by lightning: "What? Why's there blood?"

Sure enough, a stream of blood trickled out from the branch were the leaf was broken off, and the leaf that was thrown aside writhed and convulsed on the ground as if it was alive for a while before gradually slumping to the ground and then rapidly curling up and withering away.

Gouchen said helplessly: “As I said, it’s a spirit. Why would the young gongzi……” He shook his head and walked up to examine the broken branch, using his spiritual energy to soothe the willow and stop its bleeding.

Chu Wanning said: “Xue Meng, come over here, don’t touch anything else.”

“Yes, Shizun.” Xue Meng knew he messed up, and walked over obediently with his head drooping.

Fortunately, this incident didn’t cause any major troubles. Chu Wanning apologized to Gouchen the Exalted, and the founding god, magnanimous as expected, only smiled and said: “The young gongzi sure is swift of hand.”

Xue Meng didn’t say a word, face bright red as he followed behind Chu Wanning with his head hanging low. They passed through the curtain of lush branches and arrived at the trunk. The willow was even more overwhelmingly colossal up close than it had seemed from a distance; the initial approximation of ten men was a great underestimation of its thickness.

There was a hollow in the trunk of the willow, or rather, it would be more accurate to call it a huge arched gateway, wide enough for three brawny men to pass through at the same time. Gouchen dispelled the numerous complicated barriers in front of the hollow one by one, then turned and said with a smile: “The holy weapon arsenal is right inside. It’s kind of small and a little messy, please don’t mind.”

Mo Ran was quite curious and moved to follow behind Gouchen immediately, but Chu Wanning held him back, as if by reflex, and said mildly: “Don’t rush.” But went in himself.

Mo Ran was already used to him doing this; in the previous life, whenever the four of them went to suppress demons, Chu Wanning had always walked in the very front. Back then, he had thought that Shizun was impatient and arrogant, and didn't want to be outdone by those younger than him. But the Mo Ran of today, after his rebirth, saw things somewhat differently. Watching Chu Wanning's white robes disappear into the darkness of the tree's hollow, a thread of hesitation suddenly surfaced in his heart——

Was this person really rushing to be in the front because of impatience and arrogance?

Author's notes:

Weapon search starts, here are some additional information about everyone's weapons.

Chu Wanning:

Owns Tianwen,[76] Jiu'ge,[77] Huaisha,[78] these three holy weapons.[79]

Shizun's good at machinery, barrier, attack and healing. But defense is ultra low, in terms of video games, he's a glass cannon burst DPS rabid dog.

Mo Ran:

Past life he owned Bu'gui,[80] this life up to this chapter, he only has a beginner level crappy sword.

Emperor was good at cultivation world's number one forbidden skill, attack and defense are not low. In terms of video games, he's someone that can output steady DPS with no mishaps.

Xue Meng:

Longcheng,[81] not a holy weapon, however it's a scimitar of the highest quality made by Taxue Palace in the Upper Cultivation World.

Young master takes after shizun, high attack high burst monster fighting rabid dog. Due to the fact that he can't create barriers, his defense is worse than shizun.

Shi Mei:

Healing all depends on his two hands, if you ask him for his weapons he doesn't have any.

Ch.39 This Venerable One's New Weapon

Inside the hollow of the tree was a narrow passage. They made their way along a flight of steps made of smooth stone, the slippery sensation traveling from the bottom of their feet all the way to the inside of their heart, through the passage and into the bright light at its end.

The Exalted Gouchen's "kind of small and a little messy" holy weapon arsenal was nothing like the size it appeared to be from the outside. The ancient tree was already enormous, but its inside was even more expansive, as if it encompassed the heavens above and swallowed the earth below. Towering shelves packed with tens of thousands of weapons proudly on display lined the inside. They couldn't even see the ceiling when they looked up. The rows upon rows of racks filled with magnificent weapons struck a vision of boundless grandeur and immense splendor.

And in the center of the arsenal was a smelting pool with waves of blistering heat coming off of the red-hot molten metal, with several unfinished weapons soaking inside. Each and every weapon made by Gouchen the Exalted far surpassed the likes of Zidian Qingshuang;[82] rather than being marred by the intense, searing heat, the blades and tips of these weapons glistened all the more, radiant and resplendent.

Even more wondrous were the various weapon parts soaring through the air on their own under the effect of the spell array in the ancient tree.

The tiny decorative pieces and ornamental jewels danced overhead like so many little fairies, with occasional collisions that sent sparks flying and filled the air with delightful tinkles.

Gouchen looked back with a smile: “It’s a little cramped in here, huh.”

Shi Mei: “.....”

Hm.

Xue Meng: “.....”

Cramped? Then what’s spacious to you?

Mo Ran: “.....”

Am I allowed to say motherfucker?

Chu Wanning: “.....”

Gouchen the Exalted told Xue Meng and Shi Mei to look around and pick a weapon, and that they’re welcome to take whichever one strikes their fancy. As for Mo Ran, Gouchen the Exalted was especially interested in him, so he had him try several different weapons, but wasn’t quite satisfied with any of them.

“Fengming Jiaowei.”[83] Not the least bit discouraged, Gouchen handed over the fourteenth weapon, “Try this one.”

Mo Ran: “Um…… I don’t know how to play.”

“No matter, just give it a strum.”

The guqin[84] was smooth and glossy in the front, scorched black in the back. Mo Ran plucked at it a couple times as instructed, but the strings began to vibrate unexpectedly, resonating with a shrill tone.

Gouchen immediately tossed Fengming aside; a spell carried the guqin back to its stand, and exchanged it for a jade pipa.[85]

Mo Ran: “.....Let’s skip this one.” Playing the pipa was really too womanly for him, leave it for those femmy boys at Kunlun Taxue Palace.

But Gouchen insisted: “Try it.”

“.....Fine.” Mo Ran could only give in and take the proffered pipa, but his grievance was a little too strong, and the string snapped under his hand after only a couple of plucks.

“.....”

Gouchen stared at that broken string, and after a while, said: “Do you know what that string is made of?”

Mo Ran: “.....You’re not gonna make me pay for it are you?”

“Wushan Goddess’s white hair.” Gouchen muttered, “Spiritual essence of the earth element, impervious to sword and fire alike. But you…...you……”

Mo Ran turned his head to look backwards in alarm: “Shizun! I don’t have the money to pay for it!”

Chu Wanning” ……”

Gouchen the Exalted twirled the string between his fingers, muttering to himself: “The earth element is naturally weak the wood element; that you are able to destroy an earth elemental spiritual essence, could it be that the weapon suitable for you is a wood elemental one?”

“Wha?”

“But it shouldn’t be……” Gouchen shot a glance at Chu Wanning for some reason. Chu Wanning noticed his glance and asked: “What shouldn’t be?”

Rather than answering, Gouchen the Exalted lifted his hand and waved to call forth a ceramic ocarina. He blew into it, and as the sound began to gradually fade, the space above was suddenly split open by a blood-red summoning array.

“Ji Baihua, come out.”

Mo Ran’s head snapped upwards; Xue Meng and Shi Mei, hearing the commotion, also came over. They watched as the air swirled about Gouchen’s fingertips with power, turning the intricate array above, and then a fox spirit with fluffy, luxurious tails appeared from the array, accompanied by splendid lights and a shower of glittering silver.

The fox spirit circled the air and floated leisurely down to land in front of Mo Ran.

The fox spirit was quite pretty; up close, it could be seen that he was male, with a dot of red between his eyebrows and a pair of peach blossom eyes that were slightly lifted, as if somewhat angry yet reservedly polite. He was draped in ornate, finely embroidered garments and held a golden brocade box in his hands. He glanced at Gouchen and smiled: “Exalted God.”

Gouchen said: “You should already know what I called you for?”

“This humble one knows.”

Gouchen asked: “And what do you think?”

Ji Baihua smiled: “Not bad, it’s worth a try.”

The two went back and forth, paying no mind at all to the other four present.

Mo Ran couldn’t resist asking: “What exactly are you talking about?”

“Hm? Is this young man getting impatient already?” Fox spirit Ji Baihua said with a smile, “Speaking of, it’s really quite interesting, but before I appeared just now, I felt your spiritual energy and thought for sure that you would be a white-haired old man, I’m surprised you’re actually a handsome young thing.”

Mo Ran: “……”

Gouchen spoke: “Ji Baihua, serious matters first.”

“Alright, I was just having a bit of fun.” Ji Baihua squinted, fluffy tails swishing, “What was the serious matter again? Aiya——don’t glare at me Xiao-Gou, about this thing, it’s really such a long story——”

Mo Ran said smilingly: “Then could you please make the long story short?”

Ji Baihua responded smilingly : “Yep yep, if you want the short version instead, it’s actually super short.” Evoking spiritual energy, he floated the brocade box in his hands over to Mo Ran.

“Here, take it.”

……That was indeed super short.

Mo Ran took the brocade box, weighing it in his hands and turning it around to examine.

The box was golden and resplendent, shrouded in a luminous light, but gave no hints as to what manner of holy weapon was inside. What's more, the box had no seam or crack, and the only decoration was a pair of koi fish on its top, one black and one white, each holding the tail of the other in its mouth to form the yin-yang symbol.

"How does it open?"

Ji Baihua: "Tehee, the opening method will have to be between the two of us, no one else must know."

Xue Meng asked: "Are you trying to say that we should excuse ourselves?"

Ji Baihua replied with a smile: "That won't be necessary, I'll just borrow this young man for a minute." He waved a hand, and Mo Ran's sight suddenly darkened as he found the two of them alone in a small secret chamber.

"Don't be nervous, I just teleported us. That box holding the weapon is a magic artifact of my exclusive and secret design, that's why I couldn't tell you how to open it in front of everyone else, don't mind."

Mo Ran smiled: "It's fine. But just what weapon is it, to warrant being held in this box?"

"That I cannot tell you." Ji Baihua said, "Holy weapons have their own temperaments, this one in particular doesn't like to easily let its form be known. If you offend it, it will refuse to recognize you as its master even if you do manage to open the box."

"....." Mo Ran was speechless for a moment, and could only force a smile, "What weapon? Such a strange temper. Fine, fine, tell me then, how do I

open the box?”

Seeing that he didn’t force the issue, Ji Baihua quite approved of Mo Ran. He put his hands together with a laugh: “Since you’re so straightforward, I won’t beat around the bush either. This box is called Ever-Yearning. As you saw, it’s completely seamless. Two conditions must be met in order to open it.”

Mo Ran: “And the conditions are?”

Ji Baihua: “Us fox spirits believe in fated love. And so, first, there is only one person in this world who can open Ever-Yearning. This person is extremely important in your life; you must love this person dearly, and this person must also love you in return, and be wholly devoted to you.”

Mo Ran smiled: “I see. It’s a strange condition for sure, but doesn’t seem difficult.” He was confident in his feelings toward Shi Mei.

But the corners of Ji Baihua’s lips curved faintly upwards at his words: “How could it not be difficult? Since time immemorial, the heart of another has ever been most unknowable, what you think to be true might not necessarily be so. I’ve lingered in this world for a long time, and seen far too many people who lost sight of their hearts, who knew not their own most beloved person. These thousands of years, pitifully few had ever managed to open Ever-Yearning.”

Mo Ran, surprised: “Why is that? Even if you get the wrong person, just try another, even if you have to try every person you know, you can definitely find this so-called most important person in your life eventually, right?”

Ji Baihua said: “That’s where the second condition comes in. Aside from you, only one other person can touch Ever-Yearning. In other words, you

only have one chance. If you choose the wrong person, then it will remain forever closed, and no one will ever be able to acquire the item within."

Mo Ran laughed: "No wonder you separated everyone else. It'd certainly be hard to handle if the others heard this as well. How awkward would it be if they knew that whoever I offer the box to is the one I like." He paused, playing with the brocade box in his hands, before continuing: "Anyway, this thing sure is interesting. So it's basically a lock with a one-use keyhole, and the wrong key will disable it for good."

"Of course you only get one chance to open it, what did you expect?" Ji Baihua glared at him, "You mortals are so preoccupied with self-indulgence in your mere few decades of life, just how much fated love is squandered without even knowing? Love is not unlike this Ever-Yearning; you cannot so easily take back a wrong choice."

"Haha, worry not, O Great Immortal Fox. Others might choose wrong, but I've got this in the bag." Mo Ran bowed to him and said with a smile, "I won't squander this yearning."

Ji Baihua shot him a look, voice soft and graceful as he spoke: "Don't be so sure about that, young man. As I see it, you don't actually seem to know your fated person at all."

Mo Ran paused, smile frozen on his face: "What do you mean by that?"

But the handsome immortal, this self-proclaimed "believer of fated love", was unwilling to say any more, only sighing softly: "To yearn unwittingly breaks the willow branch.[86] Sigh ……"

Mo Ran wasn't a learned man, and didn't understand this sour-tasting scholarly bullshit, but he couldn't shake the feeling that the fox spirit was

subtly trying to remind him of something. Unfortunately, he was too dumb to understand just what that something might be, however hard he tried.

He was just about to ask again when Ji Baihua, knowing that his task was complete, smiled faintly and waved a hand to send Mo Ran back out. Then he suddenly froze and became stiff, and, soon after, broke into pieces with a crash; all that remained was a single black chess piece that fell where he once stood.

It was too bad that Mo Ran didn't get to see this. Many things at the bottom of this lake might have turned out differently, had he only seen……

When Mo Ran came to, he was already back at the holy weapon arsenal, with Ever-Yearning in his hands. The other four were waiting for him; Gouchen the Exalted smiled broadly at his return: "That little fox is really too much, so much secretive ado just to open a box. Well then, do you know how to open it now?"

Now that the moment of truth was already upon him, Mo Ran didn't have time to ponder it too deeply anyway. He smiled: "Yeah, it's easy."

He walked up to Shi Mei, very casually: "The lock has such an interesting and clever design, you guys probably couldn't figure it out even given eight, ten years. Wanna try?"

Saying so, he offered the box to Shi Mei, very casually.

The brocade box glittered brilliantly in front of Shi Mei, its golden glow lighting up his gentle, elegant face.

"Shi Mei, why don't you try first." Mo Ran tried to act nonchalant, but his heart had tied itself into a knot and his palms wouldn't stop sweating.

This was gambling on his chance at having a holy weapon, he really ought to be careful about it, but he felt like he was already plenty careful. After all, he had already died once, how could he still not know just who it was he cared for?

It's not like he was dumb.

Shi Mei hesitated a bit, but took the proffered box in the end.

Mo Ran's heart jumped to his throat. He stared intently, but a long while passed, and nothing happened.

Mo Ran: "....."

Shi Mei held the box carefully as he examined it, tracing the yin-yang koi fish with his fingers and wondering: "There's no seam at all, and I couldn't find a keyhole either."

Why is there no reaction?!

Shi Mei touched Ever-Yearning, but why isn't anything happening?

Could it be——Ah! It must be! The gloves!

Mo Ran glanced at those deer hide gloves on Shi Mei's hands with sudden realization. He was just about to ask Shi Mei to take them off and try again when, suddenly and without warning, a hand with slender fingers reached over and calmly took Ever-Yearning.

Mo Ran cried out loudly and miserably, as if he had been struck by lightning: "Shizun——!!"

Chu Wanning nearly jumped and almost dropped the box, but his composed exterior was so practiced that it had already steeped through to his bones, to the point that his inner turbulence didn't show at all on the outside.

Mo Ran howled like the freshly bereaved: "Shizun——!!!"

Xue Meng got goosebumps all over: "What are you wailing about! It's just a box! What's wrong with you? Yelling like somebody stole your wife or something."

"I——I——" Mo Ran was really about to pass out from anger, but couldn't say the reason why. He could only cover his face and howl helplessly: "Oh my god……"

Chu Wanning! Why aren't you wearing gloves?!

Why, when you're so afraid of the cold!

It's all ice and snow out there, we're all wearing gloves, why only you——

Mo Ran paused.

Oh……

They each wore demon-repelling haitang flowers that had to be linked to Chu Wanning's spiritual energy via his palms, so he didn't even buy himself a pair of gloves to start with.

The reason he didn't wear gloves was to protect them.

But Mo Ran never spared him so much as a single thought this entire time; only just now, at this crucial moment of opening Ever-Yearning, did he

suddenly notice that Chu Wanning, who was the one most afraid of the cold, had been freezing this whole time.

Mo Ran wanted to cry, but no tears came. He lamented his bad luck, to let the holy weapon slip through his fingers just like this. His chest was unspeakably stuffy when all of a sudden, as Chu Wanning's fingers brushed lightly past the yin-yang koi fish, that pair of koi made from metal came to life and began to weave nimbly around the box.

A beat of silence.

And then, with two crisp clicking sounds, the yin-yang koi fish came together and rose to protrude from the surface, becoming a pair of handles. Chu Wanning turned the handles, and Ever-Yearning split into two to reveal the radiant object inside, glowing golden.

Mo Ran was stunned.

Ji Baihua's words rang in his ears.

"There is only one person in this world who can open Ever-Yearning. This person is extremely important in your life; you must love this person dearly, and this person must also love you in return, and be wholly devoted to you."

.....That person was Chu Wanning?

How could it possibly be Chu Wanning!

No way, absolutely no way in hell!! How could he love Chu Wanning, and how could Chu Wanning like him? What a joke!

This must be a mistake. Something's wrong with the box. The box is definitely broken.

He was still hung up on this when Chu Wanning took out the holy weapon inside the Ever-Yearning, and something even more startling happened.

This time, not only Mo Ran, but the other three were shocked as well. Even Chu Wanning's expression changed slightly.

A glistening willow vine illuminated their faces, its transcendent light reflected in their eyes.

Chu Wanning: "....."

Xue Meng: "....."

Shi Mei: "....."

Mo Ran choked on the two words for quite a while before finally spitting them out with much difficulty and even more disbelief.

".....Tianwen???"

Author's notes:

If this is an online game novel, let's discuss how everybody would die:

Chu Wanning: Death from over threat

Mo Ran: Death from dead tank

Shi Mei: Death from dumbass teammates

Xue Meng: Death from bad positioning

Ch.40 This Venerable One Cannot Believe This, What the Hell

The weapon inside Ever-Yearning was Tianwen, or rather, a golden willow vine just like Tianwen, exactly the same in every aspect from the patterns on the vine to the construction.

To yearn unwittingly breaks the willow branch.

Chu Wanning wore an interesting expression as he handed the willow vine over to Mo Ran, then, light gathering in his palm, called forth Tianwen. The two were as mirror images, not the slightest bit different.

No one had anticipated anything like this happening, even Mo Ran couldn't believe his eyes——as someone who had been on the receiving end of Tianwen for probably about a thousand times last life, he never would have expected to receive the exact same weapon from Jincheng Lake.

What exactly was going on?

Everyone's gaze turned collectively toward Gouchen the Exalted.

Gouchen the Exalted seemed surprised as well: ".....There are actually two wood elemental spiritual essences in the world concurrently?"

Xue Meng asked: "What does wood elemental spiritual essence mean, anyway?"

"Ah, it's like this." Gouchen explained, "There are five elements in the world, as you all know. In cultivating a spiritual core, every person is aligned with one or two of the elements. The person most innately abundant in a certain element is the spiritual essence of that element; for instance, the Wushan Goddess of the past was the spiritual essence of the

earth element. However, generally speaking, there can only exist one spiritual essence of any particular element in a single generation——and there is currently already a spiritual essence of the wood element, to whom I gifted the first wood elemental weapon many years ago."

His gaze landed on Chu Wanning.

"When forging the five top-tier holy weapons, I originally planned to make only one of each element. Everything went as intended for the other four, but the wood elemental holy weapon broke into two pieces inside the forge."

"I recognized it as the will of the heavens, and so made the two halves of the willow vine separately into two weapons. But even so, I was certain that these two weapons would never find owners at the same time, so I entrusted one to Ji Baihua and his brocade box, as a precaution against any unscrupulous scheming. I never would have expected……"

Gouchen shook his head, and was about to say more when, suddenly, a burst of lustrous red firelight burst forth from the willow vine in Mo Ran's hand as its golden radiance changed gradually into the scarlet of a raging inferno. Mo Ran's thoughts were still in utter disarray, and he blurted out without thinking: "Ah! What the hell!"

Chu Wanning tried to stop him, but was too late.

And so, both he and Gouchen the Exalted could only gaze at Mo Ran with pity. Mo Ran also quickly realized the reason behind their looks. He remembered:

The first time a holy weapon changes its color indicated a recognition of its owner and a request to be bestowed a name by its new master……

Unfortunately, it was already too late. They could only watch helplessly as three characters written in exquisite and powerful calligraphy slowly appeared on the silver handle of the willow vine——

Ah! What The Hell [Jiangui] .

Holy weapon “Ah! What The Hell”.

Mo Ran: “……AAAAAAAAAAAAH!!!!”

Although Xue Meng and Shi Mei didn’t know about the practice of naming holy weapons, they put two and two together easily enough. Xue Meng doubled over with laughter, clutching his stomach with both hands and laughing so hard that he was almost crying: “Only you could manage a name like that! Hahahaha, good name, good name. Shizun’s Tianwen and your ‘Ah! What The Hell’, Ahahahahahaha!”

Since Mo Ran already got a holy weapon, Xue Meng and Shi Mei also each picked out a weapon they liked——Xue Meng chose a long sword, and Shi Mei opted for a short flute. Neither of their weapons changed in color, evidently not yet willing to submit to their new masters.

But it was no matter, they’d figure something out later.

And thus, everyone returned to the estate for the evening feast in quite the good mood. Gouchen the Exalted had never brought mortals into Jincheng Lake before; he generously invited them to stay the night before leaving, and spared no efforts as a host. The banquet tables were loaded with meat and wine, and energetic drumbeats accompanied their merrymaking. Everybody came out a bit tipsy.

Afterwards, Gouchen had the chamberlain bring the guests to their rooms to rest.

The guest rooms were adjacent to the holy weapon arsenal. Looking at that massive tree, Mo Ran thought of the “Jiangui” that he had just received, and couldn’t help calling forth the willow vine to look it over.

To yearn unwittingly breaks the willow branch.

Just what did that fox spirit Ji Baihua know, why did he say something like that, and what exactly did he mean by those words?

He was a little drunk, the alcohol in his system muddling his thoughts, but it just made no sense to him——if Ever-Yearning wasn’t broken, then how did Chu Wanning open it?

Of course he didn’t like Chu Wanning. As for Chu Wanning being deeply in love with him…… don’t make him laugh.

Thinking so, he looked back towards his Shizun.

But unexpectedly, Chu Wanning was also looking at him. Their eyes met, and Mo Ran felt his heart tremble slightly as if pricked by some tiny, sharp thing, along with a faint sweet-sour kind of feeling. Without thinking, he was already grinning toothily at Chu Wanning, but the feeling lasted for only an instant before he was filled with regret instead.

He obviously disliked Chu Wanning, but why was it that he felt so at peace, so warm, when he looked at him sometimes?

Chu Wanning, on the other hand, appeared impassive as always. He saw that Mo Ran had called out Jiangui, thought for a moment, and also called out Tianwen.

He walked towards Mo Ran.

Jiangui seemed to have a bit of a temper; sensing the approach of another strong wood elemental, it crackled with sparks of scarlet firelight, some splashing on Xue Meng from time to time, as if in a show of aggressive competitiveness.

In contrast, although Tianwen also seemed to have sensed the presence of another like itself, it was already habituated to Chu Wanning's mannerisms from having spent so much time with him, and so, despite also being proudly combative, its golden light did not stir into an agitated frenzy like Jiangui, but rather brightened gradually, and, seeing that its master did not disapprove, grew dazzlingly brilliant, as if determined to show Jiangui the steady composure with which an exceptional weapon should greet battle.

Two holy weapons, originally one branch.

One was fresh and inexperienced, while the other was seasoned through hundreds of battles.

One flared with a red light, like an impatient and excitable youngster still wet behind the ears; the other coursed with a golden radiance, like a proud and haughty master standing atop the tallest peak.

Chu Wanning glanced at the willow vine in his hand with a quiet noise of contemplation, then his gaze, from beneath thick, lowered lashes, turned to Jiangui. He spoke: "Mo Ran."

"Shizun?"

"Take up your……" It was a little embarrassing to say Jiangui [what the hell]. Chu Wanning paused, then said: "Take up your willow vine, let's have a

match.”

The mush in Mo Ran’s brain boiled and bubbled but he couldn’t make heads or tails of it. He pinched the bridge of his nose and forced a smile: “Please don’t joke like that, Shizun, have mercy.”

“I’ll let you have the first three moves.”

“I’ve never used a willow vine before……”

“Ten moves.”

“But——”

Without wasting any more words, Chu Wanning flicked his wrist and a flash of dazzling gold cleaved directly toward him! Mo Ran, whose fear of Tianwen was already embedded deeply into his very being, was scared shitless and immediately raised Jiangui to block. The willow vines split the skies, entwining in mid-air like a pair of dragons locked in battle, sparks of gold and scarlet flying ceaselessly with the friction!

Mo Ran had never studied how to use this unusual weapon before, but he had watched Chu Wanning’s combat style for so long, and combined with his exceptional innate talent, he actually managed to defend against Chu Wanning’s attack, although only just barely.

They exchanged several dozen blows in the freezing lake water. Chu Wanning was holding back, but Mo Ran’s performance in holding his own against him was still outstanding and exceeded his expectations.

Tianwen’s gold and Jiangui’s scarlet danced together, light resplendent in their wake, magnificent to behold. The willow vines ripped through the

once-calm waters, stirring it to life and tearing it apart——gold and scarlet intertwining, evenly matched, loath to part!

Chu Wanning's gaze was one of praise, but Mo Ran, gasping for breath and utterly exhausted from the fight, didn't notice at all.

Chu Wanning said: "Tianwen, return."

The golden willow vine that was fierce and unrelenting but a moment ago became immediately pliant, like black ice melting into spring water, glimmering as it returned obediently to Chu Wanning's palm.

Mo Ran's chest heaved as he panted for breath, Jiangui still crackling with firelight in his grip. His legs gave out after a while and he fell on his butt right there on the snowy ground, grievance written all over his face: "No more, no more, Shizun's bullying me."

Chu Wanning: "......I let you have ten moves."

Mo Ran whined petulantly: "How could ten moves possibly be enough, a hundred would be more like it! Owwie my hand, my arms, they're gonna fall off. Shi Mei, Shi Mei gimme some rubs." He blabbered as Xue Meng laughed mockingly and Shi Mei tried his best to calm both of them down.

Chu Wanning glanced at them quietly, and said no more.

In the green waters of the freezing lake, the corners of Chu Wanning's lips seemed to move slightly, as if in a faint yet warm smile, but there was no way to be sure and it was only for an instant, and in the next moment he had already turned around, a hand held casually behind his back as he gazed at the enormous tree at the center of the courtyard with its thousands of drooping branches, thoughts unknowable.

That night, Mo Ran sat in a guest room with a soft and clean floor of white sand, the walls painted in aquamarine and enchanted to gleam softly with the rays of light that pierced through the water. The window was half open, the pearl curtain drifting gently in the evening breeze, and on the table was a lamp made of night-glow pearl that lit up the room with an easy ambience.

A large seashell sat in the center of the room, its inside lined with layers of soft, fine satin. Mo Ran sank into the bed and called out Jiangui again, holding it in his hand and staring at it. Perhaps he really was too worn out, but he fell asleep before long, after only having examined it for a little while.

Laying on Mo Ran's chest, Jiangui pulsed with a dim red light, as if following its master into slumber……

Mo Ran didn't know how long he had slept for, but when he awoke, the first thing he felt was an icy chill, followed immediately by a burst of searing pain from his wrist.

He sucked in a breath and, holding his head, slowly sat up. The strange pain at his wrist grew more distinct as his consciousness returned, and he was startled to discover that a gash had been cut into his wrist, and already scabbed over with congealed blood.

What's going on?

——Where is this??!

Mo Ran's eyes shot open.

Sobering up, he found himself in a dark and completely unfamiliar stone room with only a small ventilation opening in the ceiling. The cold light of the lake came through that opening into the narrow space, barely a few feet wide; the ash green stone walls, damp and slimy, glistened faintly in the feeble light.

Ch.41 This Venerable One Kisses the Wrong Person Again……

The stone room had nothing to see, just plain walls on three sides and magicked bars on the fourth that coursed with a red light. The only fixture in the room was a crude bed made of stone and covered with straw.

There was nothing to do but to lie on the stone bed. His hands and feet were both shackled, the chains clanking with every movement. Even worse, something seemed to be suppressing his spiritual powers, and he couldn't invoke any of it. His mind was racing with anxious thoughts when he heard a sudden creaking sound and turned to see two merfolk enter.

"You!" Mo Ran growled angrily, "You lunatics! What exactly is going on? What do you think you're doing? Where are my shixiong and shidi? Where's Gouchen! ……Oi! I'm talking to you!"

But no matter how much Mo Ran yelled or cursed, the merfolk paid him no mind. They were carrying something wrapped in a piece of red fox fur, something human-shaped, which they expressionlessly set down on the stone bed.

Mo Ran snarled: "You little eels——"

"Quit yapping already." One of them finally spoke, voice filled with contempt, "You're a spiritual essence, it won't be a bad deal for you."

The other also sneered: "More like a pretty sweet deal."

Mo Ran was about to spit blood out of rage: "Just what do you want! What did you lock me up here for? And what's that on the bed?!"

"What's that on the bed?" One countered.

“The person you like, of course.” The other said.

Mo Ran’s fingertips went cold with shock: “.....Shi Mei?”

The merfolk did not confirm or deny, only sneering: “The spring of youth is such a fleeting thing. Since the two of you are meant to be, we’ll let you have this night together. When it’s all done and over with, then you’ll find out what the Exalted God went to such trouble for.”

Tossing these words out, they left.

The room was deathly silent.

With his hands and feet restrained, Mo Ran couldn’t move at all. One minute blurred into the next, with no way to tell how much time had passed. He struggled to no avail, until his wrists and ankles were raw and bloody.

Panting softly, Mo Ran turned to look at the person next to him, wrapped firmly in the fox fur from head to toe with only a long strand of ink-black hair visible. He stared at that strand of hair, heart beating erratically with both panic and arousal.

He didn’t know why that creep Gouchen was doing this, but if this is what would let him realize his covetous desires with Shi Mei……

His thoughts suddenly ground to a halt, as if any more would be to profane that beautiful person.

Mo Ran stared at the ceiling, breaths heavy and stifled as if there was a weight on his chest. He had longed for this for so long, but now that the chance had come, all he felt was unease.

That initial, filthy excitement slowly faded away as a thousand thoughts raced through his mind. He gradually calmed down.

Whatever it was that Gouchen was planning, it could not be good. It'd be one thing if it was only aimed toward himself, but how could he bear it if Shi Mei got dragged into it too?

Besides, this whole situation was by someone else's design, Shi Mei hadn't agreed to anything at all. Mo Ran may be scum, but he wanted to protect, not hurt, the person he liked. He resolved that no matter what Gouchen does, he definitely won't take advantage of Shi Mei when he wakes up.

A long while passed in silence before the person beside him finally moved.

Mo Ran hurriedly turned his head that way, voice raspy: "Shi——"

The "Mei" hadn't even come out before it made a stiff U-turn on the tip of his tongue and went right back in. He swallowed, the jut of his throat bobbing before he finally managed to spit out the second half.

"Zun?"

Shizun?!?

Mo Ran's gaze, resolute and filled with chivalrous conviction only a moment ago, faltered as soon as he saw the face that was revealed from underneath the fox fur. All of his mental fortitude fell apart in an instant, the barricades in his chest that he had worked so hard to raise razed to the ground, turned into rubble amidst a barrage of cracking sounds.

All that stuff about protecting, not taking advantage, absolutely not defiling ——each one was like a slap to his face, every one louder than the last.

Mo Ran's face turned pale.

He could finally say with absolute certainty that every single inhabitant of this Jincheng Lake, even and especially that Gouchen, was blind as fuck!!

To think that he liked Chu Wanning?

Ugh!

First that fox, now these merfolk, he seriously couldn't understand what made them all think that the apple of his eye was Chu Wanning. Could it be that they somehow figured out that he's slept with him before, and still wants to sleep with him even now? Ridiculous! It's not like wanting to bed someone is the same as liking that person!

Mo Ran raved on the inside, filled with self-righteous indignation, but couldn't even choke out half a word on the outside, only staring dumbly as that pair of phoenix eyes slowly opened.

……

Oh god.

He could almost hear the clunk of something in his head breaking.

A second passed, and something seemed to ignite from the wreckage inside his chest, along with a foul stench, black ashes, and a twisted kind of heat.

It was scalding hot.

As if a fire-spitting dragon was suddenly soaring through the deathly stillness of this dark night, as if scorching lava and raging flames had

suddenly burst out of the silent abyss.

All of his premeditated reason and self control burned up in the roaring blaze……

This was the last thing he could've possibly anticipated.

Chu Wanning's usually piercing eyes were hazy with sleep, languid and dazed, like a bamboo forest after the rain, every leaf and sound laden with dew.

Judging by that expression, something seemed to be controlling his consciousness. He sat up slowly, the fox fur slipping off a shoulder and revealing large expanses of supple skin, for he was completely naked underneath, but his back and shoulder were covered in bruises, lovebites in hues of red and blue——

How……could this be……

Mo Ran felt like he was going crazy.

Who did this?

Who did this kind of thing to his……his……his Shizun?

He was Chu Wanning……

Every bone in his body was shaking in rage, his blood screaming with hatred.

This was Chu Wanning!

Who touched this person who belonged to him!

This person was his ——

Mo Ran was so overcome with hatred that he didn't even stop to consider that Chu Wanning didn't belong to him at all in this life, didn't belong to anyone. All he saw was Chu Wanning's firm, well-proportioned body, and those unfamiliar marks on that familiar body.

"Shizun!!"

His voice was low and twisted, but Chu Wanning didn't seem to hear his hoarse cry at all. He lowered his lashes, and, like a puppet on a string, leaned over Mo Ran, a hand caressing his face as their eyes locked for a moment, then he closed his eyes and leaned in, those moist lips capturing his own.

Rarely had Chu Wanning ever kissed him first; at the touch, all the fields of his heart dried up, brilliant, frantic colors exploded before his eyes as his heart beat wildly, feverishly.

Chu Wanning's body was cold, but heat flared up all the same where teeth scraped as their lips met. Mo Ran was still agonized and jealous over him having been debased by another, but couldn't resist being seduced by this familiar man, pained and aroused all at once.

Mo Ran was breathing hard when they parted. He opened his eyes only to see Chu Wanning's eyes glassy and skin flushed with desire. His blood raced, and he couldn't help wanting to reach up and stroke his face.

But he was still bound in chains, unable to move. Chu Wanning glanced at the shackles but said nothing, instead rising to his knees and moving to straddle him. Mo Ran swallowed hard, throat moving, but then he noticed,

between Chu Wanning's long, shapely legs, an unmistakable stickiness sliding slowly down his thighs with the movement……

Mo Ran saw red, his eyes snapping open as he tried to sit up in a jolt, but was pulled back by the chains, slamming heavily back down against the bed.

"Who……"

He couldn't bear it anymore, roaring like a caged beast, bereft of all reason.

"Who the fuck did this to you!!! I'll kill him! I'll kill him!!!! "

He didn't care if it was Gouchen the Exalted or the Heavenly Emperor himself, whether it was a god demon ghost or the fucking Buddha——he was Taxian-Jun! Chu Wanning was Taxian-Jun's! Even if he was trapped in this young body right now, deep in his bones he was still the Emperor of the Mortal Realm, who dared touch his——fuck Shizun, who dared touch his person? His, Mo Weiyu's, Taxian-Jun's person!!!

"Mo Ran!"

Someone seemed to be calling him.

But he was engulfed in the flames of rage, senses muddled, he seemed to hear yet also not.

"Mo Ran!!"

……He'll just have to kill them all. Unforgivable. Where was Jiangui? Where did his spiritual powers go, why couldn't he summon Jiangui——he was really about to lose it.

Insufferable humiliation, hateful grudge——insufferable humiliation, hateful grudge!

Who dared touch Chu Wanning? In the previous life, he dug out the eyes of anyone who dared to so much as even glance at Yuheng of the Night Sky one too many times and made them swallow their own eyeballs! And then at night he would hold Chu Wanning under himself and fuck him until exhaustion, but this life——

“Mo Weiyu!!!”

Just who was it calling him, so persistent.

But that voice was really so familiar.

As if he had heard it once somewhere before……

No, that’s not it.

It was as if he had heard it all the time before, everywhere, as if the owner of that voice had kept him company through the years……

“Mo Weiyu, wake up already! Have you lost your mind? What’re you doing?!”

“!!!”

Mo Ran’s eyes flew open.

He followed the voice to see pristine robes white as snow outside the cell, a pair of sharp eyes on an expression written with worry, brows tense and drawn together with an aura of killing intent, it was none other than Chu Wanning!

“Shizun!?” Mo Ran paled.

Then, on the bed——

He whipped his head around, and nearly got scared to death by that face mere inches from his own! This wasn’t Chu Wanning at all! It was clearly a dead monster with a human body but a fox face!

The dead part wasn’t an embellishment; dead, as in literally dead.

The thing pressed against him, that was passionately making out with him just a moment ago, really was a dead thing.

The fox monster’s eyes were empty, its skin pallid, not a hint of life.

Mo Ran almost retched thinking about how he was just kissing that thing while entranced by some illusion, his face an interesting color: “What’s happening!”

Outside the cell, Chu Wanning held a cursed talisman between two fingers. Seeing as the fox monster was no longer moving, Mo Ran guessed that he had probably used a spell to rip the talisman from the fox corpse in the nick of time.

He evoked his spiritual energy, and a stream of dark red blood bubbled forth from the talisman along with blood-curdling shrieks as the paper burned into ashes.

Chu Wanning opened his hand, the scorched ashes slowly gathering in his palm and forming into a jet-black chess piece. He stared at that chess piece, expression troubled.

“It really is Zhenlong Chess Formation……” Chu Wanning muttered, before suddenly looking up and pinning Mo Ran with his gaze, “What food does Shi Mingjing usually make for you when you’re sick? Say it!”

“Huh? Uh……” Too much had happened in too short a span of time, Mo Ran’s head was in complete disarray. He could only say dumbly, “Wh-what are you asking about that for?”

Chu Wanning said harshly: “Just say it!”

“.....Wontons?”

Only then did Chu Wanning’s expression relax slightly, but his brows were still furrowed as he spoke: “Mo Ran, listen closely, that Gouchen is an imposter, not the actual God of Weaponry. This person is adept at illusions, and knows Zhenlong Chess Formation, one of the three forbidden techniques. That’s why I had to be careful, in case you were one of his illusions too.”

Mo Ran was about to cry from indignation: “Why would I be tied up if I was an illusion!”

Chu Wanning: “.....I’ll get you out of there right away.”

Nodding frantically, Mo Ran asked: “Oh yeah, Shizun, what about Shi Mei and Xue Meng?”

“Same as you, they also succumbed to the drugs in the wine, and got locked up elsewhere.” Seeing Mo Ran’s expression, Chu Wanning added, “No need to worry, they’re fine now. It’s just that there was no way to tell what kind of dangers laid in wait here, so I had them wait outside. You’ll be able to see them once we get out of here.”

As for Zhenlong Chess Formation, Chu Wanning did not explain further, nor did he need to.

It was one of the three powerful and notorious forbidden techniques of the cultivation world.

As the name implies, Zhenlong Chess Formation is a technique that uses others as chess pieces, to be maneuvered at will like in a game of chess. The user typically doesn't appear in person at the battlefield, but rather, lays down a chessboard and manipulates the chess pieces from the shadows, forcing everything from living people to the ghosts of the departed, from beasts on the land to birds in the skies to be at their every beck and call. A living creature under the control of Zhenlong Chess Formation is loyal to the user until death, and a dead creature will do their bidding until torn limb from limb.

However, what the user could control depended on their spiritual strength. Newly deceased people and beasts were the easiest to control, followed by those long dead, then live beasts, and finally, cultivated to the highest level, it allowed the user to control living people.

Very few people in the world were even capable of achieving this highest tier of Zhenlong Chess Formation, but when Mo Ran named himself emperor, he had already perfected the technique. That year, when he faced off against Chu Wanning in a deathmatch, he laid down a scroll a hundred feet long, a chessboard of splashed ink, an army of strewn pieces.

In that battle, hundreds of thousands of chess pieces touched down simultaneously, winged beasts blotted out the golden sun and dragons burst out of the raging seas. Mo Ran summoned endless beasts of both

land and sky, and commanded an army of countless living people. A scene like that would be a rare sight even in hell.

This fox corpse was obviously something controlled by Zhenlong Chess Formation, with an additional layer of illusion magic alongside.

Rumor had it that the fur of the QingQiu fox clan's earliest ancestor was divided into forty-nine pieces of various sizes and made into magic artifacts. If one were to take someone's blood and drip it onto the fox fur, and then wrap that fur around something, anything at all, even a block of rotten wood would take on the appearance of that person's heart's desire.

The fur wrapped around this fox corpse was one such artifact. However, the magic only worked on the original owner of the blood; to anyone else, it looked as it always had.

It was a simple task to free Mo Ran. By the time Chu Wanning got him out of there, he had also more or less finished explaining everything to him.

What Mo Ran couldn't figure out was: "Shizun, how did you know that Gouchen was a fake?"

Ch.42 This Venerable One Is a Little Uneasy

Chu Wanning replied: “If it was the real Gouchen the Exalted, why would he use dead things instead of living beings? And even though this man’s powers are fairly strong, they’re still nothing compared to a god’s.”

This made a lot of sense, but Mo Ran was still confused on a few parts. “Was it when Shizun saw this……this dead fox that you realized that guy was an imposter?”

Chu Wanning shook his head. “No.”

“Then how could you tell……”

“Do you still remember what this Gouchen asked me when he first showed up?”

Mo Ran thought about it for a moment and said, “I think he asked you something about your weapon?”

“That’s right,” Chu Wanning confirmed. “I’ve never hidden the aura of the holy weapons on my person; they can be sensed with just a little perceptiveness. But even as the God of a Thousand Weapons, he couldn’t immediately tell that I had two holy weapons from Jincheng Lake and assumed I only had one. I was suspicious then, but the matter at hand was acquiring weapons so there wasn’t a good time to bring it up. I just kept a close eye on everything he did from then on, so that he wouldn’t get his way.”

“But……” Mo Ran said, “If he isn’t Gouchen the Exalted, how could he create the holy weapons?”

“First off, Gouchen creating all the weapons is just a rumor. No one really knows why this lake has so many weapons inside it, so the holy weapons were not necessarily made by Gouchen. Second, this person just let you all pick whatever you wanted from the holy arsenal, but who knows if they’re even his to give. Moreover, I just looked closely at Xue Meng and Shi Mei’s weapons——entirely fake.”

At this, Mo Ran grew alarmed. “Fake?”

“Mn.”

Mo Ran stood blankly for a moment, before finally realizing something pertaining to himself. “Then Jiangui……?”

“Jiangui is real. But his goal wasn’t just to give you a weapon.”

“Then what did he want to do?” Mo Ran said, looking in disgust at the fox corpse lying on the stone bed. “First he spent all this effort to lock us up, and then he got something sickening like this. What does he even want out of it?”

“You.”

“Huh?”

“What you just said was only half right. That Gouchen didn’t go through all of this to trap us ; the one he ultimately wants is you.”

“What does he want with me?” Mo Ran laughed drily. “I’m just some dumbass.”

Chu Wanning replied, “I’ve never met a dumbass who could cultivate a core within a year.”

Mo Ran was going to continue, but he suddenly realized something and slammed to a halt.

——Did Chu Wanning just……praise him?

The realization made his heart beat faster, and he stared at Chu Wanning with his mouth hanging open. A few moments passed before he slowly blinked. The thick face he'd always been so proud of was actually blushing a little.

Chu Wanning wasn't even looking at him, still muttering to himself. "Furthermore, Tianwen and Jiangui seem to have something to do with that willow tree in the courtyard—I've read about it before in ancient texts. When Gouchen the Exalted descended to the mortal realm, he brought three willow branches with him from the imperial court. But the ancient texts were missing a lot; I never found out what Gouchen did with those three branches of heavenly willow."

He paused before continuing. "But if the rumors are true, it would seem that Tianwen, Jiangui, and the old tree in the courtyard could in fact be those three willow branches. Two became holy weapons, and one was taken to the bottom of Jincheng Lake, becoming the powerful guardian of Gouchen's arsenal."

"But what does that have to do with me?" Mo Ran said.

Chu Wanning shook his head. "How could it not have something to do with you, you're the one who awakened Jiangui."

Mo Ran sighed. "Like I said, seriously what the hell!"

“My guess is that whatever he wants in the end has to do with the willow tree in the courtyard. But that’s as much as I can infer from what we’ve gathered. I don’t know anything else beyond that for now.”

This was almost all conjecture on Chu Wanning’s part, but Mo Ran thought that, since he was so smart, if that’s the conclusion he came to, then it was probably pretty close to the truth.

As they considered these things, they walked quickly though the gloomy underwater dungeon path. When they got through the twisting, winding path, they walked along another one until they finally came to the exit. They took advantage of the fact that the merpeople patrolling back and forth weren’t expecting them, and escaped.

The exit of the dark underground cell was right in the courtyard where the giant willow was. When they surfaced, the scene before Mo Ran’s eyes shocked him.

There were four coffins placed in front of the giant willow, one of them empty. Lying in the other three were Chu Wanning, Shi Mei, and Xue Meng.

Mo Ran paled and yelled, “What the hell is this?!”

“Those are corpse-sacrificing coffins,” Chu Wanning said. “You see the vine wrapped around the edge of the coffin? The other end of it is linked to the giant willow. The fake Gouchen only needs you, so after he drugged us, he had merfolk take you to the cell and put the three of us into these coffins. Using the corpse-sacrificing coffins, he can transfer the entire lifetime’s worth of cultivation from the people inside to the giant willow. It’s similar to extracting blood.”

Seeing Mo Ran's grim expression, Chu Wanning continued, "Don't worry, Shi Mei and Xue Meng are unharmed. I pretended to be unconscious and waited for an opportunity to dispatch the three merfolk guarding the coffins. The three people you see in front of you are actually the bodies of those demons."

He said all of this very matter-of-factly, but Mo Ran couldn't help raising his eyebrows and covertly sneaking a look at the other.

How high was the cultivation of the merfolk in Jincheng Lake? Chu Wanning's so-called, simple "waiting for an opportunity to dispatch" meant that he would have had to take care of all three of the merfolk in a single blow, without making a sound.

Just how skilled was this person……

It had been too many years since he'd last fought on equal footing with Chu Wanning, so he was a little dazed when he heard this sentence. It was as if the storms and hails in his past life flashed before his eyes, and he saw the figure within it that shook the sky and earth, his face slightly turned to the side, eyes shining bright like Mercury.

Chu Wanning saw him lost in thought and asked: "What is it?"

Mo Ran jolted back to awareness. "Nothing."

"……"

"I was just wondering, how did Shizun turn the merfolk into these forms?"

Chu Wanning smiled coldly: “Simple illusions. If that fake Gouchen can do it, how could I not be able to as well? Leave the fake bodies here to avoid being discovered by those eels. Give him a taste of his own medicine.”

“……”

In any case, the area was dangerous so they couldn’t stay there long. They took a short breather and then left immediately. However, when they ran to the meeting place Xue Meng and the others had agreed upon, they found that it was empty; no one was there.

Mo Ran’s face went completely white. “Where’s Shi Mei?!”

Chu Wanning’s expression was also slightly disquieted. He didn’t answer, instead lifting his ring finger and producing a layer of golden light atop it. He could use the haitang flowers, which he’d tucked into the waistbands of the three disciples before they climbed Dawning Peak, to track them.

After a short period of time, Chu Wanning cursed under his breath and put the light away. “Something we didn’t expect may have happened here. The two of them probably ran away from this area to hide from the merfolk patrolling back and forth, possibly towards the market. Come, let’s go look.”

The two of them were both extremely skilled, easily avoiding all of the merfolk patrols. They swiftly flipped over the tall walls of the courtyard and rushed in the direction of the market that Gouchen had taken them to during the day.

Normally, there would be no such thing as night and day under water, but Jincheng Lake was different; one could perceive the rising of the sun and

the setting of the moon. At that time, the long night had already broken and the sun was rising in the east.

Mo Ran could see Jincheng Lake's morning market setting up in the distance, the bustling city center filled with people gathering into it, and subconsciously released the breath he had been holding. It looked like Shi Mei and the rest were safe; otherwise, the scene before them wouldn't be so peaceful.

On the other hand, Chu Wanning's expression didn't look so good for some reason. He did not say anything, but wordlessly pulled Mo Ran over to him.

"Shizun?"

"Come here."

"What's wrong?"

"Don't go far." Chu Wanning's voice seemed to be laced with some self-reproach, even if he looked as cold as always. "Xue Meng and Shi Mei have already gotten lost, I'm afraid that if I'm not careful, you'll also……"

Mo Ran saw that Chu Wanning's face was a little pale, and it actually seemed to be out of worry for him. At first, he stared blankly. Then, for reasons he couldn't figure out, his heart actually moved faintly and he spoke to comfort him: "I won't get lost. Come on, Shizun, let's go look for them."

He started walking forward while talking, and as he did so, he turned his wrist and casually took Chu Wanning's hand in his own.

"……" Chu Wanning's fingertips in his palm seemed to tremble for a split second.

But the second was too short and too faint; Mo Ran's heart was preoccupied with Shi Mei, so he didn't think much about it, chalking it up to his own misperceptions.

"Fish blood mantou, freshly made!"

"Skin of Shuairan Snake, premium clothing material, only three feet left! Once it's all gone you'll have to wait for my next shedding~"

"Selling squid ink brow filler, made with fresh ink spat just this morning by yours truly, it'll do wonders for your eyebrows——hey, hey wait, miss, don't leave!"

The shouts of the peddlers in the market fell incessantly on their ears, the extraordinary scene really too much for one's eyes to take in.

Mo Ran pulled Chu Wanning along with a silly smile on his face for two steps and, in that abrupt moment, suddenly realized something wasn't right. He immediately slammed to a halt, eyes widening in an instant, and he felt all the blood in his body run cold.

Something's wrong!

Something very wrong here!

He swept his gaze around and, sure enough……

A headless ghost sat by its stall, selling combs and makeup. It held a comb between two fingers with long, scarlet-painted nails as it brushed the hair on its own bloody head that was resting on its knees, offering in a soft voice: "High quality bone combs, take one home with you today."

As he thought!

Just as he thought! In this city center, every person's movements, every person's words, every person's expressions, were exactly the same as when Gouchen had brought them here yesterday!

Mo Ran jerkily recoiled a few steps, crashing right into Chu Wanning's chest. He immediately raised his head and said hoarsely, "Shizun, what is this?"

Chu Wanning seemed to have had his suspicions for a while now, but after confirming it with his own eyes, his heart still dropped in his chest. He gripped Mo Ran tightly.

"What's going on?——What is this? An illusion?"

Chu Wanning shook his head, but thought about it for a moment. Suddenly, he said slowly, "Mo Ran, have you ever thought about this…... Jincheng Lake has many different beasts and creatures, and at least some among them must have seen the real Gouchen the Exalted before. In that case, how could they not tell that this one is fake?

The color drained from Mo Ran's face, and he felt a tinge of fear. "Yeah……you're right."

"And let me ask," Chu Wanning continued, "if you were pretending to be Gouchen the Exalted and hiding out in Jincheng Lake, how would you make everyone else say what you want them to say, do what you want them to do, listen to your every word, and put on an act for you?"

Mo Ran understood immediately.

Zhenlong Chess Formation!

Black and white chess pieces fall into place, and all under the heavens fall in line. None knew better than him the sheer might of this forbidden technique. He almost blurted it out, but a glimpse at Chu Wanning's eyes, and he managed to stop himself just in time.

How could the sixteen year old him think so easily of the three forbidden techniques?

And so, all he said was: "That would be very difficult."

"No," Chu Wanning said, "it's very easy."

He paused for a second, then said, "You just need them all to be dead."

Ch.43 This Venerable One Is a Sacrificial Offering???

>>brief goriness

Mo Ran didn't even get a chance to respond before an ear-piercingly shrill voice rang out from behind him: "Make way, make way! Let me through!"

Was it the fuban?!

Carrying the heavy pile of rocks, the fuban trudged to the same apothecary as before, where it yelled: "I can't take it anymore! Hurry and save me doctor!"

A white-haired merman swam out, but his tail was distinct from those of the others, the entire length glittering resplendent like flowing gold. His hair was held back with simple clips and draped over his shoulders, and his face, although wrinkled, was well-proportioned, with a straight nose and a pleasant curve of the lips, and those golden eyes were as tranquil as a misty drizzle; it was easy to imagine how handsome he must have been in his prime.

Mo Ran quivered.

This was different from before; where did that turquoise-colored sea dragon go?

The elderly merman glanced at them from afar but said nothing, instead making his way to the doorstep and bending over to take the rocks off the fuban's back one by one.

With the removal of the last rock, the illusion shattered and the fuban exploded, its blood diffusing into the water like a haze of fog. Nearly

simultaneously, all the monsters and creatures in the market stiffened for a split second before drooping bonelessly as their bodies festered and saturated the lake water with a miasma of blood.

The water was dyed red, the color deepening rapidly as more and more blood seeped out. It became difficult to see things in the distance, then the immediate area was smothered, and soon enough, scarlet filled their vision and they couldn't even see their hands in front of them.

Chu Wanning said: "Mo Ran."

Mo Ran knew him well, and didn't need him to say more: "Shizun, I'm here, don't worry."

Chu Wanning was a man of few words, or rather, he was no good with words. He was silent for a moment before saying only: "Be careful."

Through the muddled blood water, Mo Ran couldn't see the face that wouldn't change color even if the sky were to fall, but could more easily sense the concern in Shizun's voice. He rarely ever sensed Chu Wanning's warmth in everyday life, and suddenly his chest felt warm. He gripped the other's hand tighter, answering: "Okay."

Standing close, back to back, they could feel the other's heartbeat and breathing even though they couldn't see. The situation being perilous, Chu Wanning summoned Tianwen, and Mo Ran followed suit with Jiangui, having recovered his spiritual strength by now.

After they called out their holy weapons, Mo Ran suddenly exclaimed: "Shizun, look over there!"

Chu Wanning turned to look toward the apothecary, where the elderly merman was cleaning up the rock pile just now, to see that a couple dozen white colored light spots of various sizes had appeared on the ground. Hand in hand, the two of them walked over, and sure enough, the light spots were the fuban's rocks.

The elderly merman had arranged the several dozen rocks into three neat rows, every piece glowing with a gentle radiance.

Slowly, a figure appeared before the rocks. It seemed to still be the same white-haired merman from earlier.

Mo Ran tried: "Who are you?"

He didn't answer, only glancing at Chu Wanning, and then at Mo Ran, before wordlessly lifting his hand and pointing at the rocks on the ground.

Mo Ran asked: "You want us to pick up the rocks?"

The white-haired merman nodded, then extended a single finger.

"Do you mean to……pick only one?"

The white-haired merman nodded, then shook his head, pointed at Mo Ran, and then pointed at Chu Wanning.

Mo Ran figured it out: "We should each pick one?"

This time the white-haired merman nodded vigorously before standing still and staring fixedly at the two of them.

Mo Ran asked: "Shizun, should we do as he said?"

“Might as well, we don’t have any other ideas anyway.”

So they each picked a rock, but unexpectedly, as soon as the tips of their fingers touched their rocks, a multitude of distorted colors flashed before their eyes as the world spun at full tilt. When things settled back down, the endless red had disappeared.

Looking closely, they had been teleported to the holy weapon arsenal!

“Shizun!!”

“Shizun, A-Ran!!”

And Xue Meng and Shi Mei were here too. Shocked and overjoyed to see Chu Wanning, they rushed over in welcome. Chu Wanning hadn’t expected the glowing rocks to be enchanted with a teleportation spell, and was still a little nauseous from the rapid spinning. He put a hand to his forehead, the other still tightly clutching Mo Ran’s.

While inside the blood lake, their hands had been joined the entire time without parting.

Chu Wanning’s status being what it was, he rarely had any opportunity to hold hands with Mo Ran. Most of the time, he could only stand a little ways off, watching the closeness between his disciples from a distance.

And so, he cautiously cherished this rare warmth at his palm……

“Shi Mei!”

But the warmth that was such a precious treasure to him was, to the other, perhaps worthless like a pair of worn out shoes, perhaps not worth mentioning, or perhaps wasn’t even noticed at all.

The moment he saw Shi Mei, Mo Ran very casually let go of his hand.

Chu Wanning’s fingertips twitched slightly, and, for a split second, seemed as if they wanted to grab onto him.

But what excuse did he have for that?

He no longer had the courage to like someone.

He didn’t want to lose the pathetic bit of pride he had left too.

Watching Mo Ran smiling so easily at Shi Mei, hugging him so casually and stroking his hair so gently.

Chu Wanning’s fingertips drooped back down.

With some embarrassment, with some awkwardness.

Luckily.

His face was habitually impassive, so emotions didn’t show through too obviously.

Maybe because he was getting older, and being such a stiff person, after that spin in the teleportation array, his chest felt a little cold.

But it wasn’t too bad, there was still a bit of warmth left at the tips of his fingers.

Leaning on that thread of remaining warmth that would soon disappear, he slowly stood up straight and arranged his expression and gaze, proper and tidy.

“Shizun, are you feeling ok? Your face is so pale……”

Chu Wanning nodded at Xue Meng: “I’m fine.”

He paused for a moment, then asked: “Were you two also teleported here by that merman?”

Before Xue Meng had a chance to respond, there came a burst of bubbling sounds. Chu Wanning turned to see half a bloody face, and right after, a disfigured person emerged from the boiling-hot smelting pool with a splash!

This person was definitely no mortal, or else definitely not alive, for no mortal could survive being submerged in the fiery molten metal. But this person, although raw and burnt all over, clearly still drew breath. Chains shackled his four limbs and held him inside the smelting pool to suffer.

He slowly opened his eyes and bowed over and over to the group, gaze begging them to approach the smelting pool.

Although he couldn’t speak, he did have other means of expression. They watched as he waved his arms, bloody flesh barely clinging to bone, and a

small wave surged forth from the molten metal in the pool to form several rows of ancient script in the air.

Xue Meng, startled: “What kind of writing is this? Why can’t I read a single character?”

Chu Wanning: “It’s ancient Cangjie script, something I’ve yet to teach you.”

Mo Ran: “Then——what does it say?”

Chu Wanning walked up and carefully studied the writing: “.....He is…...asking for help.”

According to legend, ancient Cangjie script was the writing of the Heavenly Realm. It was practically a lost art in the human world; very few people knew it anymore, and even an accomplished zongshi like Chu Wanning couldn’t read all of it, but he could at least get the gist of it.

Chu Wanning studied the writing for a bit, slowly interpreting: “He says that he is the spirit of this willow tree, named Zhaixin Liu [Heart-Pluck Willow]. When he was a sapling, Gouchen the Exalted brought him here from the seventh heaven of the Realm of the Gods. Afterwards, Gouchen abandoned this world for reasons unknown. Zhaixin Liu hadn’t seen him since, and doesn’t even know if he yet lives.”

“But even without him here, Zhaixin Liu had always followed his instructions these hundreds of millenia, protecting Jincheng Lake, guarding the holy weapon arsenal. Nourished by the spiritual energy here, it gradually cultivated into human form, and the days passed without

incident until one day, when a——” Chu Wanning suddenly stopped reading.

Mo Ran asked: “What’s the matter?”

“.....I don’t recognize these three characters. Seems to be a name.” Chu Wanning said, raising a hand to point at the complex, twisting characters, “Anyway, this person came to Jincheng Lake. He was powerful and cruel, slaughtered everything in the lake, and used Zhenlong Chess Formation to control them. Zhaixin Liu was no exception.”

Mo Ran shouted immediately: “That person is probably the fake Gouchen!”

Hearing his words, Zhaixin Liu’s eyes flickered, and he nodded twice in agreement.

“.....Huh, I really guessed it.” Mo Ran grinned, a little embarrassed, and scratched his head, “Haha, I’m pretty smart eh.”

Chu Wanning glanced at him mildly, then continued:

“In the years since then, Zhaixin Liu has been in a continuous unconscious state, without even half a day of clarity. Fortunately, the other two willow branches that had once been connected with it in body and spirit——Tianwen and Jiangui——both awakened. Borrowing their strength, Zhaixin Liu was temporarily able to regain consciousness. If not for that, it probably would’ve already lost control and hurt everyone here.”

Hearing that, “everyone here” was either incredulous or apprehensive, the three youths collectively raising their heads to stare at the being in the smelting pool, unsure how to take its self-introduction.

Mo Ran started: “Liu-qianbei [Senior Willow]——”

Xue Meng: “Liu-qianbei?”

“Well what else should I say, Zhai-qianbei [Senior Pluck]?” Mo Ran glared at Xue Meng, then continued, “I’m gonna say something you probably won’t like, but there seem to be some holes in your story.”

Zhaixin Liu could not speak, but could understand spoken words. He turned to face Mo Ran.

Mo Ran: “First you said you were under the fake Gouchen’s control, but then regained your consciousness under the influence of Tianwen and Jiangui’s awakening. But the fake Gouchen was the one who gave me Jiangui, how could he not have known the consequences of doing that?”

Zhaixin Liu shook his head, and the characters in front of Chu Wanning changed.

“I am of the Realm of the Gods, he knows little about me, and is unaware that the holy weapons could affect my consciousness. In his pursuit of the three forbidden techniques, he needs to draw upon my power, but my lifespan is coming to its end, and he has been frantically looking for a way to extend my life. But I really do not wish to continue living, death is much preferable to helping this villain, it’s just that I am under his control, and cannot act of my own will……”

At this, Chu Wanning paused in contemplation: “That must be why he brought Mo Ran here. Mo Ran is a wood elemental spiritual essence, that fake Gouchen must be planning to combine his spiritual power with that of Jiangui and offer that as sacrifice to you.”

Zhaixin Liu nodded.

Mo Ran still didn’t quite understand: “But that fake Gouchen said so himself, there are two wood elemental spiritual essences. Shizun is also one, why did he only lock me up?

Zhaixin Liu wrote: “Sacrificial offerings have always been better the younger they are, and even more care must be taken when making an offering to a tree spirit. Moreover, the offering must be sated in appetite and desire, satisfied in every need, and their life must be taken as they are immersed in such an euphoric illusion, without their slightest knowing. Otherwise, the offering would have remaining regrets, and the resentful energy would accelerate my withering instead.”

At this, Mo Ran’s thoughts snapped to the fox spirit monster in the cell that took on Chu Wanning’s appearance.

So that was to sate his desires, like fattening up a pig before the slaughter so that it’s tastier.

That would also explain why he saw Chu Wanning instead of Shi Mei. He cherished Shi Mei far too much to defile him. When it came to the matter of desire, he did indeed lust after Chu Wanning much more than he did Shi Mei……

Seeing the strange expression on Mo Ran's face, Chu Wanning thought he was still uneasy, and, wanting to comfort him, asked: "What are you thinking about?"

"N-nothing."

Mo Ran's face started turning red. Chu Wanning stared blankly for a second before comprehension dawned on him and he immediately closed his mouth. A while passed before he turned away in a fit of embarrassed rage.

What uneasiness? This guy was definitely thinking back to those so-called 'desires' just now, daydreaming, even.

Chu Wanning flung his sleeves in indignant anger, and, face frigid, muttered: "Shameless."

Mo Ran: "……"

Good thing Chu Wanning didn't know just who it was satisfying his desires in that illusion, or he'd probably skin him alive in a fit of anger.

He was in the midst of musing when the ground of the holy weapon arsenal suddenly started shaking. Xue Meng yelled, startled: "What's happening?"

Ch.44 This Venerable One Doesn't Want to Owe You

>>blood n stuff

Zhaixin Liu did not get a chance to respond before his expression twisted and he clutched his head in pain, mouth open in a soundless scream. But even though he couldn't make any sounds, the agonized screams were practically audible in that horrifying expression and those bulging eyes.

Save me.

Save me——!!!!

His lips twisted into an inconceivable shape, bloody veins spreading quickly across his eyeballs. If not for those chains shackling him in place, he likely would have already vaulted up and violently ended his own life.

"I beg of you……hurry……and destroy me……"

It seemed that Zhaixin Liu's grasp on his consciousness was nearing its limit; he struggled in agony but to no avail as a black fog surged out from the smelting pool, crashing into and attacking the body trapped inside. The chains rattled sharply as sparks flew.

Seeing this rapid turn of events, Chu Wanning moved quickly, long sleeve sweeping as he shielded the disciples behind himself: "How can I save you?"

Zhaixin Liu moved slowly, but he could still control the molten metal in the pool. More rows of ancient Cangjie script formed in the air.

“I am about to lose my consciousness and attack you. It is not my intention to hurt you, but it is out of my control and there is no time to explain. The only thing I can do for you now is to apprise you of the techniques at my disposal, pray take care……”

The molten metal suddenly reformed.

“I am well-versed in three techniques. First, Sweetest Dream, a nightmare technique that puts those afflicted to sleep and grants that which they desire in a wondrous dream. As such, even those with strong spiritual powers, who could perceive it to be an illusion, would still willingly remain therein, never to wake.

Second, Temptation of the Heart, using that most coveted by a person as enticement, induces the afflicted to slaughter one another.

Third, Heart Pluck……”

But his spiritual energies became exhausted at that moment, and he could no longer control the molten metal to form more words.

And, just like that, the effects of the Heart Pluck technique were left to the unknown.

A mist of blood exploded from the struggling Zhaixin Liu. No longer able to control the molten metal, he dragged his finger through the spilled blood,

a pair of bulging, spasming eyeballs fixed on Chu Wanning, refusing to yield.

“Shizun!” Xue Meng hurriedly grabbed him as he made to approach, “Don’t go, it might be a trap!”

Zhaixin Liu, unable to speak, could only hold up that finger dipped in blood. Abruptly, tears welled up in his eyes.

Chu Wanning: “.....You want me to go over?”

Zhaixin Liu nodded slowly.

“.....”

“Shizun!”

Xue Meng tried to stop him once again, but Chu Wanning only shook his head at him before approaching the smelting pool by himself and extending a hand.

Zhaixin Liu seemed quite touched. He glanced deeply at Chu Wanning and struggled to wave his flesh-dangling arms, as if trying to bow. Then, enduring the searing agony, he grabbed Chu Wanning’s hand and wrote shakily on his palm:

Draw your lots, break the nightmare……

Do not——lose sight……of your…….heart……

Once……. the nightmare is broken…….the trial——ends!!

He hadn’t yet finished writing the last word when he suddenly crumpled bonelessly like a pile of mud and fell back into the boiling smelting pool,

disappearing from view.

Simultaneously, an enormous wave of scarlet rose from the pool with a loud crash, the molten metal surging into the sky as nine pillars of flame each formed in the shape of a dragon roared up from the ground. Chu Wanning was forced to retreat, the fire reflecting in his eyes.

Suddenly, four tokens zoomed out from the fiery pillars of molten metal to hang in mid air.

Shi Mei, remembering Zhaixin Liu's words from earlier, said at once: "Are these the……tokens for drawing lots that Zhaixin Liu mentioned?"

He stepped closer, but Chu Wanning stopped him: "Don't touch it. All of you get behind me."

Shi Mei: "Shizun……"

"I'm here, it'll be ok." Chu Wanning said, "Don't take any chances, let me go first."

He spoke mildly, even without much intonation, but Mo Ran's heart quivered. For some reason, the Chu Wanning before his eyes suddenly overlapped with that heartless person from his previous lifetime, the one who coldly watched his own disciple die.

If he could say something like this, then why did he stand by and do nothing in the past as his disciple died?

Mo Ran suddenly felt like he had never understood Chu Wanning.

He also muttered, despite himself: “Shizun……”

Chu Wanning paid them no mind as he lifted a hand and picked one of the tokens out of the air. The token was made of jade, light yellow in color. He looked it over front and back, quietly muttering “Hm?”

“What’s wrong?” Xue Meng asked.

Chu Wanning said: “There’s nothing on it.”

“How could that be?” Xue Meng was puzzled, “Let me try.”

They each picked one of the four tokens. Xue Meng and Shi Mei’s jade tokens were the same as Chu Wanning’s, with not a word written thereon. Mo Ran’s eyes widened as he flipped his token over:

“Blass?”[87]

The other three looked toward him at once. Xue Meng frowned: “What’s a blass?”

Mo Ran jabbed a finger at his token: “That’s what it says.”

Xue Meng shuffled over to take a look, and immediately started hollering angrily: “Pah! More like you just read the half that you could actually read!”

“.....It’s blood hourglass.” Chu Wanning said abruptly.

He could read the majority of ancient Cangjie script, and wouldn’t make things up if he wasn’t sure. So if that’s what he says is written on the token, then that’s what’s written on the token.

Mo Ran stared blankly: “What does blood hourglass mean?”

Chu Wanning shook his head: “I don’t know.”

As if in answer, a low rumbling sound came from the arsenal’s towering roof, and a massive copper hourglass mottled with rust descended. Unlike other hourglasses, this one had a cross mounted on it, its purpose unknown.

Chu Wanning glanced at the hourglass, then looked down at the token in Mo Ran’s hand.

Blood hourglass.

He suddenly understood what was meant by “draw your lots”. Chu Wanning’s expression shifted abruptly as he shouted in a stern voice: “Mo Ran, hurry and throw the token away!”

The order left no room for argument; even without knowing the reason, Mo Ran moved to obey, almost subconsciously.

He wouldn’t have known without trying, but now that he was trying, Mo Ran found that the jade token was somehow stuck firmly to his hand, and he couldn’t even fling it off.

Chu Wanning cursed under his breath and rushed forward to trade his own token for Mo Ran’s. But at that moment, dozens of thorny vines suddenly burst forth from that rusty hourglass and headed straight for Mo Ran!

“Move!”

“Shizun!!!”

“Shizun!”

Blood splattered everywhere. At the last second, Chu Wanning had shoved Mo Ran aside, but the thorns pierced into Chu Wanning like so many arrows.

Mo Ran in his youthful body was no match for the force of Chu Wanning’s push. But as he stumbled backwards and fell to the ground, the sound of tearing flesh was horrifyingly clear, and Xue Meng and Shi Mei’s twisted screams were loud and shrill.

No way.

How could this be…...

But this was Chu Wanning, the one who beat him and scolded him, who never looked at him kindly. The one who callously watched his own disciple die right in front of him. The one who coldly said “deficient by nature, beyond remedy”. The one who……

Mo Ran looked up.

Amidst the chaos, he saw the blood soaking through that person’s robes. Sharp, densely packed vines pierced from his back all the way through to the front, at the exact same place where he had been injured by the ghost mistress before. The old wound had not yet healed, and was now once again ripped into a bloody mess.

The one who……the one who protected him with his own body in the coffin, who didn't make a sound even as the claws stabbed through him……

The one who, hiding under the bridge, secretly put up a barrier to shield everyone from the rain and the wind, but who dared not show his face.

The one who, after Shi Mei's death in the previous lifetime, went to the kitchen and clumsily made wontons so that he might eat something.

The one who has such a bad temper and not much of a way with words, who's afraid of the bitterness of medicine and coughs from spicy food, the one he knows the best.

The one he never remembered to look after, whom he hated with gritted teeth yet also felt was quite pitiful……

Chu Wanning.

Wanning……

"Shizun!!" Mo Ran screamed as he scrambled toward him, "Shizun!!!!"

"Your token……" Chu Wanning's hand shook as he lifted it. His face was pale, but his expression was steady as always, "Trade with me……"

The hand he extended toward Mo Ran held his own blank token. He raised it slowly, with difficulty, his entire arm trembled minutely with pain.

His eyes were bright and resolute beneath the layer of wetness.

"Hurry, give it to me!"

Mo Ran hadn't even gotten up; he half-crawled, half-dragged himself to Chu Wanning and stared helplessly at that horrifying wound.

“No……Shizun……”

“Shizun!!”

Xue Meng and Shi Mei moved to come over as well. Chu Wanning’s expression was one of exasperation as he erected a barrier with a brandish to keep them out, and then called harshly: “Tianwen!!!”

Tianwen appeared as called, slicing clean through the dozens of vines piercing through Chu Wanning!

But those vines were no ordinary entity. Chu Wanning could clearly feel them devouring his spiritual energy from where they were buried into his flesh. Having no other choice, he could only grit his teeth, grip the broken ends of those vines, and, steeling himself, rip them out!

A rush of blood spilled out instantly!

Chu Wanning tossed the vines aside and let out a breath, then quickly tapped his meridians, temporarily stopping the blood loss. Then he leveled a glare at Mo Ran, voice hoarse: “Give it to me.”

“Shizun……”

“Trade tokens with me!” Chu Wanning said harshly.

By now, Mo Ran had also figured out what “blood hourglass” meant. The curse left by Gouchen millions of years ago was no different from how he had tormented Chu Wanning in the previous life.

Indeed, whether god, demon, human, or ghost, they all came up with more or less the same thing when trying to be as cruel as can be.

Blood hourglass.

Pour the blood of a person into the hourglass in place of sand or water to keep time.

The time interval ends when the person is bled dry.

At his coronation ceremony as Taxian-Jun in the last life, hadn't he used Chu Wanning as a blood hourglass, made him watch while he tread on the remaining sects as he ascended the throne, had him bled out drop by drop in front of him?

But in this life, in front of Gouchen's blood hourglass.

Chu Wanning was willing to trade him his own, safe, token, willing to go on the cross in his place, he……

Mo Ran's heart beat out of rhythm in his chest.

He couldn't even think.

How could this be……

How could this be!!

The copper hourglass missed its first strike and failed to grab a person. It brandished its thorny vines, ramping up for a second attack.

Chu Wanning stared at him, eyes flickering with a light that trembled faintly.

His face was pale from the pain as he panted softly: “Mo Ran, li-.....listen to me, hurry and trade me.”

“.....”

“Hurry……” Chu Wanning’s face was pale as fresh snow lit by moonlight, “.....Are you trying to make me block a second attack for you?!”

“Shizun……”

The vines shot out again.

In that instant, Mo Ran finally raised his token, and Chu Wanning reached for it without thinking.

But unexpectedly, right as their hands were about to touch, Mo Ran’s eyes flashed as he pulled his hand back and instead turned to shield the unguarded Chu Wanning behind himself. The second wave of vines had reached them by then, and Mo Ran met them head on. His whole body was wrapped up and swallowed by the vines in an instant, and dragged to the copper hourglass.

“Mo Ran!!”

Dozens of vines coiled around and pinned him tightly to the cross. Mo Ran turned to look toward Chu Wanning. His lips moved.

Chu Wanning’s eyes widened abruptly.

Mo Ran's voice was quiet, but he heard it clearly, there was no mistake.

He said: "Shizun, I'm really not……beyond remedy……"

So, please, don't give up on me——

But he couldn't finish the rest of the sentence. Last life, he wanted to say it but didn't; this life, it was also already too late.

Whether Chu Wanning gave up on him or not wasn't really important to him anymore.

He just didn't want to owe this person, that's all.

He was really too dumb, and already couldn't figure out just what it was he felt toward Chu Wanning. He didn't want things to get even more muddled.

This life, Mo Ran thought to himself, the one he cared about, the one he liked, was Shi Mei and no other.

He didn't want to exchange tokens with Chu Wanning only because he didn't want to owe him a favor, only because he didn't want……

He didn't want to see Chu Wanning bleed out again.

His heart wasn't made of stone. Nothing made him happier than to have someone nice to him.

A little kindness, and his smile would be brilliant as the spring.

But if it's a lot, lot of kindness, then he'd willingly die without complaint.

Suddenly, out of the dense vines came a glistening sword.

The sword was undoubtedly a holy weapon; it was ancient, but carried an overwhelming aura of valor. A pair of rings flanked the hilt, and the pommel was etched with thorned patterns. The sword was slender, with an intricate effigy of a bull-headed dragon embedded therein, the blade coursing with an azure radiance that could slice clean through everything from the softest hair to the toughest metal.

Mo Ran only had enough time to see the “Gouchen” written on the sword, not even the “Exalted”, before the sword of the God of Weaponry stabbed directly into his chest.

Blood gushed out, into the hourglass.

At the same time, a curtain of water suddenly poured down in the arsenal, separating Mo Ran and the others on two sides, the abrupt torrential deluge trapping everyone else on the other side.

Shi Mei yelled: “A-Ran!! A-Ran——!”

The rapid downpour blocked their line of sight; they couldn’t clearly see how Mo Ran was holding up on the other side. Chu Wanning tried over and over to break through the water, but was pushed out again and again, until he was drenched all the way through, eyes dark on an anxious face, lips wholly without color.

Chu Wanning’s voice was hoarse:

“Mo Ran——!”

It wasn't very loud, but shook terribly. He himself did not notice, but Shi Mei startled and turned to look at him, only to see the usually calm and composed Shizun soaked and disheveled, his long feathery eyelashes trembling as he failed to suppress his emotions and worry colored his features.

He summoned Tianwen, savagery written between his brows, like a bowstring stretched taut. Shi Mei held onto him with unease: "Shizun, stop it! There's no way to get through!"

Chu Wanning shook him off, eyes sharp as blades, and silently raised a barrier to try again. But the waterfall was infused with the ample spiritual energies of Jincheng lake; not only was he unable to break through, the water beat down on him like a thousand arrows, cutting and piercing.

Already weakened from his grave injuries earlier, this intense impact made it hard to remain standing. He clutched his chest and tried to endure, but was still forced down to one knee, face pale as the wounds on his back tore open and started seeping blood.

There was no way to tell if the wetness on Shi Mei's face was water or tears. He cried in distress: "Shizun! All this——for what……"

"What do you mean for what? If that was you or Xue Meng back there," Chu Wanning spat, "I would also……"

It really hurt too much; frowning, he couldn't finish the sentence.

Unexpectedly, a sword suddenly flashed from behind the waterfall, effortlessly parting the torrential downpour in half like cutting tofu.

The energy of that sword was extraordinary and immense. It slashed right toward exactly where Shi Mei stood, and was just about to hit him when Chu Wanning waved his sleeve and used the entire remainder of his spiritual energy to erect a protective barrier around Shi Mei; he coughed up a mouthful of blood from overexertion.

A deep and clear male voice rang out unhurriedly, reverberating inside the holy weapon arsenal:

“I am the God of Weaponry, Gouchen the Exalted. How dare ye crooks trespass on the forbidden territory of holy weapons!”

Author’s Notes:

Today’s mini theatre 《What did everyone buy on Double Eleven》[88]

Mo Ran: Oil, salt, sauce, vinegar, pretty plates, cute pots and yummy snacks.

Shi Mei: Everybody is buying stuff, if I order anything, I will only add workload to the delivery man. Though the general outcome won’t change just because I don’t purchase anything, but every step counts, I won’t buy anything.

Xue Meng: Clothing, arm guard, hair ribbon and hair clasp, 《Path for Geniuses After Twenty》 complete hardcover edition.

Chu Wanning: 《How to raise someone's IQ》 complete hardcover edition. (Note: Please mail to Sisheng Peak disciple dormitory, recipient Mo Ran. Send anonymously, thanks.)

Let's show these two characters that are not formally introduced but are named in the side character listing~ Can roughly guess some personalities.

Mei Hanxue: 300 pairs of jade lovers pendant bulk purchase, 500 embroidered silk pouch, 5000 sets of boutique hair accessories from Yiwu Commodity Wholesale.

Ye Wangxi: Nothing.

Ch.45 This Venerable One Knew You Would Come

>>blood and pain

Xue Meng raged skywards: “What kinda shitty god are you! You fuckin’ blind? Where do you see us trespassing? We’re the ones that got snatched, get your damn facts straight!”

Shi Mei said: “It’s no use, he isn’t actually here, this is just a voice he left behind. The fake Gouchen must have addled Zhaixin Liu’s judgement, to make him see us as unscrupulous trespassers.”

The voice continued:

“Those befitting of holy weapons ought to understand virtue and resolve as a matter of course, ought to be unsusceptible to the allure of fantastical illusions and capable of staying true to thy heart. Since thou hast come, thou must undertake my trial. If thou dost pass, I shall offer thee safe passage and a holy weapon. But if thou art selfish and faltering, then thou art unfit to be the master of a holy weapon!”

Chu Wanning uttered darkly between blood-stained lips: “Virtue……is this so-called virtue of yours using someone as a blood hourglass?”

Of course he knew that Gouchen the Exalted couldn’t actually hear, but even still, anger drove him to spit the words out, even if every utterance made him breathe harshly and pulled on his wounds, he just couldn’t control that unrelenting mouth of his.

The voice, heedless, continued to reverberate in the arsenal: “As a test of thy temperament, all of ye shall be imminently submerged in Zhaixin Liu’s

dream illusion. If thou doth fail to wake from the illusion in time, thy companion shall bleed out and perish."

The color drained from all three of their faces at these words.

Shi Mei murmured: "What……"

So, in other words, the three of them were about to be plunged into an illusion.

And if they didn't manage to wake in time, then they would become eternally entranced within a wondrous dream, while Mo Ran bled out in reality?

Xue Meng was dumbstruck for a moment before bellowing furiously: "What kinda god even are you!!! If cultivating into an immortal means ending up like you, I won't deign to touch another sword for the rest of my life!!"

Chu Wanning also snapped: "What absurdity!"

"Shizun!" Shi Mei hurriedly tried to calm him, "Don't get angry, please mind your injury."

But Gouchen the Exalted, that bastard, chose this moment to start leisurely reciting poetry: "Water poured upon even ground doth stream each its own way. Life is predestined, even if thou doth sigh as thou walketh and brood as thou lieth. Fill thy cup as comfort, song interrupted by toast, yet the road remains ever arduous. The heart is not of wood or stone, how could it be unfeeling, words unspoken and steps untread, nothing left to say."

Xue Meng was seriously about to pass out from anger: “What the hell are you mumbling about!”

Shi Mei explained: “It’s from Difficult Paths by Bao Zhao, the general meaning is that each person has their own fate, why wallow in remorse and drink for relief, the toast interrupting the song. Since people’s hearts are not made of stone, it’s impossible to have no feelings, and many things go unsaid.”

Gouchen the Exalted let out a long sigh: “How many people in this vast world wouldst be willing to abandon a perfect dream just to save another? The world is filled with such incessant war and slaughter. If a holy weapon were to fall into unscrupulous hands, the fault would be mine, and how could I, the very creator of weapons, forgiveth myself for the sins of such……”

Suddenly, the holy weapon arsenal grew dim, and the tinkling parts flying through the air ceased all movement. A faint light came from above, as if the stars of a resplendent sky were slowly descending one by one, their light illuminating the ground.

An intangible voice in the air whispered: “Sleep……”

The softly translucent light seemed to have some kind of hypnotizing effect. Shi Mei and Xue Meng’s cultivations were lower, and they quickly sank into slumber.

“Sleep……”

Chu Wanning gritted his teeth and stubbornly forced himself to resist, but the power of a founding god was insurmountable, and in the end he was ultimately unable to hold out against the lull, and fell into a dream as well.

Inside the holy weapon arsenal:

As the blood hourglass, Mo Ran was the only one still awake. Blood bubbled up when he coughed. Across the diminished waterfall, he could vaguely see the three trapped in dreams.

Chu Wanning, Shi Mei, and Xue Meng, all asleep.

He heard Gouchen's words, and knew that the only way to break the spell, and the only way for him to be saved, was for one of them to wake in time.

But the time inched past, his head grew dizzier and his body felt colder, and no one awoke.

Maybe what goes around comes around; this was how he treated Chu Wanning in the previous life, and now it was his turn to feel his blood draining away drop by drop.

How very laughable.

Amongst them, who could possibly abandon the best dream of their life, about the thing they most wanted to have, just to come save him?

Xue Meng definitely wouldn't.

Chu Wanning…… nevermind, not gonna think about him.

If anyone, it should probably be Shi Mei.

He mused woozily, but he had already lost too much blood, and his hold on consciousness was beginning to slip.

Mo Ran lowered his head and looked down below his feet. The blood that had drained into the bottom of the copper hourglass mixed with the water

inside, dying the gleaming liquid a faint red.

He suddenly wondered, if he also fell into Gouchen's illusion, what would he see?

Would he dream of delicate, translucent wontons, Shi Mei's gentle smile, Chu Wanning's praise and approval, and the sight when he first arrived at Sisheng Peak, of haitang flowers drifting across the sky, carried by the breeze……

"Mo Ran……"

He heard someone calling him.

Mo Ran's head remained drooping. He felt like he was about to pass out; maybe he was already hallucinating, hearing things.

"Mo Ran."

"Mo Ran!"

It wasn't a hallucination!

He abruptly lifted his head.

His pupils contracted at the sight that greeted him——

His voice was almost hoarse as he cried: "Shi Mei!!!!"

It was Shi Mei!

The one who woke up from the dream, who abandoned perfection and gave up happiness, who, even when everything was exactly as wished for, still remembered him.

Was Shi Mei……

Watching that fragile person cross the waterfall and walk toward him, Mo Ran suddenly felt himself choking up.

“Shi Mei……you……”

He wasn’t sure what to say. Mo Ran closed his eyes, voice hoarse.

“Thank you…… even in a blissful dream, you still…… still remembered me……”

Shi Mei waded through the water, his eyes and brows even more strikingly black against his soaked clothes. His looks were gentle like the first time Mo Ran had seen him, gentle like the countless dreams in which he had appeared in the previous lifetime, gentle like the way he remembered him when his whole body felt cold and he had naught else to reach for.

Shi Mei said: “Don’t be silly, what’re you thanking me for.”

Only when he got close did Mo Ran notice that his feet were bleeding.

He didn’t know when the ground had become scalding hot; Gouchen the Exalted seemed intent on testing just how far a person would be willing to go for their companion, and the allure of the dream was trailed by ruthless torment.

Shi Mei’s boots had already been burnt through. If he didn’t walk, the ground would stay as is, but if he insisted on walking forward, then every step would be accompanied by a surge of flames underfoot, not too hot as to directly render him unable to move, but enough to be searingly agonizing.

But that gentle person, himself clearly in pain, only glanced down once before his gaze grew even more unwavering and he walked toward Mo Ran, one foot in front of the other.

“Mo Ran, hold on just a little longer.”

He said.

“I’ll get you down from there.”

Their eyes met, and Mo Ran knew there was no point in saying “don’t come”.

His gaze was far too determined, far too persistent.

He had never seen this kind of expression on Shi Mei’s face before.

If Mo Ran was in a calmer state, he surely would have found it strange.

Shi Mei had always called him “A-Ran”, when had he ever called him Mo Ran?

He was so fixated on Shi Mei’s kindness to him that he altogether failed to realize that the person in front of him right now wasn’t Shi Mei at all, but ——

Chu Wanning.

The ancient willow’s last technique was called Heart Pluck.

This so-called Heart Pluck was an exchange of the heart and spirit between two people.

When Chu Wanning broke free of the dream and woke up, he found that he had switched places with Shi Mei. Zhaixin Liu's magic had transferred his consciousness into Shi Mei's body, and likely vice versa. But Shi Mei remained asleep, and so had no idea that he had switched bodies.

Chu Wanning had no time to explain, and Mo Ran, completely unaware of the truth, thought that the person before him was really Shi Mei.

He firmly believed that Shi Mei would definitely endure the pain and make it to him, just like how he couldn't forget his kindness even through death. People were stubborn creatures.

But it was really too cruel.

When Chu Wanning finally arrived at the copper hourglass and started climbing up the towering vine toward Mo Ran, countless tiny, burning thorns suddenly sprouted from the vine.

Chu Wanning was caught off guard, hands burned and pierced all at once. He tried to grab on and keep climbing, but Shi Mei's body and cultivation were both weak, and the thorns sliced through the skin and flesh of his hands as he plummeted down the vine.

"……!"

Chu Wanning cursed under his breath, brows furrowed in pain.

This useless body of Shi Mingjing's!

Mo Ran: "Shi Mei!"

Chu Wanning tumbled to the ground on his knees, his skin instantly scalding where it touched the ground. Brows drawn tight, he bit down on

his lip out of habit and refused to cry out.

This kind of expression would look stubborn and fierce on his own face, but on Shi Mei's gentle, beautiful face, was somehow only heart-rending instead.

He really couldn't compare, after all.

"Shi Mei……"

Mo Ran opened his mouth to speak, but tears rolled down instead.

His heart felt like it was being cut with knives. Through his blurry vision, he watched that thin and fragile body, that frail person, slowly, bit by bit, climbing up the vine.

The thorns pierced his hands, the flames burnt his flesh.

Everything was dyed scarlet, a trail of smeared bloodstains in his wake.

Mo Ran closed his eyes, blood bubbling up in his throat. He choked, and every word trembled:

"Shi…… Mei……"

That person was close now. Mo Ran saw a brief flash of pain in his eyes; he really seemed to be in a lot of pain, even Mo Ran's voice seemed to be a kind of torment to him.

His expression was unwavering, but those eyes could almost be described as pleading.

"Don't call out to me anymore."

“.....”

“Mo Ran, hold on just a bit more, I’m getting you……
down……from……there……”

As he spoke, his eyes glinted with determination like the unsheathing of a blade, beautiful beyond words on that usually gentle face.

Chu Wanning’s robes billowed as he leaped onto the copper hourglass.

His face was wan and he stood unsteadily, almost on the verge of collapse. Other than the rise and fall of his chest, he seemed little different from the dead.

In that moment, Mo Ran felt like it’d be better for him to just bleed out and die than for him to have to suffer like this.

Even his voice came out shattered: “I’m sorry.”

Chu Wanning knew that this sorry wasn’t for him. He wanted to explain, but, glancing at the Exalted Gouchen’s silvery-blue sword protruding from Mo Ran’s chest, the sword likely being the source of spiritual energy for the vines, he worried that Mo Ran might injure himself further from shock if he were to explain, and so he continued pretending to be his “Shi Mei”, asking:

“Mo Ran, do you trust me?”

“I trust you.” Without hesitation.

Chu Wanning shot him a glance from beneath his lashes and gripped the hilt; the sword was close to the main artery, the slightest slip could cost Mo Ran his life.

“.....” Chu Wanning’s hand trembled a little where it wrapped around the sword, and didn’t move.

The rims of Mo Ran’s eyes were still red, but he suddenly smiled: “Shi Mei.”

“.....Mn.”

Mo Ran: “.....Am I about to die?”

“.....You won’t.”

“If I’m about to die, then, can I……can I hold you?”

He said it so cautiously, his eyes glistening with wetness, that Chu Wanning’s heart softened despite himself.

But, remembering that the person in Mo Ran’s eyes was actually somebody else, that softness instantly froze over again.

He suddenly felt like the insignificant comic relief on the stage of a play, obscured behind the beautiful flowing sleeves of the female lead, going totally unnoticed.

In this touching and heartwarming narrative, he was unneeded, unwanted.

Or maybe his only use was to wear the ugly face of the clown, and, with an exaggerated smile painted on, act as a foil to the joys and sorrows, the love and hate of other people.

How very laughable.

But Mo Ran knew nothing of his thoughts. He saw the flicker in Chu Wanning’s eyes and thought it was Shi Mei’s unwillingness, and quickly said, “Just for a little while. A little while is enough.”

A soft sigh, barely audible.

“Actually, I……”

Mo Ran: “What is it?”

“.....Nevermind.” Chu Wanning said, “It’s nothing.”

He leaned closer, but not too close for fear of accidentally bumping that sword, then he reached out and gently wrapped an arm around Mo Ran’s shoulder.

He heard Mo Ran whispering by his ear: “Shi Mei, thank you for waking up, thank you for still remembering me even in that dream.”

Chu Wanning looked down, eyelashes trembling like the fluttering of a butterfly’s wings, then he smiled faintly: “Don’t mention it.”

A pause, then he said: “Mo Ran.”

“Hm?”

Chu Wanning held him, caressing his hair, as if still in a dream, and sighed softly, “Did you know, the most wonderful dreams are rarely ever real?”

Then he pulled away, the hug briskly over like the light touch of a dragonfly on water.

Mo Ran looked up. He didn’t really understand what Shi Mei meant; all he knew was that the brief hug was Shi Mei’s kindness to him, a piece of candy given out of pity.

Sweet and sour, a hint of tartness against his tongue.

The instant that sword was pulled out, blood blossomed in the air like so many haitang flowers blown from the branches by a fierce gale.

A sharp agony ripped through Mo Ran's chest. He thought he was about to die, and everything he couldn't let go of flooded his thoughts at once. He suddenly blurted out: "Shi Mei, actually, I've always liked you. And you……?"

With the sound of the sword falling to the ground, the vines dissipated in an instant, the tumultuous downpour of water abruptly ceased, and the holy weapon arsenal returned to its former tranquility.

I've always liked you.

And you……?

Mo Ran's body had reached its limits, and darkness swept across his vision.

A pair of bloodstained hands caught him as he fell into Shi Mei's arms. He didn't know if he was seeing things, but Shi Mei's thin eyebrows were drawn together as he slowly closed his eyes, and a glistening wetness seemed to slide slowly down.

He seemed to hear Shi Mei softly whisper: "I as well."

Mo Ran: "!"

He must be seeing things, why else would Shi Mei look so miserable as he answered.

"I also……like you."

Finally unable to hold out any longer, Mo Ran sunk into unconsciousness.

Ch.46 This Venerable One Wakes Up

When he came to, Mo Ran discovered he was still inside the holy weapon arsenal.

He seemed to have been asleep for a long time, but when he opened his eyes, he found that not much time had passed, in fact, it might have been but only a blink of an eye.

He didn't know if it was because the spell was successfully broken, but when he woke up, he discovered he was lying on the ground without a single injury. That savage wound, that gory blood, they were all just a nightmare, leaving not a trace on his body.

Mo Ran was both surprised and delighted in spite of himself, then he looked over to Shi Mei. He didn't know when Shi Mei lost consciousness, but he was also free of any harm.

Could it be that after passing the Exalted Gouchen's test, not only did Gouchen break the illusion, he had also healed all the wounds they received within the illusion?

……

Although now that he thought about it, Gouchen the Exalted didn't intend to harm them, so this was more appropriate for the initial objective of testing them. Still, it just didn't feel real to Mo Ran, and he still felt like he barely escaped with his life.

Among the four of them, he was the first to wake.

Then, it was Shi Mei. Seeing Shi Mei's lashes slowly flutter open, Mo Ran was overjoyed and exclaimed eagerly, "Shi Mei! We're alright! Quite alright! Quick, look at me!"

Within Shi Mei's eyes was first a flash of confusion, then gradually they became more lucid, and he widened his eyes abruptly, "A-Ran?! You——"

Before he finished he was wrapped in a tight embrace by Mo Ran.

Shi Mei couldn't help but be taken aback, but still he gently patted his shoulder, "What's with you……"

"I'm sorry that I made you suffer so."

Shi Mei was confused, "Well, it wasn't really anything, I just had a dream that's all."

"But the hurt was still real!" Mo Ran exclaimed.

"……What hurt?" Shi Mei asked.

Just then, Xue Meng also woke up, and who knows what he dreamt of, but he yelled, "INSOLENT RUFFIAN! YOU DARE FEEL ME UP!" and he shot up.

Shi Mei saw that he was awake and walked over, "Young Master."

"Huh…… Why is it you? Why are you here?" Xue Meng thought he was still in a dream.

Mo Ran was in a great mood, so his attitude towards Xue Meng was also very soft, and he smiled as he gave an account of the things that happened. Only then did reality dawn on Xue Meng.

"So it was a dream…… And here I thought……"

In order to hide his awkwardness, Xue Meng cleared his throat, and suddenly discovered that the typically most powerful Chu Wanning was actually still asleep, not yet roused, and was astonished in spite of himself.

“How come Shizun hasn’t woken yet?”

They walked over and examined Chu Wanning’s wounds. Since Chu Wanning was already injured before the illusion activated, and by the Exalted Gouchen’s design, only injuries suffered within the illusion could be healed, Chu Wanning’s shoulder was still soaked in large amounts of blood, a shocking sight to see.

Mo Ran sighed, “Let’s wait a bit longer and see.”

It took about one incense stick’s worth of time before Chu Wanning finally came to.

He slowly opened his phoenix eyes, and when he awoke, his eyes were empty and cold, like it had just snowed heavily in a thick blanket of white. It was a long time before his eyes moved, and his gaze fell on Mo Ran.

However, he seemed to be just like Xue Meng, and hadn’t completely snapped out of the dream state in the moment. He gazed at Mo Ran, then slowly reached out, his voice cracking, “You……”

“Shizun.” Mo Ran acknowledged.

Hearing Mo Ran call him thus, Chu Wanning’s hand paused in mid air, and a trace of warmth finally seemed to appear on his pale face, and his eyes also brightened all of a sudden, “En……”

“Shizun!!”

Xue Meng pushed Mo Ran aside and threw himself at Chu Wanning, clutching his hand, “Are you alright? Are you feeling better? Shizun, you didn’t wake for the longest time, I was going to die from worry!”

When Chu Wanning saw Xue Meng, he was slightly bemused, then the thin layer of fog in his eyes gradually faded. When he took a closer look at Mo Ran, he saw that while the other was also looking back, he was holding Shi Mei’s hand tightly, having never let go for a second.

“.....”

Thus, Chu Wanning completely woke up, his expression cooling. Then, like a fish in a dried pond, it died thoroughly.

Shi Mei asked with concern, “Shizun, are you alright? Does your shoulder hurt?”

Chu Wanning replied tranquilly, “I’m fine. It doesn’t hurt.”

With Xue Meng’s assistance, he slowly stood up. Mo Ran was a little puzzled; Chu Wanning had hurt his shoulder, so why did he step so gingerly when he rose, like it was his feet that were injured?

Mo Ran thought Chu Wanning didn’t know what had happened in the illusion earlier, and gave another brief account.

When Shi Mei heard the account the first time he already thought something wasn’t right, and now that he listened again, he felt even more perplexed and said, unable to hold back, “A-Ran, you said I was the one who saved you?”

“Yea.”

Shi Mei was quiet for a moment, then said slowly, “But I…... I’ve been dreaming the whole time earlier, I never woke up.”

Mo Ran was taken aback, then immediately laughed, “Stop joking around.”

“I’m not joking,” Shi Mei said, “I dreamt…... I dreamt about my mom and dad, they were still alive. That dream was too real, I didn’t think…... I didn’t think I could leave them behind, I really——”

He hadn’t finished before they heard Chu Wanning say flatly, “That’s nothing strange. Goucheng probably wiped your memory of rescuing others. Either way, neither myself nor Xue Meng saved him, and since he said it was you who saved him, then it was you.”

Shi Mei: “.....”

“Otherwise, what? Did you think Gouchen has a way to swap people’s souls?” Chu Wanning said coldly.

He hadn’t wanted to suffer for nothing, and had originally wanted to tell Mo Ran the truth. He had also hoped Mo Ran would notice, that the person within the illusion wasn’t Shi Mei, but he who had swapped hearts with Shi Mei.

However, Mo Ran’s confession towards Shi Mei at the end, to Chu Wanning, really was much too embarrassing.

When he woke, he gazed at Mo Ran’s bright black eyes. There was a moment where Chu Wanning thought, perhaps in Mo Ran’s heart, he did care for him even just a little.

Such a humble expectation; it took a long time before such a weak and vulnerable thought dared peek out in secret.

But it was all in his head.

The blood he bled, the injuries he suffered, Mo Ran knew nothing of them, and there was no need for him to know either.

Chu Wanning wasn't dumb. Even if Mo Ran didn't say anything, it was easy to see just how much he treasured that gentle and beautiful person. Why would Mo Ran ever look at him, standing in the corner like a doll piled with dust.

Yet when he heard Mo Ran say from his lips "I've always liked you", Chu Wanning still felt like he had lost completely, an utter miserable defeat.

That embrace within the illusion, to Mo Ran, it was a charity bestowed from Shi Mei.

But Mo Ran would never know, that that embrace, was him bestowing charity upon another pitiful soul.

Chu Wanning had never believed that Mo Ran would ever fall in love with him, so he did his best to suppress his feelings, never trying to force his hand, never causing any disturbance, never touching him.

That reckless affection, those passionate, obsessive entanglements, only grew on the soil of youth. When he was young he had also hoped there might be someone who could stay by his side, clinking glasses beneath the moon, but he waited and waited, and still this person never showed. Later, time passed day by day, his name within the cultivation world climbed higher and higher, and everyone stopped short of admiration, spreading word that he was an unreasonable character.

It was as if he was hiding in a cocoon, and time was continuously spinning silk around him. At first he could still see some light from the outside seeping through the cocoon, but year after year, there was more and more silk and the cocoon grew thicker and thicker, so much so that he could no longer see the light. Within the cocoon was only himself, and darkness.

He didn't believe in love, he didn't believe in chance encounters, and he certainly didn't want to go chase after anything. If he arduously bit through the cocoon, covering himself with wounds, and came crawling out clumsily without anyone to wait for him on the other side, what would he do?

He might like Mo Ran, but this boy was too young, too far out of reach, and too fiery. Chu Wanning didn't want to get close, lest one day he would be burned to ashes by such a flame.

Thus, he had taken every path of retreat there was.

He didn't know what he had done wrong.

What had he done, that even such a small daydream should be drowned by storming frigid rain.

"Shizun, look over there, quick!" Xue Meng's sudden startled cry brought Chu Wanning's mind back, and his gaze followed the sound only to see that roaring molten metal was rolling once again in the smelting pool. The ancient tree spirit broke through the waters once more, surrounded by flames. However, the tree spirit's eyes were rolled back, obviously in a state of senselessness. In its hands, it held that silver, shimmering sacred sword of Gouchen the Exalted.

"Run! Quickly!" Chu Wanning ordered.

No need to have him repeat himself; the disciples immediately all dashed towards the exit.

The manipulated tree spirit raised its head towards the sky and shrieked, the iron chains all over his body rattling soundly, clinking and clanking. No one had spoken, but all four of them heard a voice in their ears at the same time.

“Stop them, not a single one shall escape.”

Xue Meng cried in dismay, “Someone’s talking in my ears!”

“Don’t pay him any mind,” Chu Wanning replied, “It’s Zhaixin Liu’s technique, Temptation of the Heart! Just focus on escaping!”

Now that he said it, the others all remembered. When Zhaixin Liu was still conscious, he had told them once. The Temptation of the Heart technique used the greed and desire in one’s heart as bait to compel people to slaughter one another.

Sure enough, that voice in Chu Wanning’s ears hissed, “Chu Wanning, aren’t you tired?”

“Esteemed Zongshi, Yuheng of the Night Sky. Such a character, but you could only sneakily love your own disciple in secret. You have given him much, but he took it all for granted. He never had eyes for you, he only likes that gentle and beautiful little shi-ge. How pitiful.”

Chu Wanning’s face was steely dark. He ignored the noise in his ears completely and continued to run for the exit.

“Come to my side, take up this Ancestral Sword, kill Shi Mei, and no one will stand between the two of you. Come to my side, I can help you achieve

your wish, have your beloved love only you. Come to my side…”

Chu Wanning cried angrily, “What a wretch, get the hell out!”

The others had obviously all heard the different terms that voice proposed, and while their pace had slowed, they could still fight against the temptations. The closer they got to the exit, the more Zhaixin Liu seemed to thrash in madness, and the hissing howls in their ears were practically becoming gnarled.

“THINK IT THROUGH! ONCE OUT OF THIS DOOR, THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER CHANCE!”

The voices within everyone’s ears were all different, shrieking sharply.

“CHU WANNING, CHU WANNING, WILL YOU REALLY BE ALONE FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE?”

“MO WEIYU, ONLY I KNOW WHERE THE RESURRECTION PILL IS, COME TO MY SIDE, LET ME TELL YOU——”

“SHI MINGJING, I KNOW THE DESIRE IN THE DEEPEST RECESSES OF YOUR HEART, ONLY I CAN HELP YOU!”

“XUE ZIMING, THE HOLY WEAPON YOU’VE SELECTED IS A FAKE! THERE IS ONLY ONE WEAPON FORGED BY GOUCHEN THE EXALTED LEFT IN JINCHENG LAKE. COME BACK, AND THIS ANCESTRAL SWORD SHALL BELONG TO YOU! DIDN’T YOU WANT THE WEAPON OF THE GODS? DIDN’T YOU WANT TO BE THE DARLING OF THE HEAVENS? WITHOUT A HOLY WEAPON YOU WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO COMPETE WITH ANYONE ELSE! COME TO MY SIDE…”

“XUE MENG!” Mo Ran suddenly discovered that his cousin who was running by his side had disappeared.

He whipped his head around and saw Xue Meng’s steps were slowing until he finally stopped, looking back to gaze at that silvery blue sacred sword floating up and down in the smelting pool.

Mo Ran’s heart lurched.

He knew just how obsessed Xue Meng was about holy weapons. When this bastard first found out the weapon he received was fake, he must’ve been quite depressed. Zhaixin Liu tempting him with the Ancestral Sword really was the best tactic.

“Xue Meng, don’t believe him, don’t go!”

Shi Mei chimed in too, “Young Master, let’s go, we’re almost at the exit!”

Looking lost, Xue Meng turned his head back and glanced at them while the echoing noises grew even more enchanting, “They’re jealous of you, they don’t want you to have a holy weapon. Think about Mo Weiyu; he has already won his weapon, of course he’d rather you have nothing. You two are brothers, but if you are not better, then the honored leader position of Sisheng Peak will naturally fall to him.”

Xue Meng muttered, “Shut up.”

Before him, Mo Ran seemed to be anxiously yelling something at him, but he couldn’t hear clearly at all, and could only hug his head and cry repeatedly, “YOU SHUT YOUR MOUTH! SHUT UP!”

“Xue Ziming, there are already no more weapons suitable for you at the holy weapon arsenal. If you miss out on the Ancestral Sword, you will only

be able to submit yourself in servitude to Mo Weiyu in the future. When that time comes, he will be your master, you must kneel before him, obey his every command! Just think, if you kill him, none of that will happen! Fratricide is not uncommon throughout history, and he's only your cousin! What is there to hesitate? Come——allow me to give you the sword…"

"XUE MENG!"

"YOUNG MASTER!!!"

Xue Meng suddenly stopped struggling, and his eyes shot open, his pupils red.

"Come to my side…... You are the darling of the heavens…... you are worthy to lead an army of millions……"

Chu Wanning shouted sharply, "XUE MENG!"

"Come…... Only when you've become the leader of Sisheng Peak will the lower cultivation world know peace…... think of those in suffering, think of all the injustice you all suffered…... Xue Ziming, let me help you……"

Unwittingly, Xue Meng had already come before the bubbling smelting pool, and the spirit of Zhaixin Liu presented the Ancestral Sword of Gouchen the Exalted, the whites of its rolled eyes crawling with blood veins.

"Very good. Take this sword, and go stop them!"

Xue Meng slowly raised his trembling hand, and took that silvery blue sacred sword.

"Kill them."

“Kill Mo Weiyu.”

“Go… AAAAHHHHH!!!!!”

Xue Meng pulled out the long sword abruptly, a splendid steel blossom in his hand. He swung backhanded and struck swiftly, the handsome visage of the darling of the heavens reflected brilliantly in the spiritual aura of the Ancestral Sword, and, illuminated by the shine of the blade, his eyes were clearer and brighter than ever before, and not at all inundated with bloodlust.

That strike wasn’t directed at Mo Ran, but instead he lunged straight for the body of Zhaixin Liu, piercing through its abdomen!

Instantly, the earth trembled, and the ancient willow shook.

The spell was broken, and the inside of the holy weapon arsenal began to crack and collapse.

Xue Meng panted harshly; he had used everything he had to break free from the enchantment. He glared at Zhaixin Liu, his young face filled with youthful determination and innocence. In those shining eyes gleamed both pride and naivete.

The phoenix’s chick wasn’t only made of martial principles.

“Don’t you befuddle me, and don’t even think about harming anyone else.”

Xue Meng panted as he finished speaking, and rapidly wrenched out the long sword!

In an instant, there was a burst of the astringent stench of blood from Zhaixin Liu, and as he slumped in death, his conscience returned to his

body, and the resentment energy within him were completely dispersed.

Clutching his chest, he arduously steadied his drooping body, lifted his face, opened then closed his mouth, and while there was no voice, the shape of his lips were easy to interpret.

“Thank…... you… for…... stopping…... me…...”

Zhaixin Liu’s original body was a spirit of ancient times, matched in power with the Ancestral Sword, and when the two clashed, both sides suffered a grievous loss. The Ancestral Sword in Xue Meng’s hand also lost its spiritual aura, dimming and wilting.

All at once, the tree spirit of a million years dissipated its form.

In an instant, millions of sparkles scattered into the waters, and like fireflies, they danced and circled around them, fluttering and flowing, the golden shimmers bright, until finally they faded, never to be seen.

“Young master, come here, quick! This place is going to collapse!” Shi Mei called.

The earth was shaking, they couldn’t stay for long.

Xue Meng looked back and gave the holy weapon arsenal one final look, then with a clang, he tossed the destroyed Ancestral Sword, leaving it behind. And behind him, bricks and shingles caved in like the crash of an avalanche.

Ch.47 This Venerable One Feels Like Something is Off

Chu Wanning was injured, and the other three were exhausted, so once they got to the corridor outside the arsenal, Chu Wanning ordered them to rest a bit. No one spoke for a while, either standing or sitting as they inspected the injuries on themselves or someone else, recuperating their strength.

Except for Xue Meng, who was spacing out with his head drooping, lost in thought about something.

Mo Ran murmured: “Xue Meng……”

Xue Meng paid no heed to anyone else, only walked over stiffly to stand before Chu Wanning, looked up, and when he opened his mouth, his voice was shattered glass.

“Shizun.”

Looking at him, Chu Wanning felt an urge to pet his tousled hair, but managed to push it down in the end.

“The holy weapon I picked before, was it a fake?”

Chu Wanning was silent.

The rims of Xue Meng’s eyes became even redder and his eyes grew bloodshot. If not for his pride and stubbornness propping him up, tears probably would’ve started falling on the spot.

“Does this mean I’ll never be able to have a holy weapon?”

Chu Wanning closed his eyes with a sigh.

The corridor was silent save for Chu Wanning's clear voice.

".....Silly child."

A single "silly child", said in a helpless sigh, and the last of Xue Meng's rationality crumbled. Unable to endure any longer, he threw himself into Chu Wanning's arms, and, clinging to his waist, began to bawl.

"Shizun…… Shizun……"

Failing to obtain a holy weapon from Jincheng Lake was tantamount to forfeiting one's qualifications to rise up in the cultivation world, surrendering one's chance to ever stand at the top. Everyone was well aware of this; a mortal's powers were finite, without a holy weapon, however strong, a person was still limited by their body of flesh and blood.

The young masters of the sects in the upper cultivation realm more or less all have holy weapons passed down from their predecessors. These weapons, even if not completely compatible with their spiritual energies, were still considerably powerful. Only Xue Meng, since Xue Zhengyong and his brother had started from scratch, never received a holy weapon from Jincheng Lake.

And so, when he chose to wield the Ancestral Sword against Zhaixin Liu in mutual destruction, it was the same as choosing to give up on his spirited ambitions to rise above all.

Chu Wanning didn't ask anything, and didn't say any more, only holding Xue Meng and stroking his hair as he cried it out. Xue Meng grew up

pampered, never really suffering any injustice; he spent all his days strutting around arrogantly, and had never cried since he was old enough to remember.

But right now, tears streaked down his youthful face, and his every word came out broken, like the holy weapon he would never have, like the lionhearted aspirations that he once thought were a sure thing, all of it shattered.

“Xue Meng.” Chu Wanning held the disciple in his arms, consoling him.

The waves at the bottom of the lake rippled past Chu Wanning’s white cloak and his long inky hair. In that instant, Mo Ran could only see his fine curtain of lashes lowering over the fragments of gentle light beneath. Then the waves picked up, ruffling hair and garment, and he could no longer see Chu Wanning’s face clearly in the dim light.

He only heard him say: “Don’t cry, you’re already great.”

His voice wasn’t quite gentle, but coming from Chu Wanning’s mouth, the words were indescribably soft.

Inside the corridor, everyone fell silent as they each dwelled on their own thoughts.

Mo Ran leaned against the ice cold wall, watching Chu Wanning hold Xue Meng, patting his shoulder, and his heart felt heavy.

This journey to Jincheng Lake.

They came fresh and energized.

But left laden with wounds.

Xue Meng had been the darling of the heavens for fifteen years.

Well-regarded and high-spirited.

But in the span of one day, everything collapsed.

From now on, he will have to use the rest of his lengthy life just to try and forget these fifteen years of cutting edge glory.

When they escaped from the arsenal, they saw Zhaixin Liu collapsing slowly into the pool, like an ancient colossus finally exhausted, like the death of a gentle giant, the demise of the sun itself. The remaining merpeople scattered in fright.

The millions year old holy weapon arsenal was destroyed in an instant.

The celestial tree fell with a deafening rumble, setting off a surging tide in Jincheng Lake. Faced with the enormous whirlpool resulting therefrom, the merpeople transformed back into their large original forms in an attempt to weather the storm; Jincheng Lake was instantly filled with glimmering scales, with little room left for mere mortals.

Mo Ran shouted: “We can’t get out this way!”

Just as he said that, a thick seadragon tail smashed in. Mo Ran moved aside swiftly and barely managed to dodge it.

Suddenly a black dragon swooped in, larger than all the others, pitch-black scales shimmering golden.

Mo Ran, startled: “Wangyue?!!”

Wangyue let out a mighty roar, and the mute dragon suddenly spoke, with a voice low like the chime of a great clock: “Climb on my back; with the destruction of Zhaixin Liu, Jincheng Lake is soon to follow. Quickly! I will bring you out of here!”

Having no other options, they could only do as instructed even without knowing if Wangyue was friend or enemy. Wangyue, carrying the four of them, surged through the perilous waves filled with thousands of dragons, the waters parting in his wake.

“Hold on tight!”

Was the only warning they got before the ancient dragon burst out of the water and soared into the skies. The pressure hit them like a ton of bricks, the flow of water like a thousand galloping horses against their bodies. They couldn’t open their eyes, could hardly breathe, clinging desperately to the dragon’s back with all their might just to not get flung back into the lake.

By the time they could open their eyes again, they were already high above Jincheng Lake, soaring through the clouds at the summit of Dawning Peak.

Droplets of water flew off from the dragon's large, mirror-like scales, the spray turning into countless sparkles of light, materializing into a rainbow in the sky. Wangyue raised his head in a roar as color washed over the land.

Mo Ran heard Xue Meng's voice from behind him against the fierce gale, full of excitement. He really was young, after all, easily distracted from his worries——

"Oh my god! I'm flying! On a dragon!"

Wangyue circled above Dawning Peak, gradually shrinking in size while descending, until landing at the bank of Jincheng Lake at less than half his original size so as to not crush the rocks and flora in the surroundings, and stayed quietly in place while they dismounted.

They turned to look toward Jincheng Lake, only to see the thick layer of ice melted, waves churning and scattering fragments of ice. The first light of dawn colored the eastern skies a pure white, the sunlight spilling into Jincheng Lake, glimmering brilliantly.

Suddenly, Shi Mei called out: "Look at the dragons in the lake!"

The dragons twisting and coiling in the lake, rising and falling with the waves, gradually stopped moving and then crumbled, one after another, turning into so many specks of dust, and black chess pieces floated up from the lake, gathering in mid air.

Mo Ran muttered: "Zhenlong Chess Formation….."

Everything in the lake, from the sea dragons to Zhaixin Liu itself, was under the control of Zhenlong Chess Formation. All of it was a match set up by someone hiding in the shadows!

Mo Ran shuddered.

Something was off with this reborn era; certain things happened earlier than they should have for no apparent reason.

When he was sixteen in the previous life, there was definitely no one who could command Zhenlong Chess Formation this well. Just who was this fake Gouchen?

Xue Meng cried: “Wangyue!”

Mo Ran turned around, only to see Wangyue crouching on the ground without moving. There was no black chess piece on his body, but he appeared extremely weak, eyes half closed.

“You lot…… did well…… it’s far preferable to have our Exalted God Gouchen’s Jincheng Lake be destroyed, than to…… to have it fall into the hands of a villain……”

When he finished speaking, his entire body suddenly started glowing golden, and when the light subsided, he had assumed human form.

“It was you?!”

Mo Ran and Xue Meng exclaimed simultaneously.

The Wangyue before them was the very same white-haired elderly merman from before who had led them to the holy weapon arsenal. Wangyue lifted his head, a hint of guilt in his eyes.

“It was me.”

Xue Meng was shocked: “Y-you, why did you lead us to the arsenal? Do you want to help us or harm us? If harm, then why did you bring us ashore, but if help, then if we hadn’t passed Zhaixin Liu’s trial, wouldn’t we have……”

Wangyue looked down, voice hoarse: “Please accept my apologies. Circumstances being what they were, there was naught else I could do. The fake Gouchen’s own cultivation is insufficient, and he relied wholly on Zhaixin Liu’s spiritual power to wield the forbidden technique. The only way to dispel his magic was to overcome Zhaixin Liu. I had no choice but to vest my hope in the four of you.”

Chu Wanning shook his head slightly, walked over to him, and began channeling spiritual energy to heal his injuries.

Wangyue let out a long sigh: “Daozhang is kind, but there is no need. It is my time. I am the same as the other creatures of the lake, living off of Zhaixin Liu’s spiritual energy, and now that it has fallen, I shall not be long for this world.”

Chu Wanning: “……”

Wang Yue continued: “The order of life and death cannot be forced. To have lived to see the nightmare of Jincheng Lake broken, my wish is already

fulfilled. But I am terribly remorseful for having involved you four in the perils."

Chu Wanning said: "No matter. ……Do you know who the pretender is, and what he wants?"

Wangyue replied: "I do not know who he is, but his goal is most likely to obtain Zhaixin Liu's power in order to command the three forbidden techniques."

Chu Wanning muttered: "The forbidden techniques require an incredible amount of spiritual energy, it would indeed be much easier with the help of an ancient tree spirit."

"Yes, that person said the same. He said that ancient spirits are immensely powerful but extremely difficult to find. The only one traceable from the ancient records was Zhaixin Liu."

"He only appeared fairly recently, and since taking control of Jincheng Lake, he spent all his time at the bottom of the lake, using Zhaixin Liu's power to practice the forbidden techniques of 'Rebirth' and 'Zhenlong Chess Formation.'"

Wangyue sighed, his eyes somewhat empty and dull.

Mo Ran felt his heart drop.

Sure enough, this trip to Jincheng Lake was completely different from the one in the past life, and all of the changes happened not long ago. Just

what went wrong to make everything change course?

“He didn’t have the strength to control living creatures, so he killed countless creatures in the lake and tried to control the dead instead. He managed that, and in a mere few weeks times, he had massacred practically all the creatures in the lake and turned them into chess pieces. He left only a few alive to experiment on, myself being one.”

Mo Ran asked: “When you came out of the water to meet me, were you being controlled by the fake Gouchen?”

“No.” Wang Yue slowly closed his eyes, “He may be able to control the others, like the fox spirit or even Zhaixin Liu, but he cannot control me. I am a spiritual beast tamed by the Exalted Gouchen at the creation of the world, millennia ago. When I submitted to being his steed, I was branded with his seal, to be loyal to one master only in life and in death.”

“Then why did you……”

“It was an act, I had no choice.” Wangyue sighed, “The intruder couldn’t control me completely, but the brand of the Exalted Gouchen is millions of years old, its effectiveness a mere fraction of the original. A portion of my body did fall under the fake Gouchen’s influence——the reason I was mute at our first meeting was because that person had control of my throat, only when his magic was dispelled was I able to speak again.”

Mo Ran asked: “Did that fake Gouchen know you were pretending?”

“I doubt it.” Wangyue looked at Mo Ran as he spoke, “He had planned to take your spiritual core today in order to extend Zhaixin Liu’s life. But he didn’t anticipate me bringing you four back to the holy weapon arsenal to

destroy the ancient willow, and took no precautions against my interference."

But Chu Wanning suddenly spoke: "Perhaps it's not that he did not take precautions against you, but rather that he did not have the strength to spare for such."

"What does Daozhang mean?"

Chu Wanning said: "There's something else that's odd about the pretender."

Author's Notes:

Today's mini theater is, modern edition of a segment of the plot. While writing I had a universe brain moment, it felt that Mo Ran was missing something in arc, after some contemplating, the thing he's missing is cigarettes. LOL

《After Jincheng Lake's Destruction, Modern Edition》 Start, Du Du Du!

Inside the corridor, everyone fell silent as they each dwelled in their own thoughts.

Mo Ran leaned against the ice cold wall, watching Chu Wanning holding Xue Meng, patting his shoulder, and his heart felt heavy.

But Mo Ran didn't say a single word, he lowered his head and fished out a box of cigarettes, there was only one left inside it. He held it between his lips, with a clicking sound from the lighter, a cluster of sparks luminiated

and then dimmed, the light reflected in his eyes looked like a newly budded poppy.

He deeply inhaled a puff of smoke, then slowly breathed it out, amidst the addictive nicotine, Mo Ran raised his eyelids. He gazed at them once again with nonchalance, then turns his face away.

He leaned against the wall, and slid one hand into his pocket.

No one spoke, rationality allowed Mo Ran to tell himself, give them a bit of time, at least one cigerette's worth of time, the little peacock needed soothing.

He was someone with a heavy addiction to cigarettes, and enjoyed the decaying taste of tar oil dissipating between his teeth.

But that day, he couldn't stop himself from feeling resentment, this cigarette seemed especially long. Damn it, he smoked for this long, this vigorous, but it fucking still had more than half left.

Mo Ran suddenly felt a sort of inexplicable irritation, he blamed this irritation on the unsatisfying smoke. He extinguished the cigarette on the wall. Then raised his head, with one hand still in his pocket, he walked towards Chu Wanning with an air of certainty.

"Mr. Chu." He stared at Chu Wanning's face, abruptly tugged at Xue Meng and straightened him up, then he dragged Xue Meng next to himself, a lazy hint of smile appeared in the corner of his lips.

"Don't just comfort my little brother, I'm upset too. How's this, you are a good person, why not see it through to the end…"

His voice was like smoker's, low and hoarse, thus he cleared his throat.

“And comfort this gege too.”

Chu Wanning was momentarily speechless.

Absurd, the thought that he had at that time was: This rascal’s “this gege”, was it him behaving like a jackass, or was it the textbook meaning, to remark that his relation to Xue Meng is “a male relative that is the same generation but is older than one’s self”?

Ch.48 This Venerable One's Old Dragon

>>passing noncon mention, not of main characters

Now that he mentioned it, Mo Ran couldn't help but agree.

Shizun was right.

There was a faint odor on the fake Gouchen. Mo Ran thought he was only imagining it, but since Chu Wanning also noticed it, then there could be no mistake.

The smell of death.

——Not only was this Gouchen not the god himself, he wasn't even a living person!

In other words, the one behind all this was just pulling the strings on a corpse dressed as the God of Weaponry. The real puppeteer himself wasn't even here.

His thoughts were interrupted by a low, sorrowful chuckle from the direction of Jincheng Lake.

Immediately following, a deathly pale body shot out from the water like an arrow as the fake Gouchen leapt into the air. But both his appearance and behavior had become frightening, his skin wrinkled all over like a snake in the midst of molting, or a silkworm trying to break through its cocoon.

"Yuheng of the Night Sky, the Beidou Immortal. Chu-zongshi, you really do live up to your name."

The fake Gouchen levitated above the crystalline water of the lake, face twisting into some semblance of a gnarled smirk even as pieces peeled off.

“How did Rufeng Sect let someone like you slip through their fingers back then?”

Chu Wanning’s voice was frosty: “Just who exactly are you?”

“You don’t need to know who I am.” The fake Gouchen said, “And I won’t let you know who I am, either. You can just think of me as someone who should have died long ago but crawled out of hell just to take the lives of you righteous, honorable types!”

Wangyue rumbled: “Shameless! Zhaixin Liu has been destroyed! With your strength alone, without the help of the holy tree, you have no way of using the forbidden techniques, or of carrying out further transgressions!”

The fake Gouchen sneered: “You old eel, on your last breath and still trying to get in my way. What makes you think you have the right to speak here? Get lost!”

Chu Wanning suddenly spoke: “And do you think that you, as a white chess piece, have any right to speak?”

The “white chess piece”, as implied by the name, is a special type of piece in Zhenlong Chess Formation.

The user can place a portion of their soul into a newly deceased body and fuse the two to form a chess piece that is white as pure jade.

The “white chess piece” was different from the common “black chess piece” that merely obeyed commands. In other words, a white chess piece was a stand-in for the user; aside from having weaker spiritual power than the original, they could think and act independently, and the things they see and hear could be conveyed to the original user.

The fake Gouchen’s identity was exposed, but his reaction was to laugh and clap: “Very good, good! Good!!”

After the three cries of “good”, the fake Gouchen’s face became even more broken and contorted. It seemed that the spell was nearing its end and unable to support the white chess piece for much longer, and the original form of the corpse was starting to show.

“Chu Wanning, don’t get too full of yourself. Do you really think that this will stop me? Even if Zhaixin Liu was destroyed, my original can always find other sources of spiritual energy. But you, on the other hand...”

As he spoke, his eyes, which grew dimmer and more defocused by the second, suddenly swept past Chu Wanning to land on Mo Ran with malicious intent.

Mo Ran was struck by a sudden wave of apprehension!

The fake Gouchen said slowly, mockingly: “If you think that I’m the only one in this world who knows the three forbidden techniques, then I’m afraid you won’t have much longer to live.”

Chu Wanning's eyebrows lowered in a frown and he demanded sternly: "What do you mean by that?"

But the fake Gouchen suddenly stopped talking. He froze and then exploded into foul-smelling pieces, a jade-white chess piece shooting out from his body and whirling in the air, backlit by the rising sun, before falling into Jincheng Lake with a plop.

It seemed that the puppeteer in the shadows, having lost the assistance from Zhaixin Liu, had exhausted his spiritual energy.

Simultaneously, Wangyue, who also relied on Zhaixin Liu's spiritual energy to survive, staggered and fell to the ground with a thud. He murmured: "Ah……"

Xue Meng let out a startled cry: "Wangyue!"

Mo Ran also exclaimed: "Wangyue!"

The four of them gathered around the old dragon. Wangyue was barely hanging on, lips colorless. He looked at them, and spoke with a voice raspy like the setting sun.

"Don't…… don't believe that person's nonsense. There was more…… more falsehood than truth in his words……"

Shi Mei's face was full of worry and sorrow, he said softly: "Elder, please don't talk anymore, and let me heal you."

“No, there’s no need. If even your master couldn’t do it…… then……you……” Wangyue coughed roughly several times, then said, panting, “In these years, many came seeking weapons. But…... when that villain came, Zhaixin Liu didn’t want the holy weapons left behind by their master to be used by him, and so destroyed them all. The only ones remaining…… were…...were a willow vine equal to it in power, and the, the sword of the Exalted God……”

At this mention, Xue Meng’s expression grew darker, mouth set wordlessly in a thin line.

“The willow vine…… went to this young Daozhang.” Wangyue looked at Mo Ran, “That day, by the lakeside, I had said to you that even if you were evil in the past, I will not stop you, and that I can only hope that you will pursue goodness in the future…… but in actuality…… in actuality, following my Master’s wishes, holy weapons should belong only to the virtuous. That’s why, I hope that you…… that you will……”

Mo Ran saw that it was already difficult for him to speak, and so interrupted: “Don’t worry, Elder, I understand.”

The merman murmured: “That’s good…… that’s good…… then I can…… rest easy……”

He gazed skyward, lips trembling slightly.

“It is said that when one goes to Jincheng Lake seeking a weapon, a creature from the lake will…… will make a request. Most of those requests…… were for gauging the seeker’s moral character, but there were the occasional exceptions……”

Wangyue's voice grew quieter and quieter, tens of thousands of years flitting past his eyes like a carousel lantern.

"I had an agreement with my Master; when he left, I was to stay and guard Jincheng Lake, without leaving…… but who could have known that I would be standing guard for millennia upon millennia…… the sights I beheld in my youth, the mountains and rivers…… I never got to……
to……..see……..again……"

He turned his head slowly to gaze beseechingly toward Mo Ran, eyes flickering with a warm wetness.

In that instant, Mo Ran suddenly knew what he was about to say.

Sure enough, Wangyue said softly: "Young Daozhang, the plum blossoms at the waist of the mountain bloom splendidly throughout the year, I was very fond of them when I was young. Even though you already got your holy weapon, would you still…… still be willing to……"

Mo Ran was just about to say, yes, I'll go get you a branch.

But before he could even say yes, the light in Wangyue's golden eyes abruptly went out.

Jiangnan has little else, but a gift of spring in the form of a blossoming branch.[89]

Snow-tipped peaks towered majestically in the distance, gleaming gold dancing resplendent on the lake surface as the rising sun bathed the waters in its red-hued light, the waves and sprays shattering the rays into glimmering crimson.

Wangyue had passed.

He was one of the first dragons at the creation of the world, had once been world-shakingly powerful, had once bowed in servitude and carried his master to all corners of the world. Everyone said that the brand forced his submission, but it was out of respect for Gouchen that he kept his promise of millennia.

In this vast world, few remained who remembered the founding of the world. But Wangyue knew that although the real Gouchen the Exalted had demonic blood coursing through his veins, his mother was taken against her will; he abhorred the demons, and stood with Fuxi against the demonic invasion, using his own powerful demonic blood to forge the first true sword of the world for Fuxi and aiding him in sweeping the demon race from the land.

But after the unification of heaven and earth, Fuxi harbored misgivings and resentment toward Gouchen the Exalted due to his half demon blood. Gouchen the Exalted was no fool; a hundred years later, he excused himself from the realm of the gods of his own accord, and came to the realm of man.

During his journey, he saw endless suffering and slaughter. He felt that he shouldn't have brought the "sword" into existence, and was filled with remorse. So he gathered a good deal of the weapons he had left in the human realm, sealed them in the arsenal at Jincheng Lake, planted Zhaixin Liu as guardian, and instructed the creatures in the lake that of those who come seeking, only the virtuous are befitting.

But now, Gouchen was no more, and Wangyue had passed.

Henceforth there are no more holy weapons inside Jincheng Lake, no more merfolk. All of the sins and repentance, distortion and dedication, with the thunderous fall of Zhaixin Liu, had scattered like smoke and ashes.

For a moment, no one spoke. In the ferocious snowstorm, the scarlet words written on the stone tablet by the side of Jincheng Lake——"The Path Forward is Difficult"——were still the same as when they first saw it, and the now-serene surface of the lake hid all of the calamity and suffering that had transpired beneath.

Just like when they had first climbed up Dawning Peak, completely unaware of the bloody story hidden behind "The Path Forward is Difficult".

Mo Ran looked up at the sky. Above the precipice, a lone eagle soared against the snowdrift.

He suddenly thought: in the past life, Wangyue had given him a powerful long blade, but in this life, the blade he saw was only a fake, and the real one that belonged to him had probably already been destroyed by Zhaixin Liu, before he could so much as even see it.

A short while passed, and his mind called up old memories unbidden.

That year, he had come to Jincheng Lake seeking a weapon.

Wangyue had emerged from the water, studied him with golden eyes that were gentle and friendly, and then said——

“The plum blossoms at the waist of the mountain are blooming beautifully, could you go get a branch for me?”

Mo Ran closed his eyes and raised an arm to cover them.

He didn’t know about the events below the lake in the past life, and only thought that Wangyue’s request was pointless pretentiousness……

It was many days before they returned to Sisheng Peak.

Chu Wanning’s shoulder was seriously injured, and the three youths were all exhausted, so they rested at Dai City for several days before returning.

Xue Meng said nothing of what happened to Xue Zhengyong and Madam Wang; proud as he was, regardless of whether his parents were to react with disappointment or sympathy, to him, either would be salt on the wound. Chu Wanning noticed and his heart ached, and so he buried himself in ancient tomes and scrolls all day, looking for some other way of obtaining a holy weapon for Xue Meng, or else some means of allowing a mortal to rival a holy weapon in strength.

Apart from this, just who was that fake Gouchen, and where was his true self? And what was the meaning behind the last thing that “white chess piece” said before exploding?

There were many and more things to worry about; the candle in the library of the Red Lotus Pavilion burned all night as the water clock dripped away, scrolls scrawled with complicated writing littered the floor, and in the depths of the files was Chu Wanning's exhausted face.

"Yuheng, look at the state your shoulder is in, don't be so reckless." Xue Zhengyong, holding a warm cup of tea, was sitting next to him and chattering fussily, "Tanlang Elder is great at the healing arts, make some time and go have him take a look."

"No need, it's already started to heal."

Xue Zhengyong clicked his tongue: "That won't do, look at yourself, you've looked terrible ever since getting back. Nine out of ten people who've seen you say you look like you're just about to pass out. If you ask me, there's something strange about that wound, might be some kind of poison or something, it's better to be careful."

Chu Wanning glanced up: "I look like I'm about to pass out?" He paused and smiled coldly, "Who said that?"

Xue Zhengyong: "....."

"Aiya, Yuheng, can you not act like you're made of metal all the time, and everyone else is made of paper?"

Chu Wanning said: "I know my own limits."

Xue Zhengyong mumbled something inaudibly, very possibly "know your limits my ass" from the movement of his lips. Luckily Chu Wanning was too absorbed in his book to see.

They chatted for a while longer, until Xue Zhengyong saw that it was getting late, and got up to head back and keep his wifey company. Before leaving, he made sure to fuss some more: “Yuheng, don’t stay up too late. Meng-er will die of guilt if he sees you like this.”

Chu Wanning ignored him with gusto.

Being met with a frosty nail like this, Xue Zhengyong scratched his head awkwardly and left.

Chu Wanning drank some medicine and then returned to the table to continue his research until he started feeling a bit lightheaded. He propped his forehead in one hand, nauseous.

But the nausea faded in short order, so he chalked it up to being tired, and paid it no mind.

The night grew late, and, finally too woozy to continue, he fell asleep with his brows drawn tightly together, head pillowed on a sweeping sleeve next to the small mountain of tomes, an unfinished scroll still lying across his knees, the hem of his robes drooping to the floor like a water wave.

That night, he dreamt.

This dream, unlike others, was clear and distinct, almost real.

He was standing inside the Loyalty Hall of Sisheng Peak, but this Loyalty Hall was somewhat different from the one he knew, many furnishings and details had been altered. But before he had a chance to take a closer look, the gates swung open, setting crimson curtains adrift.

A person walked in.

“Shizun.”

The person had a handsome face, deep black eyes with a tint of purple. He was a young man, but looked almost childlike when he curled the corners of his lips.

“Mo Ran?”

Chu Wanning stood up and was about to walk over, but found that his wrists and ankles were shackled by four lengths of metal chains flowing with spiritual power, fettering him in place and rendering him unable to move.

Shock followed by overflowing rage, Chu Wanning glared at the chains with disbelief, anger twisting his expression and choking his words back, and it was a while before he lifted his head to say harshly: “Mo Weiyu, what do you think you’re doing? Untie me at once!”

But the person acted like he hadn’t heard a word of his furious bellows, a lazy smile and a pair of dimples on his face as he strode over and gripped Chu Wanning by the jaw.

Author's Notes:

Bonus character card #3:

GoCheng the Exalted (the real one, not fake)

Courtesy Name: None

Nickname: Are you joking?

Job: Gatherer of the world's weapons, commander of battles, expert in the art of sword casting, protector of the righteous ways.

Simply put: Sharpening scissors~ sharpening knives~[90]

Appearance in society: Lord of armed forces

Simply put: President of China's #1 weapon corporation

Likes: Poetry

Favorite food: Five grains of the agriculture god

Dislike: War

Dislike as well: Unemployment

Most painful thing: Unemployment from there being no wars

Height: God's height is heaven's secret, cannot be leaked

Ch.49 This Venerable One's Shizun Is Always So Mad

>>dubcon touching

Chu Wanning's incredulity was no longer describable in words. His eyes opened wide, staring at the Mo Ran in his dream as if looking at a ghost.

The grown-up Mo Weiyu was gallant, with broad shoulders and long legs, half a head taller than himself.

And when he looked down at him, there was musing and mocking in the corners of his eyes.

"This Venerable One's dear Shizun, you should really take a look in the mirror."

His finger slid along Chu Wanning's cheek to rest by his ear, eyes cold and threatening.

A moment passed in silence, then he let out a cold hmph and leaned over abruptly, accompanied by a soft, scaldingly hot sensation as he captured Chu Wanning's lips in his own.

Caught completely off guard, Chu Wanning's head hummed with white noise, and something in his mind seems to have…… snapped……

Mo Ran was kissing him. His breath invaded him, moist, agitated, full of filthy, sinful desire.

Lips met roughly with the scraping of teeth as stormy waves surged in his chest.

Chu Wanning was nearly trembling with fright, phoenix eyes wide open, mind equal parts furious and stupefied. But it was as if he had lost his spiritual powers in the dream, could hardly gather even his physical strength; he was held tightly against Mo Ran's chest, and couldn't struggle free of his grip at all.

The Mo Ran in the dream was completely different from the one he knew for some reason.

There was none of the deferential ingratiation, replaced instead by overbearing tyranny.

He could clearly feel Mo Ran's heated breaths, low and rapid, when he exhaled, the animalistic desire scalding like lava, threatening to melt him down flesh and bone alike.

Chu Wanning's face was pale with anger, nearly about to spit blood. He never could have imagined that he would get held down by Mo Ran without the strength to resist, and even harder to accept was the heat gathering in his abdomen and the weakness in his fingers from the wet, frantic friction of the kisses. He trembled in his arms; Mo Ran's chest was scalding hot, so hot that he might get melted and drowned even through the layers of fabric. He wanted desperately to struggle, but couldn't gather the strength.

By the time they parted, Chu Wanning's legs were boneless. Mo Ran, still holding him, turned to press his face against the back of his ear. He could feel the caress of warm, moist breaths at the base of his neck as he panted. Then he heard Mo Ran say: "Didn't you want to talk conditions with this Venerable One?"

His voice was hoarse, so much so that it sounded nearly unfamiliar to Chu Wanning.

Chu Wanning looked down only to see the jut at his throat bobbing, a swallowing motion as he fought a losing battle to maintain control.

“But you have little else of value to this Venerable One, so you’ll have to bargain with the last thing you have remaining.”

Chu Wanning’s voice grew hoarse as well, but he didn’t know if it was from anger or desire; quietly, he said: “What thing……”

Mo Ran backed him into a wall, then abruptly raised a hand to strike the hard surface, the other hand closing tightly around Chu Wanning’s shackled wrist.

Not without malicious spite, but also not without timid desire, he bent down to capture the lobe of an ear between his lips.

Chu Wanning shuddered violently, a frightening numbness shooting up his spine and spreading over his scalp.

Mo Ran’s voice was husky, his breaths heavy and oppressive.

“Let me screw you, and I’ll let you have your demand.”

Chu Wanning’s eyes shot wide open, wetness in his eyes colored with arousal, but even more with disbelief.

Mo Ran’s hand had already felt its way to his waist, his lips moving against the side of his neck, venomous words spoken in the most tender voice.

“But this Venerable One loathes Shizun so very much, it’ll probably be hard to summon any interest in Shizun’s body. You’ll have to work a little to make it a good time.”

Mo Ran paused, but pulled him in even closer and continued stroking his waist.

“So really think it over, and if you’re willing, then get on your knees like a good boy and put your mouth to work, serve me well, then go spread yourself on the bed and beg me to fuck you.”

“.....”

Chu Wanning was about to lose it.

The virtuous proud pure austere Yuheng Elder kept his distance from men and women alike and indulged in neither erotic art nor amorous song, ever incorruptibly chaste and aloof.

Or, in simpler words, he knew practically nothing in matters of love and lust.

And so, very unfortunately for him, in spite of his anger, all of his defenses fell apart in the face of this intense, unfamiliar feeling; he was utterly defeated.

Mo Ran waited for a short while, but received no reaction. He cursed under his breath and started kissing him again, unable to hold back. When he’d had his fill of his lips, he pulled his tongue out, trailing a thread of translucence, before immediately biting down none-too-gently on his neck, licking and kissing along his neck, shoulder, ear.

Chu Wanning's scalp grew number still when Mo Ran began to pull and tear roughly at his robes, muttering "what're you pretending to be so virtuous and saintly for!" as he ripped, and when he lifted his eyes to look at him, his gaze was heated and crazed, a strange light in the corners of his eyes like long-accumulated hatred finally spilling out.

But also like the searing-hot lava of desire trapped under layers of rocks, finally overflowing after long years of restraint.

Chu Wanning, as if burned by the intensity of his predator-like gaze, wanted to look away, but Mo Ran saw through his thoughts and gripped his face before he could.

"Look at me."

His voice was rough and heated, shaking faintly from arousal——or perhaps something else——filled with the craving of a beast about to devour its prey.

"I said look at me! "

Chu Wanning closed his eyes shakily.

This dream was really far too absurd……

"Shizun." The voice by his ear suddenly became soft and warm like the tone he was familiar with, "Shizun, wake up."

Chu Wanning blearily saw Mo Ran's face hovering mere inches from his own, and reacted immediately with a fierce and well-aimed slap that landed soundly on the other's cheek.

Mo Ran, caught off guard, ate the slap head on. He let out an “ah” and opened his eyes wide: “Shizun! What was that for?”

“……”

Chu Wanning sat up, phoenix eyes flickering with anger and alarm.

His body was still shaking slightly, dream and reality blending together and driving him mad.

“Shizun……”

“Stay away!”

Chu Wanning shouted harshly with his brows lowered in a scowl. Mo Ran was startled by the extreme reaction, and a while passed before he asked cautiously: “Did you have a nightmare?”

Nightmare……

That’s right, it was a dream…… it was just a dream.

Chu Wanning stared blankly at the person in front of him for quite a while before he was able to slowly collect the pieces of his composure.

He was lying in the library at the Red Lotus Pavilion. Loyalty Hall and the grown-up Mo Ran were nowhere to be seen. The only thing in front of him was a face that was still young and childlike.

Finally fully awake, Chu Wanning paused for a moment to school his expression into one of propriety as he made a show of rearranging his clothes with slender fingers that still trembled slightly, suppressing the

agitation and unease that yet remained, and said: “.....Mn, I was dreaming and…… hitting someone.”

Mo Ran rubbed the redness on his cheek and hissed a little in pain: “What was Shizun dreaming about? What a forceful hit……”

Embarrassment flashed across Chu Wanning’s features. He pressed his lips together and, turning away a bit, loftily said nothing.

His face was as calm waters, but his heart was full of waves wildly crashing. He could practically feel his own pride on the very verge of shattering into a million tiny pieces: he couldn’t believe that he would dream of something so unspeakably preposterous, of such filthy words, how absolutely shameless, how could he even call himself a teacher anymore.

Even worse, this useless body of his actually reacted to this humiliating dream, he really wanted to break down……

Thankfully his robes were wide and loose-fitting, hiding his shame from the eyes of others.

But Chu Wanning’s face still darkened gloomily as he propped up his forehead in one hand.

He couldn’t grab the dream Mo Ran to vent his anger, but the one right in front of his eyes that conveniently delivered himself to his door was available. So, glowering, he asked sullenly: “What are you doing barging into my private quarters in the middle of the night like you own the Red Lotus Pavilion? Since when were you the Yuheng Elder?”

“……”

First a slap for no reason at all, then a thorough tongue lashing; Mo Ran felt a little wronged, mumbling in a tiny voice, “What’s got you so mad this time……”

Chu Wanning scowled: “I’m not mad, I’m going back to sleep, get out!”

Mo Ran said: “But Shizun, it’s already morning.”

Chu Wanning: “……”

“I only dared to come into the Red Lotus Pavilion without permission to look for you because we’ve been waiting at the Platform of Sin and Virtue for quite a while already, but Shizun never came.”

Chu Wanning: “……”

He opened a shuttered window, and sure enough, the sun had already risen a ways into the sky, the birds were singing and the bugs were buzzing.

Chu Wanning’s scowl grew even darker.

He looked like he might summon Tianwen and start whipping at any second.

To have actually been immersed in a spring dream all the way through to early morning, and if not for Mo Ran coming to look for him, the dream might have even continued——the thought made the vein at Chu Wanning’s temple throb, the joints of his fingers turning pale like jade where his grip tightened on the window frame.

Chu Wanning practiced mental cultivation, cultivating his mind with restraint and discipline, and was proficient in suppressing desires; he’s

never even had an unbecoming thought before this, much less a spring dream.

His principles being what they were, Chu Wanning was like a wooden man, stupid, clumsy, and stiff on top. His mental cultivation was so advanced as to entirely sever all desire, and he often looked down in contempt at pairs of lovers and dual cultivation partners when he had nothing else to do, feeling quite self-satisfied that he was virtuous and incorruptible.

Who could've anticipated that he would fall like this in the end……

In the hands of his own disciple.

The wise strong noble aloof Chu-zongshi dared not even look at Mo Ran as he angrily spat out: "Hurry and come with me to the Platform of Sin and Virtue for morning practice!" before turning and leaving abruptly, and was gone in an instant.

Xue Meng and Shi Mei had already been waiting for a long while, and were sitting in the shade of a tree chatting when Chu Wanning arrived.

Shi Mei was distraught: "Shizun is never late, did something happen? It's so late already and he's still nowhere to be seen."

Xue Meng was even more distressed: "Didn't Mo Ran go look for Shizun? It's already been a while and he's still not back, if I'd known this was gonna happen I would've gone with him. I hope Shizun's not sick?"

Shi Mei said: "Shizun's shoulder wound was quite severe, even with proper care, his body is frail by nature, so that's not unlikely……"

Hearing that, Xue Meng grew even more restless until he abruptly stood up: "I can't wait anymore, can't count on that unreliable mutt Mo Ran, I'm

gonna go check on Shizun myself!”

But when he turned around, there Chu Wanning was, pristine robes fluttering as he strode over.

The pair beneath the tree called out simultaneously: “Shizun!”

Chu Wanning: “I got held up by something. I’ll take you guys for martial practice today, let’s go.”

When Chu Wanning wasn’t paying attention, Shi Mei turned to Mo Ran who was following behind him and asked in a low voice: “Is Shizun alright? What was the hold up?”

Mo Ran rolled his eyes: “He just overslept.”

“Eh?”

“Shh, act like you don’t know.” Mo Ran rubbed his cheek, still sore from the slap earlier; he definitely didn’t want an encore.

Shi Mei blinked: “Why’s your left cheek so red?”

Mo Ran said quietly: “If you keep asking, my right cheek’s gonna join it. Let it be, let’s hurry and follow.”

When they arrived at the practice field, Chu Wanning instructed Mo Ran and Shi Mei to go have a practice match first, keeping Xue Meng behind.

Chu Wanning said: “Sit.”

Although Xue Meng didn’t know the reason, he’d always obeyed Shizun’s every word like the law, and promptly complied, sitting down on the spot.

Chu Wanning also sat down across from him, saying: “The Spiritual Mountain Competition is in three years, what are your plans?”

Xue Meng looked down, and a moment passed before he said through gritted teeth: “Win.”

If Chu Wanning had asked him before their trip to Jincheng lake, Xue Meng would have answered proudly and with certainty.

But now, all that was left behind this word was a simple, stubborn refusal to give up his pride.

It wasn’t that he had no self-awareness, but that he refused to just step aside and hand his title of “heaven’s darling” over to someone else without a fight.

Having ground out the word “win”, Xue Meng snuck a glance at Chu Wanning, his heart filled with anxiety.

Chu Wanning was looking at him without the slightest bit of derision or any doubt whatsoever.

He only said, simply:

“Good.”

Xue Meng’s eyes lit up immediately: “Shizun, do you think——do you think I can still…… I……” He stumbled over his words in his excitement.

Chu Wanning said: “My disciples don’t give up before the fight.”

“Shizun……”

“Outstanding youths from all sects participate in the Spiritual Mountain Competition. Those without holy weapons are naturally no match for you, but even if your opponent does have a holy weapon, there’s no need to be afraid.” Chu Wanning said, “A holy weapon is not something that can be easily mastered in a short period of time. Although your Longcheng blade is slightly lesser in comparison, it is still a superb, high-quality weapon of mortal craftsmanship. As long as you train and practice diligently in these three years, winning is certainly not outside the realm of possibilities.”

It was well known that Chu-zongshi had a discerning eye and solid judgement in the realm of the martial arts.

Further, he wasn’t the type of person to tell encouraging white lies out of sympathy, so Xue Meng’s spirits were immensely lifted by his words.

“Shizun really means it?”

Chu Wanning narrowed his eyes, saying lightly: “How old are you, Xue Meng? I don’t coddle anyone older than five.”

Xue Meng, a little embarrassed, rubbed his nose and started grinning.

Chu Wanning continued: “Victory or defeat is unpredictable, only pride cannot be taken lightly; just do your best and don’t worry overmuch about the result.”

Xue Meng answered: “I understand!”

Having eased Xue Meng’s worries, Chu Wanning headed toward the practice field, arriving at the back where the training dummies were. In order to prevent disciples accidentally injuring people passing by while

sparring with the dummies, this area was built out of the way, and one had to go through a long corridor and then turn a corner to get here.

Shi Mei and Mo Ran were conversing with their backs toward him, not too close and not too far away, just within hearing distance.

“You two……” Chu Wanning was just about to call them over, but seeing the sight before him, suddenly stopped talking.

Author’s Notes:

Today’s mini theater:

《If this is a modern danmei, then everybody’s background could be...》

Chu Wanning: Probably the teacher with the worst temper in the entire school.

Shi Mei: Surgeon

Xue Meng: Film school student, studying… maybe performance major.

Xue Zhengyong: Oil executive, new rich tycoon.

Mrs Wang: A lady from a pristine family that married a new rich tycoon.

Mei Hanxue: Therapist

Ye Wangxi: Dedicated police officer

Mo Ran: … Race car driver. Don’t ask me why, driving cars[91] all depend on him.

Ch.50 This Venerable One Likes You

As someone who cherishes weapons, this kind of scene made Chu Wanning so angry he couldn't even speak.

He saw a moron.

Under the flowering tree not too far away, Mo Ran summoned Jiangui. The size of a holy weapon could be changed at will; most people liked to make their weapon bigger and more impressive-looking, or at least keep its normal size as Chu Wanning did. But Mo Ran had turned Jiangui tiny, about the length and width of a cord for tying hair, its leaves miniscule; the dignified holy weapon looked absolutely pitiful.

People had different spiritual energies; Tianwen glowed golden when Chu Wanning poured his spiritual energy in, but Jiangui glowed scarlet.

So, leaves aside, Jiangui looked just like a red string of fate……

"Shi Mei, tie this on your hand, I want to see if Jiangui has the same power as Tianwen, to coax the truth out of people."

"Uh…… you want to test it out on me?"

Mo Ran smiled: "Yup, cause I'm the closest with you, and I know you'd never lie to me."

Shi Mei was still hesitant: “That’s true, but……”

“Aiya, I won’t ask anything tricky. If you don’t believe me, let’s pinky swear?”

He said, sticking out his pinky.

Shi Mei didn’t know whether to laugh or cry: “How old are you already, isn’t that a little too childish?”

“C’mon, let’s pinky swear, if it’s fine at eight then it’s fine at eighteen, eighty-eight too, nothing childish about it.” Mo Ran grabbed Shi Mei’s right hand and pried his pinky out with a cheeky grin. Shi Mei, caught between getting mad and laughing at his antics, could only go along with it in the end.

But, unexpectedly, instead of hooking their pinkies together, Mo Ran grinned, eyes becoming little crescents: “Jiangui, time to get to work.”

Jiangui zoomed faster than lightning, and in a flash had tied itself around Shi Mei’s pinky, with its other end around Mo Ran’s.

The handsome young man laughed like a sly fox that had schemed its way into ascension. He said happily, framed with dimples: “Congrats, you fell

for it.”

Shi Mei really didn’t know whether to laugh or cry: “You! ……Hurry and let go.”

“Later, later.” Mo Ran grinned, “Just a couple of questions first.”

Truth be told, Mo Ran had been feeling uneasy ever since that episode at Jincheng Lake, when he got Ever-Yearning and Shi Mei wasn’t able to open the box.

Even though Shi Mei was wearing gloves at the time and didn’t directly touch the box, Mo Ran just couldn’t shake his doubts. What’s more, it was Chu Wanning who opened the box in the end.

Chu Wanning…… how was it possible……

So Mo Ran decided that the box must have been broken.

But he wanted to use Jiangui to confirm it, just to make sure.

He was absolutely certain in his feelings for Shi Mei, but he worried that maybe he didn’t have the same weight in Shi Mei’s heart. As for that confession at Jincheng Lake, he couldn’t be sure that he didn’t imagine it.

Shi Mei had a gentle temperament and was nice to everyone. Unlike that Chu Wanning, with a sullen face day-in day-out like everyone else owed him something, totally unlikeable.

Taxian-Jun may be a crude person, but when it came to his heart's desire, he would dwell on it for so long that he tripped over his own thoughts.

"First off." Mo Ran's heart was filled with anxiety, but he kept grinning and feigning casualness. He decided to toss out a couple of easy, non-consequential questions first as padding.

"What do you think of Xue Meng?"

A prickling sting on his finger, and Shi Mei fessed up: "The young master is a good person, but he's too straightforward, sometimes intolerably tactless."

Mo Ran burst out laughing, clapping in glee: "Eh? Even you can get fed up with him? Hahaha, understandable, he's way too annoying."

Shi Mei turned red: "......Don't be so loud, what if the young master hears."

"Ok ok ok." Mo Ran grinned, "But it makes me happy when you badmouth him."

Shi Mei: "....."

Mo Ran continued: "And what do you think of Shizun?"

“Shizun is good too, just his temper is a little……” Shi Mei seemed like he really didn’t want to critique Chu Wanning, but he was bound by Jiangui, so he bit his lip for a while but still ended up having to say: “His temper is a little short.”

“Haha, a little short? More like ridiculously short. Gets mad every other day and won’t even admit to being mad, he’s a bigger handful than the empress herself.”

Chu Wanning, standing in the corner: “……”

Mo Ran wondered: “If you know about Shizun’s bad temper, then why did you still pick him to study under?”

Shi Mei said: “Shizun is cold on the outside but actually kind on the inside. I’m not as naturally gifted as others, but he never minds if I’m slow on the uptake. He said everyone deserves to learn, and since I’m no good at combat, he taught me healing instead. H-he’s truly very nice to me.”

Mo Ran, originally quite gleeful, grew quiet upon hearing this, the grin disappearing off his face.

A while passed before he said: “When has he ever been nice to you. All he did was teach you some techniques, maybe occasionally take care of you, that’s only to be expected from any master.”

“That’s different——”

Mo Ran grew annoyed, cheeks puffing out: “Anyway, he’s not good to you! Whatever he does for you, I can do it too!”

Shi Mei stopped talking.

In the awkward silence that followed, Mo Ran slowly quelled the flames in his heart. Seeing Shi Mei looking wordlessly downward filled him with guilt, and he quietly whispered: “Sorry.”

“It’s alright.” But a short moment later, Shi Mei suddenly said: “Once, some years ago, before you came to Sisheng Peak, I was walking along a path when it suddenly started storming.”

“I wasn’t a disciple under Shizun yet at the time. I bumped into him while running in the rain. He was holding a red oil paper umbrella, and, seeing my pitiful state, offered to share it with me. I had heard of his cold reputation, so I was very nervous walking by his side.”

“And then?”

Shi Mei wore a soft expression: “Then? Then we didn’t speak a single word the whole way.”

Mo Ran nodded: “He’s such a stuffy person, what is there even to say to him.”

“Yes.” Shi Mei smiled a little, “Shizun doesn’t talk much. But, when he walked me to the door and I turned to thank him, I saw that his right

shoulder was completely drenched. I was walking to his left, and didn't get rained on at all."

Mo Ran: "....."

"It was a small umbrella, really only big enough for one person, and he used most of it to cover me. I watched him walk away in the rain, and then, as soon as I got back to my room, I wrote a letter of intent asking him to accept me as disciple."

"That's enough." Mo Ran suddenly said, "You're way too soft hearted, if you keep going, I'll feel like you're too pitiful."

Shi Mei said softly: "A-Ran, don't you feel like Shizun is the one who's pitiful? He only has a small umbrella, because he's always alone, no one wants to walk with him. That's why, even if Shizun is a little strict with me sometimes, or scolds me a little much sometimes, I don't mind. Because I remember his drenched shoulder."

Mo Ran said nothing, the tip of his nose a little red, his heart a little forlorn.

It was a hazy sort of forlorn feeling, and he wasn't even sure whom it was for.

"A-Ran, let me ask you something."

"Mn, go ahead."

"Do you dislike Shizun?"

Mo Ran paused: “I……”

“Or, in other words, you don’t like him, right?”

For some reason, Shi Mei’s usually gentle and serene gaze seemed somewhat sharp when he asked this. Mo Ran, caught off guard, found himself suddenly speechless.

In his daze, Mo Ran neither nodded nor shook his head. A long while passed before he forced a smile onto his face: “Aiya, aren’t I supposed to be the one asking the questions here? Can’t just let you turn it around on me like that!”

Shi Mei didn’t miss the fact that Mo Ran just dodged the question, but he didn’t force the issue, smiling: “I was just wondering, don’t take it to heart.”

“Mn.” Mo Ran calmed his emotions and looked up through his lashes at Shi Mei’s face, no less beautiful than the bright moon in the sky.

He had planned to ask Shi Mei if he liked himself for the third question, but the exchange just now left his heart heavy. Mo Ran was quiet for a bit, lips pressed together, before abruptly saying: “He’s just my Shizun, nothing more than that. Liking or not is irrelevant.”

Hearing these words where he stood in the shadows, Chu Wanning’s eyelashes quivered slightly, like the wings of an injured butterfly.

Even though deep in his heart he already knew, to hear it confirmed like this still made his body feel so light it might float away, and his heart so heavy it might sink into the sea. Chu Wanning felt cold; maybe autumn had come early this year.

Mo Ran and Shi Mei were still talking in the distance. He closed his eyes, the light nausea that had been coming and going lately washing over him once again.

Suddenly feeling exhausted, he turned to leave.

But he had only taken a few steps when the autumn wind carried Mo Ran's voice faintly over. He stopped walking despite himself.

Mo Ran was asking Shi Mei his third question: "Well, you've given your thoughts on Xue Meng and Shizun, do me next."

He tried to sound as nonchalant as he could, and very carefully, almost pathetically asked:

"Shi Mei, what do you think about me?"

Shi Mei was quiet.

Jiangui indeed seemed to have the same interrogation ability as Tianwen. Shi Mei refused to answer, so Jiangui's scarlet radiance grew brighter where it was wound tightly around Shi Mei's finger.

Shi Mei frowned a little: "Ow……"

“Just say something.” Mo Ran’s heart ached for him, but this question had burrowed so deeply into his heart, this life and last, that it had practically become his personal demon, so he persisted, “What do you think of me?”

Shi Mei shook his head and closed his eyes, as if in a great deal of pain, long lashes trembling and sweat gathering on his forehead.

“.....” Mo Ran sighed, unable to bear hurting him like this, “Forget it……”

He was just about to remove Jiangui when Shi Mei reached the limit of his endurance, and, face pale, said hoarsely: “I think you’re.....great.”

Mo Ran’s eyes widened.

Shi Mei’s face went from pale to red very quickly, as if vexed. He looked down, lashes lowered, and dared not look at Mo Ran.

Jiangui turned into specks of glimmering red light that fluttered like the petals of ravaged flowers back into Mo Ran’s palm. With his head lowered, Mo Ran couldn’t help letting out a quiet chuckle, and when he looked back up at Shi Mei, his face was warm like the first bloom of spring.

There was a lazy smile in his voice, but his eyes were a little wet as he said: “I’m glad, thank you. I think you’re really great too. I already said it to you at Jincheng Lake, but since you don’t remember any of it, I want to say it again. You’re really…...really so likeable.”

He didn’t specify what kind of like, but Shi Mei still blushed all the way to his neck and couldn’t find any words.

Mo Ran stared at him with deep inky eyes that shone with a clear, bright light, like an ocean filled with stars, like gentle waves in the night sky.

“I want to treat you right, I want to make you happy.”

Shi Mei wasn’t dense, and Mo Ran’s meaning was written clearly all over his expression. Shi Mei couldn’t help but lower his head.

Mo Ran’s heart quivered, and he raised his hand to stroke Shi Mei’s hair. But before he could even get close, there was a sudden flash of sharp golden light, and a lash of vine struck Mo Ran right on the face with an audible crack.

“Ah!” Feeling the sting, Mo Ran turned around in shock.

Chu Wanning stood in front of the walls, white with green eaves, pristine robes paler than snow and one hand held behind his back, staring coldly at them. Tianwen coiled on the ground like a hissing snake, willow leaves rustling, golden light coursing along its length with the occasional spark.

Shi Mei, startled: “Shizun……”

Mo Ran, holding his face: “Shizun.”

So what if he was loathed, so what if he wasn’t liked?

Another person might cry miserably, but Chu Wanning…… cry? Ridiculous. Of course he'd deliver a beating instead.

Chu Wanning's expression was frosty. He walked over slowly, voice frozen over: "Slacking off from training to chatter instead? Mo Weiyu, you think you're so impressive just because you got the last holy weapon? You think you're all-powerful and invincible now? Aren't you just so relaxed and carefree."

"Shizun, I was just……"

Chu Wanning glared. Mo Ran shut up.

"Shi Mingjing, spar with me. Mo Weiyu." He paused, then said resentfully, "Go practice. If you can't hold out for at least ten moves against me later, then go back and copy the book of meditation techniques three hundred times as punishment. Now get lost."

Ten moves?

He might as well just go and start copying.

Ch.51 This Venerable One's Shizun…… Pfft Hahaha

For the next three days, Chu Wanning was even more sullen than usual, his temper even worse.

Resentment was written clearly all over Yuheng Elder's features, and a haze of miasma followed wherever he went. The disciples scattered like prey animals at the mere sight of him. Even Xue Zhengyong dared not talk to him too much for fear of his murderous aura.

Chu Wanning didn't want to admit that he had any untoward feelings for Mo Ran, but seeing his two disciples rendezvousing by the training dummies and acting so affectionate, he simply couldn't help the rage that flared up and the sour feeling that flooded his chest.

He felt disgusted.

Not just at others, but more so at himself.

He and Mo Weiyu were master and disciple, nothing more. How was it any of his business whom Mo Ran liked to stick to, whom he wanted to be involved with?

What right did he have to wave his willow vine around just because he didn't like what he saw? If he liked someone, liked being near someone, what's that got to do with you? Did it inconvenience you in any way? Chu Wanning how are you this pathetically petty!

…….Anyway, backing up a thousand steps, so what if he felt unspeakable longing toward Mo Ran? He had his pride and plenty of self-restraint, more

than enough to keep his feelings under control, more than enough to suppress that terrifying longing for however long it takes to suffocate it.

No one will ever know of this unsightly affection of his.

Nothing will remain but the brocade pouch with the two locks of hair inside.

Mo Ran won't know about his feelings, just like he will never know that, at the bottom of Jincheng Lake, the one who endured searing agony to save him wasn't Shi Mei, but himself.

But what is this feeling?

Is it…… jealousy?

The mere thought made Chu Wanning choke.

For months after that, he tried to avoid Mo Ran as much as possible, minimizing all interactions outside of the routine instructions in cultivation and training.

Time flew by, and it was nearly the end of the year before anyone knew it. One day, as Chu Wanning was returning from a trip down the mountain to suppress monsters, it started snowing just as he got to the front gates.

Sisheng Peak quickly became covered in a veil of silver. Chu Wanning was no good with the cold; tugging his robes closer for warmth, he walked briskly toward Loyalty Hall.

A hearty fire warmed the inside of the hall, firewood crackling inside the copper basin.

Chu Wanning came to report in with Xue Zhengyong, but the sect leader was nowhere to be seen. Instead, he bumped into Mo Ran.

There was no one else at Loyalty Hall. This was the first time Chu Wanning had been alone with him in many months, and he couldn't help feeling a little awkward. What's more, this was where that absurd dream took place.

Speaking of, Chu Wanning actually had that dream several more times afterwards, clear and vivid each time. He tried to struggle the first few times, but got used to it after a while and just let the Mo Ran in the dream run his mouth like a lunatic, while he idly counted Mo Ran's eyelashes out of pure boredom, one, two, three……

But that dream always ended abruptly at a certain critical moment; after many repeats of the same, Chu-zongshi decided that it must be due to his innately pure and noble disposition, that even fantasies didn't get too overly sordid.

Having come to such a conclusion, Yuheng Elder and his fragile glass maiden heart finally managed to retrieve a bit of dignity.

But the combination of Mo Ran and Loyalty Hall still gave Chu Wanning an intuitive sense of danger.

Unfortunately, that young man hadn't the slightest about any of this. Seeing him, Mo Ran's face lit up in a toothy smile: "Shizun, you're back."

".....Mn."

"Are you looking for uncle? Aunt's feeling a little under the weather, so he's been over there taking care of her. What did you need? I'll let him know."

Chu Wanning pressed his lips together and said mildly: "No need."

Then immediately turned to leave.

But Mo Ran called out to him: "Shizun, please wait."

"What is it……"

He turned to look back as he spoke, but was unexpectedly met with Mo Ran's extended hand brushing against his brow.

Mo Ran brushed a few times, saying like it was the most natural thing in the world: "Look at you, you're covered in snow."

Chu Wanning froze.

At a loss for what to do, he stood frozen as the young man uttered fussily while dusting the snow off him, then took out a white handkerchief to dry his hair.

Chu Wanning was no good with the cold; he couldn't be exposed to the cold, or he'll easily fall sick.

But this person never knew to take care of himself. Last life, after he was imprisoned, he often liked to sit in the courtyard and watch the koi fish in the pond, unheeding even when it began to snow.

So he caught colds and ran fevers all the time. Shizun was even more frail after his spiritual core was destroyed; he would be bedridden for at least half a month every time he got sick, and bowl after bowl of medicinal decoction had practically no effect.

And so, when Mo Ran saw him covered in snow, half melted half frozen, he reflexively started brushing the snow off of him.

But halfway through drying his hair, he belatedly realized that his actions might have been a little too intimate. His head snapped up just in time to come face to face with a pair of reticent phoenix eyes.

Chu Wanning was glaring at him: “.....”

Mo Ran’s hands withdrew sheepishly: “Ahaha, this disciple overstepped his bounds, Shizun can dry himself off of course.”

Chu Wanning was quite relieved that he backed off.

That dream was just a dream, after all.

His disciple was still the same as before, nothing like that guy in his dream who referred to himself as “this Venerable One”.

Chu Wanning was silent for a while before taking the proffered handkerchief from Mo Ran. He took off his cape and walked over to the fire to warm his hands, then wiped off the melting snow on his hair.

“Since when did you finally learn what boundaries were?” Face lit by the warm light of the fire, he glanced sideways at Mo Ran through narrowed eyes: “Haven’t you always been oblivious to such things?”

Mo Ran: “.....”

Neither spoke for a moment. Chu Wanning finished drying his hair and absentmindedly tucked the handkerchief away, then shot an impassive glance at Mo Ran.

“Anyway, what are you doing here?”

Mo Ran hurriedly replied: “It’s the end of the year, there’s a year’s worth of files that need to be organized, so I’m helping……”

Chu Wanning cut him off: “I know the files need to be organized, but isn’t that Shi Mingjing’s job? Why are you doing it?”

Mo Ran: “.....Shizun’s memory is truly very impressive.”

Chu Wanning was totally unmoved by the flattery: “Where is he?”

“He said he was a little feverish and headachey this morning.” Seeing the look in Chu Wanning’s eyes, Mo Ran hurriedly continued, “Sorry, Shizun, I was the one who told him to get some rest, so please don’t blame him.”

Such covering was like a sharp needle that pricked Chu Wanning and made his brows draw together. He was quiet for a while, then asked: “Is he

okay?”

Seeing that he didn’t lay blame, Mo Ran let out a breath of relief: “I gave him medicine and waited for him to fall asleep before leaving earlier. He just caught a cold, should be fine in two or three days. Thank you for the concern, Shizun.”

“Who said I’m concerned about you lot, I was just asking.”

Mo Ran: “.....”

“I’ll leave you to your organizing, then.”

Chu Wanning left.

Sisheng Peak forbid its disciples from doing each other’s duties. Mo Ran thought he was going to be punished by Shizun for sure, but Chu Wanning had unexpectedly let him off this easily. He stood in place dumbstruck for quite a while, and didn’t react until Chu Wanning was already a distance away.

Mo Ran picked up the umbrella leaning against the door and ran after the lone figure in the snow.

“Shizun!”

“Shizun, wait!”

Chu Wanning turned around. Mo Ran came to a stop in front of him, shook the snow off the umbrella, and opened it above the two of them.

“The snow’s really coming down, take the umbrella with you.”

Chu Wanning shot a glance at him: “No need.”

Mo Ran tried to hand the umbrella over, but Chu Wanning felt only irritation and refused to accept it. The umbrella fell in the back-and-forth struggle right as a wind picked up, and was blown several feet away.

Chu Wanning stared at at that umbrella planted in the snow. He stared for a while. This was such a non-issue; he wanted to just turn and leave indifferently as he always had in the past. But his feet refused to move.

Just like how a candle will always go out in the end, and even an ancient well will dry up in time.

Even the most tolerant person will eventually break down.

Chu Wanning turned with a sweep of a sleeve and said angrily: “Mo Weiyu, can you just stop messing with me? I’m not Shi Mingjing, I don’t need someone else to take care of me!”

A golden light gathered in his hand as he spoke, and Mo Ran reflexively took a step backwards, thinking he was going to summon Tianwen for a whipping again. But instead, the light rose into the sky like a gushing spring of gold and formed into a resplendent barrier, blocking snow and wind alike.

Mo Ran: “.....”

Oh, a barrier for blocking rain and snow……

Chu Wanning's expression was frigid, his brows even: "Do I look like I need an umbrella?"

He seemed to be truly angry, the barrier rapidly changing colors with the movement of his fingertips, from gold to red, to purple, blue, and then green.

The effect of the barrier changed with the color; one warded only against snow, one blocked the wind as well, and another even kept the inside of the barrier warm despite the freezing snowstorm.

These techniques were quite powerful, and Chu Wanning normally wouldn't waste his spiritual energy to block the snow this way. Such a sulkily showy display was so childish that Mo Ran was rendered completely speechless for a moment.

"Shizun, don't be angry……"

"Who said I'm angry?!" Chu Wanning's face was pale from anger, "Get lost already!"

"Ok ok ok, I'm getting lost." Mo Ran glanced at the barrier, "Don't waste your energy like that though……"

"Get! Lost!"

With a wave of Chu Wanning's hand, the spiritual energy forming the barrier suddenly gathered instead into a strike of lightning that landed right in front of Mo Ran.

Mo Ran was just showing him some concern out of the kindness of his heart but nearly got struck by lightning for it. He felt a bit resentful and was just about to say something, but when he looked up, he saw Chu Wanning standing in the snow, face pale to match, but the rims of his eyes were a little red.

Mo Ran, startled: "You……"

"You and I are merely master and disciple, nothing more than that. There's no need for any unnecessary concern between us. So take your umbrella and get lost."

Mo Ran started, understanding suddenly dawning on him.

"Shizun, that day at the practice field, when I was talking with Shi Mei, did you……"

Hear.

But Chu Wanning said nothing, only turned to leave.

Mo Ran didn't call out to him this time, and he didn't turn to look back.

A little ways away, Chu Wanning sneezed. His steps faltered, then he put his head down and walked even faster, as if he was angry, but also as if he was running away.

Mo Ran stood in the snow the entire time, staring numbly at his back until he disappeared, lost in thought.

Chu Wanning fell sick as soon as he got back to the Red Lotus Pavilion.

He could use barriers to ward off rain and snow, but he never bothered to when it came to himself, seeing it as a waste of spiritual energy. That's why, when it rained, he just used an oil paper umbrella like any other ordinary person.

He sneezed a whole bunch, and the headache and fever were quick to follow as well. He was already used to self-medicating from all the times he got sick, and a little cold was nothing to even bat an eye at, so he took some medicine, washed up and changed his clothes, then burrowed into bed to sleep it off.

Maybe it was due to the cold, but the nausea that had been cropping up ever since he got injured at Jincheng Lake was especially acute this night. The night went by in a hazy sleep, his entire body drenched in a cold sweat but burning like a furnace.

Chu Wanning didn't wake up until noon the next day. Blinking his eyes blearily open, he laid there spacing out for a while before slowly getting out of bed to put on shoes.

He paused and stared.

His boots seemed to have become quite a bit bigger overnight……

He looked more carefully.

Chu Wanning: “……”

……

Even Yuheng Elder’s composure couldn’t handle this kind of shock.

It wasn’t that his boots had become bigger.

Chu Wanning stared blankly at his hands, his legs, his bare feet, and the shoulder that his robe had slid off from.

It was that he…… had become smaller????

Author’s Notes:

Mini Theatre (this is an edit from an old joke~)

Xue Meng: Mutt I’ve got a quiz for you, what do you say when you see a frigid Shizun?

Mo Ran: Your Highness.

Xue Meng: What do you say when you see an angry Shizun?

Mo Ran: Your Majesty.

Xue Meng: What do you say when you see a Shizun that has shrunk in size?

Mo Ran: Come, Gege give you a smoochie (/^▽^)/ #

Xue Meng: Failed, get lost.

Ch.52 This Venerable One Didn't Even Get an Appearance

Xue Zhengyong was practicing his sword at the northern peak when a haitang blossom floated over. He uttered a curious "eh" and caught it while drying his sweat with a towel, muttering to himself: "Yuheng's messenger haitang? He can't even be bothered to come over to talk anymore? When did he get so lazy."

But he still took the golden orb of light from the flower's center and placed it in his ear.

Out came the unfamiliar voice of a child: "Sect Leader, please come to the Red Lotus Pavilion at your earliest convenience……"

Xue Zhengyong didn't believe it at first, but when he stepped off from his sword in front of Chu Wanning's residence, he was completely dumbfounded.

A child of about five or six years stood in the pavilion by the lotus pond stood with a hand held behind his back, gazing at the lotus with a face of gloom. Looking from the side, this person had a frosty expression and icy eyes to match; he was draped in Chu Wanning's robes, but they were really way too big on him, pooling on the ground, sleeve hem and all, looking like a fish towing behind it a huge sweeping tail.

Xue Zhengyong: "....."

The child turned around, 'if you laugh I will kill you and then myself' practically written on his face.

Xue Zhengyong: “PFFT HAHAHAHAHAHA!!!”

The child slapped the table angrily: “What’re you laughing at! What’s so funny!”

“I am definitely not lau——ahahaha oh god I can’t, Yuheng, I told you to go to Tanlang Elder to get that wound checked out, but you just wouldn’t listen, hahahaha, I can’t breathe.” Xue Zhengyong roared with laughter, holding his stomach with both hands, “I’ve, I’ve never seem a kid with such a murderous aura, ahahahaha.”

This child was none other than the Chu Wanning who had awoken to find that he had shrunk. The vine that pierced his shoulder at Jincheng Lake must have been enchanted with some kind of curse that turns those stricken back into their five or six year old selves. Thankfully his spiritual power did not also revert, else Chu Wanning felt like he really might as well just die.

Xue Zhengyong went to fetch a set of small-sized uniform for younger disciples, laughing the whole way there and back.

Chu Wanning finally looked a little less comical after changing into the more fitting clothes. He straightened out the silver-trimmed blue hand guards, looked up to shoot Xue Zhengyong a glare, then said vehemently: “If you dare tell anyone, I will end you.”

Xue Zhengyong laughed: “I won’t, I won’t. But what’re you gonna do about this? I don’t know anything about healing, so you gotta get someone to take a look right? How about I ask Tanlang Elder to come over……”

Chu Wanning swept his sleeves angrily, but the sleeves of the disciple uniforms were tight and form-fitting, waving them around didn’t have the same effect at all. He grew even more grumpy: “Come over and do what, laugh at me?”

“Then how about I ask my wife to come take a look?”

Chu Wanning pressed his lips together and said nothing, looking indignant.

“I’ll take that as a yes then?”

Chu Wanning only turned his back to him. Xue Zhengyong knew he was in a bad mood, but the sight was really too funny; he tried to hold back but ultimately failed, and once again burst into uproarious laughter.

Tianwen appeared with a woosh, Chu Wanning glaring at him out of the corner of his eye: “I dare you to laugh again!”

“Ok ok no more laughing. I’ll go call my wifey over right away, ahahahaha.”

Xue Zhengyong ran off and returned in no time with a worried Madam Wang in tow. Madam Wang froze as soon as she saw Chu Wanning, and a long while passed before she finally managed with disbelief: “Yuheng Elder……”

Chu Wanning: “.....”

Thankfully, Madam Wang was a kind and compassionate doctor, unlike her husband. She asked Chu Wanning some questions while looking him over, then softly said:

“Elder’s spiritual energy circulation is fine, and there’s nothing abnormal about your body either. Nothing seems to have changed aside from having turned into a child.”

Chu Wanning asked: “Does the Madam know of a way to break the curse?”

Madam Wang shook her head: “Elder’s injury was caused by an ancient willow vine, I’m afraid there is no other known case of this ailment, so I do not know how to treat it.”

Chu Wanning lowered his lashes, stunned, and was speechless for a while.

Madam Wang couldn’t bear the sight, and hurriedly said: “Yuheng Elder, based on what I have seen, the most likely cause of your current state is

that the willow vines likely contained a self-healing secretion that got into your wound, and not actually a curse, else it wouldn't have taken this long to take effect. It was probably only a very slight amount of the secretion, and was only able to affect your body because you were overworking yourself day after day. How about you take care and rest up for a few days, and see if anything changes?"

Chu Wanning was silent for a while, then sighed: "There's nothing else for it. Many thanks, Madam."

"You're welcome."

Madam Wang gave him another careful once-over: "With the Elder's current appearance, as long as you don't tell them, no one will be able to tell it's you."

She wasn't wrong; even Chu Wanning himself had forgotten what he was like at five or six. Looking at his reflection in the pond, other than some vague similarities in facial features, he didn't look very much like his grown-up self at all. Finally feeling slightly relieved, he looked up at Xue Zhengyong to say:

"Sect Leader, I'm going to go into seclusion at the Red Lotus Pavilion for a few days. Please look after my disciples."

"That's a matter of course, Xue-er is my son, Ran-er is my nephew, and Shi Mei is a disciple of Sisheng Peak, of course I'll look after them." Xue

Zhengyong grinned, “You just worry about yourself.”

But three days of meditation later and there still wasn’t even the slightest sign of his body going back to normal. Chu Wanning couldn’t help feeling even more anxious, totally unable to “take care and rest up” as directed by Madam Wang.

One evening, Chu Wanning finally couldn’t handle the restless feeling any longer. Meditation wasn’t doing anything anyway, might as well go take a stroll down the mountain, get some things off his mind.

It was after dinner and before evening classes, and Sisheng Peak’s paths and corridors were full of disciples, but no one really paid him any mind. Chu Wanning strolled around for a bit, then went to the bamboo forest near the Platform of Sin and Virtue.

The Elders each had their own favored practice area that they always took their disciples to for cultivation and training. This bamboo forest was Chu Wanning’s.

The tranquil rustling of bamboo leaves filled the air. Chu Wanning plucked a leaf and idly blew a melody with it, the crisp, serene notes soothing his agitated mind. But it wasn’t long before the sound of footsteps approached and stopped near him.

“Oi, kiddo.”

Chu Wanning opened his eyes.

It was Xue Meng, long-legged and slim-waisted, standing proudly amidst the bamboo forest, blade LongCheng glistening in hand as he declared towards him.

“I’m going to practice sword here, go blow your leaf elsewhere.”

“.....” The end of Chu Wanning’s eyebrow went up a bit. It was quite a strange feeling to have Xue Meng boss him around like this. He thought for a moment, then said: “I’ll play my leaf, you can practice your sword, there’s no interference.”

Xue Meng said: “No way. Hurry and leave, my blade will hurt you.”

“You can’t hurt me.”

Xue Meng clicked his tongue, patience running thin: “Don’t say I didn’t warn you then. If you get injured later, it’s none of my business.” He said, LongCheng unsheathing with a powerful sound, like the hiss of a serpent emerging from the depths of a lagoon and soaring into the skies.

Instantly, LongCheng became a dancing shadow in Xue Meng’s hand amidst the flying leaves, a brilliant trail in its wake as light reflected off the blade. One slice rendered a leaf into ten pieces, the force of it plucking more leaves from the bamboos. Pierce, thrust, swipe, and slash, every motion smooth as the glide of snow in wind.

Even a fifty year old cultivator would praise such an impressive display, not to mention a five year old child.

But even when Xue Meng had gone through ten forms, the child was still just sitting on his rock playing his leaf, as if there was nothing astounding or

even noteworthy happening in front of him.

Xue Meng, irritated, sheathed his blade and leaped down from the upper regions of the bamboo forest, landing lightly before Chu Wanning.

“Kid.”

“.....”

“Hey, kid, I’m talking to you.”

Chu Wanning lowered the leaf and slowly opened his eyes to look expressionlessly at him: “What is it? Did your master not teach you to be courteous when speaking to others? Don’t just go hey this hey that, I have a name.”

“Why would I care to know your name.” Xue Meng was going to be nice about it, but the rest of his good humor vanished after those thorny words, “Blades don’t have eyes, scram off to the side before mine cuts your head off.”

Chu Wanning replied with an air of indifference: “If you can’t even avoid my head, is there even any point to you practicing the blade?”

“You!” Xue Meng had never been thus disputed in all his life, and by a beginner disciple who doesn’t even reach up to his thigh, at that. Angry and indignant, he said, “You sure are impudent, do you even know who I am?”

Chu Wanning glanced at him mildly: “Who are you?”

“.....I am the young master of Sisheng Peak.” Xue Meng was about to suffocate from indignation, “How do you not even know this?”

The corners of Chu Wanning’s lips quirked up slightly. The smile would have looked very mocking on his original face, but on his current childish, adorable face, was even more infinitely mocking.

“You’re just the young master, it’s not like you’re the sect master, why would I know of you?”

“Wh, wh-wh-wh-what did you say?”

“Quit putting on airs and practice your sword.”

Chu Wanning lowered his long lashes and went back to playing his leaf, the melody floating leisurely in the wind, notes rising and falling.

Xue Meng could seriously die from how mad he was; he let out a yell and actually got into it with a little kid. But no matter how mad he was, he still didn’t want to hit a kid, so he could only leap up and hack ruthlessly away at the bamboos, which broke and fell in batches amidst the serene melody.

His blade was swift and vicious; several flashes, and dozens of bamboos had been carved into blunt points. Against an enemy, the points would’ve been razor-sharp, but this was enough for teaching a junior disciple a lesson.

Hundreds of pointed bamboo sticks fell directly toward Chu Wanning, and were mere inches from hurting him. Xue Meng rushed downwards to move this cheeky little disciple out of the way.

He didn't actually want to hurt the kid, just to scare him a bit. But unexpectedly, in the same instant he rushed down, the child stopped playing and flicked the leaf between his fingertips, the tender bamboo leaf suddenly turning into hundreds of fine threads.

Instantaneously, the hundreds of threads struck out toward the falling spikes with stunning precision.

Even the wind seemed to stop flowing.

Chu Wanning stood up. Simultaneously, the hundreds of spikes all around him became mere powder.

Utterly obliterated!

Xue Meng stood frozen in shock, face both pale and red, unable to manage even half a word.

The little kid before his eyes looked up, silver-blue uniform fluttering, and grinned at Xue Meng: "You wanna go again?"

Xue Meng: "....."

“Your strikes are vigorous but without order. Too erratic and unsteady.”

Xue Meng opened his mouth, then closed it.

Chu Wanning continued: “Start over from the sparrow form. Follow my music, go through each form in time with the segments of the tune and no faster than that.”

To be instructed like this by a little kid, Xue Meng’s face became even more overcast, biting his lip and not moving at all. Chu Wanning didn’t rush him, waiting quietly to see if Xue Meng would lay down his ego for the sake of improvement, if he would be willing to listen to a half-grown child.

A while passed before Xue Meng suddenly stomped his feet in dejection, flung his sword, and turned to leave.

Watching him leave in a fit, Chu Wanning’s expression darkened a little, thinking that it was truly such a pity that Xue Meng couldn’t humble himself to accept guidance……

But before he could even finish that train of thought, he saw Xue Meng pick up a branch from the ground and turn around to say huffily: “Then, then I’ll use a branch, just in case I hit you.”

Chu Wanning paused, then he nodded with a smile: “Alright.”

Xue Meng plucked a bamboo leaf for him and wiped it clean before handing it over: “Here, xiao didi#, for you.”

So he’s “xiao didi” now, instead of “kiddo”?

Chu Wanning threw an amused glance at him, accepted the leaf, and, sitting back down on the rock, leisurely started playing again. Xue Meng had a rash personality; this maneuver includes a move where the wielder leaps and turns in mid-air while unleashing six stabs followed by a strike. But Xue Meng never could get it quite right, often stabbing over a dozen times before the strike, which far misses the optimum window.

Xue Meng messed it up five, six times in a row, his brows drawing increasingly tighter as he grew more and more agitated.

In his agitation, he caught a glimpse of the child sitting on the rock playing the bamboo leaf; despite his tender years, he was the very image of composure, without even the slightest bit of complaint, and Xue Meng couldn’t help the sense of shame that crept up.

So he rallied his spirits and tried several more times, slowly getting a feel for it in the melody’s rhythm. But he didn’t get ahead of himself, keeping at it until late night, when the moon was hanging high in the sky, and he could finally complete the maneuver flawlessly.

Xue Meng wiped at the sweat on his brows, exclaiming happily: “Today was all thanks to you. Which Elder’s disciple are you, lil bro? You’re pretty amazing, how did I not know about you before?”

Chu Wanning was already prepared for the question——Xuanji Elder had many disciples, so many that he couldn't even remember them all. He put the leaf away and said with a small smile: "I am Xuanji Elder's disciple."

Xue Meng seemed to think rather little of Xuanji. He hmph'd: "Oh, the Rubbish King huh."

"Rubbish King?"

"Ah, pardon me." Xue Meng misunderstood the surprise in Chu Wanning's eyes, and thought the child was upset that he had derided his shizun.

He smiled and explained: "It's just a nickname. Your shizun accepts anyone and everyone; the rubbish part refers those disciples of his that are completely talentless, not Xuanji Elder himself, don't mind it, lil bro."

Chu Wanning: "......Do you guys often give the elders nicknames in private?"

Author's Notes:

Xue Meng: I met this child today, pretty impressive, but something felt wrong.

Xue Zhengyong: (Nervous) What felt wrong?

Xue Meng: His expressions towards me felt wrong.

Xue Zhengyong: … Maybe you provoked him… it's normal that he noticed you…

Xue Meng (Angry table flip): No! There is no admiration in his eyes! Do you know how it feels when a kid not even one meter tall look down upon you?

Xue Zhengyong: …….

Ch.53 This Venerable One's Cousin is Certainly Not Very Smart

"Well of course, they all get nicknames, no one gets a pass." Xue Meng appeared to be in quite the good mood, eager to show Chu Wanning the ropes, "You look pretty young; what are you, five? You must be new to Sisheng Peak then, haven't gotten to know everyone yet. Once you've settled in, you'll find out that the disciples have nicknames for all twenty of the elders."

"Oh." Chu Wanning shot him an undecipherable look. "For example?"

"Oh man, where do I even start. But it's getting late now and I'm kinda hungry. As thanks for all the pointers you gave me today, I'll take you for a late-night snack down the mountain and tell you over food."

Chu Wanning thought for a moment with his head lowered, then smiled and said: "Mn, okay."

Xue Meng put away LongCheng and took Chu Wanning's hand, the unknowing disciple and the downsized master walking along the stone steps between the bamboo grove toward the main gate.

"Little bro, what're you called?" Xue Meng asked as they walked.

Chu Wanning answered calmly: "My surname is Xia."

"Xia what?"

"Xia Sini." [sounds like 'scare you to death']

Xue Meng completely failed to catch on, even happily asking: “That’s a nice name. Written with which letters?”

Chu Wanning glanced at him sideways with a look reserved for idiots: “.....Si as in Disciple Si, Ni as in Disciple Ni#. Xia Sini.”

“Oooh.” Xue Meng, still grinning, kept asking, “And how old are you? Was I right before or what, you can’t be older than five?”

“.....” Chu Wanning’s entire face was dark. Luckily for Xue Meng, he was looking at the road and not his face, or he’d definitely have gotten the scare of his life. “No, the young master guessed wrong. …… I’m six this year.”

Xue Meng: “Then you’re amazingly talented, but not quite as much as I was at your age of course. Anyway, with a bit of guidance, you’ll definitely grow up to be outstanding. Say, why don’t you quit being Xuanji’s disciple? Call me shige, and I’ll go ask my Shizun to take you on as a disciple, how about that?”

Chu Wanning managed, with effort, to not roll his eyes: “What did you say for me to call you?”

“Shige.” Xue Meng, still grinning, bent down and flicked Chu Wanning’s forehead, “This is a rare opportunity you know.”

Chu Wanning’s expression was complicated: “.....”

“What, speechless from overwhelming joy?”

Chu Wanning: “.....”

The two laughed and chattered as they walked —— at least, Xue Meng thought they were laughing and chattering —— when a voice suddenly came from behind them and ended this line of conversation that might have led to Xue Meng’s untimely demise.

“Eh? MengMeng, what are you doing here?”

On the entire Sisheng Peak, to have the nerve to call Xue Meng MengMeng#, who else could it be? Xue Meng started cursing before he was even done turning his head.

“Mo Ran you god damn mutt, call me that one more time and I’ll rip out your dog tongue.”

Sure enough, Mo Ran stood behind them under the clear moonlight, clothes fluttering in the breeze and an easy grin on his face. He was just about to throw a retort to tease Xue Meng some more when he noticed the dainty kid next to him and screeched to a halt: “This is……”

Xue Meng pulled Chu Wanning behind him, glowering at Mo Ran: “None of your business.”

“Nonono, don’t hide him away.” Mo Ran circled around and grabbed Xue Meng’s hand, pulling Chu Wanning back out and crouching down to give him a careful once-over. He made a questioning noise, muttering, “This kid looks awfully familiar.”

Chu Wanning, inwardly alarmed: “.....”

“Feels like I’ve seen you somewhere before.”

Chu Wanning didn’t like where this was going; if he got busted here, how would he ever face anyone ever again? He took a subconscious step back and turned to run.

“Hold it!” Mo Ran grabbed him with a mischievous grin, then reached out and playfully swiped his nose and said in a soft voice, “Come, little didi, tell gege your name?”

The nose that just got swiped felt oily; awkward and self-conscious, Chu Wanning kept trying to back away.

Mo Ran thought he was scared, and laughed as he said, “What’re you hiding for, be good and tell gege, is your name Xue?”

Xue Meng: “???”

Mo Ran pointed at Xue Meng and asked, smiling, “Is he your papa? Tell the truth, this gege will buy you candy.”

“What’s your problem Mo Weiyu!!” Xue Meng exploded, face bright red feathers all ruffled, “Wh-wh-wh-what the hell are you thinking?! Y-you’re despicable! F-f-filthy! Sh-shameless!”

Chu Wanning was also speechless for a while, but secretly felt somewhat relieved: “.....My surname is Xia, Xuanji Elder’s disciple, Xia Sini.”

“Scare you to death?” Mo Ran caught the meaning immediately and his eyes curved into slivers of amusement, “Haha, how interesting.”

“.....”

“Seriously, what’s wrong with you!” Xue Meng shoved Mo Ran away and said angrily, “He’s my new friend, butt out already. We’re going for a late night snack, out of the way.”

“Okay." Mo Ran moved out of the way, but then fell into step next to them, grinning and swaggering.

Xue Meng roared at him: “What do you think you’re doing?”

“I want a bite to eat too.” Mo Ran said innocently, “What, am I not allowed?”

Xue Meng: “……”

Wuchang Town.

This small town had once been infested with all manners of ghosts and ghouls, but thanks to the founding of Sisheng Peak nearby, it gradually regained its peace over the years, and could even be called lively these days.

It was late enough that the night market was already open. The group walked past the many stalls on the sides of the road and picked a gudong soup [hotpot/shabu-shabu] place, taking their seat at a low wooden table in the outdoor area.

“Gudong soup” uses a pot propped over a stove, with the fire burning while eating. The broth is generally very spicy; fresh, raw ingredients are placed on the table and dipped into the boiling broth to be cooked at the time of eating. It was called gudong soup because of the ‘gudong’ sound of food being tossed into the broth.

This was a famed dish of the ChuanShu province, but Chu Wanning only ate it with clear broth free of peppers; anything spicy made him choke.

Xue Meng was born here, and Mo Ran had grown up around XiangTan; both of them were used to spicy food, and naturally assumed that ‘Xia Sini’ could also handle it.

When they sat down to order, Xue Meng called out a bunch of dishes with familiarity, and added: “With extra peppers and chili oil in the broth.”

But Chu Wanning suddenly tugged on his sleeve and said quietly: “I want a twin pot.”

“Wha?” Xue Meng thought he had misheard.

Chu Wanning’s expression was dark: “Twin pot, half spicy half mild.”

Xue Meng: “.....You aren’t from here?”

“Mn.”

“Ah.” Xue Meng nodded in understanding, but there was surprise in his eyes as he glanced at Chu Wanning, “To have left your home at such a young age, it’s really so…… sigh , nevermind.” He sighed and turned to the waiter, “Alright, twin pot then.”

But there seemed to be a hint of resistance in Xue Meng's tone.

Soon enough, he found that he indeed was not imagining things, that Xue Meng really was reluctant to just accept it, fussing incessantly as they waited for their food: "Shidi, when in ChuanShu, do as the ChuanShu people do——you gotta learn to eat spicy foods. How're you gonna get buddy buddy with people when you go out if you don't eat spicy? You don't have to know the local dialect, but spicy food is non-negotiable. Oh yeah, where are you from, anyway?"

Chu Wanning: "LinAn."

"Oh." Xue Meng mulled it over, but knew little and less of that southern region, so he asked while nibbling on the tips of his chopsticks: "Do you guys eat rabbit heads over there?"

Before Chu Wanning could even respond, Mo Ran had already piped up from the side with a smile: "Of course not."

Xue Meng shot him a glare, and Chu Wanning also looked over at him.

Mo Ran had a foot up on the wooden bench and an arm propped casually on his knee as he skillfully twirled the chopsticks in his hand. Seeing their reactions, he grinned and tilted his head: "What? Why the look, they really don't eat that."

Xue Meng turned to ask Chu Wanning: "Is that true?"

"Mhm."

Xue Meng went back to glaring at Mo Ran: “How did you know that? You been there?”

“Nope.” Mo Ran pulled a funny face, “But Xia-xiong and our Shizun are from the same place, don’t you even know that Shizun doesn’t eat rabbit head? When he picks cold dishes at Mengpo Hall, it’s either tofu with scallion or sweet osmanthus lotus root, look for yourself next time if you don’t believe me.”

Chu Wanning: “.....”

“Ah, I guess I never really paid attention before. I haven’t had the guts to look at what’s in Shizun’s plate ever since that one time I saw his breakfast, too scary.” Xue Meng rubbed his chin and let the distaste show on his face, “Shizun’s tastes are really beyond words. Did you know? He actually eats savoury tofu pudding.”

Chu Wanning: “.....”

As he spoke, Xue Meng actually turned toward him and said, sincerely and with the utmost importance: “Little shidi, definitely, absolutely, do not take after Yuheng Elder, or no one will want to eat with you. Remember, rabbit head and spicy foods are both mandatory , and when you have tofu pudding for breakfast, do not eat it with savoury sauce.”

“Don’t forget about the seaweed and dried shrimp.” Mo Ran added.

“Right, seaweed and dried shrimp too.” It was a rare instance of Xue Meng and Mo Ran uniting against a common enemy. “Absolutely unacceptable.”

Chu Wanning looked at the pair of idiots, face devoid of expression: “Oh.”

Their dishes came in short order: fresh and crispy bamboo shoots, vividly green cabbage, tender tofu, succulent fillets of fish, thinly sliced rolls of lamb neatly piled on a porcelain plate, meat fried to a crunchy gold and sprinkled with cumin and pepper flakes, and a jar of freshly made soy milk on the side, the little table creaking under the weight.

Food brings people together, especially a lively meal like gudong soup; a couple plates of lamb and a few cups of soy milk later, even Xue Meng and Mo Ran's strained relationship became more relaxed in the thick steam, at least for the time being.

Xue Meng scoured the spicy broth with his chopsticks: "Oi oi, where's the brain I put in here?"

"Isn't it attached to your neck?" Mo Ran laughed.

"I meant the pig brain!"

Mo Ran bit his chopstick with an impish grin: "Mhm, that's the one."

"You god damn mutt dare insult me——"

"Oh hey! Your brain floated up! Time to eat!"

Xue Meng walked right into his trap in a moment of excitement, yelling: "Put your dog paw away! Don't even think about stealing it, that's my brain!"

Chu Wanning sat on his little stool, leisurely drinking his jar of sweet soy milk while watching the brats bicker. He was in no hurry; the entire mild side of the pot was all his.

He finished the soy milk and licked his lips as if wanting more. Mo Ran saw and asked with a smile: “Does little shidi like it?”

Chu Wanning took a moment to digest the fact that he was just called ‘little shidi’ and internally calculated the possibility of making him not do that, only to arrive at the conclusion that his chances are practically zero, so he could only reply dryly: “Mn, it’s not bad.”

So Mo Ran turned toward the waiter: “Excuse me, another jar of soy milk for my shidi here.”

And so Chu Wanning contently began drinking a second jar.

He had always loved sweets, but he got a cavity from eating too many pastries before, and Tanlang Elder had to go to quite the trouble to restore it for him. Since then, Chu Wanning has refrained from overindulging in sweets for the sake of his thin face.

Being stuck as a kid had the unexpected benefit of letting him eat all the sweets he wanted.

Mo Ran watched him eat with his cheek propped in a hand: “Your tastes are just like Shizun’s.”

Chu Wanning choked a little but managed to maintain his placid expression: “.....Is shixiong talking about Yuheng Elder?”

“Yup.” Mo Ran nodded with a smile as he pushed a steamer basket toward Chu Wanning, “Try this. I think you’ll like it too.”

Chu Wanning picked up a leaf-wrapped steamed bun from the bamboo steamer and took a small bite; warm steam gushed out from the bun, and inside the soft, glutinous wrapper was a sweet bean paste filling.

“Do you like it?”

Chu Wanning took another bite before nodding: “Mn.”

Mo Ran smiled: “Then have some more.”

The three of them chatted while eating. Chu Wanning suddenly remembered the earlier subject, and, after finishing his fourth bun, asked Xue Meng with feigned nonchalance: “By the way, young master, you mentioned earlier that every elder has a nickname. If my Shizun Xuanji Elder is called the Rubbish King, then what’s Yuheng Elder’s nickname?”

Author’s Notes:

The yin yang pot thing comes from that joke “How to tell when a Sichuanese person is utterly disappointed in you”, the following is abridged with the characters from this novel.

How to tell when the young master of Sisheng peak is utterly disappointed in you?

Xue Ziming: Okay, yin yang pot then yin yang pot it is.

How to tell when elder Yuheng is utterly disappointed in you?

Chu Wanning: Sure, no sugar then no sugar it is.

How to tell when the little handsome Shi-Ge from Sisheng Peak is utterly disappointed in you?

Shi Mingjing: Aye...okay, looks feminine then looks feminine it is.

How to tell when LinYi Rufeng Sect's Ye Gong-Zi is utterly disappointed in you?

Ye Wangxi: Unseen then unseen it is.

How to tell when Kunlun Taxue Palace Elder Shixiong is utterly disappointed in you?

Mei Hanxue: Heh heh, like above then like above it is.

How to tell when this novel's main character is utterly disappointed in you?

Mo Weiyu: Hmph! Big scumbag then big scumbag it is.

Meatbun: … Hang on, looks like someone from above is giving up?

Ch.54 This Venerable One Fights Over Pastries

“Shizun?” Xue Meng’s expression became serious for a few seconds, “He’s the only one who doesn’t have any nicknames out of everybody on Sisheng Peak. Nobody dares to joke about him.”

“Bullshit, everyone knows that you like Shizun, so they just all hold their tongues around you.” Mo Ran rolled his eyes, pulled Chu Wanning over, and whispered to him loudly, “Don’t listen to him, I’ll tell you—out of everyone on Sisheng Peak, Yuheng Elder is the one with the most nicknames.”

“Oh? Really?” Chu Wanning lifted his eyebrows slightly, showing the slightest bit of interest. “For example?”

“For example, one of the more courteous ones would be white-clothed ghost.”#

“……Why do they call him that?”

“Because he only wears white clothes every single day.”

“……What else is there?”

“Little napa cabbage.”

“…….Why is that?”

“Because he only wears white clothes every single day.”

“……What else?”

“Big mantou.”

“Why?”

“Because he only wears white clothes every single day.”

“What else is there?”

“Little widow.”

Chu Wanning: “???”

“Do you know why they call him that?” Mo Ran was still laughing stupidly, totally unaware of the flicker of killing intent that flashed in Chu Wanning’s eyes, “It’s because he only wears white clothes every single day.”

“……”

If Chu Wanning’s temper hadn’t been so good, he wouldn’t have been able to retain his composure: “What, what else is there?”

“Aiyo.” Mo Ran glanced at Xue Meng’s expression, and whispered softly in a voice that wasn’t subtle at all, “If I say any more, I’m afraid that my cousin here might pour the entire hotpot over my head.”

Xue Meng slapped the table, gnashing his teeth angrily: “That’s ridiculous! Who allowed them to make fun of Shizun like that? What sort of little napa cabbage or big mantou, not to mention little widow? Are they sick of being alive?”

“Ah.” Mo Ran replied, simmering with laughter, “I can’t believe you’re already so upset because of these nicknames. You haven’t even heard what the female disciples call Shizun, it’ll give you goosebumps.”

Xue Meng’s eyes widened: “What do they call him?”

Mo Ran drawled lazily: “What else could they call him, they’re girls after all—bound to be more refined. Something something like pear blossoms under the pale moon, the spring snows, Sir Chu of Lin An, lotus blossom beauty. My god.”#

Chu Wanning: “……”

Xue Meng: “……”

“These nicknames are still fine. In comparison, someone like Tanlang Elder with such a terrible temper and average looks has much worse ones.”

Out of all of the twenty elders on Sisheng Peak, the one that Chu Wanning had the worst relationship with was Tanlang Elder. Chu Wanning asked: “What do they call him?”

“Something like wintertime pickles or mustard greens, because his skin is dark.” Mo Ran said, laughing. “MengMeng, don’t make that face at me, you have your fair share of nicknames too.”

Xue Meng looked like he’d just swallowed a whole egg: “What? Me too?”

“Of course.” Mo Ran said, grinning.

Xue Meng tried to look like he didn’t mind, and cleared his throat, asking: “Well, what do they call me?”

“Fanny.”

“…….why?”

“What do you mean why, isn’t it obvious?” Mo Ran shrugged his shoulders, uttering those words mirthfully, but couldn’t resist anymore, and slapped

the table, laughing. “You’re like a peacock fanning its tail feathers everywhere, HAHAHAHAHA—”

Xue Meng bounded to his feet, howling in anger: “MO RAN! I’LL KILL YOU!!!!!!!!!”

By the time the three of them had eaten their fill and drank enough, it was already past midnight. They returned to Sisheng Peak, and Chu Wanning was first sent off by the two stupid disciples to Xuanji Elder’s quarters. He bade them farewell. Xue Meng eagerly made plans to meet tomorrow near the bamboo forest, but Chu Wanning didn’t know when he might turn back to his original form, and didn’t dare to agree. Instead, he said that he’d come meet Xue Meng if he had free time.

Chu Wanning waited until the two disciples had walked far away, and only then did he fly up lightly, stepping along the edges of rooftiles and making his way back towards Red Lotus Pavilion.

The second morning, Chu Wanning woke up, and felt slightly dispirited after seeing that he was still stuck in a child’s body.

Chu Wanning stayed stone-faced, stepping onto a wooden stool, and stared at the person in the mirror for a long while. He felt as though he didn’t have the motivation to comb his hair properly. After mulling things over, he felt like he couldn’t take it anymore, and immediately went to find Xue Zhengyong.

“What? You saw Meng-er and Ran-er yesterday?”

“Right, I said that I was Xuanji Elder’s disciple, and they didn’t seem to doubt it.” Chu Wanning said, “But if Xue Meng comes to ask you, please remember to cover for me. But more importantly, I’ve already cultivated

for more than ten days, and nothing has really changed. This isn't working, I'll have to ask Tanlang to take a look after all."

"Oho, our Yuheng Elder and his thin face is suddenly not worried about losing face?"

Chu Wanning shot him a cold glance. However, such a look coming from a young child wasn't imposing at all, but rather looked like the child was throwing a fit.

Chu Wanning was quite adorable as a child, and Xue Zhengyong couldn't help but to be slightly moved, reaching out to pat his head.

Chu Wanning suddenly said: "Sect Leader, when my body returns to normal, could you ask HuanSha Hall to tailor me a new set of Sisheng Peak robes? Not white."

Xue Zhengyong froze in shock: "I thought you didn't like wearing light armour?"

"Occasionally changing appearance is good too." Chu Wanning said with a dark expression as he walked away.

Although Tanlang Elder wasn't on good terms with Chu Wanning, he had to hold himself back a little bit in the presence of their sect leader. He didn't sneer at Chu Wanning openly, but it was clear what he was thinking from his eyes.

Chu Wanning looked up at Tanlang Elder expressionlessly.

Tanlang's eyes were shining with glee, almost like there were fireworks going off in there.

Chu Wanning : “……”

“Madam Wang’s diagnosis was more or less correct.” Tanlang Elder let go of Chu Wanning’s wrist after taking his pulse, and Chu Wanning immediately yanked his hand away and tugged his sleeve back down.

“Then why has it been ten days without any change?”

Tanlang responded: “Although you didn’t come into contract with much sap from the ancient willow tree, its effects are still pretty strong, so I’m afraid that it might take quite a long time to return to your original form.”

“How long will it take?” Chu Wanning casually asked him casually.

Tanlang said: “Not sure, but probably about ten years.”

Chu Wanning’s eyes widened immediately. Tanlang Elder tried his best to keep a straight face, but his eyes were brimming with glee at Chu Wanning’s misfortune: “Yup, you’re gonna need ten years to return to your original form.”

Chu Wanning stared at him for a while, then said gloomily: “Are you misleading me?”

“Perish the thought, I wouldn’t dare mislead the great Yuheng Elder.” Tanlang said with a smile, “Anyway, if you ask me, this is just fine. You’re body’s just smaller, your mentality slightly younger—just a tiny bit—and besides, your cultivation is unaffected, what’s the rush to go back to normal?”

Chu Wanning, ashen-faced, was speechless for a while.

Tanlang continued: “However, during these ten years, there’s no guarantee that you’ll take the form of a child the entire time. This type of tree sap migrates along the same paths as your spiritual energy, so if you don’t use any spiritual techniques for three to five months, you should be able to turn back to your original form.”

“That works too!” Xue Zhengyong’s eyes lit up as if he was seeing the first light of dawn.

But Tanlang smiled and continued: “Sect Leader, don’t be in such a rush, I’m not done explaining yet. Even after Yuheng Elder returns to his adult form, he still won’t be able to use too many techniques, because once his spiritual energy becomes depleted from overuse, the willow sap will be able to exert its influence again, and he’ll turn back into a child.”

“Overuse? So how much would count as too much?” Xue Zheng Yong exclaimed.

“About that, since the sap has already spread throughout his entire body.” Tanlang said, “At most, he’d only be able to use two moves per day.”

Chu Wanning spoke in a voice that was cold and hard as steel, “The boundary to the ghost realm develops breaches that need repairing all the time, forging golems also uses spiritual energy. if I can only use two moves a day, I would be as good as useless.”

“Well that’s all I got.” Tanlang replied sarcastically, “After all, if the human realm suffered the loss of the Beidou Immortal, even the sun might not rise in the west tomorrow.”

Xue Zhengyong fretted with worry: “Tanlang, quit it with the sarcasm already. Out of the entire cultivation world, your medical techniques are up

there, please think of something. Even if Yuheng's cultivation hasn't been affected, he's still in a child's body, so his abilities definitely aren't the same as before. Not to mention, if the other sects hear that Yuheng was injured at Jincheng Lake, they might think to try something funny. Ten years is way too long, could you look for some medicines or something, that could maybe……"

Tanlang Elder sneered and interrupted him mid-sentence: "Sect Leader, the sap that the Beidou Immortal was infected with is from an ancient spiritual tree, not some common poison. Do you really think that I can just come up with a cure on the spot?"

Xue Zhengyong: "....."

"That's enough for now, I have to go extract medicine for pills." Tanlang said languidly, "Why don't you two see yourselves out."

Xue Zhengyong: "Tanlang!" He still wanted to say something, but Chu Wanning pulled on the hem of his robes, and said, "Sect Leader, let's go."

When they reached the door, Tanlang's voice suddenly floated over from behind.

"Chu Wanning, if you're willing to beg me properly and humbly, then who knows? I might be willing to help derive a cure for you. Although I've never seen someone with your condition before, I might not necessarily be unable to help. So why don't you think about it carefully?"

"....." Chu Wanning looked backwards and replied, "What would count as properly and humbly?"

Tanlang reclined on the couch, lazily sorting out the bundles of silver needles on the table, and raised his eyes at the sound of Chu Wanning's voice, disdain apparent in his eyes: "When other people are at the end of their ropes, they get on their knees to prostrate themselves and beg for help. We're colleagues, so I won't ask you to get down and knock your head on the floor, but if you kneel and say some nice words towards me, then I'll help you."

Chu Wanning said nothing, only gazing indifferently at him.

Only after a while did he say: "Wintertime pickles, you must be dreaming."

With that, Chu Wanning flicked his sleeves and left. Tanlang Elder was left there in a daze to figure out what wintertime pickles meant.

The days trickled by slowly. Yuheng Elder declared that he was going into seclusion to meditate, when actually, he was stuck in the body of a child and couldn't return to his original form. Xue Zheng Yong, Madam Wang, and Tanlang Elder found out about it one after another, and, to prevent the secret from being exposed, Xuanji Elder was also informed.

A few months passed in the blink of an eye, Red Lotus Pavillion's doors had been closed to visitors for quite a while, and Xue Meng and the others couldn't help but to be worried.

"Shizun has been in seclusion for more than seventy days now, why hasn't he come out yet?"

"Maybe he's refining his cultivation level." Shi Mei took a sip of spiritual mountain dew from his cup, and looked up at the dark, overcast skies outside the window, "It's going to snow, and soon it will be the new year, I wonder if Shizun will come out before then."

Mo Ran was flipping lazily through a manual of sword techniques, and upon hearing Shimei's words, said, "Probably not. Didn't he send us a message with his haitang flower a couple days ago to say that it would be a while yet? I doubt he'll be out in time."

It was a rest day on Sisheng peak, when the disciples didn't need to practice cultivation. Mo Ran and the other two were gathered together to enjoy some freshly brewed tea and warmed wine. The bamboo curtains of the small pavillion in the yard were half drawn, the heavy curtains concealing its occupants, and steam wafted lightly from beneath.

Lately, there's been a new addition who often hangs out with them—Xuanji Elder's disciple, Xia Sini.

Ever since that day when he met Xue Meng, Xue Meng had dragged him over to cultivate or play together every couple of days, and before long, the group had become inseparable.

And so, Yuheng Elder's group of three disciples mysteriously got a fourth.

At this moment, Chu Wanning, assuming the name Xia Sini, was seated in front of the table eating pastries. He ate in a refined manner, but the speed at which he ate wasn't lacking at all.

Xue Meng glanced at him inadverdently, paused in surprise, then his gaze doubled back to the plate and he uttered in surprise: "Wow, little shidi, who'd you inherit this bottomless stomach from?"

Chu Wanning was chewing leisurely on a piece of osmanthus cake. The cake was delicious, and he didn't bother responding to Xue Meng; after all, there was somebody fighting over the food with him.

Mo Ran and Chu Wanning's hands landed on the last piece of crispy lotus pastry at the same time. Their eyes shot up, and it seemed as if there was lightning crackling between their gazes.

Chu Wanning: "Let go."

Mo Ran: "Nope."

"Hands off."

"You've already eaten eight pieces, this one is mine."

"You can have any of the other ones, just not the lotus pastry."

Mo Ran glared at the little fellow for a while before pulling out his trump card: "Shidi, if you eat too many sweets you'll get cavities."

"That's fine." Chu Wanning was very calm, "I'm six, it wouldn't be embarrassing."

Mo Ran "……"

There was a loud 'PA!' as Xue Meng's slap landed alongside his scathing complaints: "Mo Weiyu how annoying can you get, how old are you already, to still fight Shidi for food???"

The moment Mo Ran covered his head with an "Aiyo," Chu Wanning had already swiftly snatched the lotus pastry, hands quick and face expressionless, feeling quite satisfied as he took a small bite.

"Shidi——!!!!!!!!!!"

Chu Wanning ignored him, totally devoted to nibbling on his sweets.

The four of them were busy making a ruckus when a sharp whistling sound pierced through the skies, reverberating throughout all of ShiSheng Peak. Chu Wanning's face fell: "The gathering whistle?"

Xue Meng lifted up the hanging curtains halfway to look outside the window. The other disciples who had been walking outside also stopped in their tracks to look around with expressions of surprise.

At the sound of the gathering whistle, everyone at Sisheng Peak must gather outside in the square in front of DanQing Hall. This also meant that the whistle would only be blown when there was an emergency. Before Chu Wanning joined the sect, this whistle had sounded often whenever the ghost realm barrier had been breached. But since Chu Wanning's joining, the whistle hadn't been heard for a long time.

Shi Mei put down the book in his hand and got up to walk to Xue Meng's side: "How strange, what could be so urgent?"

"Don't know. No point wondering, let's just go take a look first."

Only Mo Ran was silent. He pressed his lips together, and his eyelashes fluttered downwards, covering the flicker of something unnatural flashing across his eyes. He knew what this whistle foretold, but the timing was slightly different than he remembered, he didn't think that it would happen this soon……

The four of them arrived at Sisheng Peak, and the other disciples also came one after another. Before long, the entirety of Loyalty Square was filled

with all of the elders and their disciples.

Once everyone had gathered, Xue Zhengyong walked out from the tightly-shut doors of Loyalty Hall to stand before the jade-banded platform railing, above flights of limestone steps. Six beautiful women followed behind him, some charming looking, others cold seeming, but all were impossibly gorgeous. They stood against the wind, wearing only thin muslin robes in such bitterly cold weather, and at a glance, their red skirts were like the clouds at dawn, their eyes seemed lit with scarlet flames amidst the delicate fluttering of silken ribbons, and the space between each of their eyebrows was marked with a crimson blaze.

Xue Meng was stunned.

Not only him——the expressions of just about every person in the square changed upon seeing the six women.

Xue Meng stared blankly for a long time before he managed to speak with a trembling voice: “Envoys of the feathered tribe…... did, did they come from Zhuque#, the land of immortals?”

Author’s Notes:

Mini theatre 《How to make you happy》

Sisheng Peak disciple A wants to join under the teachings of Chu Wanning. But heard the elder is very rigid, thus decided to ask the three shixiongs for advice.

Disciple A: Hello young master! I’m disciple A! What should I do to make elder Yuheng happy?

Xue Meng: First, you need to be strict with yourself, be keen on your studies with diligence, then you need to brace the cold winds and not be swayed with difficulty, lastly you need to be hard-wearing. If Shizun strikes your left cheek, remember to present your right cheek, if Shizun wants to cut off your left leg, remember to stick out your right leg too.

Disciple A felt despair, thus he went to Shi Mingjing for help.

Shi Mei: To make Shizun happy? Very easy, you just need to remember drinking wine he likes to drink pear blossom wine eating fish he likes to eat lake perch three pieces of tang yuan is just enough rice wine pudding ten bowls is not too little cold winters he likes to steep tea there needs to be a lot of rose petals in tea barbeque meat has to have a sprinkle of cumin there can't be a single piece of chili…

Disciple A: ……

He only had his last savior Mo Weiyu left.

Mo Ran: Oh, no problem, my method is really easy.

Disciple A: What is it?

Mo Ran: Sleep him.

Disciple A: …….

Mo Ran: If once is not enough then twice, if twice is not enough then ten times….

Disciple A: I'm afraid the next day after the first time I will be put on the cucking stool.

Mo Ran: ? Who said to allow him to be able to get out of bed the next day? At what rate did you think I meant when I said if twice is not enough then ten times?

Disciple: W-What rate?

Mo Ran: The whole night.

Disciple A, in the end, abandoned the thought.

Ch.55 This Venerable One Feels Uneasy

Zhuque may be called the land of immortals, but its residents are not, in fact, immortals. Rather, but a people of half-immortal, half-demon mixed blood.

In the cultivation world, they are the beings that most resemble immortals, and are also known as the “feathered tribe.”

The feathered tribe has always lived in their own Peach Blossom Spring# beyond the maze of JiuHua Mountain, rarely ever interfering in matters of the human world. But half of the blood that flowed in their bodies was still mortal after all, so they weren’t completely detached. Thus, they would often appear at times of turmoil or disaster in the cultivation world and use their immense powers to help the mortals through the crisis.

When Mo Ran was raising hell and turning the world upside down in the last lifetime, the feathered tribe had appeared in droves. But their power couldn’t best the emperor who had already perfected the forbidden technique in the end, and Mo Ran had chased down and killed every single one, treading across the ground covered in blood and scorched feathers.

Zhuque, the land of immortals was burned down in one day.

It was an extremely frantic memory, so much so that even Mo Ran would break out in a cold sweat whenever he recalled it afterwards. He thought that he was like a man possessed at that time, endlessly cruel.

But right now, he clearly did not yet have the strength to contend with the feathered tribe. In fact, due to the natural superiority of their blood, the vast majority of cultivators fell short of them in terms of spiritual strength. Out of the entire Sisheng Peak, only a few of the most stellar elders could even exchange blows with them.

Xue Meng unintentionally saw Mo Ran's face and got quite the scare: "What's up with you? Why's your face so pale?"

"It's nothing." Mo Ran lowered his eyelashes and whispered, "I just ran too fast earlier."

The arrival of the feathered tribe marked the beginning of Shi Mei's tragedy in the last lifetime. Mo Ran's heart jumped to his throat; he thought it would be a while yet before these events happened, why did the progression of so many things change so much from before?

The faint winter sun hung weakly in the sky, illuminating the world in a layer of deathly white.

Standing underneath, Mo Ran couldn't help reaching out and taking Shi Mei's hand.

Shi Mei blinked: "What's wrong?"

"....." Mo Ran shook his head and said nothing.

Just then, Xue Zhengyong started speaking. His words weren't much different from what he said in the last life.

“The reason I called everyone here today is because envoys of the feathered tribe have come once again. Just like eighty years ago, they came from the Peach Blossom Spring to the human world to help in a foretold calamity.”

A pause as he looked slowly over the disciples gathered below.

“As everyone knows, the barrier to the ghost realm was originally set by the god Fuxi, but it has gradually weakened over these past million years, and would break every few decades. In recent years, its power fades by the day, and despite everyone’s utmost efforts——”

Xue Meng huffed under his breath: “Dad’s talking some nonsense, it’s clearly the efforts of basically just Shizun.”

“Despite everyone’s utmost efforts, the breach grows bigger still, and the barrier will eventually break down like it did decades ago. When that time comes, the boundary between the human realm and the ghost realm will be broken, thousands of ghosts and spirits will rush out, and ordinary people will suffer. In order to avert this calamity, envoys of the feathered tribe have come to the sects to select those with the most suitable spiritual energy and innate skill to go to the Peach Blossom Spring to cultivate in seclusion.”

His words caused a commotion in the crowd.

The feathered tribe is picking people to go advance their cultivation at the Peach Blossom Spring in the land of the immortals?!

All of the disciples grew from amazement to excitement, and, regardless of actual ability, each secretly held hopes and expectations.

Only Mo Ran alone was not the least bit glad, his features subtly showing anxiety instead. He was usually very good at feigning appearances, so much so that others couldn't even tell real from fake, but right now, he couldn't hide his feelings at all——

This had to do with Shi Mei's survival. Back then, Shi Mei was selected by the feathered tribe and went to the Peach Blossom Spring to cultivate. Not long after his return, the breach underwent a large scale breakdown, and huge hordes of ghosts climbed up from hell.

Shi Mei fought alongside Chu Wanning in the ensuing battle, each taking one side of the array, working together to repair the biggest breach. However, Shi Mei wasn't as strong as Chu Wanning, and the countless ghosts, seeing that the mortal realm was about to be closed off, all charged toward Shi Mei in a murderous stream as he was focusing on maintaining the balance in the barrier, and ran him through in an instant!

The demonic energy pierced through his heart and soul.

Chu Wanning didn't even lift a single finger to help, didn't even attempt to stop them. As Shi Mei fell from atop the coiled dragon pillar, he chose instead to use all of the remainder of his power to seal off the rest of the barrier that Shi Mei wasn't able to.

It was snowing that day. Shi Mei's falling form seemed as if it was just another of the countless small, insignificant flakes of snow.

The snow fell nonstop, covering the sky. No one would care if a flake of the frozen crystal was about to melt, just like generation after generation of people, the decades of their lives from birth to death, none but their close relatives would care about an ordinary person's death.

In that snow, in that pandemonium, Mo Ran held Shi Mei as his breathing grew shallower and shallower, kneeling on the ground begging Chu Wanning to please spare him a glance, to please save him.

But in the end Chu Wanning only turned away, chose to walk away into the boundless white, to accomplish his own prestige, severing the bonds between master and disciple.

How laughable.

The things Chu Wanning liked, the things he cared about, the things he pursued, all of it was so very laughable.

For example, Chu Wanning liked the sound of rain in the lotus pond, and he liked the melancholic verses of the poet Du, with that frighteningly strict adherence to form.

For example, Chu Wanning cared about the sprouting of plants in the coming of spring, the death of cicadas with the arrival of autumn; he cared about where the flames of war were lit once again, and where the common people struggled.

For example, Chu Wanning had always taught them to be righteous, to put the people before the self.

But Mo Ran thought, fuck the people!

He didn't know or care about those people, what did it matter to him whether they lived or died?

If Chu Wanning's rain poured over the mutterings of lost souls, if his plants were splashed with the tears of refugees, Mo Ran didn't care. His rain was normal rain, and his plants were ordinary plants. The 'common people' were just so many words on a piece of paper, who the hell cares.

And so he thought, Chu Wanning was despicable, a hypocrite who spouted words of duty and compassion as if his heart was big enough to hold everything under the sky, but in reality, that pathetically narrow chest of his didn't even have a place for his own disciple.

Afterwards, he had angrily asked Chu Wanning, does your heart ache? Do you feel any unease at all? You said to put the people before the self, but you're still alive while Shi Mei died following your commands! You're the one who got him killed, you hypocrite, you liar!

Do you even have a heart?

When Shi Mei fell from the platform, he was calling for you, he was calling 'Shizun,' did you hear him? Did you hear him? Why didn't you save him…… why didn't you save him!!

Chu Wanning, you have stone for a heart.

You've……

Never cared about us.

You didn't care…… you didn't care……

And then, everything ended up the way they did.

Chu Wanning became adored and respected by everyone in the cultivation world, practically a king just without the crown, and no one spared a thought for those who had perished; Shi Mei's death was like an unremarkable step under the feet of the victorious.

He traded an ungifted disciple for peace and prosperity, the so-called world peace.

No one would say he was wrong in that.

Only Mo Ran saw that the brilliant crown atop his head was made of the bones of the dead, that his success was built Shi Mei's death.

He hated to the bottom of his heart.

"Hey, young man."

"Hey——"

There was a warm hand on his forehead all of a sudden. Mo Ran started and opened his eyes as he was ripped from his pitch-black memories.

Before him was a delicate face, bright and lovely. One of the envoys of the feathered tribe had approached without him knowing, and was smiling gently at him.

"Spacing out with such a great opportunity right in front of you?"

"Ah, big sister, please don't mind." Mo Ran did his best to cheer up so as to not rouse any suspicion, smiling back at the envoy, "I've always liked to daydream, and was so hoping to be selected that I got lost in my imaginations of what the Peach Blossom Spring might look like, so sorry about that."

It turned out that, while Mo Ran was lost in his memories, the envoys of the feathered tribe had already come down and began picking people, but he was so caught up in his tangled thoughts that he was wholly unaware of things happening around him.

The envoy smiled sweetly, and then said something that Mo Ran hadn't been expecting at all: "Your spiritual energy is pure, and your cultivation and aptitude are both remarkable as well. If you want to go to the Peach Blossom Spring, then come along with me."

Mo Ran: "....."

Mo Ran: "!!!!!!"

To the Peach Blossom Spring?

Only Shi Mei and Chu Wanning were chosen in the last lifetime, why is this life——

He was too shocked to even speak. Luckily, being chosen by the feathered tribe is naturally something worthy of shock and amazement, so the people nearby didn't find his reaction odd at all, only gazing at him with envy.

The envoy brought him to Loyalty Hall, and as the initial shock subsided and his heart stopped hammering in his chest, his eyes began to fill with an ecstasy that no one else saw.

Things were indeed different this life.

Even though he didn't yet know if these changes were for better or for worse, and why exactly the fates had even changed at all, at least he could go to the Peach Blossom Spring too. If he studies under the feathered tribe as well, then the heavy task of repairing the barrier might not fall on Shi Mei when the time comes.

He wasn't some cultured man; even after living two lives, he still didn't understand what putting the people before the self even meant.

But Shi Mei was the person who was the kindest to him in this world, and nothing else mattered in front of this person.

Including his own meat sack and this half a wisp of returned soul.

As long as Shi Mei lives, he would throw it all away.

But when the envoys had finished their selection and gathered them all in front of Loyalty Hall, Mo Ran found that the lineup was completely different from the last life.

Shi Mei was here as before, but as a result of being in seclusion, Chu Wanning missed the selection, so he wasn't amongst the chosen, and in his place was Xuanji Elder's disciple Xia Sini.

And even more surprising was the fact that Xue Meng had also been invited to the Peach Blossom Spring, per the words of the envoy: "There is a lingering power of the Exalted Gouchen's sacred sword on your person, how interesting."

From the Heaven-Piercing Tower nearby came the deep sound of a clock reverberating throughout Sisheng Peak.

“From Sisheng Peak of the lower cultivation realm, the chosen are Xue Ziming, Mo Weiyu, Shi Mingjing, and Xia Sini, for a total of four.” The head of the envoys conveyed to Xue Zhengyong before releasing a messenger myna bird.

Lifting her hand with the vividly colored bird perched atop a fingertip, she continued in a clear voice: “These four are exceptional individuals, suitable in aptitude and genuine in character. Thus concludes this report.”

With that, she released the bird. The myna memorized her words and, with a flutter of its powerful wings, quickly vanished into the vast skies.

To be able to go cultivate at the Peach Blossom Spring was a rare opportunity, even more so than acquiring a holy weapon, and no one would turn it down. Moreover, they would be studying techniques to ward against the breakdown of the barrier to the ghost realm, the very duty and obligation of those who cultivate, and no one could turn it down.

As for the time, it could take anywhere from a couple of months to three or even five years.

But the feathered tribe was not unreasonable; seeing that it was nearly the end of the year, they said to stay and spend New Year’s Eve first, then they will come bring the group to the Peach Blossom Spring at JiuHua Mountain.

Thinking about how he will soon be able to go together with Shi Mei to the Peach Blossom Spring, Mo Ran couldn’t help feeling overjoyed. However, it was not long before the joy faded away. He didn’t understand why at first, until one day, passing by the foot of the southern peak of Sisheng Peak, he looked up to see the sealed-off Red Lotus Pavilion.

Mo Ran's steps slowed subconsciously, then came to a stop altogether. He stood there, gazing up where the mountain disappeared into the clouds.

Chu Wanning had been in seclusion for over three months.

In this life, the hatred he held toward this person seemed to be ebbing away…… Even if he reminded himself time and again to not forget the look on Chu Wanning's face when he abandoned him and Shi Mei, there were still times when he empathized with him, when he felt confused and disconcerted.

Xia Sini was walking with him. Seeing the odd expression on Mo Ran's face and the way he stared at the southern peak lost in thought, his heart skipped a beat and he asked: "What is it?"

"Little shidi, do you think he will come out before we leave?"

".....He?"

"Ah." Mo Ran paused, coming back to his senses, and smiled toward Chu Wanning. Having spent quite some time together, he felt that this little shidi was clever and sensible, and liked him a lot, "I was talking about my Shizun, Yuheng Elder."

Chu Wanning: "I see……"

Mo Ran sighed, muttering: "He's never been in seclusion for this long before. Could it be that the injury he got at Jincheng Lake was actually very serious?"

This was the first time in a long while that he brought up his shizun of his own accord.

Chu Wanning already knew that it was impossible, but still couldn't help asking: "Do you…… miss him?"

Ch.56 This Venerable One is Busy Wrapping Dumplings

To be asked such a question, Mo Ran's face was one of bewilderment.

Do I miss him?

In spite of the deep, unforgettable resentment from his previous life, Chu Wanning had never wronged him in this one. Instead, he'd shielded him over and over from danger, and he was the one who was covered head to toe in injuries and bruised black and blue for him instead.

After a long time, he finally responded: "En……All of these times that he's been injured, it was all because of me……"

Seeing the expression on his face, Chu Wanning felt a twinge of warmth in his heart. He wanted to say something back to Mo Ran, but stopped after hearing what he said next.

"He's done too much for me, and I can only hope to help him recover a little bit quicker. I don't want to owe him too much."

That flicker of warmth his heart seems to have died, completely unmoving, frozen over.

Chu Wanning stood still for a little while, feeling as though he was extremely laughable.

Mo Ran already told him that the only thing between them was the relationship between master and disciple. It was his own fault that his head became dizzy with excitement at the slightest bit of hope, flying like a moth into a blazing fire, and being scorched into ashes—he couldn't blame anyone else.

Chu Wanning smiled; it was probably an ugly, dejected smile.

"You're overthinking it. You are his disciple, so there's no such thing as owing him debts. Everything he does, he does willingly."

Mo Ran's eyes turned to him: "And you—you're still so small, but you're always turning your nose up, giving cheek and imitating how adults speak." He said, laughing brightly, and rubbed Xia Sini's head.

Chu Wanning's head was patted for a while. He was still laughing at first, but after a while, his eyes slowly started to fill up with tears, and, facing the dazzlingly brilliant face in front of him, he said softly: "Mo Ran, I don't want to play with you anymore, let go."

Mo Ran's skull was several inches too thick, so he didn't notice any changes in his shidi's expression. Besides that, he had gotten so used to joking

around and yelling with “Xia Sini” that he didn’t hesitate to pinch the child’s soft, baby-smooth cheeks. Mo Ran’s lips quirked up softly, and he made a funny face.

“Pfft, why is little shidi mad this time?”

Chu Wanning stared at the child reflected in the other’s eyes, with such an ugly smile on his pinched face, like a pathetic, funny-looking monster.

“Let go.”

Mo Ran didn’t notice, and continued teasing him just as he did before: “Okay, okay, don’t be mad, I won’t say that you’re pretending to be an adult, hm? Come here, let’s make up, call me Shi-ge~”

“Let go of me……”

“Be good, call me shi-ge, and I’ll buy you osmanthus cake to eat in a bit.”

Chu Wanning closed his eyes, eyelashes trembling slightly, and finally spoke, his voice hoarse.

“Mo Ran, I’m not kidding around, I really don’t want to play with you anymore. Can you let go of me, let go, ok?” His slender eyebrows knitted together, and tears didn’t trickle out from his eyes because they were tightly shut. However, he spoke in a voice choked with sobs, “Mo Ran, it hurts……”

It hurt too much to hold one person in his heart, so he hid him carefully in the very depths of his heart. It was fine if that person didn’t like him, as long as he could think about that person quietly, protect that person silently; it was fine if he couldn’t have that person, all of it was fine.

But that person’s warmth and tenderness were given only to others, and the only things offered to him were barbs and thorns. He held him in his heart, and whenever that person moved, his heart would start bleeding. Day after day, new wounds would appear before the old ones had even healed over.

It was then that Chu Wanning knew that even if he wasn’t vying to obtain this person’s affections, every single moment that he held him in his heart would hurt him to his core.

He didn’t know how long he’d be able to bear this kind of pain, didn’t know when he’d break down from it completely.

Mo Ran finally noticed that something was off, and frantically let go. He touched the other's red-tinged cheeks, at a complete loss as to what to do. Chu Wanning suddenly thought that being in the body of a child wasn't a bad thing.

At least, this way, he could say so if it hurt without restraint, could show a little bit of his vulnerable side.

At least, this way, he would look toward him with concern.

This was something that he would've never even dared to think about before.

In the blink of an eye, it was already New Year's Eve. This was the liveliest time of year on ShiSheng Peak. All of the disciples were busy putting up red paper talismans and sweeping snowdrifts. The head chef at Mengpo Hall was busy from dawn till dusk, preparing delicacies for the end-of-year feast. Also, all of the elders prepared spells and charms that they specialized in to add to the festivities to help welcome the New Year. For example, Tanlang Elder transformed a pool of fresh spring water into fragrant wine, and Xuanji Elder released the three thousand fire light mice that he'd been raising, allowing them to scatter around the sect and to keep watch wherever they were, bringing everyone a little bit of warmth and respite from the cold. LuCun Elder enchanted the snowmen everyone made to run around the peak and yell "Happy New Year" at anyone they ran into.

No one expected Yuheng Elder to do anything; as a matter of fact, he was still in seclusion. He'd been gone for a long time, and hadn't appeared in front of anybody since the very start.

Xue Meng stood by the window, his face tilted upwards, looking at the petals of haitang blossoms fluttering from the skies, and spoke as though preoccupied with something: "We'll be gone after today. It seems we won't be able to see him before we leave after all……I wonder what Shizun's doing right now?"

"He's definitely cultivating." Mo Ran said through a mouthful of apple, "Speaking of which, all of the elders are supposed to put on a performance tonight. It sucks that Shizun isn't here—if he was, he'd have to perform too. I wonder what he could even do."

Mo Ran laughed before continuing: "Maybe he'd put on a display of "How to get Angry," eh?"

Xue Meng glared at him: "How about a performance of "Whipping Mo Weiyu to Death'?"

It was the New Year, so Mo Ran didn't get angry at Xue Meng's harsh joke. He suddenly thought of something, and asked: "Oh yeah, have you seen

the little Shidi today?”

”You mean Xia Sini?” Xue Meng replied, “I haven’t seen him, but in any case, he’s Xuanji Elder’s disciple. Xuanji is already being gracious to not mind him hanging out with us every day, but if he kept sticking around us even during the New Year festivities, his Shizun might really lose his mind.”

Mo Ran laughed: “I guess.”

The rays of the setting sun turned into evening above Red Lotus Pavilion.

Chu Wanning held a pill in his hand, looking it over carefully. Xue Zhengyong was sitting across from him and pouring himself a cup of tea, since Chu Wanning didn’t invite him to have some. He also ate a crispy pastry from the plate, etiquette be damned.

Chu Wanning glared at him, but Xue Zhengyong kept chewing obliviously: “Yuheng, aren’t you done looking at it yet? Tanlang can be pretty harsh with his words, but his intentions aren’t bad at all. It’s not like he’d actually harm you.”

“……What are you saying, Sect Leader.” Chu Wanning replied lightly, “I was just thinking that since Tanlang Elder already went through the trouble to concoct a pill that would allow me to regain my adult form for one day,

then why doesn't he just extract a couple more of them? That way, I can just take one when the need arises."

"Aiya, if only it was that easy," Xue Zhengyong said, "The raw materials that go into making this medicine are rare beyond measure, and Tanlang's already out of materials after refining three of them. It's not a long-term plan."

"I see." Chu Wanning replied, deep in thought. "So that's how it is, please give him my thanks."

"Haha." Xue Zhengyong waved his hand, "You two are actually pretty similar you know, curt with your words, but not bad at heart."

Chu Wanning shot a glare over at him, but didn't say anything. He poured himself a cup of tea, and swallowed the medicine that would allow him to return to his original form.

Xue Zhengyong was just about to eat another pastry when Chu Wanning stopped his hand.

"Wha?" The sect leader said unhappily.

Chu Wanning spoke: "Mine."

Xue Zhengyong: "……"

When night fell on Sisheng peak, all of the disciples filtered into Mengpo Hall, one after the other. Each elder brought their disciples and sat down together to knead dough and make dumplings. Both the snowmen and the fire light mice threaded through the throngs of people, passing them jars of salt, red pepper powder, saucers of chopped scallions, and other miscellaneous things.

Every table was bustling with excitement and chattering laughter. Yuheng Elder's table was the only exception—the disciples were all here, but the master was absent.

Xue Meng looked around him for a bit, sighing: "I miss Shizun."

Shimei replied warmly: "Didn't Shizun send us a letter a few days ago, telling us to enjoy the festivities and to work hard on our cultivation at the Peach Blossom Springs, and that he'll come see us as soon as he comes out of seclusion?"

"He did say that, but just when will he come out of seclusion……"

Xue Meng sighed sorrowfully, his eyes wandering listlessly past the gates, when he suddenly sat up straight, eyes opened wide like a cat and staring out the gates

Xue Meng's face paled and then coloured, flushed a dizzying shade of red, and his eyes shone brightly. He was so excited that he couldn't even speak properly: "That…… that's…… that's……"

Mo Ran thought that one of the rare spiritual beasts that Xuanji Elder raised had escaped to liven things up a bit, and thought that Xue Meng was surprised because he was inexperienced and overreacting. He laughed: "That's what—look at you, it's like you saw an immortal or something, what's there to be so sur——"

He turned around, still grinning gleefully, and casually looked up.

And couldn't finish the rest of his sentence.

Standing in the snowy dusk outside the door was Chu Wanning, dressed in white robes with a vividly red cape. He turned elegantly to the side to put away his umbrella and shake off the dusting of snow, then his eyelashes flicked up to reveal a pair of bright, slender phoenix eyes underneath, a mild glance sweeping over them.

With just this one glance, by the time Mo Ran came back to his senses, his heart was already beating fast and his palms were covered in sweat, and even his breathing had slowed down involuntarily.

The chatter in Mengpo Hall gradually quieted down. Usually, whenever Chu Wanning appeared in Mengpo Hall, the disciples didn't dare to cause a ruckus. Even more so now, to suddenly appear on New Year's Eve after having been in seclusion for such a long time, the snowflakes on him seemed to make his face even fairer and more beautiful, and made his eyebrows seem a darker and more defined.

Mo Ran stood up, murmuring: "Shizun……"

Xue Meng bounded up and sprinted with kitten-like excitement towards Chu Wanning, yelling "SHIZUN!!!!!" while running into Chu Wanning's arms.

Chu Wanning's clothes were thoroughly chilled from the bitter cold outside, but Xue Meng wore an expression like he was holding peach blossoms from early spring, or a coal fire from late summer, endlessly warm. Xue Meng began to shout noisily, not stopping to take a breath: "Shizun, you've finally come out! I thought that we wouldn't be able to see you before leaving, but you love us after all!!!! Shizun, shizun……."

Shi Mei also came over and bowed respectfully, his face beaming with delight: "Congratulations to Shizun for coming out of seclusion."

Chu Wanning patted Xue Meng's head, and nodded in Shi Mei's direction: "This master has arrived slightly late, but let's go greet the new year together."

He sat down at the feast, with Xue Meng at his side and Mo Ran across from him.

With Chu Wanning's arrival, and after the initial hubbub and excitement died down, the three disciples fell into their usual habits, sitting upright and still like their Shizun. Their table was weirdly silent.

There was flour, ground meat, eggs, and many other types of ingredients on the table, along with a brand-new copper coin.

Mo Ran was the one with the best cooking skills in their group. Thus, everyone decided that he'd be the one to give instructions.

"Well, I guess I'll take charge, then." Mo Ran replied, laughing, "Do you guys know how to roll dough?"

Nobody uttered a word.

"……Ok, I'll roll out the wrappers then." Mo Ran said, "Shi Mei, you make the best wontons, and dumpling filling isn't all that different, so why don't you make the filling."

Shi Mei hesitated for a while before saying: "This……There's some difference after all, I'm afraid that I might not be able to do it properly."

Chu Wanning replied lightly: “It’s fine as long as it’s edible, don’t worry too much.”

Shi Mei smiled: “Okay then.”

“Xue Meng, you can just pass the water or help roll our sleeves up or something. Just don’t get in the way.”

Xue Meng: “……”

“As for Shizun.” Mo Ran grinned, “Would Shizun like to sit by the side and have a nice cup of tea?”

Chu Wanning replied coldly: “I’ll wrap the dumplings.”

“Ah?” Mo Ran exclaimed, startled, thinking that he might’ve gone violently deaf in both ears. “What did you want to do?”

“I said, I’ll wrap the dumplings.”

Mo Ran: "……"

Mo Ran suddenly thought that he would've much rather gone violently deaf in both ears after all.

Author's Notes:

There are some little baobeis with questions about the story's background setting. Although bits and pieces have already appeared in the book and more will be written in the future. There is yet to be a detailed summary, after all, world expositions tend to be less interesting. I'm afraid of everybody falling asleep if I fed it to you all at once hahaha~ So today's author's notes will contain a segment of the setting, take a look if it interests you.

First is about upper and lower cultivation world, the "upper" in upper cultivation means the rising of pure air, coastal area on the map, near Kunlun sky pond, these places are all upper cultivation world. The "lower" in lower cultivation indicates the sinking of tainted air, overflowing with spirits and monsters, with the necropolis FengDu as center, most located in SiChuan and GuiZhou region. Upper cultivation world has an abundance of cultivation energy, suitable for cultivation practice. Thus there are nine large sects in the upper cultivation world, while lower cultivation world only has Sisheng Peak.

In regards to cultivation: There is no clear differentiation of ranking such as golden core, foundation, passing trials or grandmaster. After the spiritual core's awakening, there is only continuous strengthening of one's own cultivation ability. There is no complex grading system. Cultivators practice

to achieve goals such as gaining exception spiritual powers, to become the top amongst peers. But of course there are ones like Shizun, who want to use their powers to do good deeds. People with tremendous amounts of power can live up to a hundred years, maintain youthful appearance, and become a celestial being upon their death. However ones who have been able to ascend while they are still alive can be counted with one hand. Dying of old age, then reincarnate into the next life tend to be the end result for the majority of cultivators.

Ch.57 This Venerable One Listens to You Play the Guqin Once Again

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Unexpectedly, although Chu Wanning's dumpling-wrapping technique was clumsy, the finished product actually wasn't bad. The dumplings made by those long fingers of his were adorably round, lining up neatly on the table.

All three disciples were dumbstruck.

"Shizun actually knows how to make dumplings……"

"Am I dreaming right now?"

"He's really good at it, too."

"Wow……"

Of course their hushed mutterings didn't escape Chu Wanning's ears. Chu Wanning pressed his lips together, eyelashes fluttering imperceptibly, and even though he was expressionless as always, the tips of his ears grew a little bit pink.

Xue Meng couldn't resist asking: "Shizun, is this your first time making dumplings?"

"......Mn."

"Then how are you making them so nice-looking."

"......It's not so different from making golems, just folding a few creases, there's nothing to it."

Mo Ran watched him from across the wooden table, gradually becoming lost in thought.

The only time he had ever seen Chu Wanning cook in the last life was after Shi Mei's passing. That day, he had gone to the kitchen and slowly made the wontons that were Shi Mei's specialty.

But before they could make it into the pot, they were struck to the ground by a Mo Ran who had lost all sense, the snowy wontons rolling all over the floor.

Mo Ran had no recollection at all of whether those wontons were round or flat, well-made or deformed.

The only thing he remembered was the look on Chu Wanning's face, the way he had stared at him without a word, with bits of flour still on his face, looking strangely unfamiliar, somewhat at a loss, even a bit dumb……

Mo Ran had thought that he would get angry, but Chu Wanning had said nothing in the end, only bending over and, with his head lowered, quietly picked up the dirty wontons one by one, gathered them together, and then tossed them into the trash.

Just what was going through Chu Wanning's mind at that time?

Mo Ran didn't know; he had never thought about it, didn't want to think about it, and, truthfully, didn't dare think about it.

The dumplings were all done being wrapped, and the little snowmen carried them away to the kitchen to be boiled. In accordance with

tradition, Chu Wanning put a copper coin into one of them; whoever gets it would have good luck.

It wasn't long before the snowmen brought back cooked dumplings, complete with spicy and sour dipping sauce in the wooden tray.

Xue Meng said: "Shizun, please go ahead first."

Chu Wanning did not decline. He picked up a dumpling with his chopsticks and put it in his bowl, but did not eat it, instead picking up three more and giving them to Xue Meng, Mo Ran, and Shi Mei.

"Happy New Year." Chu Wanning said mildly.

The disciples were taken aback for a moment before they all broke into smiles: "Shizun, happy New Year."

As it happens, Mo Ran bit into the copper coin with a crack on the very first dumpling. He was caught totally off guard, and nearly broke a tooth on it.

Looking at the grimace on his face, Shi Mei laughed: "A-Ran is sure to have good luck this year."

Xue Meng: "Tch, lucky bastard."

Mo Ran, teary-eyed: "Thithunn, arenth you a litthle too gooth af pickihg dumphlingth, I gof it on the ferry firth one……"

Chu Wanning: "Speak properly."

Mo Ran: "I bhith my tonn."

Chu Wanning: "……"

Mo Ran rubbed his cheek and took a sip of the tea Shi Mei offered before the pain finally subsided a little, and he immediately began joking around: "Haha, could it be that Shizun memorized which dumpling had the copper coin and deliberately gave it to me?"

"You wish."

Chu Wanning said coldly, then lowered his head and started eating.

Mo Ran wasn't sure if he was seeing things, but under the warm candlelight, Chu Wanning's face seemed a little red.

After the dumplings, a sumptuous dinner prepared by the head chef was brought out, platefuls of meat and fish covering the entire table.

Mengpo Hall grew even livelier. From the seat of honor, Xue Zhengyong and Madam Wang directed the little snowmen to deliver red packets to every table.

A little snowman bumped insistently against Chu Wanning's knee, the stones it has for eyes rolling around as it stared at him.

Chu Wanning blinked: "Hm? Even I get one?"

He accepted the red packet and opened it to find a handful of pricey golden leaves. A little lost for words, he looked up at Xue Zhengyong, only to see the carefree man grinning back at himself before raising the cup of wine in his hand toward him in a toast.

How silly.

But then again, Xue Zhengyong was really…… really……

Chu Wanning stared at him for a while, and couldn't help the faint smile that curved the corners of his lips. He raised his own cup in return toward the sect leader, and downed it in one gulp.

Chu Wanning divided the golden leaves amongst his disciples. Three rounds of drinks later, accompanied by non-stop performances on the stage, the atmosphere at the table finally grew lively as well.

Mostly due to the fact that it seems the three brats have grown less afraid of him.

As for Chu Wanning, he's always been able to hold his alcohol.

"Shizun Shizun, let me read your palm?"

Xue Meng was the first to get all tipsy.

He grabbed Chu Wanning's hand and held it in front of his eyes to carefully examine. If not for the three cups of wine in his system, he never would've dared to be this bold.

"Your life line is long but disjointed, which means your health isn't too good." Xue Meng mumbled, "You get sick easily."

Mo Ran laughed: "That's pretty accurate."

Chu Wanning shot him a glare.

“A long and slender ring finger, Shizun has good fortune with money.”

“Three lines from a common point, the love line branches off at its tip to merge down into the wisdom line, typically indicates a willingness to sacrifice for love……” Xue Meng stared at it blankly for a while before whipping his head up to ask, “Is that true?”

Face ashen, Chu Wanning hissed between gritted teeth: “Xue Ziming, are you tired of being alive?”

But Xue Meng, too drunk to detect the mortal danger he was in, just grinned sincerely and kept right on looking, muttering: “Ah, and, the love line forms an island shape, right beneath the ring finger at that, Shizun, your taste in people is dreadful… absolutely abysmal……”

Chu Wanning had had enough. He ripped his hand away and brushed his sleeve down to leave.

Mo Ran was about to die of laughter, doubled over holding his stomach and cackling loudly, when he suddenly caught Chu Wanning’s icy, murderous gaze and forcibly swallowed his laughter, his ribs aching with the effort.

Chu Wanning said angrily: “What’re you laughing about? What’s so funny?”

He was just about to storm off in a rage when Xue Meng grabbed his sleeve. Immediately after, all the laughter disappeared from Mo Ran’s face as Xue Meng pulled Chu Wanning down in a drunken daze and burrowed

into his arms, with his forehead pressed against the folds of his Shizun's robes and his arms wrapped around his waist, nuzzling affectionately.

"Shizun……" Came the teenager's soft, velvety voice, complete with a tinge of acting cute, "Don't go~~ come come, have another round~"

Chu Wanning looked like he was going to choke.

"Xue Ziming!! Wh-what do you think you're doing, let go!"

But right at this moment, the little snowmen from the stage suddenly all clacked over. It turns out that Tanlang Elder's sword dance performance was over, and it was now Chu Wanning's turn to put on a show.

Unfortunately, this also meant that all the eyes in the hall turned collectively toward Chu Wanning just in time to see a drunken Xue Meng clinging to Yuheng Elder's waist and burrowing into the other's arms like a spoiled child. The other disciples were absolutely flabbergasted, with someone even holding their chopsticks upside down, all eyes staring unblinkingly at their corner.

Chu Wanning: "……"

The scene was extremely awkward for a moment; Yuheng Elder could neither stand nor sit, locked stiffly in place by the way Xue Meng was clinging on him.

A long while passed in silence before two dry, forced chuckles came from Mo Ran's direction: "Come on, Xue Meng, still acting so spoiled at your age?" He reached out and tried to drag him off, "Off now, don't cling to Shizun like that."

Xue Meng wasn't acting spoiled on purpose; in fact, if he still remembers this when the alcohol wears off, he'd probably slap himself silly.

But he was drunken beyond all sense right now, and Mo Ran had to pry and pull for quite a while before he finally managed to rip him off of Chu Wanning.

"Sit. What number is this?"

Brows knitted, Xue Meng squinted at the single finger Mo Ran held out: "Three."

Mo Ran:"……"

Shi Mei laughed and couldn't resist teasing him: "Who am I?"

"You're Shi Mei, duh." Xue Meng rolled his eyes impatiently.

Mo Ran joined in: "Then who am I?"

Xue Meng glared at him for a while, then said: "A dog."

"……" Mo Ran roared, "Xue Ziming I will make you eat those words!"

Suddenly, from the adjacent table, a Sisheng Peak disciple—who knows if he's just naturally courageous or if alcohol took away all his inhibitions too—pointed at Chu Wanning and gleefully asked in a high-pitched voice: "Hey young master, look over there, who's that?"

Xue Meng, an authentic lightweight, couldn't even sit up any longer. He slumped over the table, propped his cheek in one hand, and squinted at Chu Wanning long and hard.

Chu Wanning: "……"

Xue Meng: "……"

Chu Wanning: "……"

Xue Meng: "……"

The deadlock lasted for a long while, but just when everyone thought that Xue Meng was about to pass out drunk, he suddenly grinned widely and tried to grab Chu Wanning's sleeve again.

"Immortal-gege."

The words were clear and unmistakable.

All of the disciples: "……"

"Pfft."

There was no way to tell who started laughing first, but everyone lost control and joined in. Even if Chu Wanning's face was gloomy and his fuse was short, they figured that if everyone was in on it, then it's not like he could pull out Tianwen and whip every single person here. And so the lively Mengpo Hall roared with laughter, everyone chiming in over meat and booze, adding to the chaos.

"Haha, immortal-gege."

"Yuheng Elder is so pretty that he does look like an immortal."

"If you ask me, I'll have to use a common saying. Every time I see him I think of it."

Someone asked: "What saying?"

"Other than the three layers of snow on you, who under the skies would be fit to don white."

".....You are so uncultured."

Chu Wanning's face went through a roulette of colors before he finally decided to fake composure and pretend not to have heard at all.

He was used to being revered by everyone from a distance, but this sudden closeness born of the festive atmosphere and the abundance of wine left him at a complete loss. Faced with such a situation, he really didn't know how to react at all, and could only force himself to fake a calmness that he didn't feel.

But the bloom of pink on his ears betrayed the frozen-over expression on his handsome face.

Mo Ran noticed. He pressed his lips together and said nothing, but for some reason, a burst of jealousy surged irritatingly through his chest.

It's not that he didn't acknowledge Chu Wanning's good looks, but, like everyone else, he knew well that Chu Wanning's beauty was a sharp kind, like the edge of a blade, and that he was cold as snow and frost when he wasn't smiling, forbidding approach.

From his dim and narrow perspective, Chu Wanning was like a plate of savory, aromatic crispy meat, but put into a filthy, broken box, and he was the only one in the entire world who had opened the box and gotten to taste the deliciousness inside. He didn't have to worry about someone else finding out about this delicacy and drooling over it.

But tonight, bathed in the warmth of the stove fire and tipsy from the warmed wine, so many pairs of eyes were turned to that box that used to be of no interest to anyone.

Mo Ran suddenly felt nervous. He wanted to cover the box and chase away these people salivating after his food like swatting away annoying flies.

But then he remembered that, in this life, the crispy meat didn't belong to him. His hands were full with clear, translucent wontons, he had no time to chase away the wolves salivating after the meat.

To the surprise of Mo Ran and the others, Chu Wanning actually did come prepared with a New Year's show just like the other elders: a guqin performance. The disciples were starry-eyed, and someone whispered: "Who would have thought that Yuheng Elder knew how to play the guqin……"

“And he’s so good at it, too, I nearly forgot to taste the meat.”

Mo Ran sat there quietly without a word. Xue Meng had fallen asleep a while ago, breaths deep and even from where he was sprawled on the table. Mo Ran took the jar of wine by his hand and filled his own cup, drinking from it as he listened while staring at the person on stage, lost in thought.

The irritation in his chest grew worse.

In the last life, Chu Wanning didn’t play anything at the New Year’s Eve feast.

Very few people knew the way he looked when playing the guqin.

There was a guqin made of paulownia wood in the courtyard when he was being kept prisoner by Mo Ran. One day, maybe to vent his frustrations, he had sat by it, closed his eyes, and played a song.

The sound of the guqin drifted through the air, attracting birds and butterflies alike. When Mo Ran returned, the sight that greeted him was that of Chu Wanning’s profile in the courtyard, indescribably lofty and serene.

And just how had he treated him back then?

Oh, right.

He had pushed him down and fucked him next to the guqin, violated this man who was clear and cold as the light of the moon right there in the courtyard. Mo Ran cared only about chasing his own pleasure, not even sparing a thought for Chu Wanning’s pain and discomfort, even disregarding the fact that it was already winter, and his Shizun, who

couldn’t handle the cold, was lying there on the ice-cold cobblestone with his robes torn off, getting fucked by him until he really couldn’t take it anymore and passed out.

Afterwards, he didn’t fully recover even after months of careful tending.

At that time, Mo Ran had said to him in a chilly tone: “Chu Wanning, from now on, you’re forbidden from playing the guqin in front of others. Do you have any idea, the way you look when playing is so……”

He pressed his lips together, but couldn’t find the right words, so he didn’t finish the sentence.

It’s so what?

It was clearly a serene, dignified look, but for some reason, it was so alluring as to destroy all of his self control.

Chu Wanning said nothing, lips pale and eyes closed, the set of his eyebrows stern.

Mo Ran raised a hand and hesitated for a second before touching the tightly knitted space between his brows. Taxian-Jun’s gestures were almost gentle, but his voice was still cold and ruthless.

“If you don’t listen, this venerable one will chain you to the bed, and then you won’t be able to do anything but sleep with this venerable one. Don’t think this venerable one won’t do it.”

And just how had Chu Wanning responded back then?

Mo Ran took another sip, watching the person on the stage, and continued his melancholic recollection.

He couldn’t be sure; maybe he had said nothing.

Or maybe he had opened his eyes and coldly said——

“Get the hell out.”

He couldn’t remember clearly anymore.

In that life, he had been entangled with Chu Wanning for so long that many things had become blurred at the edges.

Eventually, like a beast, he knew only one thing: Chu Wanning was his. Even if he didn’t like him, he was still his to sunder and to ruin. He’d rather rip Chu Wanning apart with his own hands, bite through his ribcage and tear out his organs like a beast, than to allow someone else to touch him.

He wanted Chu Wanning’s blood to course with his desire, his bones to bear his curse, and his body to be filled with his passion.

Wasn’t he always so virtuous and untouchable?

And in the end? Didn’t he still have to open his legs for the world’s evilest villain, on the bed of the most ruthless tyrant, to have his life be taken by the man’s fiery weapon. He defiled him, made him dirty, inside, outside, everywhere.

Shredded clothes weren’t so easy to put back on.

Mo Ran closed his eyes, knuckles white, heart hammering.

Sunken deep into his memories, he could no longer hear the lively merriment of New Year's Eve festivities, or the soothing sounds of Chu Wanning's guqin.

All that remained in his mind was a callous, crazed voice, swooping back from the past and hovering like a vulture.

"Hell is too cold. Chu Wanning, I'll take you to the grave with me."

"That's right, you're god, you're everyone's light, all of them, Xue Meng, Mei Hanxue, and all the common people are just waiting for you to shine on them. Chu-zongshi, how very saintly of you." The voice laughed sweetly, laughed and laughed, until it suddenly became cruel, like a soul split in half, thundering, "But what about me! Have you ever shined on me! Ever given me any warmth? All you've ever given me were these scars on my body! How very saintly of you, Chu Wanning!'

"Your body is mine, and your life too. You want to be their fire, but I'll taking you to the grave with me, I'll make you shine on my dead body and nothing else. I want you to rot with me."

"Living or dying won't be up to you……"

Suddenly, there was a loud cheering and applause.

Mo Ran's eyes flew open. His back was drenched in a cold sweat.

The performance had ended, and all of the disciples were clapping enthusiastically. Sitting in the crowd, Mo Ran felt his vision pulsing and blurring, fading in and out. He watched Chu Wanning walk slowly down the wooden steps, holding a guqin made of paulownia wood.

In that moment, for the very first time in this life, he suddenly felt that it was all so absurd, that his past self must have been mad.

Chu Wanning wasn't actually a bad guy…… why was he even…… doing any of this?

He swallowed, feeling the burn of the alcohol down his throat, but feeling no less at a loss, exhausted and confused, until finally, he fell into a drunken oblivion.

Author's notes:

Mini theater 《Each Actor's Inner Thoughts》

Mo Weiyu: I feel like a lunatic in my past life, no matter how I look at the script from the director, I'm playing a psycho. This script is unbearable, but I have no choice but to obey.

Xue Meng: I feel like I’m a straight man, but the director actually made me cling onto Shizun for attention today. This script is unbearable, but I have no choice but to obey.

Shi Mei: I feel like A-Ran has changed, the director said the one he likes is me, but today he didn’t even look at me. This script is unbearable, but I have no choice but to obey.

Chu Wanning: I feel like I don’t want to act bed scenes, but the director said… I don’t care what he said, drag him outside, beat him up, if he dies I’ll take the fall. I’ll let him know what it means to have no choice but to obey.

Ch.58 This Venerable One Feels a Little Hazy

Actually, Mo Ran could usually hold his liquor pretty well.

It was just that, on this night, in order to cover up his anxieties and fake a nonchalance he didn't feel, he downed five whole jars of pear blossom white wine, grinning the whole time, until his consciousness grew hazy.

When he was half-dragged, half-carried back to his room by Shi Mei and collapsed on the bed, Mo Ran's throat moved, wanting to call Shi Mei's name.

But habit was a frightful thing.

During all of those years in the past, the one by his side wasn't the moonlight of his heart, but the mosquito blood he was sick of looking at.

The name that came out of his mouth was that of the person he had always thought he hated.

"Chu Wanning……"

It came out all muddled.

"Wanning…… I……"

Shi Mei hesitated, then turned to look toward Chu Wanning, who was standing by the door. Chu Wanning had carried Xue Meng back to his room, and had just walked in, a bowl of sobering soup in hand, just in time to hear Mo Ran's murmuring.

After the initial surprise, he immediately convinced himself that he had misheard.

After all, Mo Ran had always called him Shizun. It was one thing if he called him Chu Wanning, but to call him Wanning——

He couldn't help remembering that night at the Red Lotus Pavilion, when they had slept holding one another, when Mo Ran, fast asleep, had clearly called out 'Wanning', and then pressed a kiss to his lips, light as the touch of a dragonfly on water.

Was it possible that, in Mo Ran's heart, there actually was a little bit of……

He smothered that thought before it had time to take root.

Chu Wanning had always been straightforward and resolute. Except for matters of the heart, he knew well that he was a dawdling coward in those.

"Shizun." Shi Mei's bright eyes, unmatched in elegance, looked at him with uncertainty, "You……"

"Hm?"

".....Actually, it's nothing. Since Shizun is here to take care of A-Ran, I, I'll take my leave."

Chu Wanning spoke: "Wait."

“Does Shizun have any other instructions?”

Chu Wanning said: “You guys are leaving for the Peach Blossom Springs tomorrow?”

“.....Mhm.”

There wasn’t much of an expression on Chu Wanning’s face. A little while passed before he spoke again: “Go get some rest. Make sure to take care of one another out there, and——”

He paused, then said: “Come back soon.”

Shi Mei left.

Chu Wanning walked to the bedside, face impassive as he propped Mo Ran up and fed him the sobering soup, spoonful by spoonful.

Mo Ran disliked the sour taste, and vomited it all back out not long after. But he did sober up a bit, opening his eyes and staring, half-awake, at Chu Wanning. He mumbled: “Shizun?”

“Mn. I’m here.”

“Pfft.” He started laughing for some reason, his laughter framed by dimples as he said, “Immortal-gege.”

Chu Wanning: “……”

Mo Ran plonked right back out after that, sprawled out on his stomach.

Worried that he might catch a cold, Chu Wanning stayed by his side, pulling his blanket back up and tucking him in now and again.

Outside the room, many disciples were not yet asleep, staying up to count down to the New Year. Most of them were gathered inside in groups chattering and laughing, playing pai gow#, or putting on magic tricks.

When the hourglass hanging in front of Loyalty Hall finished trickling, signifying the changing of the year, the disciples rushed outside and began to set off fireworks and firecrackers, instantly filling the night sky with silvery flowers and branches of fire.

The deafening sounds from outside woke Mo Ran from his hazy sleep.

He cracked open an eye and pressed a hand to his throbbing temple, but the sight that greeted him was that of Chu Wanning sitting by his bedside, his handsome features composed and impassive. Seeing him awake, he said, lightly: “Did the noise wake you up?”

“Shizun……”

He woke up filly, startled despite himself.

Why was Chu Wanning the one keeping watch over him? Where was Shi Mei?

He didn’t say anything in his sleep that he shouldn’t have, did he?

Mo Ran snuck an apprehensive glance at Chu Wanning’s face, and only let out the breath he was holding when it seemed that nothing was out of the ordinary.

The crackling sound of firecrackers continued outside. The two stared awkwardly at one another for a while.

Chu Wanning: “Do you want to go see the fireworks?”

Mo Ran: “Where’s Shi Mei?”

Said at practically the same time.

It was already too late to take back anything.

Mo Ran’s eyes opened wide, startled, and stared at him for a long while as if he didn’t recognize him.

A moment passed in silence, and then Chu Wanning got up nonchalantly to leave, turning at the door to say: “Everyone’s celebrating the New Year, so he’s probably not asleep yet. You should go look for him.”

It was only to be expected. He had such a terrible temper, after all. Even if he summoned up all of his courage to ask him to go watch the fireworks together, of course he would be rejected.

He shouldn’t have asked, how humiliating.

Chu Wanning returned to the Red Lotus Pavilion and sat by himself beneath the haitang tree that bloomed year-round. There, alone, with a cloak draped over his shoulders, he watched the brilliant flowers blooming across the night sky.

In the distance, the disciple quarters were warmly lit, their cheerful laughter drifting over, but none of it had anything to do with him.

He should've gotten used to this long ago.

But for some reason, his chest felt all stuffy.

Maybe because seeing the merriment of others made it harder to return to his own solitude.

Quietly, he watched the fireworks bloom, one, two, listened to the voices of people wishing each other a happy new year, three, five.

Leaning against the tree, he closed his eyes, feeling a bit tired.

He wasn't sure how long had passed, but he suddenly felt an intrusion into the barriers.

His heart lurched, but he didn't dare open his eyes. He heard the sound of breathing, slightly winded, and those familiar footsteps, coming to a stop not far away.

The young man's voice carried a hint of hesitation.

"Shizun."

Chu Wanning:"……"

"I'll be leaving tomorrow."

"……"

“It’s gonna be quite a while before I can come back.”

“……”

“Actually, there’s nothing going on tonight, and we have to get up early tomorrow, so I think Shi Mei probably went to bed already.”

The sound of footsteps came nearer and stopped very close by.

Mo Ran said: “So, if you still want to, I……” he opened his mouth, but the rest of the sentence was swallowed by the bang of an especially large burst of fireworks.

Chu Wanning’s eyelashes fluttered as he looked up. Backlit by the splendid river of stars in the night sky and the scattering of fire flowers like silvery frost, the handsome young man stood before him, pitying and a little bashful.

“……”

Chu Wanning had always been prideful. He didn’t care for company born out of pity. But right now, looking at him, the words of refusal suddenly wouldn’t come out.

Maybe the wine had gotten to him too.

Chu Wanning felt a sting in his chest, but also a warmth.

“Since you’re already here, sit down with me.” Then he added, softly, “I will watch with you.”

He gazed up at the sky with an impassive expression, but the fingers hidden in his sleeves had curled up nervously. He didn’t dare to look closely at the person beside him, fixing his eyes at the fireworks above instead, at the boundless night sky sprinkled with glittering brilliance.

Chu Wanning asked quietly: “Has everyone been well these days?”

“Mhm.” Mo Ran replied, “We became friends with a cute little shidi, we mentioned in a letter to Shizun before. How is Shizun’s injury?”

“It’s nothing. Don’t blame yourself.”

A firework burst in the sky, scattering resplendently.

That night, fireworks and lanterns lit up the sky, firecrackers crackled nonstop, and the faint smell of smoke filled the snowy air. The two of them welcomed in the new year underneath the flowering tree; Chu Wanning was a man of few words, but Mo Ran looked for things to chat about, until he finally grew tired and fell asleep.

Early the next morning, Mo Ran woke up, still underneath the tree, with his head in Chu Wanning’s lap and a hefty but soft fur cloak covering him. It was Chu Wanning’s fire fox cloak, smooth and exquisitely-made.

A little startled, Mo Ran looked up to see Chu Wanning leaning against the trunk of the tree, deep in slumber. His long eyelashes drooped over his

cheeks, quivering slightly with each breath like butterflies in the wind.

Did they really just sleep under the tree like this?

How did that even happen?

With Chu Wanning's compulsive nature, he should've gone back to his room to sleep no matter how tired he was. How could he have been willing to settle for just carelessly resting under the tree like this, and, this fur cloak……

Did he cover him with it?

Mo Ran sat up, his ink-black hair a little disheveled. He stared, draped in Chu Wanning's cloak, a bit at a loss.

He wasn't that drunk last night. Although some things were a little blurry, he could more or less remember most of it.

Even running here to the Red Lotus Pavilion of his own accord to welcome in the new year together with Chu Wanning was a sober, conscious choice.

He had clearly hated this person, once, but when he heard him ask "do you want to go see the fireworks?", when he watched him turn around forlornly to leave with his head lowered.

He had actually felt an ache in his heart……

He had thought that, they wouldn't see one another again for a long time anyway, he didn't really have much grievance toward him in this life, and

Chu Wanning was so lonely, it was no big deal if he kept him company til the morning once in a while.

And so he brazenly came over.

Thinking back on it now, he felt like he was really too……

Chu Wanning woke up before he could finish the thought.

Mo Ran stammered: “Shizun.”

“.....Mn.” He rubbed his temple, his brows drawn slightly together from having just woken up, “You…… haven’t left yet?”

“I-I just woke up.”

Lately, for some reason, every time he saw Chu Wanning’s impassive face, that silver tongue of his tied itself into a knot.

Mo Ran was stock-still for a moment before suddenly remembering that he was still wearing Chu Wanning’s cloak. He hurriedly took it off and scrambled to wrap it around the other person instead.

While draping the cloak over his shoulders, Mo Ran noticed that although Chu Wanning wore several layers of clothing, it was still a bit thin without the cloak as the outer garment in all this snow.

The thought made his movements even more frantic, and he ended up tying his own finger into the knot while trying to fasten the tassel cord.

Mo Ran: “……”

Chu Wanning glanced at him and reached out to untie it, saying: “I’ll do it myself.”

“.....Ok.”

And, appended in a mumble: “Sorry.”

“It’s alright.”

Mo Ran stood, and hesitated: “Shizun, I have to go pack and eat breakfast, and then I’ll be setting out.”

“Mn.”

“.....Would you like to go get breakfast together?” Pah! He wanted to bite his tongue and die right there right after saying that! The hell’s wrong with him! What did he do that for!

Maybe he saw the regret that surfaced on Mo Ran’s face right after asking that, but Chu Wanning paused, and then said: “I’ll pass. You go ahead.”

Mo Ran was deathly afraid that he might say something even more outrageous if he stayed any longer, so he said: “I-I’m going then……”

Chu Wanning: “Alright.”

After Mo Ran left, Chu Wanning sat expressionlessly under the tree for a while longer before slowly getting up, with a hand on the trunk for support, but then didn’t make any further movements.

His legs were completely numb from having served as Mo Ran's pillow all night; he couldn't walk at all with the pins and needles in them.

He stood there sullenly for a good while before his blood circulation returned to normal, and he could finally hobble his way back inside.

Sure enough, after spending the night outside in such bitterly cold weather, even with the haitang tree shielding them from the snow, he still ended up catching a cold.

"Achoo!"

He sneezed, the corners of his eyes already reddening.

Covering his nose with a handkerchief, Chu Wanning thought, dammit…… I probably…… caught a cold……

Yuheng Elder.

The owner of three holy weapons, and the number one great zongshi most sought after by all the sects of the cultivation world. The mere sight of Tianwen tamed the four seas, the white of his robes bested all the colors of the world.

Such an impressive character, he could even be said to be the strongest cultivator of the era.

Unfortunately, even the strongest person was bound to have a weakness. Chu Wanning's weakness was that he couldn't handle the cold, and would easily fall sick if exposed. Thus, when Mo Ran and Shi Mei set off from

Sisheng Peak, not only had Chu-zongshi turned small again from the pill wearing off, but on top of that, he was also sneezing and sniffling nonstop.

And so, when the feathered tribe arrived at noon to escort them, they were met with Xue Meng, Mo Ran, and Shi Mei, who were perfectly healthy, and a pitiful little shidi “Xia Sini” who could not stop sneezing.

Author’s Notes:

Mini Theater 《The Correct Way to Competitive Drinking Against Yuheng Elder》

Xue Meng: Shizun, Shizun! I wish you prosperity like the eastern sea, longevity like southern mountains, bottoms up! Gulp gulp…

Chu Wanning: Okay, drink.

After one cup, Xue Meng, flat on the ground.

Shi Mei: Shizun, I’ll join in and drink with you, bottoms up.

Chu Wanning: Okay, drink.

Shi Mei: Shizun, one more cup.

Chu Wanning: Okay, drink.

Shi Mei: Shizun, one more…

Chu Wanning: Okay, drink.

Shi Mei: Shizun…

After four cups, Shi Mei, flat on the ground.

Mo Ran: Shizun, Happy New Years, bottom up.

God of Alcohol Chu Wanning: Okay, drink.

Mo Ran: Drink what?

Chu Wanning: Alcohol? Didn’t you say bottoms up?

Mo Ran: (Brightly smiles) Yeah, bottom up, your bottom.

Ch.59 This Venerable One Is Only So Simple

There was nothing for it; even if the little shidi couldn't stop sneezing, they still had to get going. The feathered tribe led them eastward, to a port on the Yangtze River. They summoned a self-navigating ferry, and, with a barrier shielding the vessel, set off to sea.

That night was the first time Mo Ran got to spend time with Shi Mei on an outing without Shizun around, but strangely, he didn't seem to feel as excited as he thought he would.

Xue Meng and Xia Sini had already gone to bed. Mo Ran lay alone on the deck, arms folded behind his head, looking up at the starry sky.

Shi Mei came out from the cabin with some of the dried fish they had bought from fishermen earlier and sat down next to Mo Ran. The two of them nibbled idly at the snack while chatting.

"A-Ran, since we're going to the Peach Blossom Springs, we might not make it to the Spiritual Mountain Competition. It doesn't matter much for me, but you and the young master are both so strong, won't you regret it if you miss out on the chance to make a big debut?"

Mo Ran turned his head with a smile: "It doesn't matter, stuff like reputation and whatnot are just words, but going to the Peach Blossom Springs and learning real, useful skills to protect those important to me, that's what's important."

Shi Mei's gaze seemed to smile, and he said gently: "That you would think this way, Shizun would be so happy if he knew."

“And what about you? Are you happy?”

“Of course I’m happy too.”

Waves crashed against the ferry, the wooden vessel rocking in the sea.

Mo Ran stared at Shi Mei for a while from where he was lying on his side. He wanted to tease him a bit, but then didn’t know what to say. In his eyes, Shi Mei was pure and unattainable.

Maybe it was because of this purity that he found it difficult to have any of the lewd thoughts he had towards Chu Wanning when faced with Shi Mei.

Mo Ran spaced out for a while.

Shi Mei noticed that he was being stared at. He turned, tucking the stray strands of hair blown by the sea breeze behind a ear, and smiled: “What is it?”

Mo Ran flushed and turned his head away: “Nothing.”

He was originally planning to use this outing as a chance to confess—carefully —to Shi Mei. But every time the words were at his lips, he couldn’t open his mouth.

Confession.

And then?

Mo Ran couldn’t be rough or forceful toward this pure, gentle person,. He was afraid of rejection, but even if his feelings were returned, he was afraid he wouldn’t know how to act toward Shi Mei.

After all, he really did perform quite terribly during the short time they got to spend together in the last life…… other than that one moment of intimacy inside the ghost mistress's illusion, he never even kissed him.

And not to mention, after what happened in this lifetime, he couldn't even be sure if that person in the illusion back then was Shi Mei or Chu Wanning anymore.

Shi Mei was still smiling: "But you really do look like you want to say something to me though."

For an impulsive moment, Mo Ran wanted to just poke heedlessly through the thin layer of paper on the window#.

But, for some reason, a figure dressed in white, with a face that didn't like to smile, flashed suddenly through his mind, a figure that always kept to himself, that looked so lonely.

All of a sudden, it was like his throat had closed off, and he couldn't speak anymore.

Mo Ran turned back to stare at the night sky full of stars.

A while passed before he said, quietly: "Shi Mei, you're really very important to me."

"Mn. I know. You're the same to me."

Mo Ran continued: "Did you know? I had a nightmare once, and in it you…… you weren't there anymore. I was so sad."

Shi Mei smiled: "You're so silly sometimes."

Mo Ran: “..... I’ll definitely protect you.”

“Okay, then I’ll just have to thank my good shidi first.”

Mo Ran’s heart caught, and he couldn’t help saying: “I……”

Shi Mei asked in a soft voice: “Was there something else you wanted to say?”

The ferry shook, and the sound of the waves seemed louder somehow. Shi Mei looked at him quietly, as if waiting for him to say those last few words.

But Mo Ran closed his eyes: “It’s nothing. Why don’t you go back inside and get some sleep? It’s cold at night.”

“.....” Shi Mei was quiet for a moment before he said, “What about you?”

Mo Ran was quite dim sometimes: “I……I’m gonna watch the stars for a while longer, feel the breeze on my face.”

Shi Mei didn’t move. It was a while before he smiled: “Alright, then I’ll go ahead. Don’t stay up too late yourself.”

Then he turned and left.

Beneath the boundless sky sky, the ferry sailed through the sea.

That guy lying on its deck had no idea what he had just missed; he was even a bit absent-minded as he tried to dig out just what it was that he really felt in the depths of his heart. He thought about it for a long time, but he really was dim-witted, and so, even by the time the morning sun painted the eastern skies a soft white, he still hadn’t figured anything out.

He spent every waking moment with Shi Mei, and the feelings between them were deep and sincere. Mo Ran had thought that he would definitely want to confess to Shi Mei as soon as they were alone, unable to wait another moment. But when the ferry reached the end of the bridge, he found that that wasn't the case at all. Maybe it was because he thought he was too clumsy, that if he were to go and rashly confess to Shi Mei right then, he'd definitely startle him, or, even if he didn't, it still wouldn't make for a good start.

He was more used to this hazy vagueness between Shi Mei and himself. Sometimes his heart would flutter, he would reach out and take Shi Mei's hand as if without thought, and his chest would overflow with honey-sweet tenderness.

It was such a natural feeling that he didn't really want to immediately shatter it.

It was late by the time he went back inside the cabin, and everyone had already gone to sleep. Mo Ran lay on the sleeping mat, staring at the night outside the narrow skylight. Slowly, Chu Wanning's figure appeared before his eyes, sometimes silent with his eyes closed, sometimes with a severe expression on his face.

Of course, he also thought about the way that person looked when he was curled up, asleep, lonely and unassuming, like a haitang blossom that nobody cared for because it had bloomed too high up on the branch.

Putting aside the hatred, Chu Wanning's entanglement with him in the last life truly was deeper than that of anyone else in this world.

He had taken many firsts from Chu Wanning, regardless of whether he was willing.

His first kiss, his first time cooking, his first time crying.

And his first time.

Dammit, just thinking about it made his body feel hot and his blood rush downwards.

And, in exchange, he had given Chu Wanning some of his firsts as well, regardless of whether he wanted them.

His first time becoming an apprentice, his first time coaxing someone, his first time giving flowers.

His first time being thoroughly disappointed.

And the first stirrings of his heart.

Yes, the first stirrings of his heart.

When he came to Sisheng Peak, the first person he fell for wasn't Shi Mei, but Chu Wanning.

That day, under the haitang tree, that white-robed young man was so beautiful, so focused, that it only took one glance for Mo Ran to decide that he wanted this person to be his master, that no one else would do.

But just when did it all change?

Just when did the one he cared about become Shi Mei, and the one he hated, Shizun……

He had thought about it a lot during the last couple of months. It probably began with that misunderstanding.

That was the first time he had gotten lashed by Chu Wanning as punishment. The fifteen year old boy stumbled back to his room, bruised and battered, and curled up alone on his bed, eyes rimmed red, choking back sobs. The wounds on his back had hurt less than the cold expression on Shizun's face when he brought Tianwen down without a thread of mercy, like hitting a stray dog.

It was true that he had stolen a haitang flower from the medicine garden, but he had no idea how precious that haitang had been, nor how carefully Madam Wang had tended to it for the last five years for one to finally bloom.

The only thing he knew was that, walking home at night that day, a luminous white at the tip of a branch had caught his eyes.

The flower's petals were clear and frosty, its fragrance mild and delicate.

He tilted his head back to admire it, thinking of his Shizun. There was a throbbing in his heart for some reason, and even the tips of his fingers felt warm. Before he realized it, he had already plucked the flower, carefully and with the gentlest of movements, afraid of accidentally shaking off even a single drop of dew from the petals.

Through the thick curtain of his eyelashes, he gazed at that dew-laden haitang blossom under the light of the moon. In that moment, he did not yet know just how pure the tenderness and affection he held for Chu Wanning was, nor did he know that, after that day—for the next ten years, twenty years, until death—he would never have it again.

Before he could give the flower to Shizun, he bumped into Xue Meng who had come to pick medicinal herbs for his mother.

The young master dragged him to Shizun in a rage. Chu Wanning turned from his scroll, his gaze ice-cold as he listened. He shot a glance at Mo Ran, and asked if he had an explanation.

Mo Ran started: “I picked the flower because I wanted to give it to……”

He was still holding onto that haitang, with specks of frost and drops of dew still clinging to its freshly bloomed petals, frosty yet indescribably beautiful.

But Chu Wanning’s gaze was too cold, so cold that it chilled the lava-like heat in his chest.

He could no longer say the word “you.”

That feeling was all too familiar to him. Before he was brought to Sisheng Peak, back when he had to scamper between songstresses and customers, shrinking into his thin, undernourished body to appear smaller and less obstructive, he had spent every day under that kind of gaze——

That kind of contempt, that kind of disdain……

A shudder ran through him.

Could it be that Shizun actually looked down on him?

In the face of Chu Wanning’s ice-cold interrogation, Mo Ran felt his heart freeze over. He lowered his head and said, quietly: “.....I……have nothing to say.”

And the rest was history.

Just because of this haitang flower, Chu Wanning lashed him until all of his initial fondness shattered into pieces, forty strikes in all.

At that time, if only Mo Ran had just explained a little more, if only Chu Wanning had just asked a little more, then maybe things wouldn't have turned out the way that they did, maybe the master and disciple wouldn't have taken that first step on the road beyond redemption.

But there weren't that many what-if's.

It was at this point that Shi Mei, warm and gentle, appeared at his side.

After returning from Chu Wanning's place, Mo Ran didn't go eat, didn't even light a lamp, only lay curled up on his bed.

This stiff figure curled up in the darkness was the sight that greeted Shi Mei when he opened the door. He set the bowl of chili oil wontons in his hands gently on the table, then walked over to the bed and called, softly: "A-Ran?"

Mo Ran did not yet have any particular feelings toward Shi Mei at that time. He didn't even turn around, still staring at the wall with red, swollen eyes, and his voice was hoarse when he said:

"Get out."

"I brought you some……"

"I said get out."

"A-Ran, don't be like that."

“.....”

“Shizun has a bad temper, but it just takes a little getting used to. Come, get up and eat something.”

But Mo Ran was stubborn like a donkey, immovable even if dragged by ten whole horses.

“Don’t want it. I’m not hungry.”

“.....At least have a bite, if you don’t eat, Shizun will get ma——” Mo Ran shot up from bed before he could even finish the sentence, his watery eyes angry and indignant, quivering slightly beneath his lashes.

“Mad? What would he even be mad about? It’s my body, how is it any of his business whether I eat or not? He doesn’t even want me as a disciple anyway, I might as well just starve to death, less hassle for him, he’ll be happier that way.”

Shi Mei: “……”

He hadn’t expected his words to touch on Mo Ran’s sore point like this, and was at a loss for a while, staring helplessly at the little shidi in front of him.

A long moment passed. Mo Ran pulled himself together and looked down, long hair covering half his face.

Mo Ran: “.....Sorry.”

Shi Mei couldn’t see his face, only the subdued trembling of his shoulders and the veins on the back of his tightly clenched fists.

But the fifteen year old boy was still too young, after all. He tried to hold it in for a while, but couldn't in the end; burying his face into his arms, he curled into himself and bawled miserably, voice rough and broken, hysterical and lost, pained and grief-stricken.

Body wracked with sobs, he repeated the same thing over and over——

"I only wanted to have a home…… these fifteen years, I really…… I really only wanted a home…… why do you all look down on me…… why do you all look at me like that…… why, why do you all look down on me……"

He cried for a long time, and Shi Mei sat with him for a long time.

When Mo Ran had cried enough, Shi Mei handed him a spotless handkerchief, then brought the bowl of now-cold wontons over.

Gently, he said: "Don't say silly things like starving to death anymore. You came to Sisheng Peak and apprenticed under Shizun, so you are my shidi. I also lost my parents when I was young, so if you want, I'll be your family. Come now, eat something."

"....."

"I made these wontons. Even if you won't give Shizun any face, at least give me some, hm?" Shi Mei's lips curled into a small smile as he scooped up a plump, translucent wonton and held it to Mo Ran's lips, "Try one."

The rims of Mo Ran's eyes were still red. Those watery eyes stared at the person by his bed, but he finally opened his mouth and allowed that gentle person to feed him.

Truth be told, that bowl of wontons had already gone cold and been soaked for too long, so it was no longer as good as it could've been.

But, in that moment, under the candle light, this bowl of wontons, that incomparably beautiful face, and those gentle eyes were carved deeply into his heart. In life and in death, never to be forgotten.

It probably began that night.

His hatred toward Shizun grew ever deeper. And that was also when he became convinced that Shi Mei was the most important person in his life.

After all, everyone wanted warmth.

Especially a stray dog that had frozen in the bitter cold so many times that the mere sight of salted roads made him tremble in anticipation of snow, of the coming of winter.

Taxian-Jun looked imposing, but only he himself knew the truth.

That he was nothing but a wandering stray. A stray that had always been looking for a place he could curl up at, a place to call “home”, but he spent fifteen years looking and still he couldn’t find it.

And so, his love and hate became laughably simple——

If someone gave him a beating, he would hate that person.

If someone gave him a bowl of soup, he would love that person.

He was only so simple, after all.

Ch.60 This Venerable One Discovers a Secret

With spells casted on the ferry, the travel was fast, and by the next morning they had already reached the Port of Yangzhou. There were already envoys at the harbour receiving them, stabling many of the horses.

The party ate breakfast at the harbour, but since the feathered tribe didn't require sustenance, they sat by the edge of the harbour with their eyes closed, resting their spirits. Dawn had only just broken then, and there weren't many merchants around conducting business, but the deck hands had all risen already, gathering together in threes and fives together chowing down porridge and steamed buns, peeking and stealing curious glances at them from time to time.

Bits and pieces of talk from those beefy men in simple labour robes as they chewed their meal fell in Mo Ran's ears.

"Aye aye, I recognize their clothes. They're people of the Lower Cultivation Realm."

"The Lower Cultivation Realm is so far away, and our sect rarely interacts with them, so how would you know?"

"Just look at the coat of arms on their vambraces. Isn't it exactly the same as those on the Holy Night Guardian?"

"You're talking about those wooden devices that expel evil?" Someone took a glance at Xue Meng's sleeve, and exclaimed in awe as he chewed the pickles crunchily, "Aiyoh, it's true. Who was the one that made the Holy Night Guardians again?"

“I heard it was Yuheng Elder of Sisheng Peak who made it.”

“Who’s Yuheng Elder? Is he as powerful as our Sect Leader Jiang of Guyue'ye?”

“Hehe, who knows. Who’s to say anything about the world of cultivators.”

The deck hands spoke with a heavy Su dialect and Mo Ran couldn’t quite comprehend, but Chu Wanning could understand what those people were saying. Learning that the Holy Night Guardians that he had invented was now successfully being distributed throughout the common world, he couldn’t help but feel comforted. Thus, he started plotting mentally, thinking that after they return he should invent more lighter-geared wooden oxen or horses, and do more good.

Once breakfast was done, the group took haste, and it didn’t take four hours before they had reached the foot of Mount JiuHua. It was still early in the day, the sun of a winter’s day had only just reached its peak, and millions of golden light threads came kissing down like silk, sinking the snowy summit in a crystal luminescence, glittering magnificently. Upon the slopes of the summit were hundreds of luscious ancient pines that remained evergreen, standing resolutely in the frost, much like a hermit cultivator with an immortal air, sleeves lowered eyes half-lidded, deadly silent as they stood on either side of the mountain path.

It wasn’t for nothing that the mortals called the summit of Mount JiuFeng the “Unmortal World”.

The feathered tribe whistled thrice at the foot of the mountain, and a little golden canary with vibrantly charming feathers came flying out of the white, snowy piedmont, and landed lightly before them. The group

followed the golden canary's lead, heading west the entire way, and came before a curtain of turbulent and tempestuous waterfall.

"Will my lord cultivators please step back."

The leader of the feathered tribe stood in front, her hand imitating the hand of Buddha, and she silently recited a spell. Suddenly, she pursed her scarlet lips, and gently blew into the wind. Shockingly, a beam of flames appeared in midair, lunging straight for the waterfall, dividing the water curtain into half!

The feathered tribe breezily turned around and smiled, "I sincerely invite my lords to step into the Peach Blossoms Spring."

They followed after the feathered tribe and passed through the water curtain. After crossing the barrier, the scenery suddenly brightened before their eyes. This place was vast without an end in sight, but bustling and lively like the other world. The Peach Blossom Springs was a sheltered world without many connections to the cultivation world, and while it couldn't be compared to the real Land of the Immortals, nevermind spoken of as equals, nonetheless this land was rich with spiritual chi. Within the Springs, the sceneries were as if they came out of poetry and paintings, the colours elegant and delicate, and after having walked for a while, they discovered the changing of seasons was randomized too.

With the feathered tribe leading the way, they first passed through the wilderness, and the sound of the coursing rivers roared in their ears, the cries of apes and beasts on either shores. Then they came to the outskirts of the city, and saw vast farmlands of crisscrossing field paths, the wheat swaying along with the breeze. Finally, when they had entered the city

fortress, there were immaculate and detailed buildings as far as the eye could see, the eaves tall and grand.

The main capital of this Peach Blossoms land was magnificent and beautiful, the city itself grand, its provisions complete, not appearing any less than the lively city centres of the mortal realm. Only, falling blossoms and drifting snowflakes danced together in the air, rare birds and immortal herons took flight together in flocks, and all the feathered tribe folks who passed by were neck tall and handsome, their figures picturesque and breezy, each looking like unparalleled fairies who emerged from paintings.

However, while such an ethereal scene appeared rather new and interesting for Xue Meng and company, but since they had already witnessed the bizarre sight of Jincheng Lake, this was no longer anything that'd shock them.

They came to a fork in the road, and saw a feathered tribe folk donned in a grand feathered coat embroidered with a gold phoenix and a pure white under layer standing upright by an ancient tree, so tall it reached the skies. That flame mark on her forehead was much deeper than any of the others, signalling that her powers were far greater than the other feathered tribe.

The envoys leading the way brought the group of them before her, then bent one knee to the ground, bowing their respects, "Great Immortal Lord, the four xianjun of ShiSeng Peak have come."

"Thank you for your hard work, you may stand down."

"Yes, milord."

The feathered tribe folk who was beautifully dressed smiled softly, her voice clear and affecting like the crowing of a young phoenix.

“I am named Eighteen. By the recognition from the immortal elder of my family, I was given the grand title of Great Immortal Lord in the Peach Blossoms Springs. We are much thankful that my lords are willing to show us the courtesy of coming to train in this humble abode. Should xianjun find any inadequate reception in the duration of your stay here, please do forgive us and do not be afraid to let us know.”

Such beauty, and such grace when she spoke, she certainly gave a good impression.

Although Xue Meng didn’t enjoy men who looked better than him, he was nevertheless at an age where he was beginning to know beauty and affections, so naturally he didn’t dismiss ladies so beautiful it was as if they emerged from paintings. Thus, he smiled in response, “Xianjun is too kind, but this name Eighteen certainly is odd. May I inquire for xianjun’s family name?”

Eighteen replied gently and courteously, “I have no family name. Eighteen is it.”

Mo Ran laughed heartily, “If you’re called Eighteen, then is there someone here named Seventeen?”

That was meant to be a joke, but who knew when Eighteen heard him, she grinned in spite of herself, “Xianjun is wise. Seventeen is my sister.”

Mo Ran: “.....”

Eighteen explained, “We feathered tribe are born from the fallen down feathers of the Heavenly God Zhuque. When our cultivation was still shallow, we often appear in the form of a crested ibis. The one to form an appearance first was the elder immortal of my family, and the rest of the

feathered tribe are thus named in order of forming appearances, starting with One, Two… I am the eighteenth one, and so I am named Eighteen."

"....."

After Mo Ran heard he fell speechless. He had originally thought Xue Zhengyong was already horrible at giving names, but he hadn't thought there was one who was even worse here —going by numbers directly.

Then, Eighteen said something that made him even more thunderstruck.

"Come. Let's get down to business. This is the first time you have come to this place, and you're not yet familiar with the training rules of the Peach Blossoms Springs." Eighteen said, "In the mortal realm, for centuries, cultivation has been divided by schools and sects. This place is different. We feathered tribe have always been very clear in dividing work. There are those who specialize in 'Defense', those who specialize in 'Attack', and those who specialize in 'Healing'. There are three divisions in all, and your training will also be conducted thus accordingly."

Mo Ran smiled, "That's brilliant."

Eighteen nodded towards him, "Thank you for thinking so, little xianjun. The cultivators from Guyue'ye also came by several days ago, and when they heard about this training method, they were all quite displeased."

Mo Ran felt incredulous, "Defense is defense, attack is attack, and healing is healing. Isn't such a clean division a good thing? What are they unhappy about?"

"You see," Eighteen replied, "There is a young master Duan from Guyue'ye who belonged in 'Defense', and needed to reside with the other xianjun of

the same division. But, his ShiJie belonged to ‘Attack’, and must train and live with the xianjun of the Attack Division. While I don’t quite understand the affections and relations of mortalkind, but I could still tell that young master wasn’t willing to be separated from his sworn sister.”

“Haha, what’s up with th—wait, what did you say?!” Mo Ran stopped laughing halfway through when it suddenly dawned on him, and his eyes widened, “Not only do those who belonged in different divisions have to train separately, they have to live apart too?”

Eighteen didn’t know why his face suddenly changed and replied in confusion, “That’s right.”

Mo Ran’s entire face turned blue, “.....”

What kind of joke was this?!

An hour later, Mo Ran, who had failed in his bargaining with Eighteen, stood dumbfoundedly before a bright and spacious little four sided courtyard residence, and sank into a long, deep silence.

Him, Xue Meng, and Xia Sini belonged in the Attack division, and were sent to the east side of the Peach Blossoms Springs. By ‘east side’, it wasn’t just any small allotted land, but the place where all the xianjun who belonged in ‘Attack’ lived. There were already more than twenty some of those courtyard residences that housed four, and there were also mountains and lakes, streets and markets, built very much similar to those of the mortal realm. It seemed it was because the feathered tribe knew they were going to live here for a long time, so it was built thus to help them rid of their homesickness.

As for Shi Mei, since he belonged to ‘Healing’, he was sent to the south side of the Peach Blossoms Springs. It was exceptionally far from where Mo Ran and the others lived, and there was even a barrier set up in between that could only be traversed through with the Authority Staff. This meant, while Mo Ran and Shi Mei were both inside the Peach Blossoms Springs, other than the daily gathering of all three divisions to learn the beginner’s cultivation method of the feathered tribe, there was basically no other chances for them to see each other.

This wasn’t even the worst of it either.

Mo Ran suddenly looked up, and gazed towards the courtyard through his thick curtains of lashes at the Xue Meng who was circling all over the yard, obviously planning on picking the most comfortable room for himself. Mo Ran could feel the veins on his forehead pop in spite of himself.

Xue Meng…

That’s right. Fucking hell. From today onwards, he would have to live in the same courtyard as Xue Meng everyday! Perhaps for the next long while, he would have to thoroughly experience two of the eight great sufferings of life: the separation from loved ones and the meeting of enemies....

The feathered tribe had been going from the Upper Cultivation Realm to the Lower Cultivation Realm to find their chosen ones, and by the time they reached SiSeng Peak, they were already at the end of their journey. Thus, those sent from all the other sects had already settled in before them, and Xue Meng soon discovered that one of the rooms of their little four sided courtyard was already occupied.

“Weird. I wonder who’s settled in here.” Xue Meng mumbled as he glanced at the blanket being hung to dry in the yard.

“No matter who it is, it shouldn’t be anyone who’d make much fuss.” Mo Ran said.

“What do you mean?”

“Let me ask you,” Mo Ran said, “Which room did you pick?”

Xue Meng immediately looked cautious, “What are you planning? I’ve already made my choice, the one sitting in the north facing south is mine. If you’re gonna fight me for it, then I’ll…”

He hadn’t yet figured out what he was going to do before Mo Ran cut him off laughingly, “I don’t like rooms that are too big, so I won’t fight with you. But let me ask you, if this residence was still empty—” He said, and pointed at the little room that someone had already moved into, and continued his query, “Would you change with him?”

Xue Meng looked at that simple little thatched cottage first before glaring at Mo Ran, “Do you think I’m dumb? Of course I won’t change.”

Mo Ran laughed, “That’s why I said that person isn’t someone who’d make a fuss. See, when he came, all four rooms in this courtyard are empty, but he didn’t pick the best one, and only chose that short, little hovel. If this man isn’t a fool, then he’s a humble gentleman.”

“.....”

This analysis certain wasn’t wrong, but Xue Meng felt like his face was ripped open by the hidden knife in Mo Ran’s smile. The other man was a

gentleman, leaving the best room to sleep in a dilapidated hut, then wasn't he a stinking, vulgar, common man, a petty cheapskate?

But Mo Ran didn't call Xue Meng out by name, so Young Master Xue couldn't yell back, nor could he endure it, so in the moment, his entire face flushed red.

"Either way… I'm used to living well." Xue Meng choked in resentment and rebuked with a dark face, "I can't stand rundown places in any case, so whoever wants to be a gentleman can go right ahead. I don't care."

Having made his statement, he turned and left.

Thus, the four different styled rooms of the courtyard residence were all taken by different masters.

Xue Meng chose the exquisite residence in the north, the walls pale and the shingles black, the threshold lined with gold; the most luxurious room. Mo Ran picked the stone cottage on the west, a peach tree planted by the entrance, the flowers at the height of their blossoming. As for Chu Wanning, he asked for the bamboo building on the east side, and when the sun sank at dusk on the west, the tender, gentle bamboos were like illuminated crisp, bright jades.

And on the south side, that humble, simple thatched cottage resided that 'gentleman' they had yet to meet.

Chu Wanning's cold wasn't yet healed, and his head was spinning crazily, so he had gone to rest quite early. Xue Meng stayed with him for a bit, but since this little ShiDi didn't snuggle or whine, nor did he cared to listen to stories, wrapping himself up like a little sticky rice ball and only cared to

sleep in muffled peace, Xue Meng sat on the edge of his bed for a little while before he found himself unneeded, and dusted himself off and left.

In the yard, Mo Ran had pulled a chair out and was just putting his legs up, his arms pillowing behind his head as he watched the golden sun sink in the west and the blazing rays peel away in leisure.

Seeing Xue Meng come out, he asked, “Xia-Shidi is asleep now?”

“En.”

“Has his fever gone down?”

“If you care about him, why don’t you go inside and see for yourself?”

Mo Ran laughed heartily, “The little guy probably isn’t deep asleep yet, my clumsiness might rouse him.”

Xue Meng gave him a look, “Well at least you’re aware of yourself. And here I thought you’re just like the cats and dogs mom raised, and only knew how to chill out in the yard and be lazy.”

“Haha, and how do you know I’m being lazy?” Mo Ran twiddled with a peach blossom between his fingers, and looked up with a smile, “The time I spent here sitting in the yard was enough to discover a shocking, major secret.”

Xue Meng obviously didn’t want to ask, but was still curious nonetheless, and after bearing it in for a good while, with his face still stiff, he worked out an expression of indifference before he muttered, “...What major secret?”

Mo Ran waved at him and squinted his eyes, “Bring your ear closer and I’ll tell you in secret.”

“.....” Incredibly unwilling, Xue Meng lowered his gracious ear over. Mo Ran pressed close, and chuckled quietly, “Hehe, got you. Dumb Meng Meng.”

Xue Meng’s eyes bulged in round circles and immediately exploded in outrage, yanking over Mo Ran’s collar, “YOU LIED TO ME? HOW JUVENILE ARE YOU?!”

Mo Ran laughed, “How have I lied? I did discover a secret, but I also didn’t want to tell you, that’s all.”

Xue Meng’s dark brows hardened, “If I continue to believe you then I’m truly a fool!”

The two bickered like a bird pecking a dog and a dog biting a bird, and Mo Ran was just about to teasingly say something else to provoke the other to get even angrier when suddenly, a foreign voice laced with confusion from behind went “En?” before speaking, “Are the two of you new training peers?”

This man’s voice was clear and crisp, more supple and bright than your average youth.

Mo Ran and Xue Meng both turned their heads back, and saw in the crimson blood red of the remnant sun, a man dressed in a tight suit was standing there against the wind.

This man was born with deep features, his brows inky black, a black jaded hair crown fastened atop his head, and his honey-colored face was both handsome and spirited. While his body wasn’t tall or buff, his figure was

exceedinging commanding, more esteemed than those distinguished and with class. Especially those pair of long legs: with the bindings of a tight black suit, they appeared even more shapely and powerful, straight and gallant.

Mo Ran's expression instantly changed, and it felt like the blood and sins of a separate world flashed before his eyes.

It was as if he saw a silhouette kneeling in the tempest of blood, the collarbones shot through with a steel chain#, flesh on half the face ripped away but would rather die than surrender, refusing to yield.

His heart trembled, like a crystal dew drop that dripped from a leaf, and Mo Ran actually couldn't describe what it was he was feeling.

If there was anyone he had respected and admired in his previous life, then the one before his eyes now was definitely one of them.

So the honorable gentleman who was to live with them… was actually him, huh…

Author's Notes:

First day of school, Mo Weiyu came to Mount JiuHua Bird Folk University and is living in a four person dorm room~

Mo Ran: Hi everybody! I'm Mo Weiyu from HuNan XinTang! I'm studying philosophy! Please take care of me!

Chu Wanning: Chu Wanning, I came from Lin'an. That pile of laundry on the balcony is mine, I'll throw them all into the washing machine and wash

them later at night. But I don't know how to stuff my duvet covers, if anyone could help me with that, thanks.

Mo Ran: ……

Xue Meng: Xue Ziming, SiChuan, do not provoke me. The entire lower cultivation world's economic backbone is under my dad's hands, if any of you dare to bully me, my dad can ruin the stocks of your parents hold.

Mo Ran: ……

Meanwhile —

The dorm room's door opened! The dorm leader came back from washing mosquito nets in the laundry room!!

Then, from the side character roster, is he Mei Hanxue, or is he Ye Wangxi? This is an easy question~

Ch.61 This Venerable One Is Really Great?

The two brothers stopped bickering, and rose to their feet at the same time.

The person in front of them had an extremely distinguished air about him. Xue Meng stared for a moment before he finally reacted, nodding. “Mn. That’s right. Who are you?”

Xue Meng had been headstrong since birth, and even though Madam Wang taught him etiquette over and over again, he never took it to heart. So, he never asked for people’s proper courtesy names, didn’t bother with honorifics, and wouldn’t give out his own name, either. He was, in essence, downright rude.

But Mo Ran knew that this person was too dignified to make a scene at such actions. After all, this was……

“I am a disciple of the Rufeng Sect, Ye Wangxi. ” As expected, the young man was calm and composed, and didn’t get angry. Below his dark, black eyebrows were a pair of eyes that shone like scattered starlight, exceptionally bright and piercing. “May I inquire as to your name?”

“Ye Wangxi?” Xue Meng frowned, muttering. “Never heard of him, must not have much of a reputation.”

His mutters weren't loud, but the only way the other wouldn't be able to hear him would be if he was hard of hearing. Thus, Mo Ran discreetly tugged on Xue Meng's sleeve to get him to hold back a bit, then masked the emotions on his own face and smiled lightly. "I'm Mo Ran, a disciple from Sisheng Peak, and the one beside me is my ill-mannered little brother, Xu e Meng."

Xue Meng pulled away from him, throwing him an angry glare.

"Don't touch me, who's your little brother?!"

"Oh, Xue Meng, you……" Mo Ran sighed. He turned to Ye Wangxi, eyes curving up into crescents and smiling. " My younger brother is a bit stubborn, please don't mind him, Ye-xiong."

It wasn't that he suddenly decided to change his entire attitude and start being courteous about Xue Meng. Rather, it was because Ye Wangxi was an outstanding genius among his peers. Although this Ye Wangxi hadn't made a name for himself yet, in his previous life, Ye Wangxi was second only to Chu Wanning in the entire cultivation world.

Heaven knows how much Mo Ran had suffered at Ye Wangxi's hands in his previous life. After being reborn into this life, seeing as the other was still

sharp as a knife's edge, an upright hero pure and noble……even if he couldn't get into his good graces, at the very least, Mo Ran didn't want to be his enemy again.

Just Chu Wanning alone was enough to beat him black and blue. How would he even be able to live in peace if Ye Wangxi was added to the mix?

Ye Wangxi was a man of few words, so after a few polite words, he returned to his own room.

As soon as he left, Mo Ran's expression returned to his annoying-as-hell, shit-eating grin. "What do you think?"

"What do I think about what?"

"That person," Mo Ran replied. "Like him? Think he's good-looking?"

"……?" Xue Meng looked at him like he was out of his mind and scoffed. "Weirdo."

Mo Ran laughed. "The four of us are living in the same courtyard, we'll run into each other around every corner. You should be glad that he's the one

we’re living with.”

Xue Meng was puzzled . “The way you talk, it sounds like you know him already?”

Of course, Mo Ran couldn’t tell him the truth, so he joked without a hint of seriousness: “Nope, I don’t know him, but I only judge people by their faces. He’s good-looking, so I like him a whole lot.”

Xue Meng scorned, “Disgusting!”

Mo Ran laughed, waving his hand as he turned around, flipping an offensive hand gesture at Xue Meng behind his back. He then lazily walked back to his own little stone house, barring the door with a klunk , and shutting all of Xue Meng’s cursing and swearing outside.

The morning of the next day, Mo Ran got up early.

The feathered cultivators delayed cultivation practice for three days so they could get accustomed to life at Peach Blossom Springs. After Mo Ran freshened himself up, he saw that Ye Wangxi left on his own. The other two hadn’t woken up yet either, so he went for stroll through the streets.

Amidst the thin layer of morning fog, quite a few cultivators glided by with light steps, rushing to their own individual cultivation grounds.

Mo Ran passed by a breakfast stall and saw a fresh pot of steam-fried buns. He thought of his little shidi, who was still sick, and walked over to say, “I’ll take eight fried buns and one bowl of sweet congee to go, Mrs. Shopkeep.”

The feathered stall owner didn’t even lift her head up and replied: “Give me six feathers.”

Mo Ran stared blankly. “Six what?”

“Six feathers.”

“.....So do I need to find a chicken right now and pluck a couple of feathers?”

That feathered shopkeeper raised her eyes to give him a look. “No feathers and you still want food? Go, get lost.”

Mo Ran was both irked and humored, but just as he was about to ask again, a familiar voice suddenly came from behind him. A hand wrapped in

bandages reached out, six glimmering, resplendent golden feathers pinched between his fingers.

“Mrs. Shopkeep, some porridge please. It’s on me.”

The feathered shopkeep took the feathers, not wanting to waste any more time on them, and turned to pack up the breakfast to go. Mo Ran turned his head, and saw that Ye Wangxi was standing by his side, standing tall and handsome, his presence elegant.

“Thank you very much.” Mo Ran grabbed the still-steaming, piping hot buns and the sweet congee, and walked away with Ye Wangxi, “If I hadn’t run into you today, I’m afraid we might’ve gone hungry.”

“No worries,” Ye Wangxi said. “Miss Eighteen doesn’t have a good memory, and always forgets to give newcomers some feathers. I also ran into you by chance; it’s not much skin off my back, so don’t worry about it.”

Mo Ran asked him, “Do you need these feathers to do all the business in Peach Blossom Springs?”

“That’s right.”

“Where do the feathers come from?”

Ye Wangxi replied, “They’re plucked.”

“P...Pluck…ed…” Mo Ran felt slightly dumbfounded. These feathers really were plucked straight off the body of a bird? Then wouldn’t the birds around here all end up completely bald?

Seeing his shocked face, Ye Wangxi glanced at him with amusement: ”What are you thinking about? In Peach Blossom Springs, there’s a place called the Ancestral Abyss . Legend has it that that was where the Zhuque immortal ascended. The bottom of the abyss is filled with roaring flames, it’s hot beyond measure and hard to endure. Not a single inch of grass can grow there, and no beasts can survive either.”

Mo Ran listened to his description, and immediately thought of the blood-red sky that he’d seen in the distance when he passed through the outskirts of the city yesterday. “Is the abyss near the northern part of the city?”

“You are correct.”

“What does that have to do with the feathers?”

Ye Wangxi replied, “It’s like this: although no other creatures can live around the Ancestral Abyss, there is a flock of angry owls that lives inside. They make their nests with the fire, hide during the day, and come out at night. Their feathers can help people from the feathered cultivators’ tribe refine their cultivation.

“So that’s how it is,” Mo Ran grinned. “No wonder they want to trade goods for feathers, then.”

“Mn. But you should be mindful, because when they come out at night, their feathers will turn into normal ones, the same as those from regular owls. Even if you catch them then, they won’t be useful at all. Only at daybreak every day, when the sun rises in the east, will the flock of owls return to the Ancestral Abyss in the hundreds and thousands. The moment right before they enter their abyss, their feathers will turn gold again, and only then is it useful to pluck them.”

“Haha, wouldn’t that be the same as practicing footwork and flying skills? If your skills are subpar, then you’d fall in and become barbeque. If you don’t go and harvest feathers, then you’d probably starve to death.” Mo Ran couldn’t help but click his tongue. “That’s pretty rough.”

Ye Wangxi asked, “Could it be that you’re not good at light footwork?”

Mo Ran chuckled. “Just so-so.”

“That won’t do,” Ye Wangxi replied, “The owls’ movements are swift and violent, no slower than a falcon or hawk. If you don’t practice diligently, then you’ll go hungry after a couple of days.”

“So that’s how it is……”

When he saw that Mo Ran was still spacing out, Ye Wangxi sighed and spoke again: “I’ve acquired quite a few feathers, and I’m not lacking for the time being. If the three of you need some, then just ask me for now.”

Mo Ran waved his hand again, smiling. “How could we do that? Let’s just count this as me borrowing these six feathers from you. I ’m going to go back and eat some food first, and if I can harvest some feathers tomorrow, I’ll pay you back. Thanks a lot.”

Mo Ran bade farewell to Ye Wangxi, carrying the congee and food back to the courtyard.

Xue Meng's room was empty. He'd probably woken up and gotten bored, and went out for a stroll. Mo Ran then went to Chu Wanning's bamboo house.

Chu Wanning hadn't woken up yet. Mo Ran set the congee and steam-fried buns on the table, and went to his bedside. He lowered his head to take a look.

All of a sudden, a familiar feeling washed over him.

This little shidi's appearance while sleeping…… why did it seem like a certain someone?

But he couldn't think of exactly who his shidi's appearance resembled. He only had a fuzzy impression of someone else who was just like this, someone who always curled himself up into a ball while laying on his bed, his hands under his cheeks——but who was it, exactly?

While he was busy getting lost in his thoughts, Chu Wanning woke up.

"Wuuh……" He rolled over. Chu Wanning saw the person beside his bed, and suddenly opened his eyes wide. "Mo Ran?"

“How many times have I told you, you should call me Shixiong.” Mo Ran ruffled his hair a bit, and then took his temperature by feeling his forehead, “It seems like your fever’s broken. Come on, get up and eat some food.”

”Eat food……” The child on the bed repeated blankly, his messy hair just making his face look cuter.

“Look at how much shixiong cares about you, I got up so early to go buy breakfast. You should eat it while it’s still hot.”

Chu Wanning put on his spotlessly white inner robes and got off the bed, walking towards the dining table. On top of the dining table, there was a single fresh lotus leaf. The steam-fried buns inside had thin skins and crispy bottoms, with jade-green pieces of chopped green onion and black sesame scattered over top. On the other side, there was a small bowl of longan and osmanthus congee. It was soft and sticky, but thick and rich at the same time, still piping hot, with clouds of steam rising from it.

The usually strong and steadfast Yuheng elder was suddenly unsure of himself. “For me?”

“Ah?”

“Do you buy all of this……for me?”

Mo Ran was stunned for a second. “That’s right.”

He watched Chu Wanning, who looked all hesitant and unsure. He thought about it and smiled, “Hurry and eat up, otherwise it’ll go cold.”

Although Chu Wanning had been in Sisheng peak for so many years, and everyone respected him, almost no one would eat food with him because his cold and stiff personality. They were even less likely to bring him a portion of breakfast from the canteen. Sometimes, he’d watch the disciples taking care of each other, and he was unwilling to admit it, but he couldn’t help being slightly jealous of them in his heart. And so, faced with this bowl of porridge and a couple of buns, he couldn’t bring himself to actually eat them. A long while passed in silence.

Mo Ran saw him sitting on the small stool, staring at the food in front of him and not moving his chopsticks, and thought the food might not be to his tastes. “What’s wrong?” Mo Ran asked. “Is it too greasy for you?”

”.....”

Chu Wanning looked back at him and shook his head. He picked up his spoon, scooping up a spoonful of congee. He blew on it, and took a careful sip.

If he was still the beautiful, cold, and distant Chu-zongshi from before, then he would seem elegant and refined eating congee in such a manner, as though he was practicing restraint.

But in the body of a child, he just looked slightly awkward and pitiful.

Mo Ran misinterpreted his hesitation, and said to him, “Do you not like longans? You can pick them out and leave them by the side then, it’s no biggie.”

“No.” The little shidi’s face wasn’t too expressive, but when he looked towards Mo Ran again, his crow-black eyes were soft. “I like it.”

“Oh…… Haha, that’s good then, I thought that you didn’t like it.”

Chu Wanning’s thick curtain of lashes swept downwards, and he repeated his words quietly, “I like it. No one’s ever taken care of me like this before.”

As he spoke, he lifted his eyes to glance at Mo Ran. He spoke again, earnestly.

“Thank you very much, shixiong.”

Mo Ran didn’t expect that he’d say something like that, and couldn’t help feel stunned.

He wasn’t a naturally kind person, and didn’t particularly like kids. He only treated Xia Sini well because his skills were unusually good at a young age, and he seemed like a junior worth making friends with.

Mo Ran was only thinking about things practically, but seeing how Chu Wanning was treating this matter sincerely, he couldn’t help but blush with

shame. However, after hearing what his shidi had said, he thought it was a little strange. Mo Ran waved his hand to tell Chu Wanning that he didn't need to thank him, and asked, "Has nobody ever bought you breakfast before?"

Chu Wanning nodded expressionlessly.

"Do Xuanji Elder's disciples not know to look after one another or something?"

Chu Wanning replied, "I don't hang out with them much."

"What about before you came to the sect? When you lived at your old house, your mom and dad……" After saying the first half of his sentence, Mo Ran stopped.

Seeing how his little shidi was so quick-witted and pure as snow, what sort of parents would have the heart to leave such a kid on top of a mountain to cultivate, and never come back and come visit him ever again? It seemed like he had suffered the same experiences as Shi Mei and himself.

As expected, Chu Wanning spoke calmly: "My parents abandoned me, and I didn't have any other relatives, so there was nobody to look after me."

Mo Ran was silent for a long while before letting out a big sigh. He thought: Originally I just wanted to be friends with this kid, one, because his cultivation level was quite high, and two, because he was steady and mature, unlike the usual rowdy kid. Who would've thought that he came from the same background as me...

Looking at the little shidi in front of him, Mo Ran couldn't help thinking of his own childhood and remembering those years filled with bitterness and hardships. He felt a surge of emotion rush through his chest that filled him with sympathy and a sense of intimacy. Suddenly, he spoke: "There was nobody to take care of you before, but there will be from now on. Since you've already called me your shixiong, I'll take care of you properly from here on out."

It seemed like Chu Wanning didn't expect him to say this, and was a bit surprised. After a while, his features melted slowly into a tiny smile, and he spoke: "You'll take care of me?"

"Mn. If you stick with me from now on, I'll teach you meditation and sword techniques."

Chu Wanning's grin widened. "You'll teach me meditation and sword techniques?"

Mo Ran misinterpreted his expression and scratched his head, saying, “Don’t make fun of me, I know that your cultivation level is already pretty good, but you’re still young, after all, and you have lots to learn. There’s a lot of disciples under Xuanji elder, and he probably won’t be able to teach you individually. What’s wrong with learning a bit from me? At the very least, I’m still a person with a spiritual weapon.”

Chu Wanning was silent for a moment, and finally spoke: “ I wasn’t making fun of you. I……think you’re great.”

Chu Wanning would’ve never been able to say something like this before. However, ever since his body had gotten smaller, it seemed as though his personality had gotten gentler and softer too. It was as if he was hiding under a cloak of darkness and could finally take off his rock-hard mask.

As for Mo Ran, although he’d lived through two lifetimes, this was the first time someone had praised him like that and told him “you’re great.” Even though the one who praised him was just a little kid, he was still at a loss at what to do, overwhelmed by the pleasant surprise. Mo Ran could do nothing but sputter for a while. His skin, which had always been as thick as city walls, actually flushed red.

He repeated what was said to him, stuttering, “I, I-I-I’m great……you really think I’m great?”

Suddenly, Mo Ran vaguely recalled that, when he was young, he had wanted to be a good person.

But that small, gentle wish of his from back then, much like all of his other little wishes—“When I grow up, I want to ask Li-zizi# from the makeup store to marry me”, “When I have money, I want to eat pancake fritters every day”, “If I could have just two pieces of barbecued meat for every meal, I wouldn’t trade it even for immortality”—all of it, in the end, became nothing more than memories blown away by the wind and scattered in the snow.

Ch.62 This Venerable One Arrives At Ancient Lin'an

Their training began without delay. Mo Ran liked feather-gathering the most—after all, it's not like he actually expected to learn much from these losers that he had already trounced thoroughly in the last life—having the funds to indulge with was where it's at.

Every day before the break of dawn, they would go to the Ancestral Abyss to loot golden feathers. Next up was meditation in the ZhuRong Cave to refine cultivation by training their inner spiritual energy against the burning Yang energy of the cave. And four hours after that was demon suppression practice with the feathered tribe.

Another four hours of that, and then they would go to Asura Arena to engage in practice matches against one another.

And finally, in the evening, before the night fell, Miss Eighteen would lecture on 《The Demon Compendium》 and 《Art of Exorcism》 at the Stargazing Cliffs of the Peach Blossom Springs.

Of course Mo Ran's favorite time of day was the nightly lecture at the Stargazing Cliffs, because that was the only lesson attended by cultivators in all three specialized divisions.

He knew that Shi Mei wasn't great at footwork, and worried if he had enough to eat, so he made sure to give Shi Mei half of his harvested feathers every day. But outside of that, he hardly even had any chance to interact with Shi Mei. Instead, he spent every day with Chu Wanning, the two gradually becoming inseparable.

During this span of time, they could often be seen together, day in and day out, cloudy and sunny, with Chu Wanning sitting on the railing of a bridge playing a tune on a leaf, and Mo ran sitting next to him, cheek propped up in one hand.

Or, sometimes, Chu Wanning would be feeding fish by the river, and Mo Ran would stand to the side holding an umbrella, watching the koi fish leap, golden scales glimmering against waters of clear jade.

When it rained at the Peach Blossom Springs, Mo Ran would hold Chu Wanning's hand while they walked along a limestone footpath, its stones cracked from age, an oil paper umbrella held evenly above the two of them.

If the rainwater began to collect on the ground, Mo Ran would pick up his little shidi and carry him on his back, and the little guy would hold quietly onto his shoulders as the drops of rain pitter-pattered all around them.

And if the close contact got to be a bit too warm and sweat started to bead on his forehead, the wordless shidi on his back would reach out and wipe his sweat for him with a handkerchief. The handkerchief was a plain white, with a haitang flower sewn on a corner. Mo Ran kept feeling like it looked familiar, as if he had seen it somewhere before, but the careless thought fleeted across and was lost, like the drizzle of rain falling into a deep pond.

One day, Chu Wanning was resting in the courtyard when Mo Ran undid his braid on a whim and tied his hair up into a high ponytail instead. He was halfway through brushing his hair when Ye Wangxi walked in holding his left shoulder, expression gloomy.

Mo Ran, ever observant, raised his eyebrows slightly: “Did Ye-xiong get injured?”

“En.” Ye Wangxi paused, then furrowed his brows, “It’s nothing, just got grazed in a fight. But that guy was truly such a depraved lecher, how despicable!”

“.....”

Mo Ran sputtered in disbelief: “Did you get groped?”

Ye Wangxi glared daggers at him, and said, coldly: “What exactly are you thinking about.”

“Hahaha, just kidding.” Mo Ran laughed awkwardly, but couldn’t resist the curiosity, “Who was it though?”

Ye Wangxi replied: “Who else could it be but that flirt from Kunlun Taxue Palace.”

Mo Ran let out an “ah” at these words, thinking: Could it be that guy?

Recently, he often came across female disciples at the Peach Blossom Springs whispering amongst themselves, “da-shixiong” this, “da-shixiong” that. It was one thing for the younger ones, but just yesterday he saw a forty, maybe fifty-some year old female cultivator in hysterics by the flower bushes, muttering with distant eyes: “Not a single man in this world could even hope to hold a candle to da-shixiong…… if only he would look my way, speak to me, I’d willingly go to hell with no regrets.”

Mo Ran had lost it right there and burst out laughing at the lovelorn display. He had a sneaking suspicion as to whom this “da-shixiong” might be, but the Peach Blossom Springs was full of cultivators who barely even

interacted, so he had never seen this person despite hearing his name mentioned time and again, and he knew enough shame to not go inserting himself into the gossip of female disciples, so he couldn't be sure.

"I was having a drink at the LingHu Tavern in the western market," Ye Wangxi said, "That bastard happened to be there too, with a girl in each arm. It was depraved, but that's their choice and none of my business, so I couldn't exactly say anything."

Mo Ran agreed: "Makes sense."

"But then, a female Guyue'ye disciple ran in, looking around with an anxious expression, clearly looking for someone."

Mo Ran laughed: "Let me guess, she was looking for that 'da-shixiong'?"

"You've heard of this da-shixiong too?"

"Haha, well, I mean, if even an upstanding individual like you has heard tell of his philandering ways, how could a gossipy person like myself not know?"

Ye Wangxi shot him a wordless glance, then continued: "That da-shixiong is truly a piece of work. Turns out, the Guyue'ye girl came looking because he had exchanged tokens of affection with her some days ago, saying he'll be her cultivation partner and stay by her side forever."

Mo Ran laughed again: "Yeah that's bullshit. I bet da-shixiong has like seventeen copies of that 'token of affection', one for every girl he's after. Probably spouts the same pledge of undying love word for word too."

Chu Wanning had been listening quietly, but now he glanced at Mo Ran and said, disgruntled: "Of course you would know."

But who would have thought that Ye Wangxi would take Mo Ran's side: "Mo-xiong has the right of it, the truth is exactly so. That girl was a secret admirer of da-shixiong's to start with, so she took him at his word and gave her virginity to him that very night."

Mo Ran hurriedly covered Chu Wanning's ears with an "aiyo."

Chu Wanning, unfazed: "What are you doing?"

"Little ones can't listen to this, it's bad for your cultivation."

Chu Wanning: "....."

Mo Ran made sure that Chu Wanning's ears were firmly covered, then immediately asked, with sparkles in his eyes: "And then?"

Ye Wangxi was a respectable individual; he had no idea that Mo Ran, the rascal, was listening to his recount of righteous indignation like he would some trashy romance, so he replied with an air of integrity: "What do you think? Da-shixiong denied it, of course, he didn't even want to give her the time of day and have some words at least. That girl took out the sword tassel he gave her as token, but didn't expect the two on da-shixiong's arms to each pull out their own, saying that he gives one to every friend, that it wasn't something special for a cultivation partner."

"Tsk tsk, that's shameless all right."

"Right?" Ye Wangxi said, "I couldn't just sit and watch, so I went over to have a word with him."

His expression shifted slightly, and there was a pause before he continued: "The talk went nowhere, so we got in a fight instead."

Mo Ran gave a smile: “I see.”

But he was actually thinking: That’s probably not the whole story. If this “da-shixiong” was indeed the person that he thought he was, then based on his personality, he definitely wouldn’t get in a fight with someone over something like this. Ye Wangxi had probably omitted something out of embarrassment.

But since Ye Wangxi didn’t want to say it, Mo Ran didn’t press the issue, changing the topic instead: “That da-shixiong must be pretty good in a fight then, I can’t imagine just any random person being able to land a hit on Ye-xiong.”

Which was evidently the wrong thing to say, as it only seemed to make Ye Wangxi even madder, anger flickering like a wildfire in those dark eyes.

“Pretty good? Yeah right.” Ye Wangxi said with indignation, “He himself can’t get any more mediocre, the women did all the fighting for him——what a good-for-nothing!”

“Ah? Hahahahaha.” At these words, Mo Ran took a closer look at Ye Wangxi to find that, aside from the sword wound on his shoulder, there were a couple of bloody scratches on his cheek that were clearly from a woman’s nails, and almost fell over laughing, “Da-shixiong sure does live up to his reputation, hahahaha.”

Chu Wanning said nothing. He seemed to have been pondering something ever since Ye Wangxi said “the talk went nowhere, so we got in a fight instead.”

He waited until Ye Wangxi left to go bandage his wounds in his room before saying: “Mo Ran.”

Mo Ran bopped his head: “Call me shixiong.”

“.....” Chu Wanning continued, “This da-shixiong, is it Mei Hanxue?”

Mo Ran said with a grin: “That’s what I think.”

Chu Wanning fell silent again, deep in thought.

Then, as if suddenly coming to a realization, his eyes opened wide: “Could it be that Ye Wangxi got——”

“Shh! Quiet!” Mo Ran raised a finger to his lips in a hushing gesture, then crouched down to Chu Wanning’s height, smiling, “Aren’t you a little too young to be thinking about that stuff?”

“.....I’ve long heard that this Mei Hanxue person is very……unreliable, that he’s done all sorts of preposterous things, but to think that he’d dare to have a go at even a disciple of Rufeng Sect……”

Mo Ran laughed: “Hahaha, unreliable is one way to put it. But anyway, let’s stay out of other people’s business. Here, let shixiong finish putting your hair up. I saw a pretty hair clasp while I was out at west street earlier, and it wasn’t too pricey either, so I grabbed it. Let’s have you try it on.

Just like how Mo Ran didn’t like Chu Wanning’s tastes, Chu Wanning was also less than impressed with Mo Ran’s tastes.

Chu Wanning stared silently at that overly vibrant and honestly gaudy hair clasp decorated with golden orchids and butterflies: “.....Are you sure that’s for me?”

“Yup! Little kids should wear lively colors like gold and red.”

Chu Wanning: "……"

He really didn't want it, but thinking about it again, this seems to be the first time that Mo Ran's ever gifted him something, so he closed his mouth and said nothing, face full of gloom as Mo Ran fastened the clasp to his ponytail. The golden orchids and butterflies glimmered garishly against his long, inky hair.

Chu Wanning lowered his lashes.

He suddenly felt that this wasn't bad.

This kind of color, this kind of Mo Ran, this kind of himself. If he was in his normal form, none of this would have happened.

It was as if the butterflies had come from a dream.

The clouds overhead shifted and colored as sun and moon chased one another across the sky.

Half a year of training at the Peach Blossom Springs flew by in the blink of an eye.

Miss Eighteen had said that they would be tested at the half year mark to gauge their progress.

"This will be your first test since coming here." Eighteen announced gracefully to the assembly, "The content of the test will differ depending on your division, with three different disaster scenarios. Those of you in the defense division will enter the 'Domain of Blood River', those in the healing division will enter the 'Domain of Great Sorrows', and those in the attack division will enter the 'Domain of Fiends.'"

“Each of the three scenarios is an illusory realm that has been reconstructed using memories of the ghost realm invasion from hundreds of years ago. You will not be any danger while inside, and you will be returned here once you have resolved the crisis therein.”

“Up to two people can enter the illusory realm at a time. In other words, you can challenge it alone, or invite one other person to go together. As for the order of testing, that will be announced by the envoys anon.”

The assembly was dismissed, and the tests began. Mo Ran didn’t know how things were going over at the defense and healing divisions, but for the attack division at least, half a dozen people have already gone through it, and all did pretty well, so it seemed the test probably wasn’t too hard.

Ten days later, it was Mo Ran’s turn.

Eighteen was the one in charge of the attack division. She smiled and asked: “Will Mo-xianjun# be going with a partner?”

Mo Ran thought about it: “If I choose someone to go along with me, would they then be exempt from having to go through the test again?”

“Of course.”

“Then I’ll bring my shidi.” Mo Ran pointed at Chu Wanning, “He’s still young, I’ll worry if he goes at it alone.”

The moon hung bright overhead as they followed Eighteen to a pitch-black cave, its entrance covered with a thin layer of reddish-gold mist.

Eighteen said: “Please listen well—the scene within the Domain of Fiends is that of the calamity from two hundred years ago, the first breakage of the ghost realm barrier. At that time, because the barrier wasn’t able to be

repaired in time, masses of vengeful ghosts and malicious spirits escaped into the human realm and slaughtered countless living beings. This illusory realm is an emulation based on the memories of a survivor from Lin'an back then. Stepping into this cave will bring you to the battle-torn Lin'an City of two hundred years ago. Slay the Ghost King leading the army, and the illusion will dissipate on its own."

Mo Ran glanced at Chu Wanning, then turned to smile at Eighteen: "Big sister, I'm sturdy so it's whatever, but my shidi is only six, and swords don't have eyes, what if he gets injured……"

"There is no need to worry, the weapons inside the illusion will not actually hurt you." Eighteen explained, "Any injuries you sustain will only be marked with a spiritual signifier. However, if you get marked at a vital area representing a fatal injury, you will have failed the challenge."

Relieved, Mo Ran clasped his hands together and grinned: "I see, thank you for the kind considerations."

And so, Mo Ran and Chu Wanning headed into the test without worry. The cave was pitch-black; stepping inside felt like missing a step, like their bodies were abruptly suspended in mid air, followed immediately by blurry images flashing before their eyes, countless contorted faces flowing together into a river passing below them.

When their feet landed back on solid ground, they found themselves transported to ancient Lin'an, on a road at the outskirts. It was noon, the sun blazed from above, and a putrid smell filled the air.

The sight of the ancient Lin'an City of two hundred years ago, plagued nightly by hordes of ghosts, accompanied by the heavy stench of rotting

flesh, unfolded slowly before Mo Ran and Chu Wanning's eyes like a weathered scroll scorched by the flames of war

Mini Theater 【Feathered Tribe Instanced Dungeon Options】

What would be the ending to an instanced dungeon with Mo Ran and Chu Wanning?

No healing, death.

What would be the ending to an instanced dungeon with Mo Ran and Shi Mei?

No opportunity, the author refused.

What would be the ending to an instanced dungeon with Mo Ran and Xue Meng?

Bicker in front of the boss about who can self destruct faster.

What would be the ending to an instanced dungeon with Xue Meng and Shi Mei?

Normal composition, there is a possibility of winning.

What would be the ending to an instanced dungeon with Xue Meng and Shizun?

Death, one DPS standing at the sidelines cheering for another DPS.

What would be the ending to an instanced dungeon with Shizun and Shi Mei?

Boss dies under the hands of a rampant Mo Ran, this instance does not exist.

Ch.63 This Venerable One Sees……Whom?!

>>gory

Lin'an City back then was deep in the midst of war, congealing blood covered the ground everywhere the eye could see, and all around were crumbled walls and ruined houses. Suffocated by the heavy miasma of malicious ghosts, the trees and flora had all withered away.

Mo Ran hadn't even collected himself yet when he heard some strange sounds and looked up. Not far away, fresh entrails were hanging off the branch of an old pagoda tree, and a dozen crows had set upon it in a feast, blood and flesh dripping nonstop.

And underneath the tree was the corpse of a middle-aged man, blood and organs spilling out from his stomach where it had been torn open by claws. No one would ever know if he had died with his eyes open or closed, because his eyeballs had already been pecked away.

Mo Ran was no stranger to such scenes.

In his past life, he had once crossed the breadth of the human world to put all seventy two cities of the Rufeng Sect to the sword. Back then, blood flowed like rivers and corpses covered the fields, making for a sight much like this one.

But for some reason he couldn't understand, even though he had reveled in the blood spilt in that life, with every fiber of his being roaring willfully, to suddenly see a similar scene of devastation before him now, he felt instead a biting sympathy…… had he been faking tameness for so long that his true nature had actually gotten unwittingly changed?

He was just pondering the point when he heard the sound of hooves from up ahead, accompanied by a cloud of dust.

Anyone galloping around in such war-torn times was probably bad news.

Mo Ran immediately pulled Chu Wanning behind himself, but there was nowhere to hide on this barren old road. A group of riders quickly emerged from the dust cloud, some dozen in all, but when they got closer to see, it was apparent that their horses were the opposite of sturdy—a few were so starved that their ribs were sticking out.

They were dressed in the same style of white attire with patterns in bright red, wore helmets embellished with feathers in like colors, and each donned a circlet of entwined dragons. The clothes were dirty yet neatly worn, and the people were thin but spirited. Even more unusual was the fact that each of them had a bow and a full quiver of arrows on their backs.

In times of war, the two most valuable things were food and weapons.

These were clearly not ordinary people.

Mo Ran was still trying to decide if the new arrivals were good or evil, friend or enemy, when one among them—a youth of only fourteen or fifteen—cried out in horror: “Dad! DAD!!”

The youth stumbled off his horse and fell in the muddied ground below, but immediately crawled up and staggered toward the tree to throw himself on the mangled body of the middle-aged man, crying miserably: “Dad! Dad!”

The others wore expressions of pity, but they had all clearly seen too much death already, so much that they had become numb to it. And so the youth

held the corpse and cried in agony, but no one else so much as got off their horse to offer any comfort.

One of them noticed Mo Ran and Chu Wanning standing not far away, and was startled for a moment before asking in a thick Lin'an accent: "You guys aren't from around here, are you?"

Mo Ran answered: "Yeah……we're from the Shu area."

"So far?" The asker was shocked, "The way the world is these days, ghosts are everywhere as soon as night falls, how did the two of you survive this far?"

"……I can fight a little." Mo Ran knew it was best to reveal as little as possible, and since these people don't seem to be malicious, he pulled Chu Wanning out to change the subject, "This is my little brother, we were passing by and stopped to rest for a while."

Some of the riders, upon seeing Chu Wanning, seemed a bit taken aback; a couple of them turned to whisper amongst themselves.

Mo Ran, alarmed: "Something wrong?"

"It's nothing." The young man at the head of the group said, "But onto serious matters—you should go into the city if you want to rest. There may not be any monsters around right now, but ghosts will be crawling the streets once night falls. XiaoMan's adoptive father came out looking for food during the day yesterday, but there was a thunderstorm and he couldn't make it back before nightfall, and then……" He sighed heavily and didn't finish the sentence.

XiaoMan was the name of that wailing youth, and the one under the tree was his adoptive father. Such occurrences were commonplace in these chaotic times; someone in a family would go out to look for food, perfectly fine as they leave in the morning, but never to return by night.

Even knowing that these were already events of two hundred years past, Mo Ran, watching that youth cry miserably as if he were about to weep blood, still felt a tightness in his chest.

Followed immediately by a sudden unease.

Had he grown so soft? He hardly even blinked when killing people in the last life.

He quickly grabbed Chu Wanning and bid the group farewell.

The leader of the group said: “When you get to Lin’an City, find somewhere to stay for a while. We’re planning to relocate everyone to PuTuo soon, where the abundance of spiritual energy has warded off the ghost invasion, at least for the time being. You should come with us, rather than traveling with just the two of you.”

“Relocate?”

“That’s right.” The leader’s eyes sparked to life, and even his face seemed to light up at this, “It’s all thanks to Chu-gongzi’s brilliant plan, everyone in the city, from the elderly to the tots, will get to keep their lives now! But enough chatter, we still have to patrol around the city before it gets dark, see if we can find any more survivors to bring back——ai, XiaoMan, come on, we should go.”

But XiaoMan only continued to cry, clutching his father’s corpse without even turning around.

Mo Ran sighed and tugged at Chu Wanning, saying in a quiet voice: “Let’s go to the city first.”

Chu Wanning nodded, but then suddenly asked: “Do you think they managed it in the end?”

Mo Ran, holding his small hand that felt a bit cold: “Do you want the truth, or a lie?”

“The truth, of course.”

“The lie would be better for little kids.”

So Chu Wanning answered his own question: “They didn’t.”

“You’re right.” Mo Ran said, “See, you already knew the answer, but you still had to ask, as if that would change the outcome.”

Chu Wanning ignored him and continued asking: “Do you know why they didn’t make it out?”

“It’s not like I’m some two hundred year old demon, how would I know?”

Chu Wanning fell silent for a while before saying gloomily: “Two hundred years ago, practically no one in Lin’an City survived.”

Mo Ran: “.....”

Chu Wanning: “Only a few escaped.”

“Wait, shidi, you’re so young, how do you know so much?”

Chu Wanning shot him a glare: “Yuheng Elder went over this in history lessons more than once. You decide to not pay attention in class, then turn around and ask me how I know things, how despicable.”

Mo Ran was speechless, thinking: Sure I spaced out in class, but even my own Shizun didn’t scold me, what’re you scolding me for? But then again, no point arguing with a little kid, so he’ll let it slide.

The two of them headed toward the city, chatting along the way, and arrived at the city gates before long. The ancient city stood tall on the bank of the QianTang River, and was already heavily fortified against ghosts and demons, with defensive structures lining the walls and the perimeter.

Countless corpses with curse marks piled outside the city. Such remains, if not taken care of, will reanimate at night.

There were cultivators outside spreading incense ash on the corpses while the sun was still high in the sky and the Yang energy was strong. And for the ones afflicted with especially strong curses, they performed exorcism using talismans drawn with cinnabar dipped in wine.

A pair of guards stood before spiked defensive frames by the city gates, dressed just like the riders they met earlier, with white attire trimmed in red, twin dragon circlets, bows on their arms and a full quiver of arrows on their backs.

“Halt, identify yourselves.”

Mo Ran repeated his story from earlier. The guards weren’t there to refuse anyone entry, but only to register new arrivals, and so they were let through after putting their names down.

Before leaving, Mo Ran remembered that the riders earlier had mentioned a “Chu-gongzi”; since the relocation was this Chu-gongzi’s idea, he must be crucial to breaking the illusion.

“Sorry to bother, sir, but might I ask about someone?” Mo Ran said.

The guard looked at him: “Aren’t you from Shu? You know someone here?”

Mo Ran smiled: “No, but we met some sentry sirs earlier who mentioned a gongzi by the name of Chu who’s going to take everyone in the city to PuTuo in two days, so I was wondering who this Chu-gongzi was. I know some magic, and wanted to see if I could help in some way.”

The guard looked him up and down, and probably decided that he must have some skill to be able to bring a little kid all the way here without any

mishap, so he said: “Chu-gongzi is the eldest son of the lord governor. The lord governor was killed a month ago when the Ghost King descended, and the gongzi has led us since.”

“The governor’s son?” Mo Ran and Chu Wanning exchanged a glance, then Mo Ran turned to ask, “That’s strange, how does the governor’s son know magic?”

“What’s so strange about that!” The guard glared at Mo Ran, “Since when was there a rule that you have to be in a big sect to cultivate, that the common people can’t do it?”

“.....”

Sure, there were independent cultivators, but they never amounted to anything.

Mo Ran thought to himself, could it be that this amateur Chu-gongzi and his half-baked idea was what got everyone at Lin’an killed?

But as they followed the guard’s directions toward the governor’s residence, Mo Ran immediately realized how wrong he was. This esteemed personage who just so happened to share a name with his Shizun was clearly no amateur.

Because he saw a Shangqing barrier.

Shangqing barrier was a powerful variety of barrier formed with purified energy, capable of warding off all evils. As long as this barrier stood, even thousand-year malicious spirits can’t hope to enter, much less the average ghost.

But this barrier required the caster to remain within its range in order to ground the spell, and protected a relatively small area. Even a mighty zongshi like Chu Wanning could only cover about half of Sisheng Peak with a Shangqing barrier.

But right here and now, this Chu-gongzi of two hundred years ago had erected a Shangqing barrier covering a radius of ten li [5 km] around the governor's residence. Although a far cry from Chu Wanning's capabilities, it was certainly no ordinary achievement.

The two of them headed toward the gates of the residence. Mo Ran was going to try his luck and have someone notify the governor gongzi that a cultivator was offering help, see if he would be willing to show them the courtesy of a personal meeting.

But when they turned the corner, they were met with the unexpected sight of three long lines of people queued up in front of the gates. Six female attendants, dressed like the guards, were bringing out large wooden barrels, and hundreds of emaciated people—the elderly, the infirm, women and children—were waiting their turn to receive porridge.

Those who had gotten their porridge went to a haitang tree by the residence. A man dressed in white, with his long inky hair loosely tied back, stood under the tree, passing out protection talismans and patiently repeating instructions.

His back was facing Mo Ran, so he couldn't see what he looked like.

But he heard the people who had received the talismans muttering "Many thanks for Chu-gongzi's kindness, many thanks for Chu-gongzi's kindness……" as they dispersed.

So this was the governor gongzi?

Mo Ran, curious, dragged his little shidi around to get a look at his face.

Just one look, and Mo Ran's eyes were boggling out of their sockets, as if struck by lightning——

I-isn't this Chu Wanning???

Not just Mo Ran, even Chu Wanning himself was dumbfounded. Straining to see from their place at the end of the line, this governor Chu-gongzi had a lean face, with sword brows and phoenix eyes, but a gentle curve to the line of his nose, and he even wore all white, just like himself!

Chu Wanning: "....."

Mo Ran: "....."

After a long while of being frozen stiff, Mo Ran said shakily: "Shidi ah."

"Mn."

"Don't you feel like…… this Chu-gongzi looks just like a certain somebody?"

Chu Wanning, drily: "Just like Yuheng Elder."

Mo Ran smacked his leg: “Right?! What’s with that? Who is this? What’s his relationship to Shizun?”

“.....Why are you asking me, how would I know.”

“I thought you paid attention in class?” Mo Ran was frantic.

“This is obviously not the content of any class.” Chu Wanning was irked.

Then they fell silent again, scooting forward slowly with the line, both of them staring unblinkingly at the gongzi.

Upon closer inspection, Chu-gongzi didn’t look exactly like Chu Wanning. This gongzi’s features were more mild and scholarly, his eyes weren’t quite as long and narrow, his pupils were softer, and his gaze was much gentler than Chu Wanning’s.

Mo Ran stared and stared, then suddenly let out an “eh?” and turned to look down at his little shidi.

“Let me look at you.”

“What do you want……” Chu Wanning, ruffled, turned his face away.

But Mo Ran only grew more persistent at that, reaching out to grab his face and forcefully turn him back around. He stared for a while before finally coming to a realization and muttering: “Aiyah.”

Chu Wanning forced himself to remain calm: “Wh-what is it?”

Mo Ran narrowed his eyes: “No wonder those people outside the city were muttering amongst themselves when they saw you. I just noticed, but you

look kinda like Shizun too.”

“……”

Chu Wanning hurriedly wrenched himself out of Mo Ran’s grip, the tips of his ears turning red: “Nonsense.”

“But how come those guards noticed immediately, but it didn’t even occur to me for so long?”

Chu Wanning: “……”

In the midst of puzzlement, the voice of a young child called out: “Papa.”

Ch.64 This Venerable One Tells Shidi a Story

Mo Ran looked to the direction that the voice came from only to see its source waddling unsteadily in a little jog from the stone steps of the residence.

It was a small child, three or four years old, a bamboo pinwheel in hand as he bounced toward Chu-gongzi. He was dressed simply, with a jade pendant hanging around his neck, along with a lock of entrusted name# for good fortune and a protection amulet of red silk, and looked every bit like the little shidi, just smaller.

“.....” Now Mo Ran truly knew the reason those riders were gossiping.

He couldn’t help muttering: “Shidi ah, you and Shizun are both from Lin’an, and Shizun even has the Chu name. Do you think this Chu family from two hundred years ago might have been your ancestors, and that you two might be distant relatives……? Seems pretty likely to me.”

Chu Wanning said nothing, staring at the father and son.

He never knew his own origins, and didn’t remember much of his childhood either.

Could this Chu-gongzi really be his ancestor……

He was still pondering when Mo Ran reached the front of the line.

Chu-gongzi was just about to hand Mo Ran a talisman when he looked up to see an unfamiliar face. He paused minutely before smiling gently: “Is it

your first time here?”

His voice was mellow and refined, a world apart from Chu Wanning’s ice-cold severity.

“Uh…… uh y-yeah.”

To be suddenly spoken to in such an open and friendly manner by someone who looked just like Shizun got Mo Ran feeling some kind of way, and he had to scramble for his bearings.

The governor gongzi smiled: “My name is Chu Xun, may I ask your name?”

“M-my name is Mo, M-Mo Ran.”

“Where does Mo-gongzi hail from?”

“R-really far, fr-from uh, Shu.” Chu Xun-gongzi was gentle and amiable, but Mo Ran just couldn’t shake the feeling that he could see right through him.

Chu Xun agreed with a smile: “That is indeed quite far.” He paused, gaze shifting downwards to Chu Wanning, surprise showing on his refined features.

“And this is……”

“My name is Xia Sini.” Chu Wanning supplied.

Mo Ran pulled him closer and pat him on the head, forcing a smile: “This is my little brother.”

Doesn’t look like me, but looks just like you.

Maybe because there was an imminent battle and more pressing matters, and Chu Xun didn’t have time to dwell on it, or maybe because he was merely part of an illusion and couldn’t react much to something that didn’t belong in the illusion to start with. Whatever the case may be, he stared at Chu Wanning for a while with scrunched brows, then simply handed them each a talisman.

“You are our guests from afar, especially in these difficult times, so please accept these talismans. And if you have no other plans, then please stay for a couple of days.”

Mo Ran said: “I heard about it already, that gongzi intends to bring the people in the city to PuTuo? And what’re the talismans for?”

“These are spirit-quenching talismans.” Chu Xun explained, “They can conceal the aura of the living when worn on the body.”

Mo Ran understood at once: “Ah, I get it. If the aura of the living is sealed, then the ghosts won’t be able to tell the living from the dead, that way even if we walk right past any ghosts, they’ll just be too confused to do anything.”

Chu Xun smiled: “Precisely.”

Seeing that he was quite busy, Mo Ran didn’t want to take up more of his time with questions, so he thanked Chu Xun-gongzi and pulled his little

shidi along to the side.

The two of them found a spot by the wall to sit down. Mo Ran turned toward Chu Wanning to see his little shidi spacing out at that talisman, and asked: “What are you thinking about?”

“I was thinking that this is a solid plan.” Chu Wanning said quietly, still deep in thought, “So then, just what happened, that they couldn’t make it out in the end.”

“Is it not in the books?”

Chu Wanning said: “This two hundred year old disaster is covered in the most detail in 《The Lin’an Records》 , and even that book only has a few lines of text about it.”

Mo Ran asked: “And what does it say?”

“Lin’an was besieged, the situation therein unknown. By the time the resistance army broke through, corpses strewed the roads, and the vast majority of houses were empty. Of the approximately one hundred people of the governor’s residence and the seven hundred and forty common people, none survived.”

“.....” Mo Ran said, “Nothing about how they died?”

“Nothing. Lin’an City was completely surrounded, and hardly anyone survived. The feathered tribe saved a few lucky survivors later on, but they rarely involved themselves in mortal matters, so they saw things differently from how we would. As far as they were concerned, the truth of what

happened wasn't all that important, and even if they knew, they still wouldn't talk about it unless there was some particular need to."

Chu Wanning paused before continuing: "But, since they're setting off in two days anyway, we'll find out what happened soon enough. In the meantime, we might as well walk around and see if we can find some clues."

The two of them tucked their spirit-quenching talismans away for safekeeping, and were just getting up to leave when there was a sudden burst of footsteps, followed by a tug on Chu Wanning's sleeve.

"Little gege."

Chu Wanning turned around. It was the little gongzi who looked just like him; he said in a small, childish voice: "Little gege, Papa said you two don't have anywhere to stay, so if you don't mind, you can stay with us tonight."

"Um……"

Chu Wanning and Mo Ran looked at each other.

Mo Ran asked: "Is that really okay? Your Papa is already so busy."

"It's okay." The little guy grinned guilelessly, "There are lots of people with nowhere to go staying with us already, we're all living together. Papa keeps the ghosts away at night, so we don't have to be scared."

He spoke with little pauses, not yet used to linking so many words together, but the open sincerity was heartwarming.

Mo Ran said: "Okay, we'll be imposing on you tonight then. Thank you, little didi."

“Hehe, no worries, no worries.”

Watching him bounce away, Mo Ran tugged on Chu Wanning’s hand: “Hey, really, I gotta say something.”

“I know what you want to say, so shut it.”

“Hahaha, you read my mind again?” Mo Ran ruffled his hair, grinning, “Once we get back to the Peak, I really gotta go ask Shizun about this. The two of you, one looks like the dad, one looks like the son, there’s no way you guys aren’t related to Governor Chu.”

Chu Wanning: “.....And so what, even if we do turn out to be related?”

“Eh?”

Chu Wanning looked mildly toward the father and son beneath the tree, then said without any expression: “It’s all in the past anyway. They’re all dead already.”

Then he turned and walked away.

Mo Ran stood rooted in place for a while before running after him, muttering: “Oi, aren’t you a little too young to be so despondent? Even if they’re dead, they’re still your ancestors. If I was you, I’d definitely put up a shrine for them, with a statue, nine feet tall, all gold, decked out in jewelry, and burn incense for them every year. I’m counting on my ancestors for protection, you know…… hey, hey hey, what’re you walking so fast for!”

While walking around the city, they noticed that every family was gathering straw and making fake straw men..

Upon asking about it, they were told that it was something Chu-Xun gongzi had asked for: everyone in the city, the young and the elderly alike, had to have a matching straw man in which to put a talisman with a drop of the person's blood, to substitute as a "fake puppet."

It was the same idea as tossing meat-stuffed mantous into the river as offerings to a river deity that demanded human heads.

Some ghosts and deities were simply and fundamentally not that smart; any little trick could fool them, like that ghost mistress from before, with nothing but mud rattling around between the ears.

It seemed that Chu Xun had arranged for at least two layers of precautions for the citizens. The first was the spirit-quenching talismans, so that they won't be discovered by the ghosts while running away.

And the second was the straw puppets, which act as decoys to buy some time for their escape, so that the ghosts won't immediately notice everyone in the city suddenly gone and fly into a rage.

But this only made the haze in their hearts even heavier.

Just how did such a carefully crafted plan end up falling through?

They returned to the governor's residence filled with misgivings. It was already dark by then, and many families had brought bedding to stay the night inside the Shangqing barrier rather than returning to their homes.

The governor kept his gates open at night, with only some guards patrolling the premises.

By the time the two of them arrived, all the rooms of the residence were already filled, with at least three or four families huddled in each. There were people crowded everywhere, with hardly any room left to even stand.

In the end, they could only find a corridor to rest in. There was no bedding, of course, so Mo Ran padded the ground with some straw he had asked the guards for, picked Chu Wanning up, and put him on the makeshift pallet.

“You’ll have to make do with this tonight.”

Chu Wanning said: “Looks comfortable enough.”

“Really?” Mo Ran laughed, “I thought so too.”

He flopped down next to Chu Wanning and stretched, then folded his arms behind his head and stared up at the wooden beams of the ceiling above.

“Shidi, take a look, those bird people aren’t half bad at weaving illusions huh. Even with the memories of a survivor as foundation, it’s still really something for it to be so detailed that you can even see the texture of the wood on the ceiling.”

Chu Wanning said: “The feathered tribe are half-immortal, after all. Even if they’re not all-powerful, they’re still capable of some things that are

beyond the abilities of mortals.”

“I guess so.” Mo Ran blinked, then rolled to face Chu Wanning, propping his head up, “I can’t sleep.”

“.....” Chu Wanning glanced at him, “What do you want, a bedtime story?”

He was being sarcastic, but Mo Ran’s face was thick as the city walls, laughing: “Yes please! I want the one about DongYong and the seven fairies.”

Chu Wanning hadn’t expected him to take it seriously, and was taken aback for a moment before turning away in a huff: “You wish. How old are you already, aren’t you embarrassed.”

Mo Ran grinned: “It’s only human to want the things we can’t have, nothing to do with age. I never had anyone to tell me bedtime stories when I was small, and I was always thinking about how nice it would be to have someone like that. But that person never showed up, and then I grew up and stopped thinking about it. But, deep inside, I still want it.”

Chu Wanning: “.....”

“You didn’t have anyone to tell you bedtime stories either, did you?”

“Mm.”

“Haha, so you don’t actually know how the story of DongYong and the seven fairies goes, right?”

Chu Wanning: "……What's the point to those silly stories, anyway."

"Just admit you don't know it, don't just write it off as a silly story. Else you're gonna grow up into a boring person like my Shizun, and everyone will avoid you."

Chu Wanning, angrily: "Who cares if everyone avoids me. I'm going to sleep."

And with that, he lay down and closed his eyes.

Mo Ran rolled around with laughter until he rolled over next to Chu Wanning. Staring at his little shidi with his eyes closed, eyelashes long and dark, looking quite adorable, he couldn't help reaching out to pinch his cheek.

"Are you really asleep?"

"I'm really asleep."

"Haha." Mo Ran laughed, "Then you keep sleeping, and I'll tell you a bedtime story."

"You know bedtime stories?"

"Yup, just like how you can sleeptalk."

Chu Wanning stopped talking.

Mo Ran lay next to him on the straw bed, their heads mere inches away. He cackled for a bit, but seeing that his shidi was pointedly ignoring him, he stopped being quite so boisterous after a while to look up at the ceiling instead, eyes still curved with mirth. The smell of the straw wafted over now and again, accompanied by the quiet sounds of night.

“The story I’m about to tell you, I made it up myself. I envied those who had bedtime stories when I was young, but there was nothing for it, so every day I would tell myself stories while lying in bed. I’ll tell you my favorite one, it’s called ‘Ox Eats Grass’.”

Mini Theater 【Bedtime Story】

Weiyu starts bedtime stories like this: A long long time ago, there was a child…

Chu Wanning starts stories like this: The path that takes you to destination could be not the common path. What story? I don’t know how to. Recite sutra.

Xue Meng: No, no... pftt! Ok! Fine! I’ll listen.

Xue Meng starts bedtime stories like this: Let me tell you, I am an excellent student. I’ve received a countless number of first places since my childhood. Today I’ll tell you how I won the 14th annual youth blade technique championship haha~

Shi Mei starts stories like this: … En… I’m not very good at telling stories, if it’s bad, please don’t mind it.

Ye Wangxi starts stories like this: You want to hear a story? Sure, let me go find a book, you can lie down first, tuck yourself into the blanket, don't catch a cold.

Mei Hanxue starts stories like this: Story? Okay, Eldest Shi-Xiong can tell you a kissy kissy story between two male tigers, or one male and one female. Which version do you want?

Ch.65 This Venerable One's Story is Super Bad

Having spoken to this point, Mo Ran smiled again before he continued, "A long long time ago, there was a small child."

Chu Wanning's eyes were closed, "Wasn't it an ox grazing? How come it's a kid?"

"Let me finish." Mo Ran smiled hummingly, "Once upon a time there was a small child, very poor. He didn't have a dad or a mom, and was a child labourer in the household of a landlord. He had to wash dishes, wash clothes, wipe the floors, and had to take the ox grazing too. The landlord's household gave him three pancakes to eat everyday, and the child was very happy that he could fill his stomach."

"One day, he took the ox out to graze as always. On the road, they bumped into a mad dog and it bit the leg of the ox. Because of this, the landlord unsurprisingly gave him a round of beatings. After the beatings, the landlord made him go kill that mad dog to vent, otherwise he wouldn't let the child have his pancakes."

"The child was very scared, and could only follow orders and brought that mad dog back after he beat it to death. However, when he came home, the landlord discovered that turns out, the dog that bit the leg of their cattle was actually the beloved canine of the county master."

Chu Wanning opened his eyes, "Then what can they do?"

"What else can they do? That dog was the County Master's most favourite's favourite, so the dog was used to having its way, using the might and power behind its back. Who knew it would get beaten to death so out

of the blue just like that, and if the County Master should find out, he wouldn't let it go so easily. So, the more the landlord thought about it, the angrier he became, so in the end, he still never gave the small child his pancakes. He even threatened, if the County Master came looking for trouble, he would give the child out."

"...What is this mess, so unreasonable." Chu Wanning said, "I'm not listening to this anymore."

"There are a lot of things that aren't reasonable in the first place." Mo Ran laughed, "It's a matter of who has the most money, whose fist is tougher, and whose position is higher. The next day, the County Master indeed came knocking. The child was given away. But, since he really was too young, the County Master didn't have the face to lock him up, so he was flogged heavily for ten times before he was let go."

"And that child ran away after he was let go, right?" Chu Wanning asked.

"Haha, he didn't run away." Mo Ran replied, "The kid still went back to the landlord's household, recovered from his injuries, and went back to grazing the ox for them. Still getting three pancakes a day to eat."

"Isn't he angry?"

"As long as his stomach is filled he won't be angry." Mo Ran said, "A round of beatings is a round of beatings, after it's over, it's over. And things were peaceful for over a decade. Later, the oxherd boy grew up. He followed after those who were the same age as well as the landlord's son. One day, several esteemed guests came to the landlord's house, and the landlord's son saw one of the guests had brought a particularly beautiful agate snuff bottle. He loved it so he stole it."

“That snuff bottle was an heirloom, extremely precious. The guest was quite panicked and looked all over the house for his possession. The landlord’s son saw he couldn’t hide anymore, so he stuffed the snuff bottle into that oxherd boy’s hands and told him: if he dared tell the truth, then he will never receive any meals again, and will die from starvation.”

“...” Having listened to this point, Chu Wanning was utterly speechless. He thought inwardly, while Mo Ran had wandered the streets since he was young, having been orphaned, but at the very least he had grown up at an entertainment house, his mother a managing head, so even though it wasn’t the happiest of days, it wasn’t miserable either, so why were all the stories he made up so gloomy and sad?

Mo Ran continued on, quite enjoying himself, “The snuff bottle was soon found. For the sake of meals, that oxherd boy could only force himself to take the blame, and naturally, what followed was another round of vicious beatings. This time, they beat him so hard he couldn’t get out of bed for three days. The landlord’s son got away with this this time, so he secretly snuck a steamed bun stuffed with marinated pork to the oxherd boy. That kid wolfed down the food, and stopped resenting this boy who harmed him. Since he’s never tasted such delicacies before, as he held the bun, he kept saying to the landlord’s son: thank you, thank you.”

“I’m not listening anymore.” This time, Chu Wanning really was aggravated, “How can he stop his resentment? A steamed bun and all is forgiven? And thanking him too! What’s there to thank?!”

“No, you’re not listening carefully.” Mo Ran innocently blinked his eyes.

“How am I not listening carefully?”

Mo Ran straightened his face, “That was a steamed bun stuffed with marinated pork, I tell you.”

Chu Wanning: “...”

“Haha, look at your face, you don’t understand, do you? Usually, that child could only get his hands on a scrap or two of fatty meat during New Year’s Eve. He had originally thought he was going to die never knowing what marinated pork was gonna taste like, so of course he’d thank the other party.”

Seeing his little shidi was stumped speechless by his words, Mo Ran smiled exceedingly brilliantly, and continued, “Either way, this incident passed just like that. He still collected his three pancakes, and passed day by day. One day…”

Now Chu Wanning had had an idea of the pattern of Mo Ran’s tales. The moment “One day” appeared, there was never anything good.

Sure enough, Mo Ran said, “One day, the landlord’s son committed another crime.”

“This time, he behaved indecently towards a neighbouring girl at the mill, and coincidentally, the unlucky oxherd boy bumped into the scene.”

“...And that child is going to take the blame again?” Chu Wanning asked.

“Aiyah.” Mo Ran laughed, “That’s right. Congrats, congrats, you know how to tell stories now too.”

“...I’m going to sleep.”

“Don’t, I’m almost done the story.” Mo Ran said, “This is my first time tell someone a story, so grant me some face, will you?”

Chu Wanning: “...”

“This time, the oxherd boy must take the blame. Because, that girl couldn’t take the shame and committed suided by way of bashing her head into the wall. But the oxherd boy wasn’t dumb. A life for a life, there was no way he was going to give up his life for the landlord’s son’s sake.” Mo Ran said, “He wouldn’t agree to it, so the landlord’s son locked him and the dead girl inside the mill, and ran off to report it to the authorities.”

“This oxherd boy has got a history; when he was young he randomly beat the County Master’s dog to death, then later he stole a guest’s snuff bottle, and this time, he sexually harassed a common girl. Naturally, his crimes could not be absolved. No one was willing to listen to him explain himself. He was caught red-handed with all the evidence, so he was arrested.”

Chu Wanning widened his eyes, “...And then?”

“And then, he stayed in jail for a few months. When autumn came, he was sentenced to the death penalty, to be sent to the execution platform outside the city. As he followed along the execution troop winding around the fields, he suddenly saw someone was butchering an ox not far in the distance. He could tell with just a glance; that ox was the one he had taken to graze since he was young, but now that it was old, it didn’t have the energy to plow the fields anymore. But that ox had to graze grass. If it only ate but didn’t do any labour, why would the landlord want to keep it? It helped them plow a lifetime’s worth of fields, but in the end, they were going to butcher it, eat its meat.”

Even as he told such a cruel thing, Mo Ran wasn't sad, and smiled, "But that oxherd boy had grown up riding on the back of that ox, had told it many of his secrets, fed it hay, hugged its neck and cried when he was wronged, and took it for his only family in this world."

"So, he knelt down and begged the executioner to let him go bid farewell to that ox. Of course the executioner didn't believe there'd be any feelings between man and beasts, so he thought the boy was only trying to play tricks and didn't allow it."

"...And then?"

"And then? And then that oxherd boy was hung to death. The ox was butchered. Hot blood flowed all over the ground, and those who gathered to watch the show dispersed. That night, the landlord's household ate beef, but the beef was old and kept getting stuck between their teeth. They had a bit, didn't like it, and dumped everything."

Chu Wanning: "..."

Mo Ran flipped over, smiled happily at him, "There, it's done. How was it?"

"Get out." Chu Wanning said.

"Hey, the first time I made this up for myself I cried. Your heart is so cold, not even a drop of tear."

"It's you who told it so badly…"

Mo Ran haha-ed twice, put his arm over his little shidi's shoulder, and caressed his hair, "Well that can't be helped. Your shixiong is only so talented. Alright, the story's done. Let's sleep."

Chu Wanning didn't acknowledge him, but after a long time, he suddenly asked, "Mo Ran."

"Call me shixiong."

"Why is the story called Ox Eats Grass?"

"Because like people, an ox has gotta eat. For the sake of eating, a lot of work has to be done. If one day you can't work anymore, then no one cares if you're alive or dead."

Chu Wanning stopped talking again.

The whisperings in the yard were the small voices of those seeking refuge, and once in a while, there'd be an ominous cry or two from ghosts and demons coming from outside the barrier.

"Mo Ran."

"Aiyah, so cheeky. Call me shixiong."

Chu Wanning ignored him, and only asked, "Does that child really exist?"

"No." Mo Ran was quiet for a moment, then suddenly smiled, his dimples deep and good looking. He rolled the little guy into his arms and said warmly, "Of course it's made up to play with you. Be good. Sleep."

Yet unexpectedly, it hadn't been long before there was suddenly commotion in the yard.

Someone was shouting angrily, "ASKING FOR THE GONGZI ALL OVER! THE GONGZI IS BUSY, WHO HAS THE TIME TO MIND YOUR BUSINESS? CLEAN

THAT CORPSE OUT! DON'T YOU KNOW THE ONES WITH BLUE SPOTS WILL RISE?!! ARE YOU TRYING TO KILL US ALL??"

This voice was like thunder in the middle of a dark night, and the moment "rising corpse" was mentioned, everyone blew up. All of a sudden, everyone who was asleep sat up, and looked to where the commotion was.

Mo Ran blocked in front of his little shidi and threw a glance, frowning as he spoke in a low voice, "Hm? It's that person from noon earlier?"

The one who was kneeling and being scolded was indeed that youth named XiaoMan from noon earlier that day. He was still wearing the tight suit from during the day, but his spirit and aura were completely different.

It was as if his entire person was emptied out, only hugging tightly onto the dead body of his foster father. That corpse's nails had grown significantly, the very sign of a corpse rising. When the others saw, they all backed away. The Governor's administrator was scolding him sharply.

"Your dad was my colleague, I feel bad about him being killed too. But so what? You were the one who cried hunger last night so he went out to find food for you. You were the one who caused your dad to die, so are you going to cause us all to die now?"

XiaoMan was kneeling on the ground, his hair completely disheveled, his eyes red, "N-no, I'm not… dad, daddy. Please I beg you, let me see the gongzi, the gongzi has a way for dad's corpse not to rise, I want to bury dad properly, please I beg you all not to… don't dismember him… Sob…"

By the time he uttered the word "dismember" he was already sobbing really hard. He buried his face in his palms, wiping messily, his lips trembling, "Please I beg you all… let me wait until the gongzi is back…"

“It’s going to be midnight soon, the gongzi is out, so how can he possibly care for your business? You know that normal corpses can still be purified, but your dad’s bluing spots and nails have already changed, so how can he possibly hold out until the gongzi is back?”

“No… He can, Uncle Liu… I’m begging you, I’ll do anything for you, I-I’ll think of a way to repay you after, please I beg you, don’t touch my daddy… beg, I… I beg you…”

Seeing him beg like this, that middle aged administrator let out a long sigh, the rims of his eyes also turning red, but still he replied, “Sigh, do you know, you’re asking for all of our lives here — GUARDS!”

“NO! DON’T!!”

But it was already too late. No one would go help him. Anyone knew that if this corpse was kept, then when midnight comes it would for sure turn into a ferocious spirit.

The corpse of XiaoMan’s foster father was forcibly dragged away, to be dismembered outside. XiaoMan was held back by several people on his left and right, and his bitter tears flowed viciously, sullying his entire face, and beast-like howls escaped his lips. But in the end, he was still half pulled, half dragged away into the distance.

Once this storm had past, the yard returned to its peaceful quiet after some muttered whispers.

Chu Wanning however, did not fall back asleep. He hung his head pensively.

Mo Ran side-gazed at his little shidi, “What are you thinking about?”

“This person lost his close family bitterly and did such a foolish thing. That his foster father’s body was overtaken, of course he’d blame the others. I have an uncertain guess. I’m wondering, could LinAn City’s botched migration be because of him.”

Mo Ran replied without missing a beat, “I thought about this too.”

Chu Wanning shook his head, “But it’s too early to tell, we can’t make any conclusive claims. Let’s keep a close eye on him first.”

Ch.66 This Venerable One Sees the Heavenly Rift for the First Time

Day two. Nothing unusual had happened.

Chu Xun sent guards to tally the number of straw men in the city, make sure that it matches the number of people, while the people busied themselves packing what few possessions they had. Just one more night, and then they will leave first thing in the morning to take refuge at PuTuo according to Chu Xun's plan.

Mo Ran sat by the gate of the governor's residence, watching the people come and go. He sighed: "Chu Xun's plan is watertight; without someone leaking the info, the average ghost wouldn't have the brains to figure out that it's all decoy puppets left in the city. Someone must have told, then. Shidi, what do you think?"

No response.

"Eh? Shidi?"

Mo Ran turned around. Without him noticing, his little shidi had wandered off to watch a cavalry of riders getting ready, and in his place was Chu-gongzi's son, sitting with his cheeks in hand.

"Da-gege……"

Mo Ran almost jumped at his sudden appearance: "What is it?"

The little guy pointed at an old paulownia tree to the side with a kite dangling from a high branch, articulating with some difficulty: "Mama gave it to me, it got stuck, can't reach. Da-gege help me?"

“No prob no prob.” Mo Ran leapt nimbly to the top of the tree using light footwork, retrieved the butterfly-shaped kite, and landed steadily back on the ground, smiling as he gave it back, “Here you go, don’t lose it again, okay?”

The little guy nodded.

Mo Ran watched him wandering around all alone for a bit, thinking about how Chu Xun probably doesn’t have the time to look after his son, so he asked: “Where’s your mom? It’s a bit messy here, I’ll take you to your mom.”

“Mama? Mama is at the mountains in the back.”

Mo Ran, mystified: “What’s she doing in the mountains?”

“Sleeping.” The little guy looked at him guilelessly and answered in a soft voice, “Mama’s always sleeping there. Papa takes me to see her when the flowers bloom in the spring.”

“Ah.” Mo Ran uttered quietly, at a loss for words.

But the little guy didn’t mind; he was still too young to understand what death meant. He played happily with the kite in his hands for a bit, then looked up at Mo Ran and shuffled over, saying in a whisper: “Gege, thank you, I’ll give you…… I have something to give you.”

He dug around in his pocket as he spoke, and finally dug out a small, half-piece of pastry wrapped in reed leaf.

No one in the city had enough to eat these days, it was a mystery how the little guy managed to save a piece of pastry. He broke it in half, and handed the smaller piece to Mo Ran.

“Da-gege, for you…… shh, don’t tell anyone else, I don’t have any more.”

Mo Ran was just about to accept it when the little guy suddenly changed his mind and took the smaller piece back, offering him the bigger half instead.

“It’s really yummy, there’s sweet bean paste inside.”

The small act made Mo Ran’s heart feel all warm and fuzzy; he was used to being treated poorly, but didn’t quite know how to respond to kindness. He reached out and took the sweet with a mumbled thanks. The little guy seemed quite pleased, grinning brightly, the curve of his dark eyelashes filled with warmth and kindness.

Mo Ran couldn’t bear to eat the flower cake, so he wrapped it up using a leaf from the paulownia tree and tucked it into his robes. He was going to talk some more with the little guy, but he was a little kid with a little kid’s attention span after all, and had already bounced away into the distance.

Chu Wanning came back around then, only to see Mo Ran standing there staring off into space. He raised an eyebrow: “What’s up?”

Mo Ran watched the little guy disappear into the distance, sighing: “I was just thinking, all these people…… how come they all had to die?”

Night descended. Dark clouds covered the skies, with occasional bolts of lightning ripping through the heavens, and as the night grew deeper, a terrible gale howled amidst a torrential downpour.

Rain and its attendant Yin energy enhanced the powers of ghosts and other fiends; Chu Xun gathered all the survivors of Lin'an near the residence, and bid them stay inside the Shangqing barrier at all times.

Due to the rain, many of the areas that could usually make do as a resting place no longer served.

Mo Ran was keeping an eye on Xiao Man, but then more and more people crowded inside to take shelter from the rain, and Xiao Man ducked out of view.

Mo Ran muttered: "Damn."

Chu Wanning was small, and immediately said: "I'll go after him."

Saying that, he dove into the crowd and disappeared in no time.

He returned after a while with an irate expression: "He got away."

"Outside the barrier?"

"Mn."

Mo Ran fell silent, looking at the downpour outside and the people bustling to and fro.

All of it was only an illusion of things that had already come to pass two hundred years ago.

But he suddenly felt so wretched; the people around him had such hope on their faces, believing that Chu Xun will take them away from this ghost-infested hell to go to PuTuo just as soon as dawn breaks. In the pouring rain, guards dressed in white and red were putting their everything into making the final preparations so that they will be ready to move at daybreak.

None of them knew how little time they had left.

The night grew later still, and the noise died down as people dozed off, leaning against each other.

But Chu Wanning and Mo Ran were wide awake. Their task was to wait for the Ghost King to appear and to kill him. Since Xiao Man had already left the barrier, the turning point must be tonight.

Mo Ran turned to glance at Chu Wanning: “Why don’t you get some rest, I’ll wake you if anything happens.”

Chu Wanning: “I’m not sleepy.”

Mo Ran stroked his hair: “Then eat something? We haven’t eaten since coming here.”

“I’m……” Looking at the pastry Mo Ran took out, the words ‘not hungry’ got replaced by a gulp.

Mo Ran handed it over: “Here you go.”

Chu Wanning accepted the sweet and broke it in half, giving the bigger half back to Mo Ran and keeping the smaller portion for himself. Mo Ran stared blankly at him, face unreadable.

Chu Wanning took a bite, uttered a questioning ‘hm?’ then asked: “Is this from the Peach Blossom Springs? The flavor is a bit different from the ones before.”

“How so?”

“It tastes of osmanthus flowers.”

Mo Ran forced a smile: “Oh? Chu Xun’s son gave it to me, it’s probably Lin’an flavored.”

“It is indeed Lin’an flavored.” Chu Wanning was opening his mouth to take another bite when he froze abruptly as if suddenly having realized something, and all the color drained from his face.

“That’s not right!”

Chu Wanning shot to his feet, eyes wide and expression ghastly.

Mo Ran hadn't the slightest what the problem was: "What's not right?"

Chu Wanning didn't answer, instead walking into the courtyard and looking around in the pouring rain before picking up a sharp rock and cutting firmly into his own arm; blood gushed out instantly.

Mo Ran grabbed him in a hurry: "Are you crazy?"

Mo Ran stared at the blood trickling down his arm for a while before his head snapped up, eyes intense: "Have you still not caught on?" He said harshly, "Someone's trying to maim us!"

Blood ran down his arm non-stop, crimson diluted by the rain.

Chu Wanning's face was pale in the deluge, his dark brows knitted tightly together, drenched through and through in the ceaseless downpour.

Thunder rumbled and lightning split the skies, harsh light turning night into day for an instant.

The sudden clap of thunder jolted Mo Ran into realization. He subconsciously took a step back.

He knew what wasn't right.

Nothing in an illusion was real, however realist it might seem.

It should be impossible for a pastry to have any taste, for a weapon to actually cause an injury. In short——it should be impossible for anything within the illusion to affect them.

"Someone actualized the illusion." Chu Wanning said quietly.

Actualizing an illusion, also known as “illusion manifestation”, was no easy task. The ones most skilled in this technique were those of the Guyue'ye Sect, whose motto was “Medicine for the people, divine physician for the heart”, the latter half referring to the fact that some among them specialize in the art of actualizing illusions—many people are unable to accept the passing of a loved one; through illusion manifestation, the dead can yet accompany the living.

However, such manifested illusions were extremely difficult, so generally speaking, only short, individual scenes could be created, such as sharing a drink or taking a nap together, just one thing at most.

But with the extensive and continuous nature of this illusion constructed by the feathered tribe, alongside the large variety of happenings, even Guyue'ye’s own sect leader might not be able to manifest it all.

Mo Ran immediately thought of someone——could it be that fake Gouchen from Jincheng lake?

But before he could think on it further, a strange sound burst forth from the skies above.

The dozing people jolted awake like startled birds, looking around with wide eyes before finally looking up.

It was deathly silent for a moment, then screams erupted like the explosion of water droplets in boiling oil.

Everyone tried to flee every which way, only to discover there was nowhere to go, and screams came from all directions. There was a fracture in the sky, and an enormous, blood-red ghost eye was staring unnervingly from right above.

The eye was so close it was practically up against the barrier.

A harsh, garbled voice thundered: “Chu Xun, how very bold of you, a mere mortal daring to deceive this Venerable One.”

Mo Ran muttered: “Ghost King……”

There were nine kings in the ghost realm, some far stronger than others. The one before them now had yet to show himself, so there was no way to tell which one he was. That eyeball alone loomed in the sky, dripping with blood as it stared at the building below: “Such arrogance, absurd! Pathetic mortal——you want to save them? I might not have wiped out the city before, but since you wish to go against me——I’ll kill every single one of you! None shall be spared!”

With a shrill shriek, a blinding red light burst forth from the ghost eye, aimed directly at the barrier!

Red clashed against gold and for an instant all the other colors of the world ceased to be. The force of the impact sent debris flying into the howling gales and relentless rain, the branches of the trees in the courtyard snapping one after another. The people inside the barrier were hysterical, wailing as they huddled together.

The Shangqing barrier withstood the first hit, but another flash of red followed immediately after, striking the same spot. The barrier held out, but a crack appeared.

“How arrogant——insufferable!!!”

The red light struck again and again, impacts thundering and sparks flying. Seeing the barrier on the edge of collapse, Chu Wanning’s blood ran cold ——now that the illusion has been actualized, an attack in here would be no different from one in the real world. If that attack were to land, both Mo Ran and himself might die here!

Golden light gathered at his fingertips.

This would surely blow his cover, but the situation being what it was, there was no other choice. He was just about to summon Tianwen and get it over with when a resplendent bolt of light flew across the sky like an arrow, headed directly for the epicenter of the cracks in the barrier!

The crowd turned to see Chu Xun standing on a tall roof.

He cradled a phoenix harp, fingertips dancing across its strings and sending bolts of light sweeping forth to gather at the barrier, each sound sharp and

powerful as the rupturing of metal, instantly reinforcing the Shangqing barrier that was on the verge of failing.

“Gongzi is here!”

“Gongzi!”

The people below exclaimed one after another, some even crying with joy. Chu Xun held his own against the eye of the Ghost King, the two already having exchanged a hundred moves in an instant, the Ghost King completely unable to encroach on the barrier.

The cold voice rang even more menacingly across the sky.

“Chu Xun, with your skills, you could have easily escaped by yourself. Why do you insist on meddling in unrelated matters and making an enemy of the ghost realm!”

“Your majesty wishes harm upon my citizens, how could anything be less unrelated to me?”

“Ridiculous! We ghosts feed on the souls of the living, there is no difference between us eating souls and you eating meat! You will understand soon enough, once you’re dead!”

Chu Xun didn't miss a beat, the notes of the harp never pausing: "Then we will just have to see if your majesty can take this head on my shoulders."

As he spoke, the chords beneath his fingers rose to a crescendo until a brilliant light pierced through the heavens right into that bloody eye in the sky!

"AH——!!!!!!"

The terrifying scream shook the very ground they stood on.

Fetid blood sprayed out from where the eye had been burned by Chu Xun's spell, the downpour of blood mixing with the shrill shrieks. In his anger, the Ghost King unleashed a blade of light many times stronger than those before, striking out amidst the rain of blood. Chu Xun moved to block, but this attack was unlike the others, and the force of the impact forced him back several steps, the notes of his harp stuttering.

"Gongzi——!"

"Crack! There's a crack! The barrier is going to break!"

"Mama——Mama——"

The crowd panicked; those with families huddled together crying, those without cowered in corners trembling.

Chu Xun grit his teeth, fire in his eyes, refusing to give up so easily. Just as he was locked in stalemate with the Ghost King, lights flared to life on

either side of him. He glanced to the side to see Mo Ran and Chu Wanning standing with him, scarlet and golden light flowing steadily into his own, once again sealing the barrier.

A terrifying roar came from above.

The ghost eye disappeared.

The three of them descended to the ground. The sky rained rotten blood for a while longer before finally returning to clear water.

Chu Xun, face pale, bowed to Mo Ran and Chu Wanning: “Many thanks for your help.”

“Don’t mention it.” Mo Ran waved his hands, “Go get some rest, you look terrible.”

Chu Xun nodded, he had indeed burned through too much of his reserves, so Mo Ran supported him to the corridor. The people that were in disarray only a moment ago, seeing that Chu-gongzi had repaired the barrier and saved them, all gathered in gratitude, offering him water and draping clothing over his shoulders.

Someone said: “Chu-gongzi, you’re all drenched, please go warm yourself by the fire.”

Chu Xun thanked them one by one, but was really too exhausted to move, and so could only turn down that person's invitation. Undaunted, the people carried branches over and made a bonfire next to him instead.

Things gradually quieted down, save for the crackling of the fire. Suddenly, someone asked: "Gongzi, we took so many precautions, but the Ghost King still somehow saw through it all…… ai, what should we do?"

"Yeah, yeah……"

"How did they know we were going to leave? Gongzi said these ghosts can't tell the puppets apart from real people, so how did this happen…… could it be……" The person's voice died down and he snuck a glance toward Chu Xun, clearly wanting to say that maybe Chu Xun was wrong, maybe he messed something up somewhere.

The white-attired guards saw that glance, and one of them immediately rebuked with furrowed brows: "What are you trying to say! It's obviously because someone couldn't keep their trap shut and leaked the plan to the Ghost King!"

The person mumbled: "Who would tattle to the ghosts though? It's not like there's anything to be gained from that……" And then, seeing all the angry glares directed his way, he stopped talking, disgruntled.

A while passed in silence before someone else asked:

"Gongzi, that damn ghost definitely won't just leave it at that, what should we do?"

Chu Xun, exhausted, didn't open his eyes, but his voice was gentle still: "We just have to hold out until dawn and then be on our way, there's nothing they can do in the daylight."

"But we have so many people, the elderly, the young, and some injured too, can we make it to PuTuo Mountain in one day?"

Chu Xun, softly: "Don't worry about that. Get some rest. Just focus on the journey tomorrow, I'll take care of the rest."

Chu-gongzi had always protected them; since he said so, everyone listened and did as told. A little kid came over holding a piece of sesame candy and offered it to Chu Xun. Chu Xun opened his eyes slightly and pat his head with a smile, and was just about to say something when a guard ran over in a panic, shouting: "Gongzi! Gongzi, it's terrible!"

"What happened?"

"The little gongzi, little gongzi——Xiao Man——outside the ChengHuang Temple——" The guard was in too much shock to even speak a complete sentence; he stammered some more, then abruptly fell to his knees and started crying miserably.

Chu Xun shot to his feet, what little color remaining on his face draining completely as he rushed into the rain.

Ch.67 This Venerable One's Heartfelt Anguish

>>gore, cannibalism, emotionaldistress.gif

ChengHuang Temple stood at the very edge of the extent of Chu Xun's powers; the barrier reached to the stairs of the temple, but no further.

Inside the temple, candles flickered weakly.

A dozen ghosts that had cultivated corporeal forms lined either side, and in between them, tied up with her back to them, was a woman in red, her head tilted back as she gazed up at the statue on the altar.

And next to her with his eyes downcast stood Xiao Man, holding firmly onto a young child.

Chu Xun cried out: "Lan-er!"

The child was none other than Chu Xun's son, Chu Lan. Mo Ran's heart lurched at the sight of the little guy in trouble; he could still taste the pastry on his tongue. He made to go over, but was blocked by Chu Wanning.

"Don't go."

"Why not!"

Chu Wanning glanced at him, then said, quietly: "They've all died already, two hundred years ago. The illusion has been actualized, I don't want you to get hurt."

"....." It was the truth—no matter what he did now, the dead have already gone, there was no way to change any of it.

The little guy wailed from outside the barrier, nearly unintelligible: “Papa! Papa help me! Papa please help Lan-er!”

Chu Xun’s lips trembled. He yelled toward Xiao Man: “What are you doing? I’ve never done you wrong, let him go!”

Xiao Man ignored him, head still lowered as if he had heard none of it. But the hands clutching Chu Lan betrayed his inner hesitation—there was a mole between the thumb and forefinger of his left hand, and his hands trembled without stop, the veins on the backs of them standing out starkly.

By now, everyone else taking refuge at the governor’s residence had arrived as well, all of them aghast and furious at the sight within the temple, murmuring:

“That’s the gongzi’s son……”

“How could this happen……”

Xiao Man cut the ropes binding the red-robed woman in one motion. She seemed to come back to her senses and turned slowly around—she was beautiful, pure as a lotus flower, her neck long and elegant, but her face was paper-pale and her lips were tinted red like blood, and the smile she directed toward Chu Xun was more terrifying than it was lovely.

The low light of the candles lit up her face. The moment they saw, Chu Xun and those behind him old enough to know all froze.

There was sadness in her smile. Softly, she said: “Husband.”

Mo Ran: “!!!!”

Chu Wanning: “.....”

The woman was none other than Chu Xun’s deceased wife!

Madam Chu looked to her side and immediately reached over to take her son back from Xiao Man. Xiao Man was unwilling, but Madam Chu was a ghost now, much stronger than he was now that she had been freed from the bindings, and easily pulled the child out of his grasp. But she had died of illness before her child was even a month old, so the little guy had never seen his mother and only kept crying for his father to save him.

“Be a good boy and don’t cry anymore, mama will take you to your papa.”

Madam Chu picked the child up in her delicate arms and slowly walked out of the temple, down the rain-soaked stone steps, to the edge of the Shangqing barrier. She stood facing Chu Xun, joy mixed with sorrow.

“My husband, it’s been a long time. Have……have you been well?”

Chu Xun couldn’t speak. The tips of his fingers shook uncontrollably at his sides as those phoenix eyes stared at the woman behind the barrier, rims slowly turning red.

Madam Chu continued softly: “Lan-er has gotten so big already, and you’ve grown steadier too, a little different from what I remember…… let me take a good look at you.”

She reached out, her hand pressed against the barrier—she couldn’t cross, not with her body being that of a ghost, could only gaze quietly across the flowing colors of the barrier at the person on the other side.

Chu Xun closed his eyes, wetness clinging to his lashes.

He pressed his hand to hers, separated by the barrier, then opened his eyes. The two of them gazed at each other, across life and death, as the day before.

Chu Xun choked back a sob: “Wife……”

The family had been separated by life and death for many years, but the amount of time they got to spend together could be counted on one hand.

“The haitang tree I planted in the courtyard that year, did it take root?”

Chu Xun smiled with watery eyes: “It’s already grown tall and beautiful.”

Madam Chu, smiling gently: “I’m glad.”

Chu Xun tried his best to keep smiling as well: “Lan-er loves that haitang tree, he’s always playing under it in the springs. He likes haitang flowers, just like you, every……every year, during QingMing#……” Unable to keep up the act any longer, he pressed his forehead against the barrier, tears falling without cease, voice breaking, “Every year, during QingMing, he would

always pick the prettiest flower to put before your grave. Wan'er, Wan'er, did you see? Every……every year, did you see?"

He was wracked with sobs by the end, every word bleeding misery, until his composure finally fell apart altogether.

Madam Chu's eyes also grew red; she was a ghost and had no tears to shed, but her miserable expression was no less unsettling to the onlookers.

For a moment all were silent, everyone wordlessly watching the scene before them, and someone was weeping quietly.

But just then, a cold voice rang out from above.

"Of course she knows. But not for long."

Mo Ran's face changed immediately: "It's the Ghost King!"

Chu Wanning's expression was dark as well: "This coward won't even show himself, shameless!"

The Ghost King's laugh sounded like nails against metal, making their blood run cold.

"Lin Wan'er is one of us ghosts now. I didn't want to hurt her, but since you're so set on opposing me and even ruined one of my eyes, I'll just have

to dig out your heart, inflict a worse pain on you!”

At his words, the ghosts in the temple began chanting incantations.

“The heart is no more, let the past be erased——”

Madam Chu’s eyes shot wide open and her voice shook: “Husband, Lan-er, take Lan-er!!!!”

“The heart is no more, let relations be severed——”

“Lan-er! Quickly! Go to your papa!!”

Madam Chu tried to push her child across the barrier, but the thin layer of light kept him out as if he was a ghost.

Xiao Man looked down at them from where he stood by the railing of the temple; his face, originally charming, twisted with a mixture of sorrow and glee.

“It’s useless. I put a ghost mark on him as instructed by the Ghost King. He’s just like a ghost now, the barrier won’t let him in.”

Behind them, the incantation rose like a tide: “The heart is no more, let reason be shattered——”

“Husband!!” Madam Chu was already panicked beyond measure, clutching her child to herself and banging against the barrier, “Husband, take the

barrier down, take it down, let Lan-er in, you have to protect him, you have to protect him——I——I'm almost……I……"

"The heart is no more, let compassion be smothered——"

"HUSBAND——!!!!!!"

Madam Chu fell to her knees, her eyes wide as her whole body shook uncontrollably, curse marks in the color of blood climbing slowly up her face, "Our child——Lan-er……you promised me, you promised me you'd take care of him……take it down…… please, I'm begging you…… take it down…… husband!!!!"

Chu Xun felt as if his insides were being ripped apart. Several times his hand lifted to dispel the barrier, only to fall back down in the end.

Outside the barrier, Chu Lan was bawling loudly, looking up at him with a tear-stained face, his little hands reaching for him: "Papa doesn't……want Lan-er anymore……? Lan-er wants Papa…… Papa hold me……"

Madam Chu held him tightly in her arms, kissing his cheek. The pair of mother and son, one kneeling, one crying, both begging Chu Xun to take down the Shangqing barrier and let the child in.

Suddenly, someone in the crowd yelled: "Gongzi, you can't! You can't drop the barrier, that would doom all the hundreds of people left in Lin'an——that's the ghosts' ploy! Gongzi! You can't drop the barrier!"

“That’s right, the barrier must be kept up!” The desire to live made the common people kneel one after another and grovel toward Chu Xun, pleading, “Gongzi, please, you can’t take down the barrier, or everyone will die!”

“Madam, please……” One of them got down and bowed toward Madam Chu, “Madam, please have mercy, please be benevolent, we will be grateful to you forever, please don’t make gongzi take down the barrier, you were always so compassionate, please, we’re begging you……”

In an instant, other than the guards and a handful of the common people, everyone else was on their knees begging and crying, their voices drowning out those of Madam Chu and her son on the outside of the barrier.

Chu Xun felt like he was standing on the point of a needle and being stabbed by a thousand thousand sharp knives, each blade growing barbs inside his flesh and tearing through his organs.

Before him were his wife and son, behind him were the lives of hundreds.

Tormented so, he felt as if he had already died, as if he had been swallowed by blazes and burnt to ashes.

But the chanting continued on, even more piercing than before.

“The heart is no more, let emotion be expunged——”

“The heart is no more, let desire be dissipated——”

More and more curse marks climbed up Madam Chu's fair neck, nearly covering her entire face, and beginning to bleed into her eyes.

She could hardly even speak anymore, only staring at her husband in despair as she strained to utter:

"If you…… I…… will…… hate you…… take…… take Lan-er…… I hate…… I……"

The curse marks oozed into her pupils. Her entire body shuddered, as if in agony, and she squeezed her eyes shut.

"I——HATE!!!!!!"

A wretched scream tore through the air, but the end of it turned into a beast-like cry!

Madam Chu's eyes flew open. Her gentle, almond-shaped eyes were stained the color of blood, and the whites of her eyes were all gone, for there were now four pupils in each eye.

"Wan'er!!!"

Chu Xun cried out with boundless sorrow, forgetting for a moment that the Shangqing barrier required its caster to remain inside, wanting only to be with his wife. But just as he was about to step out of the barrier, an arrow pierced through the sky and firmly into his shoulder, and the arm he was raising dropped back down to his side.

It was a young man of the guard, still posed with bow in hand.

He said to Chu Xun, self-righteously: “Gongzi! Wake up! You’ve always taught us that the righteous put the people before the self, were those just pretty words? Will you toss away the lives of hundreds to save one person just as soon as it concerned yourself?!”

An old woman next to the young man said shakily: “P-put that bow down, how could you hurt the gongzi? Everything, everything is gongzi’s choice, gongzi has already done his utmost, how, how could you…… how could you be so ungrateful!!”

As they argued, cries of fear suddenly broke out in front.

Madam Chu had completely turned. She had held her child with such love only a moment ago, but she was no different from a beast now, howling toward the sky with saliva dripping from her mouth, her teeth growing longer by the second.

And in her arms, Chu Lan’s voice had gone hoarse from crying, but in between sobs he still called out: “Mama……”

What answered him were Madam Chu’s blood-red claws, piercing straight through his throat!!!!!

All sound disappeared from the world.

Droplets of blood drifted through the air like so many blossoms.

Just like that year, when Madam Chu had stood by the window holding her newborn child, watching the petals of newly bloomed haitang flowers dancing in the courtyard.

She had cradled the child gently in her arms, singing softly: “Red haitang, yellow haitang, floating gently in the wind. Children in a land far away, missing their mom and dad.”

Red haitang…… yellow haitang……

The hand that had caressed Chu Lan so tenderly that year tore into his skull, his limbs, his flesh.

Floating gently in the wind.

The rain came down in a deluge, blood pooling and flowing along the ground. The mother devoured her child’s entrails.

Children in a land far away.

The eaves of ChengHuang Temple towered solemnly above them.

The year Chu Lan was born, she had knelt before ChengHuang Temple and clasped her delicate, warm hands together in prayer. The chime of a clock had sent all the birds nearby scattering, and in the haze of the fragrant candles, she bowed down low to pray for her child’s health and happiness, that he might live a long life free from worries……

Missing their mom and dad.

Chu Lan's heart was dug out from his mangled body. Madam Chu sunk her teeth into it, insatiable, blood dripping from the corners of her mouth.

"AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHH!!!!!" Chu Xun broke down, clutching his head where he had fallen to his knees, bashing his head repeatedly against the ground. He wept, wretched and miserable, kneeling in the rain in the blood in front of his wife and son in front of all the people of Lin'an, he knelt before the image of god, he knelt in the mud underfoot.

He knelt in the depths of sin, he knelt in the heights of virtue.

He knelt in untold gratitude, he knelt in utmost hatred.

He hunched over in the dust, his very soul torn apart and extinguished.

Disintegrated into dust.

A long while passed before someone finally spoke up in a trembling voice.

"Gongzi……"

"Gongzi, condolences……"

"Gongzi's benevolence will not be forgotten……"

“Chu-gongzi is righteous, truly a kind person! Truly a kind person……”

Someone had pulled their own child close and covered his eyes so that he wouldn’t see the bloody scene, only just now letting go to say to Chu Xun: “Gongzi, you saved all of our lives. The madam and the little gongzi, they’ll…… they’ll surely ascend to paradise……”

Someone else spit out: “Take your child and get lost! Why didn’t you and your child go to paradise instead?!”

That person backed away timidly.

But all of it sounded so far away. Chu Xun felt like he had already died. The voices sounded as if they came from across an ocean, from across a life.

In the torrential downpour, the man was covered in mud, that thin layer of transparent light separating him from his wife and son, the dead on one side, the dying on the other. Looking at the scene before him, Mo Ran thought suddenly of his past life, when he had wantonly slaughtered the innocent, and wondered if he had created more than one Chu Xun, more than one Chu Lan, more than one Madam Chu……

He looked down at his hands.

For a split second, his hands looked as if they were covered in blood.

But then he blinked, and it was only the ice-cold rain gathering in his palms and flowing down his hands.

He trembled.

But in the next moment, a warm hand took his.

He snapped out of it like waking from a nightmare to find his little shidi looking at him with concern. He looked so much like Chu Lan.

Mo Ran slowly knelt down to be eye level with him, like a sinner begging forgiveness from the souls of the dead, looking at him with eyes watery with rain and tears both.

Chu Wanning said nothing, only reached up and pat him on the head.

“It’s already happened.” Chu Wanning said softly, “It’s all in the past already.”

“You’re right.” A while passed before Mo Ran wrangled out a sad smile. Lowering his lashes, he muttered, “It’s all in the past already.”

But even if it was all in the past already, it was all still things he had done. He hadn’t killed Chu Lan, but how many people just like Chu Lan had died because of him?

The more he thought about it, the more scared he was, the more it hurt.

Why had he been so cruel…… why had he been so willfull…...

Ch.68 This Venerable One Can’t Bear it

Chu Lan was dead, but the illusion continued.

Dawn was still hours away, the long nightmare not yet over. The survivors returned to the residence, preparing to leave for PuTuo Mountain as soon as the morning light breaks.

It was hard to believe that someone could still carry on after suffering that kind of pain. If truth be told, it really did seem like all that remained of Chu Xun was a walking husk, his soul long since gone.

Mo Ran walked around the city and heard many people fretting—after all, Chu Xun had suffered so much that, leaving aside the possibility that he might be holding a grudge, even if he was still willing to lead everyone away from here, their chances were significantly diminished with him in such a state.

But not everyone thought only of themselves; it wasn’t many, but at least there were a few people who were genuinely sad for Chu Xun.

They stewed in anxiety as they waited for the sky to brighten.

But what arrived before the rising sun was that cold, now-familiar voice, rupturing the heavy night sky and reverberating above the barrier.

This time the Ghost King addressed not Chu Xun, but everyone else in the city.

“The sun will rise soon. This Venerable One knows the lot of you plan to leave once it’s daytime. But have you really thought it through? PuTuo is a long way from here, there’s no way for you to make it there in only one day. Once night falls, all of you will have to depend on Chu Xun for protection. But do you think Chu Xun will protect you?”

“Mommy——”

A child started crying from fear at the terrifying voice, burrowing into his mother’s arms. Everyone was looking up at the sky.

Only Chu Xun, standing in front of the residence and leaning against the haitang tree, had his eyes closed as if hearing nothing.

“His wife and son are dead because of the lot of you. Do you really think Chu Xun would actually protect you? He probably has something else in mind to avenge his family, something to make you lot wish you were dead. It’s only human nature, after all…… this Venerable One was once human too, you know. Sure there are kind people, but they’re only doing it for their reputation. Humans are vile by nature, any so-called good person is just trying to get something out of it. But let’s be honest, once forced into a corner, they’re not gonna care about whether other people live or die.”

The Ghost King’s eerie voice echoed from above them.

“This Venerable One has already said it before, but I wasn’t going to take all of your lives. In fact, the living can serve us ghosts. If you don’t believe me, just look at him——”

As he spoke, a black cloud billowed toward the barrier with Xiao Man standing on top. And, next to him, a kindly man of about forty or fifty.

Someone called out in surprise: “That’s Xiao Man’s father!”

“It’s Xiao Man’s father! Didn’t he die?”

“Even his body was dismembered, everyone saw. How could this be?!”

The Ghost King continued: “As one of the nine kings of the underworld, even if this Venerable One does not exert control over life and death like Emperor YanLuo does, something like restoring the appearance of the dead is but a simple matter. If you serve me, I will grant you the lasting company of your deceased loved ones. But if you oppose me, you will end up like your Chu-gongzi, watching your wife kill your child with your own eyes, powerless to do anything about it.”

All were silent within the barrier.

“Will you really trust him? Trust that he won’t take revenge for his wife and child?”

“Do you really think he will take you from here all the way to PuTuo?”

Someone glanced toward Chu Xun, eyes already flickering with malice.

Chu Xun finally looked up from where he stood under the flowering tree to level them with a quiet gaze. He really didn’t know what to even say at this point; a long while passed before he finally said: “It is already what it is, what would be the point in maiming you now.”

“HAHAHAHAHAHAHA——” The Ghost King’s ghastly laugh echoed from above the barrier, “Very good, very good, he says he won’t harm you. If

you believe him, then go ahead and go with him. But if you believe me ——”

His voice thundered with increasing intensity, as if it might pierce through their eardrums straight into their hearts.

“If you believe me, you will be rewarded. I can bring back your families. All you have to do is hand over Chu Xun, you just have to——hand him over to me! My grudge is against him, not any of you. Hand him over, and you won’t have to abandon your homes. Hand him over, and you can reunite with your family. Just hand him over, and it will all be over.”

The Ghost King’s voice grew faint.

“I will be waiting at ChengHuang Temple, until the sun rises.”

The voice faded away.

An odd sort of rackus emerged from the deathly silence as all eyes in the crowd looked over at Chu Xun. Chu Xun looked back at them with a calm, even expression.

Someone started muttering helplessly: “What should we do……”

“What should we do, husband, I’m so afraid……”

“Mommy I’m scared, I don’t wanna get eaten!”

Someone else said in a low voice: “The Ghost King isn’t wrong…… these supposedly kind people all just have ulterior motives, we’ve seen plenty of

their kind before. Chu…… Chu-gongzi may not have done anything yet, but just look at him, half-dead the way he is, who's to say he won't do something crazy in the future!"

Another person, hearing his words, whispered in agreement: "You're right. For all we know, he's nursing that grudge and just waiting to get all of us killed! Treachery at the eleventh hour is hardly unheard of……"

Suddenly a rough-looking man stood out from the crowd and yelled: "Grab him! We can live if we hand him over!'

Everyone went silent. A few moments passed before a young woman stepped out and blocked in front of the man, her voice soft but determined: "How could you be so ungrateful? Have you no dignity as a man?"

"Piss off!" The man kicked the woman to the ground and spit on her face, "You're just a stupid whore that sleeps with men, no family to speak of, the hell you running your trap for? I have to take care of both young and old, I ain't gonna let my own family go through shit! Chu-gongzi, you're just gonna have to understand!"

And with that, he made to go capture Chu Xun.

But he hadn't even taken one step before his leg was firmly grabbed. He looked down and roared furiously: "Still getting in the way, you dumb

whore? Go die by yourself if you want, how dare you try to drag everyone else down with you!”

The woman was no less enraged: “I may be a prostitute, but at least I can tell right from wrong. If even cats and dogs know to repay kindnesses, how could we humans not?!”

“Shut the fuck up!”

The man aimed his boots at her head until her entire face was mottled with bruises. By then, the rest of the crowd had also come closer and formed a circle around Chu Xun. A few among them tried to stop them like the woman from the brothel had, but it was a futile effort, like a single leaf caught in a raging current, swallowed in no time at all.

“Gongzi——Gongzi, hurry and get out of here!”

An old woman yelled shakily toward Chu Xun: “Chu-gongzi, go! Just go! Don’t stay for the sake of these animals! Go!”

There was also the tender voice of a young child: “Stop fighting, mommy, daddy, don’t hurt the gongzi, don’t hurt him——”

A maelstrom of commotion, disorder and chaos.

Chu Xun stood alone in the rain. He felt as if he was looking at a horde of ghosts that had crawled out from the very depths of hell. For a moment, he did want to leave.

But then his gaze landed on those people, those living, breathing, crying people. He saw the young child, bawling as he tried to stop his parents. He saw the young woman who was the first to stand up for him, whose face was now bruised and swollen. He looked at the old woman shaking in the rain, and the other dozen or so people standing with their backs to him, trying their best to stop the others.

The foot that was about to leave paused.

They've done nothing wrong. If he takes down the barrier, these people will die too.

So it turns out that the most disgusting thing in this world weren't ghosts and demons, but those cowardly, worthless beasts wearing human skin hiding in the crowd, willing to say and to do anything just to ensure their own survival.

And, after it all, they would say: "I just wanted to live, I'm pitiful and powerless, I've done nothing wrong."

He had thought that the people he protected were all helpless, good people. But he was wrong.

Those beasts took off their human skins now, revealing their ugly, snarling, blood-red faces……

They were so well hidden……so well hidden.

He didn’t want to cry and bleed for those beasts in human clothing anymore, but they were so sly, hidden so well amongst the good, kind people, their faces laughing at him, delighting in his powerlessness.

—— You have no choice but to save us; if you drop the barrier, we’ll take the people you want to save, the people actually grateful to you, together with us to hell.

You have no choice, however much it sickens you.

You chose to be virtuous, you chose to be a good person.

Since that’s the choice you made, then it’s only your duty to sacrifice yourself to save everyone else. If you refuse, then you’re a swindler, a pretender, a fake, worse than animals.

It was as if he could hear those people howling, could hear their shrill laughter:

You have no choice. You have no choice!

In that frenzied pandemonium, in the tempest of rain and wind, Chu Xun slowly lifted his head toward the heavens.

Dawn was finally about to break.

The relentless downpour had washed the blood from the stone steps of the ChengHuang Temple. Chu Xun and those who had tried to protect him were all tied up, walking toward the temple.

The scene was both sorrowful and laughable; those people had tied Chu Xun up so tightly, smugly pleased that they had captured such a powerful person, completely unaware that Chu Xun could easily turn the ropes to ash with but a single spell.

But he didn't. Nor did he take down the Shangqing barrier.

Enough blood had been shed in Lin'an already. He didn't want any more innocent people to die just for his own revenge.

And so it was that the thin layer of light protected them all, both the thankless beasts that turned on him and the people who stood sincerely by his side. They arrived at the temple, but the Ghost King himself did not appear. Instead, there was a candle giving off a black smoke that twisted into a dark silhouette.

"Why——have you not dispelled the barrier!" The moment it saw Chu Xun, that voice flew into a rage, "Dispel the barrier!!!!"

Chu Xun said, calmly: "Over my dead body."

The black smoke let out a shrill shriek: "Chu Xun, you must be mad! You…… the lot of you——kill him, else I'll take all your lives as soon as night comes!"

Daybreak.

The first light of day lit up the endless night.

The Ghost King, unable to maintain his form in the daylight, fled into the darkness. The candle giving off the black smoke flickered and went out.

Chu Xun pulled himself together. ChengHuang Temple stood on tall ground; from here, he could see the morning mist shrouding gently about the mountains and the rivers, hiding the scars from view, and for a moment, everything looked like the days of old—it was a beautiful spring.

”Chu-gongzi, sorry.”

“It’s not that we’re cruel and heartless or anything, it’s just that the Ghost King holds a grudge against you for ruining his eye…… we have no other choice……”

“What’re you all still yammering for! Don’t drag it out, we don’t want any surprises. I’ve got a family back there that wants to live! Who’s more important, this one guy or all of us? The righteous put the people before the self, his words, not mine!”

Chu Wanning stood in the distance, looking at that person of unknown relation to himself, his feelings complicated.

Suddenly, a pair of hands covered his eyes.

Chu Wanning whispered: “What are you doing?”

“Not letting you see.”

“.....Why?”

“You’ll be sad.”

Chu Wanning was quiet for a while, his eyelashes trembling against the underside of Mo Ran’s hands: “I won’t. I’ve already said that it’s all in the past, already, two hundred years ago.”

Mo Ran sighed softly from behind him: “.....You little dummy, then why are my palms wet?”

He didn’t know how long had passed: one incense stick [30 min], one shichen [2 hr], or only a split second.

Time blurred in this madness, this chaos.

When Chu Wanning opened his eyes again, the Shangqing barrier had dissipated. Chu Xun laid in a pool of blood, surrounded by people and by ghosts, by demons wearing human skin, inhaling the scent of fresh blood.

Ecstasy and guilt; calamity past, the rest of their lives now laid open. Agony and sin; the hearts of people, indistinguishable from those of beasts.

The air smelled like death.

The human realm—or perhaps hell.

It was difficult to tell.

Slowly, the crowd dispersed. There was no fear of ghosts during the day, so they went to find food, to rest, to wait for the Ghost King to come back at night and inspect the body in the temple and reward them the promised reunion with their deceased loved ones.

Slowly, only a dozen or so people remained in the temple, weeping in grief.

The young woman from the brothel was there, and the white-haired old woman. The young child, and his parents who had listened. A beggar, a scholar, a storyteller, a son of a once-wealthy family, a widow holding her infant son, a teacher, and a farmer.

No one else.

But just as they wept over his body, the man lying dead in a pool of his own blood slowly opened his eyes.

“Gongzi!”

“Chu-gongzi!”

Mo Ran’s heart tremored. Unable to bear it, he said: “No…… this is……”

This spell was a lost art in the modern age, he hadn’t expected to see it being used in this illusion.

“The Lingering Voice Spell. He’s already dead, but he used this spell on himself before he died.” Chu Wanning paused before continuing, “He still

had unattended matters, things he was worried about.”

Sure enough, Chu Xun’s eyes were blank, pupils dilated, and his voice was flat when he spoke: “Demons and ghosts are treacherous, you must not believe their words. Without the Shangqing barrier, they will overrun the city once night falls and slaughter at will. Please leave this place and head to PuTuo.”

“Gongzi……”

“I have already died, and will not be able to accompany you. But I have concentrated my entire lifetime of spiritual power into my spiritual core, bring it with you, and ghosts will not be able to approach.”

They wept even more sorrowfully.

Mo Ran and Chu Wanning’s blood ran cold.

The spiritual core……

It was a crystalline formation within the heart…...

Chu Xun’s body slowly lifted its hand that had not yet gone stiff, and, under the control of the spell, grasped the knife buried in his chest and pulled it out.

And then——

“GONGZI!!!!!!” The people around him cried out with grief, their voices twisted and hoarse, soaked with tears, “Gongzi, what are you doing

——!!!!”

With his own hands, he ripped open the gash in his chest, dug into his flesh, grabbed his heart that was no longer beating and slowly, inch by inch, tore it out.

Blood dripped from the heart, enveloped in a golden-red flame.

It was Chu Xun’s spiritual core, the last burst of light from a candle that had burned out.

“Take…… it……”

He lifted the burning heart, holding it out in front of him, repeating: “Take it…… take…… it……”

Droplets of blood fell, only to become so many red haitang blossoms, burning brilliantly as they drifted downwards.

“The road ahead is long and unpredictable. My life ends here, and I can do no more. Please…… please take care…… of…… yourselves……”

Watching this scene unfold before his eyes, Mo Ran suddenly broke out in a cold sweat, feeling like there were thorns digging into his back.

Scar…… this scar!!

He suddenly remembered that, on Chu Wanning's chest, where the heart was——

There was a scar there!

Chu Wanning was extremely sensitive there, how could he forget? Whenever he licked at that light-colored scar as they entwined in bed, Chu Wanning's usually impassive face would reveal a hint of the desire that he kept suppressed. That expression made Mo Ran's blood boil, so he always humiliated the person underneath himself in this way.

But back then, he had never cared about Chu Wanning's past, and so had never asked how he got that scar, all the way until death.

And now, in this life, he no longer had any right to ask.

Ch.69 This Venerable One Will Learn From You, Yea~

Was it a coincidence? Or…

Presently, his shizun's chest wasn't something that he could see whenever he wanted, and he could only rely on his memory to recall that scar. That faint, crescent moon shade, it should've been purely the slashing wound from a blade, not like Chu Xun, whose mark was made by that of five fingers piercing with force, and left behind savage, bloody holes.

It wasn't the same after all.

Mo Ran let out a quiet sigh of relief as he thought this. While Chu Xun and Chu Wanning were completely different people in personality, there were much too many areas of their persons that were alike; from appearance to "As a cultivator, the life of all is our priority, and the self at the bottom", to that long scar on the chest. With so many coincidences piled together, it really made one suspicious.

Yet for some reason, perhaps it was because Chu Xun was overly gentle, completely different than Chu Wanning's cruel ruthlessness, or perhaps because Chu Xun was someone married with a son, so if Chu Wanning was Chu Xun's reincarnation, or if he was Chu Wanning himself, Mo Ran felt he might not be able to take it, and he'd break down.

Thank goodness it wasn't like that.

There was no need to expand on what kind of disaster would face the City of Ling An without Chu Xun's protection.

Of course the Ghost King wouldn't keep true to his words, and once night entered, the rain was bloody the winds astringent, and the world was flipped upside down. The moat was dyed with the colour of blood, and after the living had lost their senses, their howling and roaring blasted throughout the night.

There were wandering zombies all over the interior of the city, picking and devouring fresh, tender entrails, chomping down on brains.

Mo Ran took Chu Wanning hiding in a broken down little house, the master of which had long since died, and the furnishings and utilities were covered with a layer of heavy dust.

Mo Ran shut the door tightly, securely sealing it all around, leaving only a small window from the kitchen to they could see the situation outside.

And on the outside, there'd come sharp wails and screams from time to time, and the ominous sounds of swallowing and chewing.

Mo Ran picked Chu Wanning up and sat him on a small pile of firewood in the corner, and patted his head, "According to Lady Eighteen, once we defeat the Ghost King we can leave. So you stay here and be good, don't run off anywhere."

Hearing this, Chu Wanning looked up abruptly, "You're going out?"

"Not now. I'll go out once the Ghost King shows himself."

"But it's really dangerous outside. The illusion has already become reality, how can you fight back on your own powers alone?"

"Well I can't bring a kid with me to go fight, can I?"

Chu Wanning shook his head, “I’m coming with you.”

“Hahaha, shidi is so cute, but you’re still young. If you go out with me you’ll drag me down. Wait til you’re bigger, and when we run into these things again I won’t hold you back from your spotlight. But this time, you have to listen to shixiong.”

“I won’t drag you down.”

“That’s what they all say.” Mo Ran said, “Just be good, and don’t fuss, okay?”

“.....”

Seeing that Chu Wanning finally stopped talking, Mo Ran quietly let out a sigh of relief. He turned his gaze through the ribbed wooden window to peer outside, his expression growing serious.

Just why did the illusion that was meant for training suddenly become real? Little shidi was right; someone wanted to harm him. There were countless in his previous life who wanted him dead, but in this life, he hadn’t yet offended any powerful character. Thinking back and forth, the only one who might want his life was that fake Gouchen from Jincheng Lake .

But what’s the real identity of that fake Gouchen? To be able to run the Zhenlong Chess Formation with such familiarity, how come he never showed his talents in the previous lifetime?

Could it be, that he wasn’t the only one reborn in this world…

This thought gave him chills, and his eyes even became sharper and more aggressive.

After rebirth, he only wanted to bury the past, but if there was another who was reborn, then things might become quite difficult.

His brows were knitted deeper and deeper, but suddenly he heard Chu Wanning speak up again, "...Mo Ran, I…"

"What is it?"

Chu Wanning gritted his teeth silently, and after he considered the pros and cons, he steeled his heart and thought he might as well just tell the truth straight.

"Listen to me, in fact, I really can help you. I'm…"

But when Mo Ran heard "I really can help you", he only thought it was little shidi wanting to argue with him again, so he cut him off, "Alright alright, I already said I won't let you out, so I'm not letting you out. Stop trying to be tough. Listen to me."

"No, you listen to me—"

Mo Ran was just feeling vexed, so he replied, "I'm not listening, I'm not listening, la-la-la. "

"....."

Seeing Chu Wanning's dark expression, Mo Ran probably felt his attitude just now wasn't very nice, so he used a finger and poked between his brows and laughed, "You little young'un, what's with all this deep tormented suffering, and disobeying of your seniors' words too. Then, let me tell you. Since you call me shixiong and we both came from the same sect, then when we run into perils like these I must protect you at all cost. Do you understand?"

Chu Wanning shut his eyes and answered in a low voice, "...I understand."

"Good to see you do. Then why don't you—"

"But I'm worried about you."

Mo Ran was taken aback, and the finger that hung before Chu Wanning's forehead quivered for a second, and he actually couldn't utter a single word for the moment. He had lived for two lifetimes, but never had he heard anyone say the words "I'm worried about you" to him. Even if Shi Mei treated him with gentleness, he had never expressed his care for him so straightforwardly.

He gazed with amazement at that tiny, small child sitting on top of that pile of firewood before him, and his heart was filled with hundreds of emotions.

After a long while, his eyes gradually grew soft, and the finger he used to poke Chu Wanning lifted, the hand landing on the soft hairs of the other, then he ruffled.

"Don't worry, shixiong promises you. I'll come back alive and well."

"Mo Ran, can you just let me finish…"

Mo Ran grinned, "Alright, what did you want to say?"

"I'm actually—"

PANG! The door was crashed open.

A man with disheveled hair screamed as he charged in, covered in blood, and one of his legs was already ripped into shreds. Behind him was a band

of zombies lured in by the stench of blood.

That man tumbled into the room dragging that wretched leg, and grabbed at anything he could get his hands on, hurling the objects to the growling zombies, and he yelled as he threw, “GET THE HELL OUTTA HERE! DON’T COME OVER HERE! GET AWAY! GET THE HELL AWAY!”

Mo Ran cursed under his breath and blocked Chu Wanning behind him, a red light flashing from his hand, and Jiangui was summoned to shield. He turned half a face over:

“Shidi, hide yourself, absolutely do not come over!”

Then he attacked with the vine in hand, and started to slaughter the mob of corpses that had invaded the house. Although Jiangui and Tianwen were similar, but Chu Wanning hadn’t yet fully passed on his moves to Mo Ran, and the weapon Mo Ran wielded in his previous life was a saber, he wasn’t used to supple weapons, so while at the beginning of the slaughtering he wasn’t losing, gradually it became obvious his power didn’t match the heart.

Jiangui was swung all over the place, when suddenly, the voice of a child sounded, crisp and cool, “Left side, wrap around the wrist and strike three times, then jump in the air, swing around the back and sling out.”

Mo Ran had no time to think, and followed his guidance to fight. The willow vine whipped upon the body of a zombie on the left, and with just one strike the zombie’s arm was broken by the holy weapon, exposing bones. Normally, no one was bored enough to whip twice more, but since little shidi told him to, then he might as well give it a try, no harm done. Thus he immediately struck the zombie again twice, then jumping up, he

bent at nimbly at the waist, flipped and slung out the vine whip straight behind his back—

THRASH!

Quite coincidentally, the next wave of corpses just happened to swarm in, and Jiangui that had stored three times the strength blew out a stream of blazing fire, blasting towards them. The band of corpses were instantly slashed by the brutal holy weapon, each of those zombies losing their heads, and when those heads had dropped to the ground they were still smoking with black smoke.

Mo Ran was dumbfounded. He gave a shocked glance at the cool little shidi sitting on top of a pile of firewood.

This guy… he's pretty good?

"How do I move next?" Mo Ran was now energetic, and he asked in excitement.

Chu Wanning instructed expressionlessly, "Next… use your left hand and pat at your right sleeve."

"Ooh, this action is deep and indiscernible, what move is it?"

Chu Wanning said flatly, "Nothing deep and indiscernible. You were swinging too proudly earlier, and the weapon lit a fire on your sleeve, that's all."

Mo Ran "Ah"-ed, and looked down. Sure enough, that was the case, and he hastily patted out the fire Jiangui had started in a mess. This man's face sure was thick; he didn't feel any sense of awkwardness at all, and even

looked up with a goofy grin, turning to the other, “My shidi is so amazing. I like.”

Chu Wanning softly cleared his throat and silently turned his face away, facing the grey, bare walls, his ears faintly red.

At this time, there were only six zombies left in the house that could still move. Chu Wanning didn’t want to look at Mo Ran any longer, so with his head still turned away, he instructed to the wall, “Loosen your wrist, swing the vine towards the sky, twirl it six times to gain power, then slash down like the word ‘one’”

Mo Ran followed the instructions, but when he twirled to the fifth round, he suddenly wondered, “How do you slash like the word ‘one’#?”

“...Just slash how you normally would with a sword.”

“Ah, I see!” Mo Ran was enlightened and struck down with one blow. The blazing fires shone, and it was as if that soft and supple vine had suddenly blazed into an indestructible long saber, slashing the six corpses in one swing!

“WAH—”

This time, Mo Ran’s eyes were so wide they were practically round.

“Where did you learn this? How come I feel the way you use the vine whip is almost as familiar and practiced as my shizun? No, maybe you’re even stronger than him. He had never told me about what you taught me today.”

“.....”

Mo Ran's smile widened, "Good good good, this is great! Now I don't ever have to take shizun's grim face anymore. I'll just learn from you, ain't that more freeing?"

Chu Wanning shot him a glare, "You scorn Yuheng Elder's grim face? Why don't you scorn my ire?"

Mo Ran withdrew the vine whip and blocked the door shut anew, then he pulled over a table to block the entrance, and laughed, "You giving me a hard time is you being good to me. Us two here, we've technically gotten through hardships together now. Shixiong remembers all the good you've treated shixiong with. From now on I'll dote on you like my own little brother. Nevermind your grim face, even if you beat me up a couple times because you're unhappy I won't get mad."

Chu Wanning's face darkened, "Who wants to be your little brother."

Then he hopped down that pile of firewood, unwilling to mind Mo Ran anymore, and instead when to check on the injuries of that man who had charged in.

Unexpectedly, when he looked, Chu Wanning widened his eyes a little, "...It's him?!"

"Who is it?"

Mo Ran looked over curiously too and was also stunned, "That… that Xiao Man?"

The one lying in a pool of blood and groaning in tears was indeed Xiao Man. He had suffered grave injuries, and after Chu Wanning had checked him over, he shook his head, "Humans and ghosts were never meant to live

in harmony. I imagine the Ghost King stopped caring for him once he was done being useful. He really…”

“Deserved it.” Mo Ran said.

Chu Wanning gave him a look. Mo Ran haha-ed but suddenly felt a little guilty. If he must say the man deserved the karma of his sins, then wasn’t he himself the one who deserved karma the most?

Mo Ran changed the subject and asked, “Oh yea, what was it you wanted to tell me earlier? That you’re actually what?”

Chu Wanning lowered his eyelashes, paused, and said softly, “I’m actually __”

Before he could finish, he suddenly felt a breeze behind his back. Chu Wanning jolted viciously, whipped around to fight, but he was in the body of a child after all, his strength far from that of a grown man, and he couldn’t struggle free as the other firmly choked his throat!

Somehow, Xiao Man had managed to struggle up from that pool of blood in one breath!

One of his vein popped hands gripped Chu Wanning’s neck in a deadly hold, the other twisted and locked Chu Wanning’s arms. It was as if a wild flame was burning on that filthy, unkempt face, and the desire to survive had twisted his entire form, changing shapes continuously in the baking heat like a wax figure.

His eyes were bloodshot, and he croaked towards Mo Ran, “Take me… away from here…”

“YOU LET HIM GO!”

“TAKE ME AWAY FROM HERE!” Xiao Man shouted furiously, his eyes practically cracking around the edges from rage, “OTHERWISE I’LL TAKE HIS LIFE! GO!”

“If you want me to save you then I’ll save you. What are you doing threatening a child? Let him go first—”

“IF YOU KEEP TALKING I’LL KILL HIM RIGHT NOW!! I’ve already committed all the sins, I won’t care for one more! ARE WE GOING OR NOT!”

Chu Wanning couldn’t utter a sound because of the stranglehold, his elegant little face bulging and flustered. Seeing this, Mo Ran was panicking. Although if he struck now he could take Xiao Man’s life, but in this illusion turned reality, if Xiao Man really explodes in fury then before he could move to strike, the other might already hurt shidi severely.

“Fine fine fine, I’ll listen to you.” Mo Ran said, “Don’t get riled up, just loosen your hand a bit, I’ll immediately…”

Before he finished, blood splattered.

Author’s Notes:

Mo Ran: Little Shidi is so good to me! Little Shidi is not only smart but also cute *^o^* Nothing like Shizun at all!

Chu Wanning: Heh, blind.

Ch.70 This Venerable One Returns

Chu Wanning wasn't some weakling that just anybody could threaten; there was a flash of golden light—Mo Ran could've sworn he saw some kind of weapon in his hand, but it was gone in less than an instant—and both of Xiao Man's hands had already been sheared clean off, wrists and all!

Xiao Man screamed and stumbled backwards. He only had one useable leg left now that even his hands were gone.

The hand seizing Chu Wanning dropped to the ground. Chu Wanning stood up, enraged, expression dark like never before. His lips moved slightly like he might say something, but in the end he seemed too angry for words and turned away instead, face ashen.

Mo Ran hurriedly rushed over and pulled him into his arms: "Shidi, are you okay? Are you hurt anywhere?"

In his arms, Chu Wanning only shook his head, too disgusted to speak.

For all that, this Xiao Man in front of them was merely an illusion of someone who had once lived two hundred years ago. Chu Wanning wiped the blood splatters from his face and said to Mo Ran in a low voice: "As you saw, staying here wouldn't be any safer for me than going out there with you. I can take care of myself, won't slow you down."

Mo Ran had heard about the little shidi's skill from Xue Meng before, but he had never seen it for himself until just now—it was, admittedly, quite

eye-opening.

“Sure you’re pretty impressive, but……”

Chu Wanning pushed harder: “I’m also familiar with all kinds of weapons, so I can give you pointers from the side.”

“But……”

Chu Wanning lifted his eyes: “Won’t you trust in me just this once?”

“.....”

“Shixiong.”

He had meant to emphasize the sincerity of his words, but with this young, tender voice, it came out all softly adorable instead. Almost like he was acting cute. Chu Wanning was flabbergasted.

Mo Ran blinked, then started rapidly scratching his head in confusion and going “Aaaah” before burying his face in both hands. A long moment passed with his face in his hands before he said: “That, uhm, see I’m just worried that…… you uh……”

Two whole lives and this was the first time a little one had called out this softly to him; Mo Ran really felt so close to him just now, as if they were brothers by blood.

When he hated someone, he hated them to the bone, but to those he cherished, he was extremely tender. And so, when he finished clawing his

head and finally looked back up at Chu Wanning from where he was crouched down, the tips of his ears turned red.

If only he really did have a little brother, maybe it wouldn't have been so lonely.

Unfortunately for Mo Ran, his reaction was noticed. Chu Wanning hesitated a little, then tried, experimentally, in a small voice: "Shige."

Shige was an even more familiar form of address than shixiong.

Mo Ran braced his forehead against a hand, seriously at his limit: "....."

Chu Wanning glanced knowingly at Mo Ran and mentally filed away his weak point. Anyway, he was in a child's body right now and Mo Ran hadn't the slightest who he actually was, there was nothing to be embarrassed about, so he opened his mouth again and out came a soft, sticky: "Ge."

"……"

"Gege."

"……"

"Mo Ran-gege."

“AAAAAAH!!!!!! OKOK! I’ll take you, I’ll take you! Stop saying that!” Mo Ran jumped to his feet, face bright red, rubbing the goosebumps on his arms, “Alright, fine, come along then, you win, okay? You win. Oh my god.”

Hands clasped behind his back, Chu Wanning tilted his head and said with a tiny smile: “Let’s go then.”

As he walked leisurely toward the door, he could hear Mo Ran mumbling quietly from behind him: “Where in heavens did he learn that from, I nearly died from sugar overdose, holy crap……”

Chu Wanning was originally in a dreadful state of mind from what happened before with Chu Xun, but now he felt the gloom in his chest slowly lifting. Suddenly, he heard Mo Ran ask: “Oh yeah, what was shidi going to say earlier?”

Chu Wanning turned around and replied evenly: “Ah. That.”

“Hm?”

“I forgot.”

“.....”

“If I remember it later, I’ll tell Mo Ran-gege then……”

“Aaaaaaaah stop! Don’t say that one! Shixiong is fine! Shixiong is enough!” Mo Ran waved his hands frantically.

Chu Wanning's eyes were like a pair of deep puddles, the corners of his lips quirked with a hint of a smile: "If you say so, shixiong. Anyway, I think the ghost king will be showing up soon, since this illusion is based on the memories of survivors, and those survivors have left Lin'an by now, so the illusion probably won't last much longer."

"That makes sense…… we should be able to get out once we defeat him, right? I'm gonna find whoever it was that manifested the illusion and tried to kill us!"

Chu Wanning nodded: "Fortunately for us, judging by the battle with Chu Xun earlier, this ghost king isn't too strong. In fact, he might be the weakest among the nine kings. Although the illusion has been manifested, it seems to me that whoever did it probably thought I was just an ordinary six year old, and didn't expect me to actually be able to help take care of this."

Mo Ran nodded along: "Sounds about right."

Chu Wanning continued: "So rather than saying that he tried to kill us, it would be more accurate to say that I was never part of the equation. He's actually only after shixiong."

Mo Ran nodded even more vigorously: "Checks out."

"After we get out of here, shixiong must make sure to tell Xue Meng about this. Something is afoot at the Peach Blossom Springs, we have to be careful from here on out. But let's not dwell on that for the time being. Shixiong, please lead the way, I won't slow shixiong down."

Chu Wanning's prediction was spot on.

Three in the morning; the massacre in the city was winding down.

A bloody rift cracked open in the sky suddenly, green smoke pouring onto the wreckage and solidifying into the shape of a hunched-over man.

The man's eyes were bright scarlet and his skin was ashen pale; half of his body had flesh and skin, but the other half was stark, exposed bone. He stalked across the corpse-littered city with a black banner in tow, absorbing the pain and resentment of the newly deceased as he passed.

Mo Ran looked at the man's face from where they were hidden.

"So it's him?"

There was a hint of relief in his voice.

It was obvious to Chu Wanning why he sounded relieved, but he didn't intend to reveal himself just yet, and a six year old can't know too much.

So he looked up at Mo Ran with feigned cluelessness: "What?"

"You guessed right. The nine kings of the ghost realm differ in strength, and this one is indeed the weakest among them." Mo Ran watched the figure approach from behind a window, saying in a quiet voice, "We lucked out."

"What does shixiong think our odds are?"

"Ninety percent. Always best to not be too overconfident, you know."

Chu Wanning smiled a little.

Of course he knew that the “Skeleton King” was the weakest of the nine ghost kings, but strength was relative. With Mo Ran’s age and experience, even with the holy weapon Jiangui at his side, going up against the Skeleton King alone was still pushing it a bit.

Unfortunately for the person plotting against Mo Ran, the kid by his side wasn’t just any rookie from Sisheng Peak, but Chu Wanning himself.

“Help me……”

They were just about to burst out the door with a surprise attack when a weak voice called out from behind.

“Ah, he’s still alive?” Mo Ran’s eyes were wide as he turned to look at Xiao Man curled up in the back.

“I don’t want to die……Dad…… I don’t want to……”

Chu Wanning looked at the young man curled into a rumpled heap of rags and shook his head: “Back then, this person had likely died as soon as he stepped in here, but he’s still alive in this illusion probably because we happened to be here and killed the undead that were after him, so some things turned out differently.”

“ Sigh …… if he hadn’t defected, do you think that maybe Chu Xun wouldn’t have died two hundred years ago? That maybe Lin’an wouldn’t just be a pile of ruins now……”

“Maybe.”

But they both knew that, no matter what they did now, the past was the past. The important thing right now was to defeat the Skeleton King and get out of this illusion, and there was no reason to delay, so they charged out from their hiding place, killing everything in their way.

Getting out of this illusion might be even easier than they had thought.

Mo Ran knew exactly what he had to do, and engaged the Skeleton King without delay. But watching them face off, Chu Wanning felt a wave of uneasiness.

It wasn’t because Mo Ran was struggling; quite to the contrary, under his guidance, Mo Ran maintained a solid upper hand. But more and more, Chu Wanning felt that——

The person behind all this had planned everything out far too precisely.

That is to say, that person had carefully assessed that it would be extremely difficult for just Mo Ran and one other person of average skill to get out of this situation. But he also didn’t use anything more deadly than this so as to not rouse any suspicions of foul play. His goal was to make it look like Mo Ran died in a training accident.

Whom exactly was this person, to plan so meticulously against Mo Ran’s life?

Was it really that fake Gouchen from Jincheng Lake…...

Chu Wanning watched the ferocious battle between Mo Ran and the Ghost King. The longer it went on, the more Mo Ran came out on top, and as the sky slowly lightened, the Ghost King's strength gradually waned; victory was all but in hand.

But just then, amongst that horde of undead and demons sealed behind Mo Ran's spell, Chu Wanning suddenly saw the face of a living person!

"Who is it!!!!"

Amidst the walking corpses, half of that person's face was shadowed beneath the hood of his cloak. From this distance, all he could see was a sharp chin, sweetly colored lips, and a gently curved nose.

Just one look, and Chu Wanning could tell that this person didn't belong in the illusion of two hundred years past——he wasn't in any kind of fighting stance, only shrouded under his hood, looking in Chu Wanning and Mo Ran's direction. Seeing that Chu Wanning had noticed him, he smiled faintly then lifted a hand and swept it across his neck in a "kill" gesture.

Chu Wanning cursed under his breath and lunged to try and capture him.

But that person only kept smiling, crimson lips and ivory teeth under his hood, and mouthed what looked like "goodbye".

Then he turned and disappeared.

“Stay right there!”

It was useless. The sky brightened, layers of fish scale clouds painting across it.

The fight between Mo Ran and the Ghost King ended with one final blow——the very moment that Jiangui sheared the Ghost King’s head clean off, sending foul blood flying everywhere, their bodies were abruptly tossed up, and that sunrise of ancient Lin’an from two hundred years ago, the ruined wreckage of the city, all of it sped away in a blur.

Thump!

When Chu Wanning hit the ground again, he found himself back at the testing cave.

Mo Ran was also here, dropped on the ground next to him, covered in blood from the fight, but mostly not his own. He was laid out on the ground, clearly still too tired to get up, only gazing at Chu Wanning with those pitch-black eyes.

A few moments passed, then he lifted a hand and gently poked Chu Wanning’s forehead.

“We made it.”

Chu Wanning “Mn”-ed, but his expression was dark: “.....I saw someone in there just now.”

“What?”

“It was probably the spell caster.”

Mo Ran rolled up, his eyes going wide: “You saw him? You saw him! Did you see who it was? What did he look like?”

Chu Wanning shook his head, brows furrowed: “He was wearing a hood, I couldn’t see clearly. But based on the figure, he should be male, fairly young, thin, with a pointed chin……”

But he didn’t voice the rest of his thoughts.

He felt like this half of a face looked vaguely familiar, as if he had seen this person somewhere before, long ago. But he also couldn’t shake the feeling that he might be mistaken, it was only half of a face after all, and there were plenty of similar-looking people out there, so he couldn’t really be sure.

He was deep in thought when he felt Mo Ran pat him on the shoulder.

“Shidi.”

“What is it?”

“.....Look over there.”

Mo Ran’s voice was low, with a chill in it.

Chu Wanning looked up in the direction he was pointing.

It was Eighteen.

At the entrance to the testing cave, Eighteen hung from the ceiling, both eyes bulging outwards, the embroidered satin shoes on her feet swaying in mid air.

She was already dead, and there was no wind here. Judging by the angle of her body's sway, the murderer had just left.

But the thing that turned their faces pale was the murder weapon wrapped tightly around her neck.

It was a willow vine.

With sharp, blade-like leaves, the vine coursed with a firey red light that crackled, erupting with sparks that fell together with the drops of blood.

Jiangui.

The thing that strangled Eighteen and hung her from the roof of the cave was none other than the holy weapon Jiangui!

Author's Notes:

Disguise: Eh? Didn't you want to take me off in the last chapter? I'll take it off for you now…

Chu Wanning: The opportunity has passed, you can be good and stay on me. (Apathetic expression)

Ch.71 This Venerable One's Been Framed

Face ashen, Mo Ran was in utter disbelief as he summoned the weapon that he had just put away a moment ago. Jiangui answered his call, appearing in his hand in a blaze of firey light.

Comparing the two, the weapon that killed Eighteen was practically identical to Jiangui, almost like a piece of it, save for the fact that it had no hilt——could it be that there was a second Jiangui in this world?!

But before he could think on it, urgent footsteps approached at a rapid speed. Chu Wanning was more level-headed than Mo Ran; he quickly assessed the situation and a chill flickered through his eyes: "Mo Ran, put Jiangui away!"

"Wha——?"

Too late.

A group of people had already arrived at the entrance to the cave. There were people from the feathered tribe, cultivators from the various sects, even Xue Meng, Ye Wangxi, and Shi Mei were there…… it was as if someone had noticed that something strange was happening here and called just about everyone over in a hurry.

And so, when everyone arrived one after the other, the sight that greeted them was that of Eighteen, brutally murdered, the willow vine cutting into her neck; and behind her, Mo Ran and a small child, battered from clearly

having just fought a fierce battle, Mo Ran covered in blood and holding Jiangui in hand, the willow vine coursing with a menacing, firey light…...

No one made a sound.

Until someone suddenly yelled: “M-murderer!”

The crowd began to clamor; panic, anger, and whispered words surging into a river, the drone of voices shaking the very bones. “She’s dead” “Murderer” “How vicious” “Must be insane” “Lunatic” fragments of words were repeated over and over, the frenzied mob looking no different from the walking corpses in the illusion just now, and for a moment, Mo Ran almost thought that the illusion was not yet over, that the nightmare still continued.

Almost as if the blood spilt in Lin’an two hundred years ago still covered the ground.

“No……” He took a step backward, throat dry, “It wasn’t me……”

He felt a tug on his clothes, and his step paused.

Amidst the madness, he looked down and saw Chu Wanning’s clear eyes.

He murmured helplessly: “It wasn’t me……”

Chu Wanning nodded and tried to shield him behind himself. But he was only a small child right now, what could he do?

As he fretted, he felt Mo Ran step forward.

More and more people joined in on the shouting: “Lock him up! The kid too! Grab them! Murderers!”

“We can’t let them get away, they’re too dangerous! Hurry and grab them!”

Mo Ran pulled Chu Wanning behind himself, blocking him from sight, then took a moment to breathe and collect himself.

“I didn’t kill Miss Eighteen. Please let me explain.”

The faces in the crowd looked blurry, overlapping with a memory from the past life that he couldn’t bear to remember. He strained to see Xue Meng amongst the shadows in the crowd, his face filled with disbelief, and then he saw Shi Mei, eyes wide and face pale, his head shaking repeatedly.

Mo Ran closed his eyes and spoke in a low voice: “I didn’t kill her, but I don’t plan to run away either. At least hear me out before you lock me up?”

But even so, no one wanted to listen to him. Anger and anxiety spread through the crowd; a high-pitched female voice yelled: “Y-you got caught red-handed, what even is there to say!”

“That’s right!”

“Just toss them in lockup first! If it turns out they didn’t do it, we can just let them out then!”

“Lock them up! Lock them up!”

Xue Meng snapped out of his shocked state. He stepped out from the crowd and stood in front of those angry, twisted faces with his back to Mo Ran, and raised his voice: “Everyone please calm down, I have something to say.”

“Who the hell are you!”

“Why would we listen to you!”

“Wait, isn’t that the little phoenix?”

“Little phoenix? You mean the darling of the heavens? That Xue Meng?”

“That’s him……”

Xue Meng’s expression was terrible, nearly colorless. He took a deep breath and said, slowly: “Everyone, please listen. Both of them are disciples of Sisheng Peak, and I can vouch that they absolutely wouldn’t do something like murder an innocent person. So please calm down and let them explain first.”

“.....”

A moment of silence, then someone yelled: “And why should we believe you? So what if they’re Sisheng Peak disciples, that doesn’t mean you know their true nature!”

“Exactly! There’s no knowing what someone’s really like, even if you’re from the same sect!’

Xue Meng's expression grew even darker, lips pressed in a thin line as his hands clenched into fists.

Behind him, Mo Ran stood with Chu Wanning in tow. Truth be told, he was surprised when Xue Meng came out in their defense. He hadn't exactly been close with this cousin of his in the past life, or rather, they could hardly even stand one another. And later, when he became the emperor of the human realm and burned, killed, and plundered as he liked, the two of them had naturally ended up on opposite sides of the battle.

So he never expected that Xue Meng would stand with his back to him, facing the horde and all of their pointed fingers.

Mo Ran felt warmth flood his heart: "Xue Meng, you…… believe me?"

"Ungh! Yeah right, you damn mutt!" Xue Meng's face turned slightly toward him as he huffed, "Look at this mess you got into! Aren't you the older one, why do I gotta clean up after you!"

"....."

But after he got done cursing out Mo Ran, he whipped back around and started yelling at those people in an even more fierce tone: "What? How would I not know them? One of them is my shidi, and the other is my cousin! Who knows them better, me, or the lot of you?"

"Xue Meng……"

“Would it kill you guys to listen to a bit of explanation? With all these people here, it’s not like they’re gonna grow wings and fly off if you just give them a couple of minutes!”

At this time, Shi Mei also stepped out, but his mannerisms were far too soft to be imposing, and there was fright in his voice as he said: “Everyone, I can also vouch for them, they definitely wouldn’t have hurt Miss Eighteen, so please hear them out, thank you……”

Even Ye Wangxi stepped forward. Although he didn’t vouch for them, he was much calmer than the rest of the agitated crowd.

He said: “Even if it’s a temporary detainment, they should still at least get the chance to explain and defend themselves. Otherwise, we might be letting the real killer off the hook. What if that person is amongst us as we speak, what then?”

At his words, the people in the crowd immediately started looking at one another with alarm in their eyes.

“.....Fine! We’ll hear you out first!”

“But we’re still going to lock you up! Can’t be too cautious, after all!”

“Guilty until proven innocent!”

Mo Ran let out a breath and folded his hands against his forehead#, and then, after a moment, actually smiled.

“I never would have thought that, surrounded on all sides, there would still be people willing to believe in me. Okay, okay, even if I get locked up, just for you three, I won’t be mad about it.”

He simply and briefly went over what had happened, from the manifestation of the illusion and the events that had transpired within, to finding Eighteen murdered upon exiting the illusion.

Unfortunately, once a Domain of Fiends scenario has been overcome, a brand new illusion is created for the next person to enter, so there was no way to check if Mo Ran was telling the truth or not. But it did seem like a stretch for him to have come up with such an elaborate story in such little time if he was making it up.

So by the time he finished, more than half the people in the crowd already seemed to be wavering.

A higher up of the feathered tribe spoke quietly to her subordinate, then said: “Mo Ran, Xia Sini, although the two of you have presented explanations, you have no evidence. For the safety of the Peach Blossom Springs, we will have to detain you until the matter has been resolved.”

Mo Ran smiled helplessly: “Alright alright, I figured as much anyway. I won’t complain too much as long as you feed me.”

“That’s a matter of course.” She paused before continuing: “Henceforth, everyone please be on your guard to prevent any further accidents. All who did not arrive here in time will be questioned one by one to eliminate any suspicions. Furthermore, I will be informing the leaders of each sect, especially Sisheng Peak, which is most heavily involved. If possible, I would like to invite your Shizun here for a chat.”

“Shizun?!” Mo Ran’s expression changed immediately.

Chu Wanning stood quietly without a word.

“I don’t want Shizun to come! Will my uncle do?”

“Issues involving the disciple shall be reported to the master. This has always been the rule in the cultivation world, is it different at Sisheng Peak?”

“No, but……”

Mo Ran scratched his head in frustration, letting out one sigh after another, but didn’t know what to say.

Issues involving the disciple shall be reported to the master, of course that made sense.

But even just thinking about Chu Wanning’s indifferent face and those crisp, cold eyes, and Mo Ran was already certain that if he were to come, he’d definitely just give him a dressing-down first and foremost regardless of right or wrong. He’d rather not see him at all.

But no matter what he said, there was nothing he could do.

Both he and his little shidi got locked up.

The lockup at the Peach Blossom Springs was a cave, not very big but also not too small, its entrance covered by ancient brambles that only listened to the commands of the feathered tribe. The inside never saw the light of day, but thankfully there was a firepit with enchanted flames that burned continuously.

The furnishings inside were simple: a wide, plain bed of stone padded with golden-red cushions made of woven feathers, a stone table and four stone stools, one copper mirror, and a couple sets of bowls and cups.

Mo Ran and Chu Wanning were imprisoned here together.

Although judgement had yet to be passed, the one in charge of them seemed to be have been close with Eighteen. Eighteen lost her life for no reasons at all, so the feathered tribe guard took it out on them by making their lives more difficult.

On the first night, the guard still knew to deliver some food; it wasn't great or much, but there was enough to eat. However, by the second day, there were only some raw meat, vegetables, rice, flour, and salt tossed casually into the cave along with something about not having the time to take care of their meals and to sort it out themselves.

"Fine, we'll sort it out ourselves then. It's just cooking, what's so hard about that?"

Mo Ran muttered huffily from where he was crouched on the ground, picking out the useable ingredients.

"What does shidi want to eat?"

"......Whatever."

“ Sigh , there’s no dish more difficult to cook than the one called ‘Whatever’. Let’s see here, we have pork belly, napa cabbage…… tsk, this bird sure is stingy, it’s only the outer layers of the cabbage. There’s quite a bit of rice and flour, but not sure how many days this is supposed to last us for.” He muttered while counting the ingredients, then looked up at Chu Wanning, “Do you want rice or noodles?”

Chu Wanning was resting on the bed, tummy-down. He thought about it, then said: “Noodles.”

A pause, then he added: “Soup noodle with spare ribs.”

“.....Ahaha, where am I gonna get spare ribs from?”

“Then whatever’s fine.”

Mo Ran sat cross-legged on the ground, one hand on his knee, cheek squished against the other, and thought for a bit before saying: “There’s not many ingredients here, how about noodles with minced meat?”

“Noodles with minced meat?”

“Would you like that?”

“Sure. Is it spicy?”

Mo Ran grinned: “There isn’t even a shadow of a pepper in what that bird gave us.”

With dinner decided, Mo Ran set about kneading the dough. Chu Wanning was short and not that strong, so he didn’t even bother trying to make a pretense of helping. He watched Mo Ran knead that soft, white ball of dough from where he lay in bed, gaze growing softer.

He suddenly felt that this wasn’t bad after all—Mo Ran didn’t know who he was, so he could stay by his side just like this, and when Mo Ran cooked, he’d bother to ask what he wanted to eat. It really wasn’t bad.

He even felt a little uneasy, as if he had been given too much, as if he had stolen it all from a child named “Xia Sini”.

Mo Ran finished cooking the noodles and put the stir-fried mincemeat on top. They had pitifully few seasonings, so he couldn’t really make anything fancy, but the noodles were pulled to a chewy consistency at just the right softness, and he had cut off the fatty part of the pork to fry the meat in. The mince sizzled as it was poured over the noodles; it’ll be delicious mixed in.

“Shidi, dinner’s……” He looked up to find that Chu Wanning had fallen asleep, still lying tummy-down like before, face turned to the side with his head pillowed on his arms, long eyelashes resting against his cheeks, expression peaceful.

“Ready……” He finished in a mumble, then walked over to the bed and stroked Chu Wanning’s smooth, inky hair.

“Looking at you like this, you really do look like Shizun. I wonder what the relationship is between you, Shizun, and the Chu family of Lin’an, and also, just who exactly is after us. Sigh …… wonder what Shizun’s up to right now, if he knew what had happened here, would he blame me again regardless of all else?”

At that, the color in Mo Ran’s eyes darkened a little as he played with a strand of Chu Wanning’s hair around his finger, sighing faintly.

“You don’t know him, but anytime anything happens, he always gives me hell…… he really doesn’t like me at all.”

But Chu Wanning was asleep, and these words scattered weightlessly into the silence of night without an answer, just like the misunderstandings coiled around them for decades and decades across two lifetimes.

Mo Ran waited for the noodles to cool down a bit before waking Chu Wanning up.

“Shidi, dinner’s ready.”

Chu Wanning covered a yawn and blinked blearily.

“Oh, dinner……”

Mo Ran carried the noodles over. He liked to cook, but hated doing the dishes, so just for the sake of having one less dish to wash, he had put the noodles directly into the pot he fried the mincemeat in.

Chu Wanning was flabbergasted at this unorthodox and uncultured way of eating, his eyes wide as he stared disbelievingly at the big pot of noodles: “How……are we supposed to eat this?”

“Together of course.” Mo Ran handed him a pair of chopsticks and was already putting his hands together with a grin, “The race to see who can scoop out more noodles is just about to begin! Who’s gonna get to eat more? We’re about to find out.”

“.....”

Mo Ran laughed gleefully, his eyes curved into little crescents. Chu Wanning stared at him a little: “It’s almost like, as long as you have food, you’re very……”

“Very happy right?”

“Mn.”

“Haha, food is the most important thing, after all!”

Mo Ran said, then cheekily scooped up a big clump of noodles for himself, slurping it all up until his cheeks were puffed out: “It doesn’t look great, but it’s pretty tasty.”

“.....” Chu Wanning’s expression was dark, “Don’t slurp while eating.”

“Hahaha!” Mo Ran laughed, slapping his leg, “How is a little kid like you this much like my Shizun? He also told me to not slurp, but you know

what? Once, when I was eating with him, I purposefully threw a bone in his bowl, and he got so mad! Hahahahaha——”

Chu Wanning grit his teeth: “Impudent!”

“Yeah yeah yeah! That reaction exactly, how did you know? Even the delivery was just like him! Hey Shidi, seriously, I think you two might be distant relatives, why don’t you ask Shizun about it when he gets here? O-oi——wait not the egg the egg’s mine——”

Author’s Notes:

Weiyu-er : Does Shididi want to eat rice or noodles?

Big white kitty: It’s gotten cold, why not eat dog meat? (sneer)

Ch.72 This Venerable One Stews Soup

At night, the two of them lay on the wide stone bed. Trying to pass the time while locked up was a task in and of itself—they had already trained and eaten, and now there was nothing else to do.

Chu Wanning, calm and tranquil by nature, wasn't all that bothered, but Mo Ran paced this way and that in the constricted space of the cave, and time only seemed to crawl even slower.

"Ahh I'm so bored, so bored, what to do? What to do?"

Chu Wanning, with his eyes closed: "Sleep."

"But it's still so early." Mo Ran glanced at the hourglass and shook his head, "Way too early."

Chu Wanning ignored him.

Mo Ran rolled about on the bed, then suddenly scooted over and pulled his cheek.

"Shidi."

"....."

"Shidi~"

"....."

"SHIDI!!!!"

Chu Wanning's eyes flew open angrily: "What do you want!"

Mo Ran took his hands in his own and swung their joined hands back and forth shamelessly: "Play with me."

"......Am I the shidi here, or you?" Chu Wanning wrenched his hands back, beyond irate, "Who's gonna fool around with you!"

Mo Ran smiled sweetly, truly and completely shameless: "You of course. Who else is there?"

Chu Wanning: "....."

Mo Ran took off the narrow red cord holding his hair up, tied the ends together, and wove it around his fingers into a distinct pattern.

Despite his protests, Chu Wanning sat up after all, asking grumpily: "What is this? How do you play it?"

"It's called cat's cradle. Mostly girls play it, not so much boys, but I grew up in an entertainment house full of girls, so I ended up learning it too."

"....."

"It's pretty fun actually, see, hook your finger around this string here…… no not that finger, use your pinky, yeah, like that. Then take your thumb and forefinger and hook around these two strings here……" Mo Ran instructed slowly and patiently.

The candle flame crackled, casting its warm light on them, one big and one small, their heads lowered in concentration as they passed that loop of red

string made from a hair tie back and forth, both their expressions slowly softening.

Chu Wanning held segments of the string taut between his fingers as he followed Mo Ran's instructions to weave a new pattern, but accidentally missed a string, so rather than turning into the new pattern when it exchanged hands, the red string returned instead to its original shape of being just a simple loop.

He stared at it blankly, hands still held in mid air, face full of incomprehension as he muttered: "Why did it fall apart? What happened……"

"Haha, you probably just missed a string again."

".....Again."

"No more, no more." Mo Ran laughed, "The same thing over and over gets boring, let's do something else."

"No." Now it was Chu Wanning's turn to be displeased, "One more time."

"....."

They spent three days in the cave. Their fourth night there, and Mo Ran was busy making preparations to cook something delicious for Chu Wanning as usual. He had figured some things out during these last few days together; his little shidi truly was from the same place as Shizun, they even had the same exact tastes in food.

Tonight's delivery from the feathered tribe guard was a hen and a couple of mushrooms. Mo Ran planned to make chicken soup with mushrooms, then add in some of his handmade noodles, and it shouldn't taste too bad.

"Are we having chicken soup tonight?"

"Mhm." Mo Ran answered, glancing to the side at Chu Wanning. The kid was a genius in the martial arts, yet simply couldn't get a grasp on cat's cradle. But he was also stubborn to a fault and would play around with a hair cord trying to figure it out every chance he got. Mo Ran couldn't help smiling at that mulish look of his.

Mo Ran said with a smile: "Feel free to play with it while I cook, but I'm afraid the soup's gonna finish stewing before you work it out."

Chu Wanning let out a cold hmph, and paused before saying: "Is there any ginger left?"

"Let me see…… yep, there's plenty, they gave us a bunch yesterday."

Chu Wanning sounded satisfied: "Put some in, it gets rid of the raw meat smell."

Mo Ran stroked his chin: "Oh…… and lemme guess, add some wolfberries too?"

Chu Wanning's eyes brightened: "Do we have some?"

"Pfft. Of course not, I was just thinking that your tastes really are just like Shizun's. He also likes ginger and wolfberries in his soup."

"..... You remember what he likes to eat?"

“Haha, yup yup, I’m super clever.” Mo Ran didn’t feel like explaining, and it’s not like he could talk about things like past lives with his little shidi anyway, so he rolled with it, “I’m a perfect model of a filial disciple following the standard of the Twenty Four Filial Exemplars, don’t you know? It’s just too bad that Shizun doesn’t see my heartfelt sincerity.”

Mo Ran began cleaning the chicken as he talked absently, and thus completely missed Chu Wanning’s expression. He plucked it and removed the innards with a quick, practiced hand, and was just about to boil the blood out when he heard little shidi say in a quiet voice: “He isn’t necessarily unaware.”

“Wha?”

Seeing Mo Ran look up, the tips of Chu Wanning’s ears turned red. He turned away and cleared his throat: “I said, Yuheng Elder isn’t necessarily unaware that you’re good to him.”

“Oh, that. It doesn’t really matter, I’m already used to it anyway. Even though I did wish, once, that he would be like other people’s masters and ask after me sometimes, or that he’d occasionally know what I liked like how I know what he likes to eat. But that’s all in the past now. When I first entered the sect, I was fooled by his pretty looks and thought he was a gentle person. Thinking back on it now is really…… sigh , my esteemed Shizun is so illustrious and unapproachable, and busy on top too, how could I possibly dare to hope for his attention? Haha, ahahaha.”

Chu Wanning was a little angry at his words at first, but then he thought about it, and although he was concerned about Mo Ran in their daily life,

he did indeed always maintain a veneer of aloofness and distance; he hung his head wordlessly, anger turned into consternation instead. After a while, he hopped off the bed and walked quietly over to Mo Ran.

“What’s up?”

“You’re always the one cooking. Today’s is simple, so I’ll cook for you instead.”

Mo Ran blinked, then smiled: “Where’d this come from? You’re too short to even reach the stove, how are you gonna cook? Besides, I’m your shixiong, since you’ve called me that, the least I can do is feed you.”

Chu Wanning carried a stool over and climbed onto it, then stared at him stubbornly without a word.

Mo Ran: “.....Why are you glaring at me?”

“I can reach the stove just fine.”

“.....”

“Yuheng Elder may not know what you like to eat, but I’m not heartless like him.” Chu Wanning said expressionlessly, “Go take a break, I’ll cook.”

And so Chu Wanning busied himself with dinner preparations, refusing to let Mo Ran help at all. There was an aura of menace and a concentrated ferocity in his eyes as he lifted the kitchen knife high into the air and

brought it stiffly down on the poor chicken. Mo Ran almost couldn't bear to look.

Mo Ran tried to help, but even the little shidi's temper was just like Shizun, and hated getting interrupted when he was concentrating on something. So in the end, Mo Ran could only scratch his head and wander off to go plop into bed.

Having finally put the chicken into the pot, Chu Wanning covered it with a clay lid and was just about to turn and say something to Mo Ran when he heard a quiet voice from the cave entrance.

"A-Ran, Xia-shidi, are you there?"

As soon as he heard this voice, Mo Ran immediately jumped off the bed as if struck by lightning and dashed to the entrance. Through a gap between the brambles, the first person he saw was someone from the feathered tribe standing there coldly, but then he looked around and found Shi Mei behind her, dressed in his usual whites and face full of worry. Mo Ran was ecstatic: "Shi Mei! What…… what are you doing here?"

"I have something important to tell you." Shi Mei said, "Sect Leader received the report and rushed over to the Peach Blossom Springs at once, he's making negotiations with the feathered tribe as we speak. How have you been, are you being treated okay?"

“I’m great, eating well drinking well and jumping around too.” Mo Ran paused, then asked, “What about Shizun? Where is he?”

“I heard he’s still in seclusion and didn’t come.”

“Oh……” Something flickered past Mo Ran’s eyes, then he sighed and mumbled to himself, “It’s fine if he didn’t come…… it’s fine.”

“But Xuanji Elder came to vouch for Xia-shidi.” Shi Mei asked, “Is Xia-shidi already asleep?”

Mo Ran: “No he’s making soup. Shidi——come over here!”

Chu Wanning put down the little bamboo fan he was using to fan the flames and walked over to the entrance. He looked at the two people outside, expression not the least bit surprised, and said flatly: “What is it?”

Shi Mei didn’t even get a chance to speak before that feathered tribe person hmph’d and shot back: “What else could it be? People from your Sisheng Peak came. Your master says he’ll vouch for you, and is meeting with our Great Immortal Lord right now.”

“.....My master?”

“Xuanji Elder.”

“Oh.” Chu Wanning paused, face totally expressionless, “Good.”

The corner of the feathered tribe person's mouth twitched: "You two can come out. Everyone is already gathered at the Dewsip Pavilion waiting to hear your explanations."

Chu Wanning turned to look at the chicken soup on the stove and said: "I'll pass. The soup isn't done cooking yet, I have to keep an eye on it. Mo Ran, you can speak for me."

Hearing his words, the feathered tribe person thought him to be an immature, unreasonable child and smiled coldly, trying to scare him: "You'll miss your chance to defend yourself if you don't go. And if you get judged to be the murderer, there goes your head."

But Chu Wanning wasn't even concerned, a face of indifference as he shot her a cold glance and turned to leave.

Shi Mei was about to call out after him, but Mo Ran shook his head with a smile: "Let him be, I'll go."

"But Xuanji Elder came all this way, it would be rude to not greet him……"

Before Mo Ran could say anything, Chu Wanning's voice came from afar: "Mo-shixiong, please send shizun my regards."

"....." Shi Mei had said it so quietly but it still got heard; feeling a little awkward, he cleared his throat and waited for the feathered tribe person to open the brambles covering the cave entrance, then immediately grabbed Mo Ran to leave.

Unexpectedly, Chu Wanning turned around just then and called: "Shixiong."

“Did Shidi change his mind and want to come along after all?” Mo Ran smiled.

Chu Wanning’s little hand waved in his sleeve: “Of course not. I just wanted to remind you to come back soon, or the soup will go cold.”

Mo Ran blinked and then laughed helplessly: “Alright, wait for me.”

“Mn.” Chu Wanning said nothing else, watching Mo Ran walk away and disappear behind a corner before turning back around to attend to the soup.

The Dewsip Pavilion wasn’t far from the lockup cave. On the way there, Shi Mei asked offhandedly: “A-Ran, you seem to have grown even closer with Xia-shidi these days?”

Mo Ran smiled: “Yeah, we went through a lot together. What, is Shi Mei jealous of a little kid?”

“.....Nonsense.”

“Hahaha, no need to worry, my favorite person is and will always be Shi Mei.”

“.....Stop talking nonsense, I just feel like Xia-shidi is a little odd……”

“Odd? Oh……” Mo Ran thought for a bit, then nodded, “I guess he is pretty odd.”

“You think so too?”

“Yup.” Mo Ran grinned, “He’s such a little thing but talks just like an adult, and his magicks are no joking matter either. Oh and, I haven’t gotten a chance to tell you guys yet, but the stuff that happened in the illusion was even more bizarre. I think he might be a distant relative of our Shizun, you know.”

Shi Mei’s eyes shifted slightly, and he asked: “Why do you say that?”

“We saw someone in the illusion, the son of the Lin’an governor from two hundred years ago. His surname was also Chu, and looked just like Shizun, and his son also looked……”

Just when he was getting to the important part, a sudden burst of loud cursing came from the front. He looked up just in time to see Xue Meng striding over with a thundercloud on his face, still cursing without stop: “Bastard! BEAST! SHAMELESS MUTT!”

Author’s Notes:

Weiyu-er : Why hasn’t Shizun’s identity been revealed up till now? I want to let Shizun return to his adult form.

Meatbun: If he goes back to his adult form, can I still develop the plot properly? I locked you and him into a small, dark room; thankfully, he's still in the form of a little boy, otherwise, wouldn't I have to cook a fucking 10000-word meal [smut] ? With this sort of performance, you still want to have sex? Dream on, trash.

Ch.73 This Venerable One is Confused

Having run into Mo Ran so suddenly, Xue Meng blinked. This was the first time the two had come face to face since Mo Ran was detained.

Recalling how Xue Meng defended him in front of the others, Mo Ran smiled at him in spite of himself, but Xue Meng was thoroughly shocked by this grin, and looked disgusted, his words contemptuous, “What are you doing? What are you looking at? What are you smiling about? What’s there to smile about!”

“...I’m greeting you.”

“Disgusting!”

Mo Ran: “.....”

A comeback like that killed Mo Ran’s conversation starter, and Shi Mei hummed pensively for a moment but didn’t push for any more answers either, and only smiled at Xue Meng, “Young Master, who annoyed you now?”

“Who else can it be? WHO ELSE CAN IT BE!! Shameless! Disgusting! Despicable! Obscene!”

Mo Ran sighed, “That doesn’t rhyme.”

“WHO CARES! WHY DON’T YOU GO AT IT IF YOU’RE SO GREAT!”

“I’m not great, I’m uncultured.” Mo Ran chuckled, “Come on, tell us. Who pissed you off?”

Shi Mei said with a smile: “I bet it was dashixiong again.”

“Goddamn dashixiong! BEAST! PERVERT! If he’s so easy, how come he hasn’t gotten syphilis?! I’m freakin’ willing to give ten years of my life so that he’d get sores on his head, ooze pus from his feet, rotten nose and rotten eyes, let’s see who’d like him then, that despicable, shameless, obscene…”

Mo Ran: “.....”

Seeing that Xue Meng was going to sink into an endless cycle, Shi Mei hastily stopped him, pointing behind and exclaimed, “Shh, look, the beloved dashixiong and those lady cultivators have come——”

“!!!” Xue Meng jumped, and that always proud face suddenly flashed a trace of trepidation. He cursed “filthy debauched” under his breath but actually turned around and left with his tail between his legs without looking back, truly panicking like that of a beaten dog. In the end however, he still wanted face and shouted back, “I suddenly remembered I’ve got something to do, so I’m heading off first!”

Mo Ran watched him scamper off out of sight and was amazed, “Wow, this dashixiong really has it going on! Actually scaring him off like this.”

Shi Mei held back his laugh, “Ever since he ran into him the other day at the restaurant and got into a scuffle, he’s been like this since he got back. I guess he’s met his match.”

“Amazing, amazing. I’ve gotta see him for myself sometimes.” While those were the words that left his lips, but inwardly Mo Ran had already gotten some ideas. If that man could make Xue Meng hide like this, then this “dashixiong” should no doubt be the one he’s thinking of.

But now wasn't the time to enjoy Xue Meng's spectacle. Xue Zhengyong and Xuanji had already arrived at the Dewsip Pavilion, and were just softly discussing Eighteen's murder case with the master of the Peach Blossom Springs, the Elder Immortal of the feathered tribe.

The Elder Immortal of the feathered tribe was practically divine; the glow of spiritual light circled and enveloped her body, and while she looked to be a young woman of a fair, tender age, heavens knew how old she actually was.

She was just explaining the case calmly to Xue Zhengyong when a personal attendant walked in and reported in a low voice, "Elder Immortal, we've brought them."

"Send them in."

Mo Ran and Shi Mei entered the warm pavilion, scanned around, and saw Xue Zhengyong was fanning that infamous fan, speaking to others, and they immediately called out, "Uncle!"

"My child, my child." Xue Zhengyong heard them and looked around. His eyes lit up, and quickly beckoned them over, then patted his shoulder, "Come, sit next to uncle…"

"I didn't kill her…"

"Of course it wasn't you, of course it wasn't." Xue Zhengyong sighed incessantly, "Who knows how this misunderstanding came about. The Elder Immortal told me everything just now, and my coming here this time was to help prove your innocence. Sigh, heavens have mercy, look how downtrodden you look."

He pulled Mo Ran over, and the Elder Immortal of the feathered tribe didn't stop him either, and only watched the two with passive eyes.

Mo Ran also greeted the Xuanji Elder too, and immediately sat down next to Xue Zhengyong's side. However, what made Mo Ran wonder was Xuanji didn't immediately notice his disciple Xia Sini wasn't around, and only very naturally nodded at Mo Ran.

It was actually the Elder Immortal of the feathered tribe who asked, "Eh? Where's the other child? The one named Xia."

"Ah, yea." Only then did Xuanji come around, "...Where's my disciple?"

Mo Ran saw that he obviously didn't care for Xia Sini and felt somewhat upset, "My shidi is still locked up. He asked me to greet you on his behalf."

"Is that so." Xuanji nodded, "Why he didn't come?"

Mo Ran replied curtly, "He's cooking."

"....."

Xue Zhengyong was bewildered for a moment, then laughed, "Is cooking more important than clearing his name?"

Xuanji also grinned, "Playing around so capriciously. I'll go check on him once the meeting is over."

"No need. After the meeting we still gotta eat." Mo Ran said, "Interrogate however you will, but let's get this over and done with."

Thus, Xue Zhengyong spoke up, "Elder Immortal, let's continue what we were discussing earlier. How about this: We have an elder in our sect who

is skilled in refining pills. Before coming here, I asked him to refine a number of truth pills."

"Truth pills?" The Elder Immortal was slightly taken aback after hearing him, and lightly tapped the corner of her lips with a dainty, crimson finger, "Is it that pill that could make mortals speak the absolute truth?"

"That's correct."

The Elder Immortal was rather surprised, "The materials required for this pill is complicated and difficult to refine, and even here in our Peach Blossom Springs, it'd take at least half a month to produce such a pill. I'm amazed that my lord has such a medical expert, why didn't you bring him along?"

"He's asocial by nature, and dislikes traveling with others." Xue Zhengyong replied, "The pills are already being refined, and they could be sent to the Peach Blossom Springs by pigeon post within ten days. When that time comes, pray my Elder Immortal come to testify the effectiveness of the pills, and have the young disciples take them. The truths will be revealed then.

"....." The Elder Immortal contemplated for a moment, then inclined her head, "That is feasible."

Xue Zhengyong sighed a breath of relief and smiled, "Then if that's the case, let me go this instant to bring my other disciple out of the prison cave."

"Hold it."

"What is it?"

“Before this affair is cleared, both Mo Ran and Xia Sini are still suspicious.” The Elder Immortal said, “Even with the Sect Leader’s insurance, this venerable cannot allow freedom to the two of them.”

When Xue Zhengyong heard this, he shut the fan with a clear PA! While there was still a smile on his face, his eyes had grown colder, “Now, that’s a little disingenuous, Elder Immortal.”

The Elder Immortal of the feathered tribe raised her gaze, and stared at him with a pair of scarlet red eyes, “Is Xue-zunzhu dissatisfied with our decision?”

“Of course. Since a guilty verdict hasn’t been passed on the two disciples of my sect, then with my and Xuanji Elder’s watch and guarantee, what reason is there for Elder Immortal to keep them detained so intently?”

“It’s not really detention.” The Elder Immortal said cooly, “I’ve never mistreated them, and their daily meals are uninterrupted. I’ve only restricted their movements, it’s not unreasonable.”

Xue Zhengyong was still smiling, but the smile had gone cold.

“Not unreasonable? In my understanding, that Prison cave saw neither the sun nor the moon, a place to imprison criminals who are clearly sentenced as guilty. How incredible that with but a smack of lips, Elder Immortal determined it not unreasonable just like that.”

There were feathered tribe guards on the side who immediately came to defend, “Xue-zunzhu, please watch your tongue!”

“What, have I said anything improper? I haven’t humiliated nor cursed your Elder Immortal, and everything I’ve said was the truth. My words only

lacked the polite respect owed by a guest, but it's not unreasonable."

That feathered tribe folk heard Xue Zhengyong's response and became even more enraged, "YOU——!"

A bare hand glowingly white as jade reached out and stopped him. The Elder Immortal raised her head, and snorted coolly at Xue Zhengyong, "We've once heard rumours in the mortal realm that Xue-zunzhu of Sisheng Peak was a fickle man, while possessing strong spiritual powers, there was some lack in education and did not parse in word games. However, today, this venerable feels the rumours have lied to us. Xue-zunzhu, how full of reasons you are."

Xue Zhengyong also flashed her a smile, but there was no more mirth left in his eyes, "I'm but a vulgar man, pray the Elder Immortal not mind."

That Elder Immortal of the feathered tribe grinned, raised her hand and picked a tangerine, then very carefully peeled it before holding it out before Xue Zhengyong, "Then why don't you and I both take a step back. It will not be possible to give those two the same freedom as before, but staying in prison certainly isn't appropriate. This venerable one will order for Xia Sini to be released right now, and Mo Ran and Xia Sini will move their lodging to Campsis Pavilion. That's a place for receiving guests, the only thing is I must send people to watch over it, forbidding the two of them from taking even half a step out of the pavilion. Is this agreeable?"

Xue Zhengyong was silent for a bit, then he raised his hand, pausing in mid air, but in the end he still took that tangerine.

Although Campsis Pavilion was said to be a place for receiving guests, the Peach Blossom Springs didn't usually have guests. Thus, the interior of the

pavilion had been neglected for a long time. Since the Elder Immortal permitted them to move to this place, Mo Ran had planned to go over and clean up first, then go pick up Xia Sini once everything was ordered and tidy.

Xue Zhengyong and Xuanji still had things to discuss, so under the watch of several feathered tribe folks, Mo Ran and Shi Mei went over to Campsis Pavilion first.

Campsis Pavilion was situated in the NorthWest of the Peach Blossom Springs. On the outside, blossoms were abundant like forests, the skies glowing brilliantly at the fall of dusk.

“This is a good place. Now even if we stay here we won’t feel wronged.” Mo Ran said happily.

Shi Mei sighed, “How can you not feel wronged? You two obviously didn’t kill anyone, but the innocent was wronged. Too bad Shizun couldn’t come. If he had come, then he could just use Tianwen to interrogate, and there wouldn’t be any use for some truth pills before the truth is revealed.”

“Haha, Shi Mei think things are too simple. Tianwen is a holy weapon, and while it has the ability to bring out the truth, whether if it’s effective is entirely dependant on if the castor has the mind to interrogate. Do you think those birds would be willing to let my Shizun interrogate me? Do you think they’ll believe him?”

“...That’s true.”

Seeing that the sun was about to set, Mo Ran started tidying the house while Shi Mei helped on the side.

It certainly was strange. Only when Mo Ran finished cleaning the house and sat down to rest and drink some tea, did he suddenly realize that he actually didn't feel any secret joy in being able to spend time alone with Shi Mei, nor did he feel charmed.

Mo Ran choked at the realization and almost spat out his tea.

Shi Mei jumped in surprise, "What's wrong?"

"N, nothing." Mo Ran waved his hands insistently, but his mind was shaken.

Had he really been training under Chu Wanning for so long that he'd also turned into a soul unmoved? Take a look at this Campsis Pavilion. The place was desolate, not a soul around, the peach blossoms were swaying, and the single men were left alone with only each other. If this was the past then he for sure would've flirted hardcore with Shi Mei for a while before he got down to serious business.

What was it with him recently? Such purity of the mind, that shouldn't be…

Mo Ran scratched his head.

Shi Mei blinked.

Four eyes met, and Mo Ran cracked a dopey smile, his dimples precious and cute, "The peach blossoms outside are beautiful, I'll go pick a branch for you to take."

"Plants are sentient, just let them bloom properly on their branches." Shi Mei said.

"En… You're very right. Then, then I won't pick them!"

They sat there in silence, and Mo Ran dug through everything he could in his mind to start a conversation, but realized that with the lessening of days they saw each other, there was actually nothing worth talking about.

When he looked up, he suddenly saw Shi Mei had a thin sheen of sweat from helping him clean the residence. Unable to bear it, he took out a handkerchief from his robes and handed it to him.

“For you to wipe your sweat with.”

“.....” Shi Mei lowered his gaze to glance over, and saw Mo Ran was squeezing that handkerchief nervously and couldn’t help but smile, replying gently, “Thank you.”

Thus he took the handkerchief and lightly dabbed his forehead.

The feel of that cloth was light and soft, sewn with the best of silk, and after Shi Mei used it, he said, “I’ll take the handkerchief back and wash it before I return it to you.”

“Okok.” Mo Ran answered promptly. His agreeableness towards Shi Mei was practically carved into his bones by now, it had become an innate ability, “If you like it, it’s ok if you don’t return it either.”

Shi Mei laughed, “That’s probably not right, look how well this handkerchief is made…” He said as he opened the handkerchief, smoothing out the creases to fold it again.

Yet just when those delicate, white and tender fingers felt over the opened handkerchief, Shi Mei was taken aback, and he let out a soft “eh”.

“What is it?”

Shi Mei paused, and looked up with a smile, “A-Ran really wants to gift me this handkerchief?”

“If you like it then take it. What’s mine is yours.” Mo Ran was very generous.

Shi Mei’s eyes were laughing, “Borrowing flowers from others to worship the buddha. Aren’t you afraid that Shizun will find out and whip you?”

“Huh?” This time it was Mo Ran’s turn to be taken aback. “What do you mean by borrowing flowers to worship the buddha? What does Shizun have to do with this?”

“Take a look yourself.” Shi Mei’s tone was a little unreadable, “Such a big haitang blossom. When did Shizun give you his own handkerchief?”

Ch.74 This Venerable One's Fault

"……"

Mo Ran was dumbstruck.

A long while passed before he snapped out of it, entire face bright red as he waved his hands frantically: "No, that uh, I dunno, this isn't mine, where did my handkerchief go? ……I, I-I, oh god, how am I gonna get out of this one……"

He stared at that square of silken cloth with a haitang flower sewn in a corner, but couldn't for the life of him remember why he even had it. He wracked his brain in a panic, then suddenly smacked his head.

"Ah!"

"……What is it……"

"I remembered!" Mo Ran let out a breath of relief and took the handkerchief back from Shi Mei's hands with a smile, "Sorry, this handkerchief isn't mine, so I can't give it to you."

Shi Mei: "……"

But I didn't even say I wanted it to start with?

"But it's not Shizun's either, it's not like everything with a haitang on it is Shizun's." Mo Ran folded the handkerchief neatly and tucked it back into his robes, beyond relieved that he hadn't accidentally taken Shizun's handkerchief, "It's Xia-shidi's."

Shi Mei looked thoughtful: "Xia-shidi's?"

“Mhm, since we’ve been living together these last few days, maybe I grabbed the wrong one from the drying rack this morning or something, haha, how embarrassing.”

“.....Mm, it’s no big deal.” Shi Mei smiled gently and stood up, “It’s getting late, we should go pick up Xia-shidi.”

They left the house and headed for the cave.

They didn’t get far before Shi Mei started slowing down; it wasn’t too obvious at first, but then he stumbled on a rock and would have fallen if Mo Ran hadn’t reacted quickly and caught him in time.

Mo Ran was shocked at how pale he looked: “What’s wrong?”

“It’s nothing.” Shi Mei took a deep breath and said, “I didn’t eat much for lunch, just feeling a little faint, nothing a bit of rest won’t fix.”

But the more he tried to gloss over it, the more Mo Ran worried. Now that he thought about it, Shi Mei wasn’t great at light footwork, and everything here at the Peach Blossom Springs, from food to clothes, costs feathers. He always made sure to give Shi Mei feathers before, but he had been locked up for some days, and Xue Meng was too thoughtless to take care of anyone……

Mo Ran got more concerned the more he thought, so he pressed: “You used to skip lunch all the time back at the sect too, but I’ve never seen you

in such a state before. Am I to believe you're like this after missing just one meal? Tell me the truth, when was the last time you ate?"

"I……"

Mo Ran's expression grew even darker at his refusal to answer. He grabbed him and started walking in the opposite direction.

Shi Mei fretted: "A-Ran, wh-where are we going?"

"Where the food is!" Mo Ran said sharply, but there was only worry in his eyes when he turned around, "Why didn't you take care of yourself while I was gone? You're always, always thinking about everyone else and putting others first! But what about yourself? Have you ever thought about yourself?"

"A-Ran……"

He dragged Shi Mei all the way to a tavern. Normally, Shi Mei belonged to the healing division and shouldn't be here in the attack division area without a token, but anxiety had been high ever since the incident with Eighteen, so the feathered tribe lifted that restriction to ease things.

"What do you want? Order whatever."

"Anything's fine." Shi Mei seemed a bit guilty, "Sorry, I wanted to come help, but ended up getting in the way instead……"

"No need for things like sorry between us." Mo Ran flicked his forehead and gentled his tone, "Go ahead and order, I'll pay for it and then you can take your time eating."

Shi Mei looked at him: “What about you?”

“I have to go pick up Xia-shidi. There’s a guard around the cave but I’m still worried, what with the killer still being out there.”

Hearing that Mo Ran wanted to leave, Shi Mei’s eyes seemed to darken for an instant, but then he quickly said: “Just two buns then, I’ll go with you and eat on the way.”

Mo Ran was going to try and talk him out of it when the bird-like chitter of feminine voices came from the outside, and some dozen young female cultivators, all primped up, entered the building giggling.

“Hey shopkeep, I have a question.” The lady at the head of the group asked with a smile, “Did dashixiong…… reserve the banquet room at this tavern tonight?”

“Indeed, indeed.” The shopkeep was all smiles. It hadn’t taken long for the feathered tribe folks to figure out that dashixiong liked wine and song, and held a banquet at one tavern or another every single night. And wherever this “dashixiong” went, a group of giggling ladies was sure to flock.

Sure enough, those ladies were thrilled and immediately hurried to reserve their tables, their words drifting over to Mo Ran’s ears now and again.

It was all “Xiao-Fang, how does the painting on my eyebrows look? Do you think dashixiong will like it?” “It’s lovely, what do you think about my eyeliner, is it too flashy, will it make him think I’m flighty?” and stuff like “You’re so pretty, dashixiong will like you for sure, yesterday I saw him look at you quite a few times already.” “Aiya stop teasing me, if only!

Dashixiong's type is definitely someone like Jiejie who is so refined and well-read."

"....."

Even in such troubled times, these people could still flutter about thus over some guy. The corner of Mo Ran's mouth twitched and he turned to Shi Mei: "Buns it is then, let's grab and go, I'll worry if I leave you here alone in this cave of carnivorous beasts"

Looking at his expression, Shi Mei couldn't help shaking his head with a light laughter.

The tastiest thing on the menu here was their big, drool-worthy meatbun. Mo Ran bought ten at once and gave it all to Shi Mei. Glancing over at Shi Mei nibbling happily on the buns as they walked, Mo Ran could finally relax a little.

No one expected the bun to do Shi Mei in.

His stomach was already weak to start with, to suddenly eat an oily bun after having had nothing in him for so long, it started hurting in no time.

Now Mo Ran really couldn't leave to go pick up Xia-shidi. He carried a pale and sweaty Shi Mei back to the Dewsip Pavilion in a frantic rush and laid him down on the bed he had just tidied, then rushed out to ask for a physician.

After some medicine and warm water, Mo Ran sat by the bed filled with self-blame as he looked at Shi Mei's pallid face: "Does it still hurt? Here, I'll rub your tummy."

Shi Mei's voice was quiet and weak-sounding: "No need…… it's ok……"

But Mo Ran's large and well-defined hand had already reached over, kneading gently through the quilt.

Maybe because the pressure was just right and it felt good, but Shi Mei didn't protest. His breaths evened out under the attentive kneading, and he fell asleep.

Mo Ran stayed until he was sound asleep before getting ready to leave.

But his hand was caught before he had even gotten up.

Mo Ran's eyes, black with a tinge of purple, widened: "Shi Mei……?"

"It hurts…… don't leave……"

The beauty on the bed still had his eyes closed, and seemed to be sleeptalking.

Mo Ran stood locked in place; Shi Mei never asked anyone for anything, it was always him helping others without any expectation of the same in return. Only while asleep would he plead with Mo Ran to stay in such a soft voice.

So he sat back down, gazing fondly at that face he yearned for day and night while continuing to massage his stomach. Outside the lattice window,

petals of peach blossoms drifted lazily as the sky darkened.

By the time Mo Ran suddenly remembered that he had told his little shidi he'd be back for dinner, it was already midnight.

"Oh no!" Mo Ran jumped to his feet, smacking his head over and over, "Oh no oh no oh no!!!"

Shi Mei was already deep in slumber by then; Mo Ran dashed outside and was about to sprint to the cave when a blue light flashed in the sky and Xuanji Elder descended from above with a child in his arms, the child holding a little clay jar.

"Xuanji Elder!"

Xuanji shot Mo Ran a reproachful glance: "What happened? Didn't you say you were going to go pick him up? If I hadn't been concerned and gone to check after all, Yu…… cough, my disciple would've had to wait til dawn in that cave."

"This disciple was wrong." Mo Ran lowered his head, but then couldn't help lifting his eyes to look at Chu Wanning, "Shidi……"

Xuanji put Chu Wanning down. Chu Wanning, still holding that clay jar, looked calmly at Mo Ran: "Have you eaten yet?"

Mo Ran hadn't expected that to be the first thing he would say, and could only reply dumbly: "N-not yet……"

So Chu Wanning walked over and offered him the jar, saying mildly: "Have some, it's still warm."

Mo Ran stood there motionlessly for a while. By the time he came back around, he had already pulled the little guy along with his clay jar into a hug.

"Okay, I will."

That silly child was worried that the soup might go cold, and had taken off his outer robe to wrap around the jar; his small body felt a little cold in Mo Ran's arms.

Mo Ran pressed their foreheads together, nuzzling softly, and for the first time in two lifetimes, he spoke these words and meant them: "Sorry, it was my fault."

They bid Xuanji good night and went inside the house.

The outer robe was too wrinkled to wear anymore, and Mo Ran worried that his shidi might get cold, so he went to the inner room to find him a blanket. Chu Wanning yawned and climbed onto a wooden bench holding the clay jar, and was about to take out two bowls for the soup when his gaze landed on the meatbuns that Shi Mei didn't finish, and he blinked.

"....."

Hopping off the bench, Chu Wanning walked over to the bedroom and looked expressionlessly at that beautiful person lying on the bed. He didn't get angry or say anything, but threads of coldness seeped out from his bones and he felt his heart, so warm only a moment ago, freeze into a solid block of ice.

When Mo Ran returned to the kitchen, Chu Wanning was sitting at the table next to the window as before, with one foot on the bench and the other dangling off, an arm propped casually on the windowsill.

Hearing the movement, he turned his head a little and shot a glance toward Mo Ran.

"Here, I found a fire fox fur blanket. Bundle up, it's cold at night."

Chu Wanning didn't reply.

Mo Ran walked over and handed him the blanket, but Chu Wanning didn't take it, only shook his head and then slowly closed his eyes, as if resting.

"What's wrong? You don't like it?"

"....."

"I'll go see if there's a different one then."

Mo Ran said with a smile as he ruffled Chu Wanning's hair, but when he turned to go look for another blanket, he suddenly found that the clay jar wasn't on the table anymore. He stared in confusion: "Where'd my soup go?"

“Who said it was yours.” Chu Wanning finally spoke, his voice cold, “It’s mine.”

The corner of Mo Ran’s lips twitched, thinking that he must be throwing a tantrum: “Okok, yours then. Where did your soup go?”

Chu Wanning said flatly: “I threw it away.”

“Th-threw……?”

Chu Wanning went back to ignoring him, hopping lightly off the bench and opening the door to leave.

“Hey? Shidi? Shidi where are you going?” Mo Ran forgot all about the blanket—the killer was still at large, it wasn’t safe out there—and hastily chased after him.

He saw that little clay jar under the peach blossom tree; it hadn’t been tossed after all. Mo Ran let out a breath, thinking that it was his own fault to start with, little shidi was probably just trying to hold back his grievances earlier, then couldn’t hold back anymore and got mad after all, and he had every right to be mad.

So he walked over and sat down next to Chu Wanning.

Chu Wanning sat under the peach blossom tree holding his little clay jar and ignoring Mo Ran. He opened the lid, took out a ladle bigger than his

face, and tried to reach in with it, but it wouldn't fit and he threw the ladle in a fit of anger. The ladle struck the ground with a crack and broke into pieces, and he sat there holding the jar in a daze.

Mo Ran, with his head turned sideways and cheek propped up, suggested: "Just drink right out of it, it's just us two here anyway, no need to be embarrassed."

"....."

"No? I'm gonna drink it if you don't, it's the first time my Shidi has made soup for me, I'm not gonna let it go to waste." He teased and reached for the jar with a grin.

To his surprise, Chu Wanning slapped his hand away: "Get lost."

"....." Mo Ran blinked, feeling a bit of deja vu from this exchange, but then scooted back over with a grin on his thick face, "Shidi, I was wrong, please don't be mad anymore. I was gonna go pick you up long ago, but your Mingjing-shixiong suddenly fell sick so I got delayed, I didn't mean to keep you waiting."

Chu Wanning kept his head down and said nothing.

"No really, I was so busy the whole time, and haven't eaten yet. I'm starving." Mo Ran tugged on his sleeve pitifully, "Shidi, my kind shidi, my good shidi, please, may shixiong have some soup?"

“.....”

Chu Wanning finally moved to place the jar of soup on the ground. He lifted his head a little and tilted it to the side a bit before turning away again, meaning for Mo Ran to help himself if he wanted it.

Mo Ran grinned: “Thanks shidi.”

The little clay jar was stuffed full, just one glance and he could tell that shidi hadn’t eaten much, leaving him the majority of the meat—it was mostly meat with a little bit of soup.

Mo Ran stared for a bit, eyes curved in amusement. He teased gently: “Are you sure this is soup? Looks more like chicken stew to me. Shidi is so generous.”

“.....”

He stopped chattering then; after spending half the day taking care of Shi Mei, he really was starving, and besides, shidi had worked so hard to make the soup, he couldn’t possibly let his good intentions go to waste. He broke off two small branches from the peach tree, smoothing them into a pair of chopsticks with a burst of spiritual energy from his fingertips, and wasted no time in stuffing a piece of chicken into his mouth.

“Wah, delicious!”

Mo Ran said around a mouthful of steamy chicken: “It’s really good, my shidi is so capable.”

It actually wasn't that good, and a bit salty too, but Mo Ran still dug in heartily to make his little shidi happy, getting through most of the chicken in quick order. And the entire time, Chu Wanning sat there quietly without looking at him at all.

He gulped down a big mouthful of soup—it was even saltier than the meat, so much so that it was practically bitter, but it was still bearable.

Mo Ran scooped up another drumstick and was just about to shove it in his mouth when he suddenly froze: "How many legs does a chicken have?"

Of course there was no reply.

So he answered himself: "Two."

He looked at the drumstick held between his chopsticks, then looked at the bone from the other drumstick that he had just eaten.

"....."

The idiot finally lifted his head, dazed, and asked Chu Wanning: "Shidi, were you……" but he didn't have the courage to say the rest.

Were you waiting for me this whole time, and haven't even eaten yet?

The jar of soup is all meat, is it because you waited for me for so long that all the soup evaporated and there was only meat left, and that's all that was left to put into the jar, only to have me think……

Only to have me think that you've already eaten…… and just left some for me…… that you cooked it wrong and turned chicken soup into chicken stew……

Mo Ran put the clay jar down wordlessly.

But he had realized too late; there was hardly any meat left in there.

Chu Wanning finally spoke.

His voice was calm and even still, with a bit of youthfulness.

"You said you would be back for dinner. So I waited." He said slowly, flatly, "If you don't want it anymore, then at least send word so I'm not waiting like an idiot. Okay?"

"Shidi……"

Chu Wanning was still turned away, refusing to look at him. Mo Ran couldn't see his face.

"Have someone pass me a message that you're going to go keep Shi…… that you're going to go keep Mingjing-shixiong company instead. Would it have been that hard?"

"....."

“You took my jar and rambled so much before eating, but didn’t even ask if I’ve eaten yet. Would it have been that hard?”

“.....”

“Would it have been that hard to check and see how many drumsticks are in the jar first?” This last one sounded a little funny even with all the remorse he felt, but Mo Ran’s dimples froze on his face before they had even formed.

His little shidi was crying.

He never would have cried over such a minor thing in his adult form; but no one knew that, although being turned into a child by the willow sap didn’t affect his mind too much, there was some impact after all—his temperament became more childish whenever tired or overexerted.

This hidden property of the sap was extremely difficult to detect, so neither Madam Wang nor Tanlang Elder noticed when taking his pulse.

“I also feel hunger and sadness, I’m only human too……” Even with the younger mentality in the foreground of his mind, Chu Wanning still held onto his self-restraint, fighting back sobs without a sound, but his shoulders shook uncontrollably as tears welled up and fell from his reddened eyes.

All those years, Yuheng Elder had always endured it silently—no one liked him, no one kept him company, and he had always feigned nonchalance as he walked through the reverent crowd, lofty and composed.

Only with his mind tinged by childish thoughts would he break down and speak the truth, let out the misery that had been piling up for so long.

It wasn't that he didn't care for those around him, only that he did it quietly.

But such quietude, without anyone to see or notice, day after day, was also a kind of torment.

Watching the minute trembling of his little shidi's shoulders, Mo Ran's heart clenched and he reached out to soothe him, but his hand was slapped away before it even made contact.

"Shidi……"

"Don't touch me." Chu Wanning always put up a strong front, regardless of age. He firmly wiped away his tears and stood up, "I'm going to bed. You can go keep your shidi company, just stay away from me."

"……"

In his indignation, he even forgot that Shi Mei was older than Mo Ran.

Mo Ran opened his mouth to say something, but Chu Wanning had already left. He disappeared into the other bedroom and the door slammed shut with a loud bang.

There were only two bedrooms in the courtyard of Campsis Pavilion.

Mo Ran was planning to let Shi Mei sleep in one while he squeezed into the other with his little shidi, but he was so mad, and even locked the door, so it looked like shidi's room was out of the question.

And he didn't want to just climb into bed with Shi Mei either. Not to mention, having been scolded by his little shidi, and even made him cry, Mo Ran's head was a complete mess and he wasn't in any mood to think about lovey-dovey anything, so he simply sat there in the courtyard in a daze, surrounded by peach blossoms in full bloom, holding that clay jar that his little shidi had brought him all this way. A long while later, he sighed and slapped himself across the face, cursing in a low voice: "You good-for-nothing."

And so he spent the night with the ground as bed and the sky as blanket, lying on the ground covered in fallen peach blossom petals, staring blankly at the sky.

Little shidi…… Shi Mei…… Shizun…… Xue Meng…… the fake Gouchen from Jincheng Lake, the unknown killer…… Chu Xun and his son in the illusion……

Many blurry figures flashed through his mind; he vaguely felt like something was off, but the feeling was so faint that it disappeared before even he himself noticed.

Peach blossoms bloomed splendidly, petals drifting gently down.

Mo Ran caught a fallen blossom in his hand, holding the perished flower up against the moonlight.

He recalled the final moments of his previous life, when he had laid himself down into the coffin prepared ahead of time; that day, the sky was also adrift with fallen blossoms, soundless and fragrant.

Only they were haitang blossoms.

Haitang……

The one he liked, in this life and last, was Shi Mei. But why, moments before death, had he chosen to bury himself under the haitang tree in front of the Heaven-Piercing Tower, where he had first met Chu Wanning.

Many of the things he had done in his past life now frightened him to think about. After his rebirth, the longer time went on, the less he understood why he had been so cruel before.

Slaughtering entire cities, oppressing the weak, killing his master…… even forcing Chu Wanning to do things like that with himself……

Mo Ran tossed the peach blossom away and laid his hand across his forehead, then slowly closed his eyes.

Little shidi's words earlier—"I also feel hunger and sadness, I'm only human too"—circled in his mind. The one who had said it was his little shidi, but for an instant, Mo Ran saw the silhouette of another person.

A person dressed in snow white robes; but then he blinked and the white robes had become red wedding robes that dragged on the ground, just the way he had looked during the ceremony in the ghost mistress's illusion.

"I'm only human too……"

I also feel sorrow and pain.

Mo Ran……

I also feel pain.

Mo Ran suddenly felt a suffocating stuffiness in his heart, as if something was trying to burst out. A sheen of cold sweat covered his forehead.

He squeezed his eyes shut, drawing labored breaths.

Murmuring: “.....I’m sorry……”

He didn’t know whom he was apologizing to—his little shidi, or that person in the wedding robes……

Inside the bedroom, Shi Mei sat up.

Padding quietly over to the window without turning on the light, he looked through the gap in the window, gazing from afar at Mo Ran lying amongst the fallen petals with an arm wrapped around the clay jar, his eyes dark, thoughts unknowable.

Early the next morning, Mo Ran wrinkled his nose from where he lay in the flowers and grass, inhaled a big breath of the fresh air, and stretched lazily before getting up.

But he only got halfway through the stretch when a shriek shattered the peace at the Campsis Pavilion.

“AAAH——!!!!!!”

Mo Ran’s eyes flew open as he rolled to his feet. The sight before him made his blood run cold, and all he could do was stare in shock.

Each and every one of the fifteen feathered tribe elites assigned to guard the Campsis Pavilion had been murdered overnight in the exact same manner as Eighteen, with a willow vine glowing brightly scarlet wrapped around each of their necks.

——Jiangui! [what the hell!]

All of them dangled amongst the grove of peach blossom trees in full bloom, crimson sleeves drifting in the breeze, long skirts reaching to the ground, their bodies swaying in time with the wind like so many preserved flowers, eerie yet uncannily beautiful.

The one who had screamed was a low-ranking member of the feathered tribe who had come to deliver breakfast. She trembled in fright, the bamboo basket she held now laying on the ground, congee and pastries spilled all over.

She trembled even more violently upon seeing Mo Ran standing in the courtyard, and reached behind her for something.

Mo Ran stepped forward without thinking: “No wait, it’s not what……”

But it was already too late—she had activated the Seal of Imminent Crisis tattooed on her lower back. The seal functioned as an urgent summoning

of the feathered tribe, and in an instant, feathered tribe folks everywhere in the Peach Blossom Springs sprouted firey wings and descended upon the Campsis Pavilion.

All of them were stunned by the sight that greeted them.

“A-Jie!!!!”

“Jie——!!”

After the initial shocked silence, they burst into screams and wails. The commotion drew all the cultivators over as well. Shock and suspicion, anger and grief surrounded the Campsis Pavilion in no time.

“Mo Ran! Things have already come to this, what can you even say anymore!”

“Murderer! Lunatic!”

The gathering of feathered tribe was already beyond furious, screaming and crying: “He has to pay with his life! Kill him! KILL HIM!!”

It’d be a struggle for Mo Ran to defend himself even if he had a hundred mouths, and he only had one: “If I really was the killer, and could kill all of them this easily, then why would I stay here? To wait to get caught?”

A feathered tribe folk with flame-red hair and a tear-stained face spat: “You shut up! I-it’s already like this, and you still, you still dare to……”

Someone else raged: “If you’re not the killer, then why was everyone but you killed?”

“That’s right!”

“Deceitful and treacherous!”

“Even if the killer isn’t you, he’s for sure related to you! Why else would he not kill you! Huh?!”

“Blood for blood!”

Mo Ran was so mad that he wanted to laugh.

He had slaughtered wantonly in the past life and hardly anyone ever dared to say something like “blood for blood” to him, yet now when he truly wasn’t the killer, he was being accused to the high heavens; this world was really so…… he closed his eyes for a moment, and was about to say something when a crimson light shot through the sky.

The Elder Immortal of the feathered tribe descended lightly from the cloud and scanned her surroundings coldly, expression exceedingly dark.

“Mo Weiyu.”

“Elder Immortal.”

The Elder Immortal stared him down for a while, then walked over to one of the corpses and lifted the bloodstained willow vine wrapped around its neck.

“Where is your weapon? Take it out and show me.”

“.....”

“Are you refusing?”

Mo Ran let out a sigh. His weapon was Jiangui; who knows how many people had already seen it during training, and a bunch more saw when Eighteen was killed. If he were to take it out now, it will be compared with the willow vines around the necks of the murdered guards, and no doubt used to implicate him. But if he refused, then it would look like he had a guilty conscience.

A scarlet blaze appeared with a woosh in his palm as Jiangui took form, coursing with a firey, crackling flare, “Feel free to look, Elder Immortal.”

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The gathered crowd gawked at Jiangui, then looked at the firey red willow vines wrapped around the necks of the murdered, and grew even more agitated.

“You did it! Just like when you killed Eighteen!”

“How could you be so cruel?”

“KILL HIM!!”

The clamoring hurt the Elder Immortal’s head. With a hand pressed against her temples, she said coldly: “Mo Weiyu, I will ask you one last time: did you or did you not kill them?”

“I did not.”

“Very well.” The Elder Immortal nodded. Mo Ran let out a breath, thinking she was going to let him go, and was just about to express his gratitude for her wisdom and righteousness when she lifted a hand in a gesture of indifference and said in an ice-cold tone:

“This person has committed myriad transgressions and refuses to admit to his crimes. Seize him.”

When Shi Mei came out after washing up and getting dressed, he saw Mo Ran being restrained with magic by over a dozen high level feathered tribe folks while another tied his wrists with immortal binding rope.

“What are you doing?!”

All color drained out of Shi Mei’s face as he hurried to Mo Ran’s side: “What happened?”

No one replied, but the corpses swaying eerily between the peach blossoms was answer enough. Shi Mei drew in a sharp breath and took a step back, bumping into Mo Ran’s chest.

“A-Ran……”

“Don’t panic, calm down.” Mo Ran kept his eyes on the Elder Immortal while whispering to Shi Mei, “Go get Uncle and Xuanji Elder.”

With the situation like this, these feathered tribe folks might not be open to reason, and if they decided to rip him apart no matter what, he had zero chance of winning, not with his current abilities. He needed Xue Zhengyong and Xuanji to step in as soon as possible.

Shi Mei left, and Mo Ran stood alone against those faces twisted by rage, gaze steady as he glanced them over one by one.

“Puh!”

A gob of phlegm suddenly flew out of the crowd toward him. Mo Ran moved to dodge, but the feathered folk who had spit it was too close, and it caught him anyway.

He turned around slowly and came face to face with a pair of scarlet eyes.

“You killed so many people and you dare to call for help? I’m going to put you down right now!!!!”

With that, a firey blaze gathered in his palm and hurtled directly toward Mo Ran!

Mo Ran stepped back and to the side, the scorching blaze singing his bangs as it shot past him and crashed into the peach tree behind him, snapping the sturdy trunk in half.

THUD ——

The peach tree fell over, flowers scattering all over the ground like snow in the wind.

Mo Ran looked at the tree on the ground, then turned to look at the attacker: “I’ve said it already, but I didn’t kill them. The truth pills will be ready in ten days, it won’t be too late to seek your revenge then.”

“Ten days? You’ll have murdered everyone here by then!” That person roared furiously, “Give my zizi’s life back!” And threw himself toward Mo Ran.

Dodging his attack once again, Mo Ran’s eyes landed on the Elder Immortal looking on from the side with no intention whatsoever of stopping this. Mo Ran felt a flare of rage and raised his voice in a bellow: “Hey! You old bird! Get a grip on your people!”

“.....”

“Fucker.” Mo Ran couldn’t help cursing under his breath when she still refused to budge, “Pretending to be deaf-mute at this juncture, you wanna watch me get burned to death or something? If I’d known you shitty birds couldn’t even tell right from wrong, I wouldn’t have come to this shithole place to start with! Who wants to get wronged like this for no reason!”

The Elder Immortal’s expression twitched slightly at his words, and there was a fierce ‘thwap!’ as she lifted her sleeve in a sweeping flourish——

That landed right on Mo Ran’s face.

The feathered tribe may look like humans, but their way of thinking was quite different.

In the cultivation world, even the head of a small martial hall—much less the leader of an entire tribe—wouldn’t jump to conclusions without definitive proof. But the feathered tribe was half-beast after all, and their blood ran thick with beast-like nature.

The color of the Elder Immortal’s hair changed from black to bright scarlet, with what looked like steam rolling from each strand. Her eyes opened wide in a glare as she said darkly:

“Whom is your master? To produce such an uncouth disciple! Watch your mouth!”

At her words, the other feathered tribe folks began to shriek one after the other and close in on Mo Ran with murder written in their scarlet eyes.

Woosh!

An arrow of flame pierced through the sky directly toward Mo Ran's heart.

Mo Ran dared not take the threat lightly, and sparks coursed through the willow vine as he dodged while brandishing Jiangui in a block, but the shot was only a feint, and when he turned to block, a bereaved feathered tribe folk rushed his back with sword drawn!

Arrow in the front, sword in the back, there was no way out.

These half-beasts meant to kill him right here; Mo Ran steeled himself, called to mind how Chu Wanning had wielded Tianwen before, and raised his hand with a flick of the wrist——

Jiangui flung into the air then abruptly pulled taunt, the blood-red willow vine whirling into a blur and creating a massive vortex, the leaves on the vine instantly turning sharp as knives as the maelstrom pulled in everything in the vicinity, even the air itself, and shredded it all into pieces.

One of Chu Wanning's ultimate techniques——"Wind!"

With the vine as the eye of the storm, everything in the surroundings was pulled in by powerful spiritual energy.

Swallowed by the vortex, ground into dust and swept away by the wind until nothing remained!

“AHH!!!!!!” The attacker screamed; her arrow had already been pulverized by Jiangui, and her long sword too was lost in the storm from being too close.

“ Clang! ” Came the sharp sound of metal breaking, and before anyone could react, she had also been pulled to the edge of the blood-red storm, shrieking: “Let me go! You lunatic! You fucking lunatic!!”

The Elder Immortal flew into a rage at seeing her own people in danger, red robes fluttering as she rose into the air.

A brilliantly red crystal of high purity appeared in her hand, and her sleeves billowed as she channeled spiritual energy into it. Instantly, a frenzied gale picked up, sweeping clouds along and flattening grass and trees alike.

The image of a fire phoenix blazed into being behind her; her eyes were a deep, unsettling red, and that originally beautiful face was now twisted.

“Bastard.” She hissed, “Still not standing down?”

“You’ve even called out your phoenix, if I stop now wouldn’t that just be asking for death?” The phoenix cast a massive shadow over Mo Ran, its fiery reflection dancing across his face, “You stop first, then I will!”

“You——”

The Elder Immortal rose even higher into the air.

“Have——”

Her blood-red eyes stared Mo Ran down as she spit out each syllable.

“No right——”

“To make demands——”

“Of me!”

An explosive sound came from above, then the phoenix dived toward Mo Ran with a screech!

“ BANG!!! ”

Another deafening sound, louder than the last, like the awakening of an ancient dragon from its thousand year slumber, smashing through stone and earth to burst forth from the depths of the ground.

The phoenix was met by a golden light, the force of their impact sending shockwaves through the air. The weaker members of the feathered tribe shrieked as the gales knocked into them, some even spitting blood as they were tossed out dozens of feet away.

The tempest swept through Campsis Pavilion, instantly obliterating trees and buildings alike into level ground!

When the dust settled, there was a slender, familiar figure in the air, blocking in front of Mo Ran.

“Sh-Shizun……?!”

Robes white as snow, sleeves billowing in the wind. Hearing the call, his face turned slightly, expression cold and composed as ever, phoenix eyes sweeping over Mo Ran where he was kneeling on the ground.

Chu Wanning's voice was cold and deep, like clear water from the well on a hot summer's day.

"Are you injured?"

Mo Ran was too stunned to even react, eyes wide and mouth opened in shock: "……"

Chu Wanning looked him up and down, didn't find any obvious injuries, so turned back to the Elder Immortal: "Weren't you asking whom his master was a moment ago?"

He released his terrifyingly strong spiritual energy, and slowly descended to the ground.

He said, coldly and simply, with not a single word more than he had to say: "Chu Wanning of Sisheng Peak, show me your best move."

"Wh-what?"

Chu Wanning frowned.

Looks like these bird people don't understand politeness. Fine by him; he was out of patience anyway.

“I said, I am his master.” A pause, “And I don’t remember giving you permission to hurt my disciple.”

The Elder Immortal may be called an immortal, but it was only because of her noble bloodline—she was far from being an actual immortal. In their exchange just now, her phoenix was shattered by Chu Wanning and her arm was slashed by Tianwen. She wore a sour expression as she held her arm, black colored blood seeping from between her fingers.

“H-how dare you, a mere mortal! Also, who let you into the Peach Blossom Springs! How did you even get in here!!!” She was almost crazed, “You conceited——”

“ THRASH! ”

Tianwen appeared with a summon and lashed right across her face, splitting the corner of her lips and spilling blood.

“Yes, go on?” Chu Wanning said with a cold smile as he smoothed down the sleeve that got a little disarranged from brandishing Tianwen, then he grabbed Mo Ran by the collar and dragged him up with one hand, eyes never once leaving the Elder Immortal this entire time, “You were saying, I’m a conceited what?”

“H-h-how dare you, you——”

“Why wouldn’t I dare.” Chu Wanning looked at her, unimpressed, “What would I be afraid of?” He paused, then dragged Mo Ran over, “Listen up, this person is mine, I’m taking him.”

Mo Ran hadn’t even recovered from his shock at Chu Wanning’s sudden, god-like descent yet when he was smashed into smithereens by “this person is mine.”

“Sh…… Shizun……”

“Shut your trap.” Chu Wanning’s face was impassive as ever, but Mo Ran could clearly see the anger simmering in his eyes, “All you ever do is bring me trouble, can’t do anything right”

The lecture was punctuated with a slap to the back of his head, then Chu Wanning took off into the air with Mo Ran in tow, and was already some dozens of feet away in a single leap. By the time Mo Ran realized what was even happening, they were already at the barren outskirts of the Peach Blossom Springs.

“Shizun! My shidi is still back there——”

Chu Wanning glanced at him and let out a cold hmph at the panic on his face: “Shidi? The one named Xia?”

“Yeah, he’s still at the Campsis Pavilion, I have to go save him……”

Chu Wanning lifted a hand to interrupt: “I already sent him to Xuanji with a spell, there’s no need to worry.”

Mo Ran finally let out the breath he was holding and lifted his eyes to look at Chu Wanning: “Shizun, why…...are you here?”

Chu Wanning was woken up by the commotion outside his room, and seeing that the situation was dire, quickly took one of Tanlang’s pills to temporarily regain his normal form. But he couldn’t tell Mo Ran that right now, so he only said coldly: “Why can’t I be here.” before lifting a hand and forming a golden haitang on the tip of a finger.

“Flowers withered outside the melancholy tower; a spring breeze through the night down to the QianTang River.”

Chu Wanning lowered his eyelashes and blew gently at the flower bud, which bloomed instantly with a flourish of light resplendent. He flicked his slender fingertip and commanded quietly: “Seek.”

The haitang flower drifted away with the wind and disappeared into the forest.

Mo Ran asked curiously: “Shizun, what spell was that?”

“Flower Toss.”

“Wha?”

“Flower Toss.” Chu Wanning’s expression was totally serious, without the slightest hint of a joke, “It didn’t have a name, but since you asked, I gave it one just now.”

Mo Ran: “.....”

This person cannot possibly be this lazy?

“Sect Leader already told me what happened.” Chu Wanning gazed in the direction where the haitang had gone, voice deep and cold as ever like jade in the flow of a stream, “The person behind this is likely the same one behind the incident at Jincheng Lake. I’m afraid that Zhenlong Chess Formation has been set here at the Peach Blossom Springs as well.”

“How could that be?” Mo Ran was startled.

He excelled at Zhenlong Chess Formation in the previous lifetime, and when Eighteen was killed, he had already checked for signs of its use; this forbidden technique was always accompanied by the stench of blood—once unleashed, killing was inevitable—so one only had to look for seemingly unfounded yet intense resentful energy to know if Zhenlong Chess Formation had been deployed in the vicinity. If that mysterious person had indeed used this forbidden technique again, he would have had to pull it off perfectly for Mo Ran to be unable to detect it.

There was a tinge of suspicion in the look Chu Wanning threw him, and Mo Ran hurried to explain: “I mean…… they’re all half-immortal here at the

Peach Blossom Springs, how could they not know if a forbidden technique had been used here?”

Chu Wanning shook his head: “That person had already shown themselves to be capable of controlling all of the ancient spiritual beasts at Jincheng Lake. Although spiritual beasts are nowhere near holy beasts in terms of strength, they are equipollent to demi-immortals. Since he could control Jincheng Lake back then, he is very likely doing the same at Peach Blossom Springs right now.”

“I see……”

“Mn.”

Mo Ran lifted his head, a bashful grin on his face framed with dimples: “Shizun, what does equipollent mean?”

Chu Wanning: “……”

Author’s Notes:

System hint: Good afternoon, your friend [Little Boy Xia Sini] has gone offline, and your friend [Beidou Immortal Chu Wanning] has come online. If you have any difficulties and require help, you can summon him to your side; if a battle is required, Chu Wanning is not responsible for footing the

cost of collateral damage. Please carry out the summoning in an open area, and ensure that the surroundings are free of dangerous character [Taxian-Jun Mo Weiyu] who will nerf Beidou Immortal. We wish you a happy summoning!

Ch.76 This Venerable One Meets That Guy Again

>>little bit gory

Chu Wanning had never been a kindly teacher type, and Mo Ran wasn't a five year old at his first lesson either; a hammy question like that didn't even warrant a response, so Chu Wanning, lashes lowered, ignored it.

The haitang flower that he had sent off with a speed-boosting wind spell quickly scouted through the entire Peach Blossom Springs. Mere moments later, a golden amulet drifted down from the sky into his hand.

"The Ancestral Abyss?"

The Ancestral Abyss was where they went every day to pluck feathers from the angry owls that dwelled there. The feathered tribe people had said before that the bottom of the abyss was filled with roaring flames, and that anyone, other than the angry owls that have lived there since ancient times, to slip and fall in there would get melted until there was nothing left.

Chu Wanning set a concealment barrier on both of them to avoid detection by the feathered tribe. They arrived at the Ancestral Abyss and looked down. There was an eerie red light and no bottom to be seen, with thousands of owls perched along the walls of the steep cliffs, currently slumbering with their heads tucked into their wings, packed so densely that they looked like countless dots on the cliffside from this distance.

According to Chu Wanning's conjecture, if the Zhenlong Chess Formation was indeed set up within the abyss, then all this about fierce flames and getting burnt until not even ashes were left should all just be made-up.

"But how can we be sure that the fire down there isn't actually dangerous?" Mo Ran stared at the eerie light down below, murmuring, "Looks real enough to me."

"Throw something in first."

"I'll go grab a rabbit then."

"No need." Chu Wanning leapt up with a flutter of his pristine robes and disappeared into the forest of peach trees nearby. Then, a moment later, he fluttered back like an immortal exiled from the ninth heaven, a branch of peach blossoms in hand.

Mo Ran understood—peach blossoms were even more fragile than rabbits, so if the peach blossoms could handle the supposed "fierce flames", then it would obviously pose no danger to people.

Chu Wanning ran a finger lightly down the branch as he mouthed a spell, covering it with a soft layer of translucent blue light. He pointed toward the abyss and said: "Go on."

The peach blossom floated gently down; one foot, two feet, ten feet, a hundred feet.

The branch was too far away to see now, but Chu Wanning could still sense the condition of the flowers from the spell he had cast. He waited with eyes closed for a while before opening them.

"The flowers are fine. Let's go."

Since Chu Wanning was this certain, there was no need to say anything else, so Mo Ran immediately leaped into the Ancestral Abyss alongside him. Both of them were proficient in the martial arts, and nimbly arrived at the bottom with ease. But when he saw the scene down here, even though he was already mentally prepared, Mo Ran still felt a shiver run down his spine.

He knew what that eerie red light was now.

Thousands of crosses stood at the bottom of the abyss, with a member of the feathered tribe tied to each one, completely naked and drenched in blood. There was a lingchi# fruit stuffed into each of their mouths, the fruit emitting a piercing red light. From above, the collective light of these thousands of fruits easily looked like flames burning deep in the abyss.

Chu Wanning's face looked terrible; he was well-learned, so of course he knew that this red colored fruit was the forbidden fruit that made everyone in the cultivation world go pale at the very mention of it. Putting this fruit into the mouth of a person on the verge of death would extend their last moment into three hundred and sixty five days.

In other words, that person would be denied their release and forced to suffer an excruciatingly slow death instead, extending the instant cessation of the heart into ceaseless torment, thus termed lingchi.

Staring at the throngs of feathered tribe living-dead, dense as a forest, Mo Ran murmured: ".....Soul Locking Array."

Using the still-living as human pillars, resentful energy could be confined therein and prevented from leaking out, even with thousands of souls trapped within a Zhenlong Chess Formation!

No wonder he couldn't sense the slightest bit of resentful energy indicating the presence of a Zhenlong Chess Formation.

Mo Ran couldn't help but shudder as he wondered if the fake Gouchen from Jincheng Lake truly was the person behind the scenes here at the Peach Blossom Springs.

Based on what happened at Jincheng Lake, it seemed that the fake Gouchen only knew the bare basics of Zhenlong Chess Formation, just enough to control the creatures of the lake. But this time, all of the fake feathered tribe folks out there in the Peach Blossom Springs, other than being a bit dumb and emotionally stunted, were practically indiscernable from the original, even being capable of using the unique magicks of the feathered tribe—it was clear that the grasp of the forbidden technique this time was at least comfortably adept; could the fake Gouchen truly have become this proficient this quickly?

Chu Wanning walked into the center of the Soul Locking Array, where there stood a crystal pillar.

There was a feathered tribe person tied to the crystal pillar as well, only this one was dead, the lingchi fruit in her mouth long since withered, her body in the beginning stages of decomposition. But her identity was clear

enough from the yellow robes she wore, embroidered in golden thread with a phoenix, and the star-shaped mark between her brows.

“This is……”

Mo Ran, startled: “This is the real Elder Immortal!”

“Correct.” Chu Wanning looked at the forest of human pillars, stretching out as far as the eye could see, and said quietly, “So many of the feathered tribe were captured for use in the Soul Locking Array, at least eight hundred, if not a thousand. The Elder Immortal definitely wouldn’t have tolerated this were she still alive. I thought it was odd earlier, when I exchanged blows with that Elder Immortal on the outside, that she didn’t even seem to be as strong as the ghost mistress of CaiDie Town. If I’m not wrong…… it seems that the feathered tribe of Peach Blossom Springs has already been wiped out, and all those outside right now are merely walking corpses under the control of Zhenlong Chess Formation.”

“!!!” Sure enough! Chu Wanning had come to the same conclusions as himself! Mo Ran turned to leave as soon as he recovered from his shock, but Chu Wanning blocked his path with a wave of his sleeve.

“Where are you going?”

“I have to go tell Uncle and the others. If this is the case, then it’s far too dangerous here.”

“Don’t be too hasty.” Chu Wanning shook his head, “Right now, we’re out in the open, but the enemy is hidden in the shadows. There are many

cultivators at the Peach Blossom Springs, and we don't know who's the one pulling the strings, acting rashly might make things worse."

"Hehe. Long time no see. Chu-zongshi is still so cautious."

A small giggle came from above, but the sound was no different from that of thunder striking the depths of the Ancestral Abyss. Both of their heads snapped up as blood drained from their faces, only to see a mangled child of the feathered tribe sitting on a branch sticking out from the cliffside, kicking his legs. The dead child tilted his head, a pair of eyeballs soaked in bloody tears rolling around in their sockets, and grinned brightly at them.

Mo Ran: "Zhenlong Chess Formation!"

Chu Wanning cursed under his breath: "Another white chess piece."

"Ehehe, that's right, another white chess piece." The child clapped gleefully, terrifyingly, "What, did you think I would come here personally? I'm not dumb."

Mo Ran: "So you are that fake Gouchen from Jincheng Lake! What do you want, you madman?"

"Hehe, who do you think you are, some no-name sproutling, you aren't even fit to speak to me. Tell your master to do the asking himself."

"YOU——!"

Chu Wanning's slender fingers came out from his wide sleeve with a sweep to hold down a Mo Ran who was so pissed off there was practically smoke rising from his head. Looking up with a lifting of his eyelashes, he asked coldly: "What are you trying to accomplish?"

The child continued to kick his legs. He was clearly already dead, but under the control of the forbidden technique, he moved nonstop, making all kinds of gestures like a puppet on a string.

“Oh, nothing much, really.”

Chu Wanning’s voice dropped several degrees in temperature: “Then why do you keep coming after my disciple?”

“My plan is nothing too important, but I just so happen to need your little disciple’s spiritual core for it.” The child said, beaming, “He can only blame himself for having such a fine core. It’s even better than yours by far. I already noticed back at Jincheng lake that he’s a superb wood elemental spiritual essence; if not for that, I might be more interested in you instead, Chu-zongshi.”

Mo Ran was about to gag at the way he spoke in a child’s voice but all greasily and with such an adult tone. He snapped: “If I’m ever so god damn unlucky as to get caught by you, I’ll immediately self-destruct my fucking core, so don’t even think about touching me!”

“It’s not like I want to touch you.” The child continued to speak in that infuriating, honey-sweet tone, “I’m only chasing you around cause I have to. All men love beauties, your Shizun is much prettier than you, I’d rather touch him.”

“YOU!!!!!!” Mo Ran bristled, “Some ugly thing like you, hiding behind white chess pieces all day long too afraid to even show your ugly mug, think you have any right to touch my Shizun?”

The child only rolled his eyes at him, as if tired of acknowledging his existence, and turned back to Chu Wanning:

“Chu-zongshi, back at Jincheng Lake, I already advised you to leave things alone, but you just wouldn’t listen. I’m so hurt~’

“Since this matter has come to my attention, even if you stop coming after Mo Ran now, I still intend to get to the bottom of things.”

“Pfft, I knew you’d say that.” The child was quiet for a moment, then grinned again, “Why are you righteous zongshi types all so stubborn? ……Fine, since Chu-zongshi won’t leave well enough alone, we’ll just have to wait and see then. I wanted to see which is stronger, anyway: your Tianwen, or my forbidden techniques.”

Chu Wanning’s brows furrowed as he said darkly: “Must you slaughter so many innocents for your ends?”

“The people of the world are like the oranges from HuaiNan.”

“What do you mean?”

“Sour.” The child started giggling, “Super sour. All these worthless people are sour, I hate them, I want to crush them, step on them.”

Mo Ran: “……”

Chu Wanning’s voice was filled with killing aura: “You are truly irredeemable.”

“Zongshi deems me irredeemable, but I think Zongshi is just as incorrigible. Our justice differs to start with, why sweat the details.” The child tilted his head to and fro, “Just think of our little spat as a game of chess. You won the match last time at Jincheng Lake, and, as for this one here at the Peach Blossom Springs, since Zongshi has already found the Ancestral Abyss and seen my white chess piece, and I’ve run out of tricks to acquire your little disciple, let’s just say you won this one too.”

He paused, then squinted his eyes in a smile, but only squeezed out more blood in so doing.

“But you better watch out. You may have protected him this time, but I wonder if you can protect him his whole life.”

“……”

“As for the secret down here, I suggest you keep it to yourselves.” The child said, holding a red and gold feather between his fingers.

Mo Ran noted with alarm: “The golden feathers used as currency in the Peach Blossom Springs?”

“That’s right.” He smiled, “These feathers have circulated everywhere by now. If the two of you keep quiet and leave by yourselves, then nothing will happen. But if you don’t behave and try to reveal me…… these feathers are imbued with the resentful energy of the feathered tribe; they won’t kill those cultivators, but they can dissipate the better part of their cultivation.”

Mo Ran said with anger in his voice: “You planned this from the start?!”

“Well of course?” The child said, incredulous, “Did you think everyone was a dumb brute like you?”

Mo Ran: “.....”

He was so, pissed, off!!!! He’ll admit that he was rather straightforward when doing things, and that he didn’t know much about schemes and strategies, but to get so overtly called out by this little bastard, he really wanted to summon Jiangui and give him what for, teach him what it means to be a real dumb brute.

“Chu-zongshi, I’m sure you know what’s best for everyone involved. Even if they learn the truth, with their cultivation greatly damaged, I’m afraid they won’t thank your righteousness.”

Chu Wanning replied coldly: “And I’m sure you’ve already heard earlier when you were eavesdropping, I wasn’t planning to alarm them to begin with for the time being.”

“For the time being? Haha, so Zongshi was planning to say it later then. But there’s no point to that, either.” The child beamed as he spoke, “Once these people leave, I’ll destroy the Peach Blossom Springs just like I did Jincheng Lake. Good luck getting anyone to believe you with no evidence.”

Chu Wanning’s gaze was icy: “I’m impressed that you had the nerve to call Mo Ran a dumb brute when you conduct yourself thus.”

The child didn’t mind Chu Wanning’s derision in the least. He got up and twirled in place a couple times, then a flame suddenly flared to life at his feet and slowly burned through his flesh and bones.

“Why don’t you save that for when you catch me? Chu-zongshi, out of respect for your character, I’ll remind you one last time: stay out of this. If you still refuse to listen, then we…... will certainly meet again……”

The flames roared into the sky in an explosion.

The feathered tribe child used as a puppet was burnt into nothingness. A translucent white chess piece fell from the sky, twirled a couple times on the ground, and stilled.

There was nothing but silence for a while.

“.....” Mo Ran knew that person wasn’t just spouting empty threats, but he also didn’t want to just take it sitting down, so he asked, “Shizun, are we really just going to leave like this? Do you have any other ideas?”

“Best not to take any chances for now. Let’s leave the Peach Blossom Springs first.” Chu Wanning’s expression was dark as well, “Since that person went to the trouble of putting down a Soul Locking Array to prevent others from noticing his use of the Zhenlong Chess Formation, that means he still wants to keep things under wraps, at least for now. I will send word to the Sect Leader to take Xue Meng and Shi Mei and leave as soon as possible, without alarming the enemy. As for you……”

Chu Wanning paused, then continued: “He was after you, both times. This time around, he planned to frame you with the hopes of isolating you from help. You don’t have to do anything further in this matter, the Sect Leader can step in and take care of it.”

“What should I do, then?” Mo Ran asked, “It wouldn’t be right to make others take care of my mess while I sit on my hands and do nothing.”

“What are you trying to prove at this juncture? It’s obvious what that person is after—the holy tree at Jincheng Lake fell, so he’s been looking for a replacement. You are a wood elemental spiritual essence, suitable for his purposes, but if he can’t get to you, then he’ll go for the next best thing, and look for something else as substitute.” Chu Wanning paused before continuing, “And once he finds that something, it will only be another massacre. He must be stopped.”

“That’s not wrong, but Shizun, it’s not like spiritual essences are all that easy to find. If he wants to find a substitute, he’ll have to……”

Mo Ran suddenly stopped talking and lifted his head, staring at Chu Wanning for a while before continuing: “If that little bastard wants to find other spiritual essences, he’ll have to check sect by sect. But cultivators don’t release their spiritual foundation without cause, the foundation is only let out when choosing a new weapon or refinement crystal in order to check for compatibility. So the simplest way to test for the essence is to sell weapons and refinement crystals. Which means, if we just keep watch on the weapon markets near the sects in the coming days, we’ll have a pretty good chance of sniffing that bastard out.”

After saying all that, he noticed Chu Wanning looking at him thoughtfully, and couldn’t help second-guessing himself.

“Uh…… I guess?”

“It’s a good guess.” Chu Wanning said slowly, but then, a moment later, felt like he knew a little too much, and narrowed his eyes in suspicion, “Mo Ran. Is there something you’re not telling me?”

“Wh-what would I even have to hide from Shizun?” Mo Ran said, but the hairs on his back were standing on end, and he felt as if Chu Wanning’s eyes, clear as glass, were staring right through this reborn body of his, directly at the soul cowering within.

A moment passed in silence, and Chu Wanning thankfully didn’t press the subject.

Lowering his eyelashes, he said: “Starting now, you will go with me to covertly investigate the major sects. We will not be returning to Sisheng Peak for the time being.”

Author’s Notes:

Peach Blossom Springs BOSS: I'm someone who looks at appearances. Your shizun looks better than you, so my attitude towards him is nicer.

Mo Ran: MMP * , didn't the author say I'm the best-looking?

*[abbreviation of Sichuan vulgarity 妈卖批, meaning "Your mom whores herself out"]

Meatbun: Yes, but, firstly, you're still physically a youth, and haven't grown into your looks. Secondly, the boss may be a straight dude, but if he were gay, his nature is similar to yours. Do you think he'll find your type more appealing, or Shizun's type more appealing?

Mo Ran: Is there no boss who's full of bottom energy?

Meatbun: There is.

Meatbun (turning her head) : Xue Meng Meng, your cousin's inviting you to be the boss!!!

Up next, Shizun's and Dog's main plotline is going to begin~

There are no knives for the moment, but be careful regardless when you see flashbacks, whenever there are flashbacks there are only two

possibilities:

One, flying daggers.

Two, street racing. (TL note: smut = car)

I won't put any more warnings for the 0.5 timeline, once you see that timeline, just be mentally prepared for these two things.

Ch.77 This Venerable One Feels Very Awkward

Chu Wanning and Mo Ran left the Peach Blossom Springs and went all over the place looking for information on when the markets open at the various sects. After several days of hasty travels, they finally decided to stay a night at a small town inn.

They hardly got any rest since leaving the Peach Blossom Springs, so Mo Ran had already retired to his own room a while ago. Sitting at the table, Chu Wanning lit the candle and contemplated the porcelain bottle in his hand under its warm yellow light.

Inside the white jade porcelain bottle were thirty some golden-colored pills.

It was fortunate that Xuanji had brought this bottle with him when he came; if not for that, he really didn't know what identity he would've had to assume with Mo Ran.

"This is new medicine from Tanlang, there's about thirty in there." Xuanji had told Chu Wanning back at the cave, "He did some research in the ancient archives and changed some ingredients, so one pill will allow you to regain your normal form for seven days. Here, these will last you a while."

"Send Tanlang my thanks."

“There’s no need for thanks.” Xuanji smiled with a wave of his hand, “Tanlang puts on a stern face, but he’s the most curious about your condition. Oh, right, he also said to let you know that this medicine isn’t too stable, and intense emotions might cause it to lose its effectiveness, so be careful about that.”

Chu Wanning was caught up in his thoughts about what Xuanji had said when he heard knocks from the door. He quickly tucked the porcelain bottle away and extinguished the incense in the burner before saying: “Come in.”

Mo Ran, having just gotten out from the bath, walked into Chu Wanning’s room wearing only a thin bathrobe while wiping his long hair that was dark as black jade.

“.....” Chu Wanning cleared his throat, thankful that his face remained neutral, “What is it?”

“My room is no good, I don’t like it. Shizun, can I sleep on your floor tonight?”

Mo Ran was being so vague, and Chu Wanning wasn’t that gullible, so of course he sensed that something was up: “What don’t you like about it?”

“I-it’s just..... just no good.” He snuck a glance at Chu Wanning, mumbling, “The sound insulation is terrible.”

Chu Wanning furrowed his brows, too noble and chaste by nature to catch his meaning. He pulled on his outer robe without another word and walked barefoot over to Mo Ran’s room. Mo Ran couldn’t stop him even if he tried, and could only follow after.

“It’s a little bare, but not so much as to be intolerable.” Chu Wanning stood in the room and looked around, a note of scolding in his voice, “When did you get so spoiled?”

Just then, a burst of crashing sounds came from the room next door, like something heavy falling to the floor.

Mo Ran really couldn’t bear to listen to any more, so before things get even worse, he reached out and tugged the corner of Chu Wanning’s sleeve, pleading: “Shizun, let’s leave already.”

Chu Wanning’s brows furrowed: “Really, what’s the matter with you? Just what do you find so objectionable?”

Mo Ran opened his mouth, but before he could get his words together, coquettish giggles drifted over from across the wall: “Chang-gongzi is so naughty, always bullying me, nnh, n-no wait…… ah! ”

“Hehe, babe, this peony at your chest is so pretty, let me take a whiff, see if it smells nice too.”

The walls were so thin that even the rustling of clothes on the other side could be heard, the rough pants of the man and the sweet moans of the woman mingling together into something truly harrowing to hear.

Chu Wanning actually didn’t understand what was happening at first. It wasn’t until a few moments later that he suddenly put two and two

together, pretty eyes flying wide open while the color of his face changed rapidly from white to red to blue and then finally settled on ashen as he cursed: “Shameless!” and stormed angrily out of the room with a sweep of his sleeve.

“Pfft.”

Mo Ran failed to hold it in and started laughing quietly from behind. Luckily, Chu Wanning was so flustered that even his arms were swinging out of sync as he walked stiffly away, and so didn’t notice Mo Ran laughing at him.

Only after getting back to his room and downing a whole cup of tea did he finally regain some semblance of composure. He nodded toward Mo Ran: “Such obscene speech is indeed detrimental to cultivation. You may stay here tonight.”

“Oh.” Truth be told, Mo Ran was beside himself with shock and happiness in equal measure when Chu Wanning suddenly appeared at the Peach Blossom Springs and did everything to protect him without doubting him in the slightest, and now that things have calmed down, he couldn’t help feeling all giddy. Right now, under the candle light, Shizun’s habitually impassive face somehow seemed a lot cuter.

Sitting cross-legged on the floor with his chin propped up, Mo Ran’s eyes curved into a smile as he stared at Chu Wanning.

“.....What are you looking at?”

“I haven’t seen Shizun for so long, just wanna take an extra look.” Voice full of smiles, gaze warm and bright.

Now that he's looking, Chu Wanning…… really does look quite like Xia-shidi.

Chu Wanning glared at him: "Instead of looking at me, go wipe your hair dry instead, how are you going to sleep with it dripping like that."

"I forgot the towel in my room." Mo Ran grinned, "Shizun do it for me?"

"....."

There was a period of time before when Xue Meng got injured and couldn't lift his arm, and every time he washed his hair, Shizun would always wipe it dry for him. He always did it very quickly by regulating his spiritual energy to warm the towel and evaporate the water.

Chu Wanning looked at Mo Ran and his perfectly functional limbs, then hmph'd coldly: "You're neither sick nor injured, why would I do it for you?"

But still waved him over.

The candle cast its warm light on Mo Ran's incomparably handsome face.

Almost a year had already gone by since his rebirth, and he was just at that age when growth spurts happened; without even really noticing it, he had gotten quite a bit taller these past few months. Right now, sitting on the bed, he was nearly the same height as Chu Wanning.

This kind of height made it a little difficult for Chu Wanning to wipe his hair, so Mo Ran leaned back on his arms and shifted his body lower. Standing at the side of the bed, Chu Wanning wiped at his long hair with an exasperated expression.

Mo Ran yawned contentedly, closing his eyes to enjoy this rare moment of peace.

Outside the window, a frog croaked now and again.

“Shizun.”

“Mn.”

“Did you know? The feathered tribe’s illusion sent me back to Lin’an, two hundred years ago, and I met someone named Chu Xun.”

The wiping movement didn’t even pause: “How would I know that.”

Mo Ran rubbed his nose with a grin: “He looked just like you.”

“.....There’s plenty of similar-looking people out there, nothing strange about that.”

“No, really.” Mo Ran said, all serious, “He was practically made from the same mold as you. Shizun, do you think he might be your ancestor?”

Chu Wanning replied mildly: “It’s possible. But, something from two hundred years ago, who can say?”

“He had a son.” Mo Ran continued, “Who looked just like Xia-shidi. I feel like all this is a bit too much to be just coincidence, Shizun, maybe Xia-shidi is a lost relative of yours?”

“I don’t have any relatives.”

“That’s why I said lost……” Mo Ran mumbled. He was so close to Chu Wanning that he could smell the light, soothing scent of haitang.

It smelled so good. No matter which lifetime, Chu Wanning’s scent always seemed to calm him down; in the past life, whenever he returned from a bloodbath, he always had to bury his face into the crook of Shizun’s neck just to breathe again.

Whether he wants to admit it or not, he was already hopelessly addicted to Chu Wanning’s scent.

He closed his eyes and slowly relaxed into the familiar peace, mind drifting in the flow of time.

Last lifetime, returning to the empty Wushan Palace after another slaughter, soaked head to toe in rain, he had clearly committed so many sins, but was nothing more than a drenched stray with no home to speak of.

At that time, he would sit and wrap his arms around Chu Wanning’s waist, bury his face against his abdomen, have him stroke his hair over and over again—it was the only way to calm the madness inside.

Those bygone dreams were already things of the past, of another life.

But with his eyes closed like this, they seemed like only yesterday.

Noticing that the chattery guy had stopped talking, Chu Wanning lowered his lashes and glanced down at him. In the dim light of the candle, his face was relaxed, at peace.

Although his face still had a touch of the soft tenderness of youth, his features had already matured into striking definition, like natural

handsomeness blooming through a haze, but still carrying that deadly freshness and vitality of the young.

Chu Wanning's hand wavered for a split second, and his heart seemed to beat a little faster.

He had no idea what compelled him to call out in a soft voice: "Mo Ran."

"Mm……"

Mo Ran absentmindedly mumbled a reply, and then, as if exhausted, leaned closer and pressed his face against Chu Wanning's waist like he used to do in the past life.

Chu Wanning: "....."

Thump. Thump. Thump.

His heartbeat was rapid in his chest like war drums on a battlefield, the reverberations making him dizzy.

Chu Wanning pressed his lips together; not knowing what else to do, he could only continue to wipe at Mo Ran's hair, steaming away the last droplets of water.

A long while passed like this, then he set the towel down, brushed aside some stray strands of hair from Mo Ran's forehead in passing, and said in a low voice: "All done. You can go sleep now."

Mo Ran opened his eyes, black with a tinge of purple and still a bit dazed, only gradually becoming clearer after a few moments.

Finally breaking out of his daze and noticing that he had gone so far as to give in to habit and lean into Chu Wanning's waist, and, even more unexpectedly, that he actually hadn't been shoved off, Mo Ran was startled to say the least, his eyes opening wide in dumbfounded astonishment, looking just like a dumb dog.

Chu Wanning originally still felt a bit uneasy, but he couldn't help smiling at that look on Mo Ran's face.

Mo Ran saw that he was actually smiling—however lightly, it was definitely a smile—and his eyes became even rounder. He sat up straight, hair a bit of a mess, and suddenly said very seriously: "Shizun, there's a scent on you, it smell really nice."

"……"

He paused, then suddenly furrowed his brows, as if trying hard to remember something. Consternation crept into his expression when he managed to remember it, and he mumbled: "Huh, that's strange, doesn't…… Xia-shidi also smell like this?"

Chu Wanning's expression went rigid immediately.

He flung the towel onto Mo Ran's head before he could react, and physically tossed him off the bed, saying in a cold voice: "I'm tired now, get the hell off and go to sleep."

Mo Ran landed stupidly on his back, caught completely off guard. He lay on the floor in a daze for quite a while before sitting up and rubbing his nose, not mad at all, and then obediently got up to make his bed on the floor.

Author’s Notes:

Mini theatre:

Tianwen: What will happen if Xue Meng sleeps in the same room as my owner?

Meatbun: Xue Meng cannot possibly fall asleep, he will be antsy for the whole night, waiting to greet your owner in the morning.

Tianwen: What will happen if Shi Mei sleeps in the same room as my owner?

Meatbun: Mo Ran will wreck the inn.

Tianwen: What will happen if 1.0 Mo Ran sleeps in the same room as my owner?

Meatbun: As the text says.

Tianwen: What will happen if 0.5 Mo Ran sleeps in the same room as my owner?

Meatbun: Do you still need to ask that kind of question? Your owner sleeps on the bed, Mo Ran sleeps on your owner.

Tianwen: What will happen if 2.0 Mo Ran sleeps in the same room as my owner?

Meatbun: Puh, don't think you can make me give away spoilers.

Tianwen: ??? You said I could extract any truth in the world???

Ch.78 This Venerable One's Shizun Has a Nightmare

Chu Wanning and Mo Ran spent the night in the same room. Mo Ran, heedless, fell asleep on the floor in no time, but Chu Wanning's thoughts were restless and erratic, tossing and turning for a long time before finally dozing off into fitful slumber.

His eyes were closed, and he could hear the howling of wind by his ears.

Chu Wanning opened his eyes to find himself kneeling in the snow.

…….A dream?

But why did it feel so real, as if he had actually lived through it at some point.

It was the middle of winter, the sky dark and grey and heavy with clouds that stretched to the distant horizons and covered the land. The snow had piled up past the ankle, freezing the very ground itself, and even the thick cloak draped across his shoulders couldn't keep out the wintry bite.

Looking down, he saw a sky blue cloak lined with fur, sewn with intricate patterns in silver thread; it looked familiar somehow, but the feeling slipped away between one moment and the next.

"……"

Chu Wanning tried to get up, unsure why he was having this kind of harrowing dream, but it was as if his body was not his own—he continued to kneel motionless on the ground, even when snow covered his shoulders

and specks of ice stuck to his eyelashes, he still showed no intention of moving.

“Chu-zongshi, it’s getting dark, His Majesty surely won’t be seeing you today, let’s go back.”

The quivery voice of an elderly person came from behind.

The him in the dream didn’t turn around, even as footsteps approached, crunching through the snow, and an umbrella appeared above him.

Chu Wanning heard himself say: “Thank you, Liu-gong#. You’re getting on in age, so please head back to the pavilion first, I’ll be okay here.”

“Zongshi……”

The elderly voice still wanted to say something, but Chu Wanning said: “Go on.”

The feeble voice sighed and heavy steps walked a few paces away, but then turned back around, and the umbrella reappeared over him.

“This old one will keep Zongshi company.”

Chu Wanning felt his eyes close in the dream, and nothing else was said.

It all seemed so strange, this ridiculous dream of his. The words they uttered were absurd, incomprehensible.

What was all this “His Majesty” and “Liu-gong” nonsense? These phrases of inner palace politics didn’t belong in the cultivation world he knew.

He tried to look around at the surroundings of the dream through the lowered lashes of this body. The place looked Sisheng Peak, but some

things were different.

The structures were more or less the same, but much more lavishly decorated. The corridors around the courtyard were draped with lilac-colored veils dotted in embroidered stars, and bells carved into the shape of dragons holding pearls dangled from the roofs, clear, crisp jingles dancing faintly through the air whenever a gust of wind blew past.

He was kneeling facing the main hall, where a row of guards, in uniforms that he had never seen before, was stationed in front. He wondered which sect they were from.

The sky gradually darkened, and a line of palace maids, with their hair done up in the traditional style, filed out from a side door to light the standing lamps on either side of the palace gate with fair, slender hands. The lamp was as tall as a person, with nine layers each including forty-nine haitang-shaped lamps hanging from slender copper branches. Candles at the centers of the haitangs glowed brightly, light scattering on the ground like the starry sky from above, illuminating the front of the palace in dazzling radiance.

Finished with her task, the head maid shot Chu Wanning a glare, malice in her voice as she smirked coldly: “It’s freezing out here tonight, who are you putting on that pitiful act for? His Majesty and the Empress are currently delighting in the revelries, you can kneel there for as long as you like, no one is going to care.”

How impudent!

All his life, no one had ever dared to speak to Chu Wanning like that. He opened his mouth angrily, but although the voice that came out was his own, the words spoken were not.

“I did not mean to interrupt his leisure, but I truly have important matters to discuss. Please inform him.”

“Who do you think you are, why should I play messenger for you?” The head maid sneered, “His Majesty and the Empress are quite enjoying themselves right now, who would dare disturb them? You can stay right there if you really want to see His Majesty, maybe he’ll spare you a glance in the morning, hmph.”

The old servant behind Chu Wanning couldn’t take it anymore, saying in a quivery voice: “Yes, His Majesty favors your mistress, but shouldn’t you still look at whom it is you’re speaking to? Take at least some care in your words?”

“Whom I’m speaking to? Who here at Sisheng Peak doesn’t know that His Majesty hates him the most? What need is there to be respectful toward him! Bold of you senile old fool to lecture me!” The head maid’s eyes were wide with rage, ordering angrily, “Guards!”

“What do you mean to do!” The feeble old man, back hunched from age, stepped forward to block in front of Chu Wanning.

The palace maid glared at him and said coyly: “Extinguish the fire basins.”

“Right away!”

Guards immediately went to the basins in the courtyard and put out the fires burning within.

Chu Wanning thought to himself that the maid had a sharp tongue, but she wasn't dumb after all. With the temperature being this painfully cold, she had no need to argue with them or do anything directly. She only had to put out the fire, and the courtyard would be as an icy cavern, too cold for even the hardiest people to tolerate.

The night grew deeper, music and song drifting without cease from the warmly lit palace.

Chu Wanning was still kneeling. His legs had gone numb long ago.

"Zongshi…… go back……"

The old servant sounded like he was about to sob.

"Please go back, your body can't take this. You know how His Majesty is, if you fall sick from this, he probably won't even send a physician. You have to take care of yourself."

Chu Wanning said softly: "This ruined body is hardly worth anything. I'm willing to die if I can just stop him from attacking Kunlun Palace."

"Zongshi! W-why go to such lengths……"

The Chu Wanning in the dream was already greatly weakened. He coughed a few times, but his eyes were still clear and bright: "Everything that he is

today, all of it was my fault. I…… cough cough .”

He couldn’t finish speaking before being overtaken by an alarmingly violent coughing fit. Chu Wanning covered his mouth with his sleeve, tasting iron in his throat. His hand was covered in blood when he pulled away, crimson against the snow white world.

“Chu-zongshi!”

“I……”

Chu Wanning still wanted to say something, but black washed over his vision and he collapsed into the snow, unable to hold on any longer.

There was a confused racket by his ear, a sudden chaos; but it also seemed so far away, as if separated by layers of fog, oceans apart, and he could barely hear the commotion around him.

Hazily, he heard the old servant yelling in a panic, but could only catch a few scattered words.

“Your Majesty! Your Majesty——please……”

“Chu-zongshi, Chu-zongshi can’t hang on much longer, please grant him an audience, this old one will gladly die——”

The disturbance grew and spread; footsteps came from all around, lights turned on.

The melody of instrumentals and the sweet voice of songstresses came to an abrupt stop. The palace gates seem to have been flung open, and there was a gust of warm, fragrant air from the inside. Chu Wanning felt himself being picked up and brought into the warmth of the palace hall. A large hand touched his forehead then immediately flinched away, as if stung.

A low, familiar voice bellowed dangerously.

“Why was this Venerable One not informed?”

No one answered.

The man flew into a rage, and there was a loud crashing sound of something heavy being smashed. He continued to roar, voice booming like thunder inside the hall.

“Are you trying to defy me? He is the master of the Red Lotus Pavilion, this Venerable One’s Shizun! And not a single one of you came to notify this Venerable One that he was kneeling outside? Why was this Venerable One not informed!!! ”

Someone fell to their knees with a thud, trembling all over—it was the head palace maid who was flaunting about earlier.

“This lowly one deserves death, this lowly one saw that Your Majesty and the Empress were in good spirits, and dared not disturb……”

The man paced briskly back and forth a few times, but rather than subsiding, his anger only grew worse. His black robes, trimmed with gold, billowed across the floor like a dark cloud before finally stilling, and his voice was twisted when he spoke again.

“His constitution is poor, can’t take the cold. That you made him wait in the snow without informing me, and even…… even put out the fire in the courtyard……”

His voice shook with rage, and he drew in a deep breath before continuing.

The words he spoke next weren’t loud, but his tone carried a killing aura that chilled those present to the bone.

“You wanted to kill him.”

The maid went pale from fright, her head banging repeatedly against the ground until her entire forehead was blue and purple, voice pitches higher through her trembling lips: “No! No! This lowly one wouldn’t dare! Your Majesty! Please have mercy Your Majesty!”

“Take her to the Platform of Sin and Virtue and execute her.”

“Your Majesty! Your Majesty ——"

The shrill voice scratched along the inside of his ears like blood red nails as the dreamscape began to shake and fall apart under her terrified shrieking, the scene scattering and disintegrating like the drift of snowflakes.

“Do you have any idea how much effort it took this Venerable One to drag him back from the gates of death. Aside from this Venerable One, no one is allowed to hurt so much as a finger on him……”

That hoarse voice was perfectly calm, that very calmness framing the frightening madness beneath.

Chu Wanning felt that person come closer and stop in front of him.

A hand gripped his jaw.

Blearily, he opened his eyes, trying to get a look at that person. Under the bright, dazzling lights, he saw a blurry face with strong, pitch-black brows, a straight nose, and eyes dark like the blackest satin, with a faint tinge of purple in the light of the candle.

“.....Mo Ran?”

“Shizun!”

The voice was in sharp definition all of a sudden.

Chu Wanning’s eyes flew open; he was still lying in the room at the inn, it was still dark outside, and a lone candle flickered on the table.

Mo Ran was sitting at the edge of the bed with one hand pressed against his forehead and the other braced on the bed, looking at him worriedly.

“What did I……”

He felt all out of sorts; the dream had been far too real, and he couldn’t quite break out of his daze for a while.

“You had a nightmare. You were shaking so much.” Mo Ran said, tucking him in more, “You looked like you were freezing. I was worried you might be running a fever, but thankfully not.”

Chu Wanning uttered a quiet “oh” and turned to look at the slightly opened window. The sky was still dark outside, the night deep still.

“It was snowing in my dream.”

He murmured, but said no more.

Chu Wanning sat up, burying his face in one hand and taking a moment to steady himself before exhaling slowly: “Must’ve been too tired.”

“I’ll go make some ginger tea for Shizun.” Mo Ran looked worriedly at the paleness of his face, “Shizun, you look terrible.”

“……”

Chu Wanning didn't respond, so Mo Ran sighed and, without really thinking, instinctively pressed his own forehead against Chu Wanning's cold, sweat-drenched one.

"If you don't say anything, I'll take it as a yes."

Startled by the sudden closeness, Chu Wanning reflexively leaned backward a little: "......Mn."

Mo Ran, not quite awake, offhandedly stroked his hair like how he used to in the past life before pulling on his outer robe and going downstairs to borrow the kitchen. A little while later, he returned with a wooden tray.

Mo Ran wasn't heartless—Chu Wanning had rushed to the Peach Blossom Springs to save him, and had also gone to great lengths to protect him; no matter how much resentment he held toward this person before, right now, he was grateful.

The tray held a pot of steaming ginger tea and a small jar of brown sugar. He knew that Chu Wanning didn't like things with overly strong flavors, but quite liked sweet foods.

And, besides the ginger tea, he also got a mantou from the kitchen, sliced it into thin pieces, soaked in fresh milk then fried until crispy, and finished with a sprinkling of powdered sugar to make for a plate of simple light snacks.

Color gradually returned to Chu Wanning's face as he held a cup of ginger tea in both hands and sipped slowly from it. He picked up a piece of the

sweet crispy mantou between porcelain-white fingertips and contemplated it for a while before asking: “What’s this?”

“I just threw something together, it doesn’t have a name yet.” Mo Ran scratched his head, “Try it, Shizun, it’s sweet.”

Chu Wanning disliked fried foods, thinks them greasy, but hearing the word “sweet”, still hel one to his lips and hesitantly took a small bite.

“Mm……”

“Is it good?” Mo Ran asked experimentally.

Chu Wanning glanced at him and said nothing, but picked up another piece to eat with the ginger tea.

The pot of tea and plateful of snacks quickly disappeared, the remnants of the nightmare also dissipating like smoke in this warmth. Chu Wanning yawned and lay back down: “I’m going back to sleep.”

“Hang on.” Mo Ran lifted his hand to wipe at the corner of Chu Wanning’s lips, “You got some crumbs there.”

“.....”

Looking at that open smile on his face, Chu Wanning’s ears felt a little warm despite himself. He turned his face away with a “mn” and paid no more heed to him.

Mo Ran collected the dishes and went downstairs to return them. When he came back, he saw Chu Wanning lying on his side facing the wall, perhaps already asleep.

He walked up and quietly put the curtain down, but Chu Wanning suddenly spoke: “It’s cold at night, don’t sleep on the floor anymore.”

“Then……”

Chu Wanning, with his long eyelashes lowered, really wanted him to stay, but the words “sleep up here” just wouldn’t come out, even as the tips of his ears kept getting warmer and warmer.

He cared for him and so didn’t want him to sleep on the floor, but he also liked him and didn’t want him to leave.

But his face was so thin, and he well knew that even if he did manage to get the words out, he will surely just be rejected, and then both his dignity and his veneer will be forfeit; even just thinking about it made him feel pathetic.

Things were so much easier as Xia Sini; little ones were allowed to be a little willful.

——But Mo Ran had been good to him today, even remembering that he liked a lot of brown sugar in his ginger tea. Was it okay for him to think that, maybe, Mo Ran actually does care for him a little bit……

The thought made Chu Wanning’s chest warm, and he blurted it out in a moment of hotheadedness.

“Come sleep up here.”

“I’ll go see if they’re done yet, and go back to my own room if so.”

They spoke at practically the same time, and Mo Ran didn't fully process Chu Wanning's words until after he had already finished speaking. His eyes widened slightly when he did.

"Sounds good."

Chu Wanning concurred instantly, as if rushing to cover up what he had just said.

"Go on."

"Shizun, you……"

"I'm tired, you can leave."

".....Alright. Rest well, Shizun."

He left, the door creaking open and then shut.

In the darkness, Chu Wanning opened his eyes. His heart raced in his chest, and his palms were covered with sweat, humiliated by his loss of self control just now.

He really had been alone for too long, to mistake just a tiny bit of kindness and care from someone else as sincere tenderness.

Like an idiot.

Irritated, he turned over and buried his face into the pillow, sinking into a bottomless self-loathing. He was well aware that Mo Ran liked Shi Mingjing, that there was nothing between them but the distant politeness of master and disciple, yet……

That person from the dream appeared unbidden in his mind.

The same exact face, only older.

The way he had looked at him with a surly expression and eyes too deep to read.

The door opened again with a creak.

Chu Wanning froze immediately, his entire back going stiff, like a bow stretched taut.

Someone came over to the bed. There was a moment of silence, then he felt that person sit down at the edge, bringing with him the light scent of freshly laundered clothes.

“Shizun, are you asleep?”

No response.

So Mo Ran continued, voice even like he was discussing the weather: “They’re still at it.” He chuckled softly and lay down next to Chu Wanning with his head propped up on one arm, gaze sweeping over the other person’s back as it very obviously and visibly tenses several degrees more.

“Is Shizun’s offer from earlier still open?”

“.....”

“Shizun sure likes to ignore people. If Shizun doesn’t say anything, I’ll just take it as a yes again.”

“.....Hmph.”

Mo Ran’s eyes curved into little crescents, black-purple and flickering with amusement at the cold hmph that came from the other side of the bed.

If doting on Shi Mei was his habit, then teasing Shizun was a game he never tired of.

He never could figure out just what it was he felt toward Chu Wanning; all he knew was that this person made his heart itch, made him want to bare his fangs and bite him until he either starts crying or starts laughing——although it was just wishful thinking for the most part.

But whenever that face, ever cold and impassive, showed some slightest bit of emotion because of him, Mo Ran would get fervently excited.

“Shizun.”

“Mn.”

“Nothing, just felt like calling you.”

“.....”

“Shizun.”

“Out with it if you have something to say, shut up if not.”

“Hahaha.” Mo Ran laughed, then suddenly thought of something and asked, half joking half serious, “I was just thinking, but Xia-shidi and Shizun really are far too alike. Shizun, is he your son?”

“……”

Chu Wanning had gone through far too much emotional turmoil for one night, and was in a sulky mood. To suddenly have Mo Ran make fun of him like this, he couldn’t help feeling irritated.

“Pfft, I was just messing with Shizun, don’t min——”

“Yes.” Chu Wanning answered cooly, “He’s my son.”

Mo Ran was still grinning: “Oh, that’s what I figured, so he’s your son——WAIT!! SON???!?!”

His eyes flew wide open as if he’d been struck by lightning, mouth hanging open in disbelief.

“S-S-S-S——SON?”

“Mn.” Chu Wanning rolled over and pinned Mo Ran with a deadpan gaze, his face deadly serious and without the slightest hint of jest.

He had blundered too much tonight, and worried that his facade might not hold. Since Mo Ran wanted to make this joke, he might as well take the

chance to muddy the waters, whatever it takes to make sure Mo Ran doesn’t find out that he likes him.

Thinking so, Chu Wanning calmly picked up the pieces of his dignity that he had dropped earlier, and said with all seriousness: “Xia Sini is my illegitimate child, even he himself doesn’t know about this. As of right now, this is a secret known by the heaven, the earth, you, and me. If ever a third person were to find out, I will absolutely end you.”

Mo Ran: “……”

Author’s Notes:

Meh QAQz It's so cold of late, don't catch a cold, comrades.

So let's look at how everyone keeps warm~

0.5 Mo Ran: Chu Wanning, come here and let this venerable one hug you for a while.

Chu Wanning: Don't you have a queen?

0.5 Mo Ran: Men, drag the queen away and fry her alive.

Chu Wanning: ...

0.5 Mo Ran: It's only you now, come here and warm this venerable one up.

Chu Wanning: Cold-blooded demon, scram!

1.0 Mo Ran: It's so cold, I want to be warm, why is no one looking after me… I'll drink more hot water, then.

2.0 Mo Ran: It's nothing, I can bear it.

Xue Meng: Cold? Nothing of the sort, I'm young and virile.

Shi Mei: It's so cold...you should wear more layers, Young Master and A-Ran *huff...*

Chu Wanning: ［This person is extremely afraid of the cold, and is hiding in his blankets, refusing to come out］....Whoever said that the lower cultivation realm provided warmth is a shameless liar!

Ch.79 This Venerable One's Shizun Is an Actor

If he didn't know Chu Wanning like the back of his hand, Mo Ran was afraid that he really might have been fooled by his serious demeanor and believed that nonsense.

Xia Sini was Chu Wanning's son?

Yeah right, he'd have to be dumb to fall for that!

But it's not like he could just brush Shizun off. So in the days that followed, he simply played along with it, putting on a show like "oh gods" "so that's how it is" "I can't believe Shizun is actually a playboy" and other such.

He had to admit that it was an interesting time, even though he had no idea what Chu Wanning was up to.

So Mo Ran made a sport of it, poking playfully at Chu Wanning every so often. Like that time when they were stopping at a teahouse for a snack, and Mo Ran, cheek in hand, eyes bright and round, had clamored: "Shizun Shizun."

Chu Wanning swallowed his tea before lifting his eyelashes to look evenly at him: "Mn?"

"Why won't you acknowledge Xia-shidi as your child?"

Chu Wanning replied: "It's not that I won't acknowledge him, it just isn't the right time yet."

"Then when will it be the right time?"

“That will depend on him.”

He had such an air of profoundness about him that Mo Ran’s ribs hurt from holding in his laughter, even as he forced himself to put on his best pitying act: “Poor Xia-shidi.”

Or that other time, as they were travelling side by side on horseback, when Mo Ran had reached up and snapped a willow branch while passing by. He was fresh out of distractions and bored out of his mind, so he clamored for Chu Wanning again.

“Shizun Shizun.”

“What is it?”

“Can I ask you something?” Mo Ran was all smiles, “About Shiniang [Shizun’s wife]…… what kind of person is she? Is she pretty?”

Chu Wanning choked, then hastily cleared his throat to cover it up.

“She’s alright.”

“Eh? Just alright?” Mo Ran was shocked, “I was so sure that someone who could catch Shizun’s eye would be devastatingly beautiful.”

“.....”

Mo Ran steered his black horse closer to Chu Wanning’s white one, and asked slyly: “Is Shizun still keeping in touch with Shiniang?”

“.....Keep in touch how?” Chu Wanning threw him a cold look and said darkly, “Your Shiniang is dead.”

They've barely just started and he's already offed his own wife? Mo Ran almost choked on spit: "D-dead? ……How did she die?"

Chu Wanning, expressionlessly: "Birth complications."

"....." Pfft hahahahaha.

If the situation wasn't like this, Mo Ran probably would've fallen off his horse from laughing too hard.

Of course Mo Ran wouldn't just let such an amusing subject go. The next day, he washed a pouchful of fresh, plump cherries before setting off, to entice Chu Wanning into talking with him some more on the way.

"Shizun, can I know who Shiniang was? What was her name?"

Chu Wanning picked up a cherry and ate it with no discernible reaction, then said coldly: "She's already passed, what's the use in knowing her name."

Mo Ran didn't miss a beat: "The sect leader has always taught us to be filial. Even if Shiniang is no longer with us, I, as an disciple, should still remember her name, and go to pay my respects every Winter Solstice and QingMing."

Chu Wanning kept eating his cherries, replying evenly: "No need. Your Shiniang wasn't a worldly person like that, and she never cared for the

smell of incense."

Mo Ran pursed his lips, rolling his eyes on the inside: it's obvious that you just couldn't make up a backstory for Shiniang on the fly, can't believe you'd just say she's unaffected and beyond common concerns with such a serious face . But he kept smiling on the outside: "For Shiniang to be so refined, she must have been a cultivator too?"

Chu Wanning paused, then picked up another cherry between snow-white fingertips and ate it at his leisure before answering: "Correct."

Mo Ran blinked curiously: "Which sect was she from?"

Chu Wanning estimated Xia Sini's age and quickly calculated in his head that he would've still been at LinYi at the time, so he said evenly: "Rufeng Sect."

"Oh……" Mo Ran's eyebrows went up slightly. Chu Wanning caught a loophole with that one—Rufeng Sect had always favored their male disciples; although the female disciples received the same teachings, they were never allowed the same opportunities to stand out and make a name for themselves. In fact, they never even left their names when out on missions, so even though the female cultivators of Rufeng Sect were no less accomplished, they were only known as "female cultivators of Rufeng Sect" out in the world, and none knew of their individual names. So Chu Wanning could make up whatever he felt like, and there would be absolutely no way to check.

But Mo Ran wasn’t one to just give up. He perked back up and persisted: “Then when did Shizun and Shiniang meet? How did you two meet?”

“Er……”

Chu Wanning hesitated, not quite up to the task of making all that up on the spot, when his gaze fell on Mo Ran’s bright sparkly eyes, and he suddenly realized that he didn’t have to answer the question at all. He immediately pressed his lips together and, with a sweep of his sleeve, said coldly, “What are you doing prying into this master’s personal matters?”

With that, he urged his horse on, white robes disappearing into the distance and leaving Mo Ran in the dust.

The two of them roamed around for a couple of weeks, visiting the markets at numerous smaller sects and checking at every stall selling weapons and spiritual stones, but found absolutely nothing of note.

On this particular day, after Chu Wanning finished exchanging notes with Xue Zhengyong via haitang message, he and Mo Ran set off from the inn and headed toward the market at Guyue'ye to continue their investigation.

Guyue'ye was the foremost medicinal sect of the world, and the sect that Xue Meng’s mother, Madam Wang, came from.

This sect was built on an island named “Rainbell# Isle”; it wasn’t an actual island, but rather the back of an enormous tortoise. The tortoise was thousands of thousands years old and bound to the founder of the sect by

blood pact, carrying the entire sect on its back as it travelled the oceans and nourishing the flora of the isle with its unique spiritual energy.

The disciples of Guyue'ye have always been enigmatic and removed from the world. The sect rarely ever interacted with the outside; only on the first and fifteenth of each month would the tortoise dock at the YangZhou port so that other sects could board and purchase medicines, and merchants could peddle their weapons, spiritual stones, and other wares that aren't usually found on the island itself.

Yet the most famous attraction on Rainbell Isle wasn't Guyue'ye, but "Xuanyuan# Pavilion." Xuanyuan Pavilion was a subsidiary of Guyue'ye, and a well-known trading post.

They opened their doors twice per month, auctioning goods like Guyue'ye's top-grade medicines and rare treasures from various sellers. The merchandise often toed the line of permissibility in terms of the cultivation world's taboos, but no one was so bored as to make an enemy of Guyue'ye —after all, most of the medicines out there came from this sect. All things considered, Guyue'ye was no less powerful than the leading Rufeng Sect.

"Put your hood on, too many eyes here."

More and more people were arriving at Rainbell Isle. Chu Wanning quietly reminded Mo Ran while tugging the hood of his own cloak lower.

Xuanyuan Pavilion's auction house had lavish private rooms for each of the great sects as a show of respect, but since this was where shady deals went down and stolen goods exchanged hands, cultivators generally kept their identities hidden so as to not attract any undue attentions or fatal misfortunes.

Mo Ran and Chu Wanning stepped into Xuanyuan Pavilion. The inside was split into three floors, with the center of the first floor occupied by a platform of white jade, shaped like a nine-petaled lotus flower and shrouded by nine layers of impenetrable defensive barriers—this was where the merchandise is displayed during auction.

With the white jade platform as center and extending into the four cardinal directions were rows of redwood benches, several hundred in all. These were the standard seats.

The second floor were private booths, each with a large window made of golden cedar and a curtain of silver moon silk that allowed those inside to see the outside clearly, but blocked sight from the outside in. These booths protected the privacy of the guests, but they were expensive—nine thousand gold per two hours.

Chu Wanning disliked crowding along with others, so he took out the gold pieces Xue Zhengyong had sent and didn't even hesitate.

The servants of Xuanyuan Pavilion that attended to the guests all had death pacts with the master of the pavilion, and would never leak any of the guests' personal information. But even so, Chu Wanning remained wary. He booked the booth with the best view and had the servant bring two pots of snowy fragrance tea, eight pieces each of fresh and candied fruit, four pastries and four sweets, and then sent the servant away.

With only Mo Ran and himself left in the room, Chu Wanning finally lowered his hood as he stood by the window looking down at the masses of people below.

“According to the sect leader, Xuanyuan is going to be auctioning off a weapon named Guilai [To Return].”

“Guilai?” Mo Ran shook his head, “Never heard of it.”

“It’s a holy weapon.”

Mo Ran started: “A holy weapon? But didn’t Jincheng Lake already——”

“I know. But supposedly this Guilai was found in a nameless grave at the Jun Mountain. Its master probably didn’t have any heirs to pass it to, and so had it buried with him.”

“.....I see.”

But a holy weapon took as master only the one who named it, and, upon his death, would then accept his heirs. Even if someone else were to get their hands on the holy weapon, they wouldn’t be able to draw out even a tiny fraction of its true power. As far as Mo Ran was concerned, there wasn’t much point to buying a weapon like that.

Seeing through his thoughts, Chu Wanning said: “It’s true that a holy weapon that does not acknowledge its user as master will not display its true power, but even then, it’s still many times stronger than normal weapons. These people will definitely go all out.”

Mo Ran grasped the situation: “I understand Shizun’s meaning now. Most people go their whole lives without even seeing a holy weapon. Since this ‘Guilai’ was found in a nameless grave, and an ages old one at that,

everyone here will more likely than not draw out their own spiritual energy to test it, on the off chance they happen to be a descendent of its original master. There's no harm to trying, after all."

"Precisely."

Mo Ran continued contemplatively: "Holy weapons are rarely even seen, but one without a master just so happens to pop up for sale right at this juncture? No matter how you look at it, this has got to be that fake Gouchen's work, bringing out a high quality fake to bait everyone into release their spiritual energies so that he can see if anyone here has the spiritual essence he's looking for."

Chu Wanning sat down in a cushioned chair, poured himself a cup of snowy fragrance, and leisurely drank it. Then he looked at the swarm of people below and said in a quiet voice: "It's exactly as you said. But regardless of whether the holy weapon is real or whether it's part of the fake Gouchen's scheme, it can't hurt to check it out."

Just then, there was a ruckus down below.

Chu Wanning and Mo Ran peered downwards, and were both a little bewildered——

Xuanyuan Pavilion's golden gates stood wide open, and two rows of blue-robed young men with their hair done up in jade crowns were striding openly through the crowd of cloaked cultivators with their faces hidden under hoods. The one in the lead was slender and handsome, not bothering with any form of concealment as he strolled right into the black market.

Mo Ran uttered, surprised: “Ye Wangxi?”

Author’s Notes:

Mini-theatre <Welcome to Sothesby's, what is the one thing each one of you gentlemen most wish will appear on the auction?>

Mo Ran: Potion that can make people stop dreaming.

Chu Wanning: I don't have anything much that I want, but I heard that the neighbour of our neighbour has a famous ancient sabre of black iron that Xue Meng can use as a holy weapon, so make it the ancient iron sabre. (Alright, we know you're Zhang Qiling * in the wrong novel, next.)

* A main character in 盗墓笔记 The Lost Tomb, whose weapon is an iron sabre.

Xue Meng: Ancient black iron sabre. (Zhang Qiling, are you going to leave!!)

Shi Mei: Black...

Meatbun: Shut up!!

Shi Mei: Black wok stain remover, I wasn't done talking.

Meatbun: ...Oh.

Mei Hanxue: Are beauties for sale? Since the olden times, the black market has always sold beauties of all kinds, I want all the exquisite ones, so I can bring them back to the palace as ornaments on display.

Ye Wangxi (kicking the door down): ....All against the wall, and squat down. Police.

Ch.80 This Venerable One's Ex-Wife… Has Come

The one who had come was the modest gentleman who shared the same residence with Mo Ran back at the Peach Blossom Springs Ye Wangxi.

Today, he had come donned in the heron mantle with blue underlinings and silver silk threads of the Rufeng sect, his hair fastened with a royal blue ribbon, and adorned around his waist was a silver fragrance pouch embroidered of a rare beast with a pearl in its mouth. Perhaps it was because the armour was removed, so while the strong aura of valiance still rested between his brows, there were traces of an elegant air.

Xuanyuan Pavilion's Grand Manager approached in greeting, his eyes lowered and his head inclined, "Ye-xianjun."

Ye Wangxi nodded and said, "I've come in my sworn father's name to bid for an item. Will the Grand Master please lead me up the pavilion."

"The Pavilion Master had already known xianjun was coming, and a booth was already reserved for the Rufeng sect. I will lead my lord up straight away."

Ye Wangxi then led the ten something disciples of the Rufeng sect upstairs, leaving behind an entire hall of hooded crowd whispering to themselves.

"Have people of Rufeng also come today?"

"Who's that xianjun? How come we've never seen him before…"

Obviously there's a reason why none of you had seen him before, Mo Ran thought, but couldn't help but be curious too, and watched as Ye Wangxi's back disappeared around the corner before he turned to Chu Wanning,

“Shizun, you’ve sayed with the Rufeng sect before, do you know this Ye-xianjun?”

“No.” Chu Wanning knitted his brows slightly, “But for some reason he looks rather familiar…” He paused a bit, closed his eyes to think, but still shook his head, “I don’t recall anything.”

Mo Ran scratched his head, “This Ye-xianjun stayed in the same residence as me back at the Peach Blossoms Springs. His ability isn’t bad. Now that he’s come on behalf of the Rufeng sect to bid for things, I imagine his status within the sect can’t be too low either, but Shizun actually doesn’t know him?”

“There are seventy-two city fortresses within the Rufeng sect, personnels are spread far and wide. I don’t like to run around, and too lazy to pry into internal affairs, so it’s not strange that I don’t know him.”

The two were just conversing when the candlelight within the booth reserved for the Rufeng sect was lit up in a bright yellow glow, no doubt it was Ye Wangxi and company who had already entered and settled in their seats. The highest level of this Xuanyuan Pavilion was especially reserved for the great sects, so normally it was very seldom used. Thus, the crowd looked up to see, thinking it a rather rare event.

Now that the Rufeng sect had joined, everyone’s anticipation for this auction instantly increased by a few notches. After a pot of tea time, the white jaded lotus platform in the centre suddenly brightened immensely, and from the ceiling of Xuanyuan Pavilion, a vibrant and brilliant red satin roll was dropped. A dainty young girl of eleven or twelve in bare feet donned in a snow-white shark muslin, caught the satin and spun and landed lightly and delicately onto the ice-cold white jaded lotus platform.

“Thank you for waiting, honored xianjuns. I am the Second Pavilion Master in Command.” That clever and handsome little girl smiled demurely, “Honored xianjuns have come from all over the four seas in praise of our name. Naturally, the Xuanyuan Pavilion will, as always, return our gratitude with the rarest and best of items to show for everyone.”

Mo Ran’s hearing was excellent, and heard down below there were people griping, “The Second Pavilion Master of Xuanyuan Pavilion is actually an immature, underaged little girl?”

“Aiyoh, buddy you really haven’t seen much. Do you know how old this ‘little girl’ is?”

“Ten? Fifteen? She can’t be more than twenty?”

“Heh, stunned, are you? She’s over a hundred now, you should call her Great Granny, not ‘little girl’.”

“What?! Liu-xiong, you’re pulling my leg here? How can that little thing be a hundred!”

“This is Guyue'ye, the number one medicine sect of the world, how is anything impossible? It’s just some medicine of everlasting youth.”

“Whoa—”

This must’ve been the first time that man who was wowing in awe had come, and after that conversation, he excitedly stretched out his neck, his hands clutching the wallet pouch on his person, obviously impatient to see just what kind of miraculous medicine and sacred tools Xuanyuan Pavilion would bring out for the auction.

The Second Pavilion Master didn't disappoint either, and with a snap of her fingers, a gap cracked open at the centre of the stone lotus, and a small podium the shape of a bulb slowly rose up. Upon it rested five silk brocade boxes the size of a palm, and each box were opened wide generously, revealing the medicinal pills with the shine of pearls.

Immediately, someone called out with a laugh, "Isn't that the Pill of Obsessive Affection? What's so rare about that?"

"It is indeed, but even if the first one out isn't going to be some rare treasure, you can't just bring some love pills out to make up the numbers."

The Second Pavilion Master heard the people's gripes but wasn't irritated in the least, and instead she smiled with crescent eyes, speaking loudly and clearly, "Everyone certainly have good eyes. This is indeed the Pill of Obsessive Affection. But everyone knows that while these pills are hard to refine, they aren't anything exotic. Our Xuanyuan Pavilion will naturally never bring any ordinary items out to placate our customers."

As she spoke, she took one of the brocade boxes and presented it in her hand, clack , and closed the box.

Although the crowd was seated in various distances, but there was a spiritual mirror prepared in front of each individual that could show the treasure's details without faut. Only then had everyone notice the snake markings on the cover of the box.

"Hanlin# the Sage?!" Someone sucked in a breath.

The Second Pavilion Master smiled, "That's right. These five Pills of Obsessive-Affection, each box had come from the refinery kiln of the elder of my sect——Hanlin the Sage. Regular Pill of Obsessive Affection can

confound the heart, and have the user become obsessed with oneself, but the effect only lasts for half a year, and it's very easy to produce an antidote for it. But these five pills…" Her delicate, tender fingertips held the brocade box and explained solemnly, "These can guarantee for ten years, without any antidote to cure."

"WHAT?"

"My heavens, how is that possible…"

"Hanlin the Sage really is too frightening…"

The Second Pavilion Master waited until the commotion died down somewhat before she smiled again, "In order to differentiate from ordinary Pills of Obsessive Affection, Hanlin the Sage has named these Love Pills. With the purchase of only one of these pills, dissolve it in water and convince the other party to drink it, in the span of ten years, we guarantee the other party will remain obsessed with you without any wavering."

A female cultivator asked with a high voice down below, "Is there really no cure for it after taking the pill? If in ten years I don't like him anymore, wouldn't he still harass me?""

The crowd started chuckling and laughing, and the Second Pavilion Master also smiled politely, "My lady has pointed out a truth, which is why the Xuanyuan Pavilion will take this chance to remind everyone that the Love Pill has no cure in the world, and until the ten years is up, there is nothing that can break the bond. If it isn't a case of unanswered tormented love, we recommend not to feed the other party the pill."

With that conclusion, the bidding started, and the price started rising. Mo Ran saw that the ones screaming to fight the prices were mostly female

cultivators, he subconsciously clicked his tongue.

“This is really too scary.”

“Indeed. To earn sentiments thus truly is too tasteless.”

Having heard Chu Wanning’s response, Mo Ran turned his head around and glanced at him, smiling, “Shizun you’ll have to watch out. You’re so good looking, who knows if there are women cultivators from ShiSeng Peak here who’d buy this and secretly drop this in your water to have you fall in love with them. You’re a married man, there’s no way you can be affectionate with another.”

“.....”

This man said this to ridicule him, and Chu Wanning wanted to be angry, but this was the first time in his life that he heard Mo Ran call him good looking, so he couldn’t find it in himself to be angry. His lips pressed into a cool and distant straight line, turning his head away, not wanting to acknowledge him.

“But if the other party really does take the pill, they must fall tragically in love, huh.” Mo Ran mumbled, and seeing how fast those five boxes of pills were purchased, he sighed, and shook his head, “How sad.”

Chu Wanning stared at that snow-white wall for a moment, then replied calmly, “If they truly loved the other, how could they actually have the heart to use a pill like that. You’re still young. There are some things you don’t understand.”

Still young?

Mo Ran twisted around, his dimples deepening with his smile, “I don’t understand, but Shizun does? Is Shizun going to tell me about Shizun’s wife?”

“Get the hell out”

“Hahahahahaha.”

In between playing around, the second item had been presented on the platform.

“Tapir Fragrance Dew.” The Second Pavilion Master introduced crisply, “Also from the kiln of Hanling the Sage. This is the newest medicinal dew refined by Hanlin. The first generation of disciples of Guyue'ye have tried it, and it works magic.”

Cultivator A was somewhat learned, “Typing Fragrance Dew?”

Cultivator B was a little hungry, “Tapas Fragrance Dew?”

Cultivator C was perverted, “Tapping Fragrance Dew?”

Chu Wanning gave it a ponder, and raised his trembling lashes, gazing over to those five porcelain bottles, “Tapir Fragrance Dew… from the Dream-Consuming Tapir?”

The Second Pavilion Master didn’t have the intention to lose people’s interest, and seeing how the crowd was confused, she immediately explained with a smile, “The reason it’s called the Tapir Fragrance Dew is because the formula has the claw blood of Dream Tapirs. With only a drop in a cup of tea, the effect will last for seven days, and every night is guaranteed a good dream. This may not mean much to ordinary cultivators, but with the influence of cultivation methods and spells, some

xianjun experiences relentless nightmares and trouble with peaceful slumber. If the problem persists it can lead to qi deviation, which is why this Tapir Fragrance Dew is the uttermost best choice."

After Chu Wanning heard, he was suddenly reminded of that realistic dream he had, and while it wasn't a nightmare, it did indeed made him feel rather unsettled…

The Second Pavilion Master was still pushing her medicine with all she had, "Besides that, the Tapir Fragrance Dew also has the ability to manage spiritual energy, and aid in cultivation."

Chu Wanning was still deep in thought, untouched by it.

"If there are any children training at home, the Tapir Fragrance Dew is also extremely beneficial for them. Hanlin the Sage has the foresight that there may be elders and teachers purchasing for young trainees, and specially made the five bottles of Tapir Fragrance Dews into five different flavours. The red bottle is lychee flavour, the yellow bottle is orange flavour, the white bottle is milk candy flavour, the purple bottle is grape flavour, and the black bottle is mulberry flavour. Also, with but one sip, the taste will remain on the lips and tongue for an entire day, quite lovely."

Just as she finished, a silver sick was dropped from the dignitary seat from the second floor.

Since the second and third floors were much further away and it was inconvenient to yell to bid for prices, they would write their price on a silver stick before tossing it down. Those silver sticks were cast with a spell, and would float to the Pavilion Master without fault.

The Second Pavilion Master caught the stick that came drifting, and gave it a glance, “.....”

Right at the same time, within the dignitary booth, Chu Wanning casually laid down the brush he had just used, and leisurely drank tea. Mo Ran watched from the side, and his lips couldn’t help but twitch.

The voice of the Second Pavilion Master rang from below, “From the Tian dignitary seat of the second floor, five hundred thousand gold. Is anyone going to bid higher?”

The moment the words were out, the crowd started chattering.

This Tapir Fragrance Dew might be good, but it obviously wasn’t as popular as the Love Pill earlier. Five boxes of Love Pills went for three hundred thousand gold altogether, so asking for five hundred thousand gold for these five bottles of dew were already considerably high.

“Probably be the parents of some little gongzi who’s buying.” Someone grumbled.

“Must be for some rich little gongzi’s training.”

There were cultivators in the crowd who had suffered enough of qi deviation, and hardened themselves, “I’ll take all five. I bid for five hundred and fifty thousand gold.”

“The Tapir Fragrance Dew, the price now is five hundred and fifty thousand, is there anyone——”

Before the Second Pavilion Master even finished, another silver stick came errantly floating down the air, and it was again tossed from the Tian

dignitary seat on the second floor. She glanced at it, and her eyes widened unwittingly.

“I apologize, everyone. I understood it incorrectly the first time, so I will rectify my mistake now. Earlier, what the customer from the second floor had meant, was he would be paying five hundred thousand per bottle, for a total of two million and five hundred thousand…”

Only a fool would fight Chu Wanning at that price point. As Mo Ran watched those five bottles of Tapir Fragrance Dews being delivered into the room, he felt his entire person feeling bad.

Chu Wanning spent two million and five hundred thousand……

On sweets……

Sensing Mo Ran’s incredulous look, Chu Wanning asked indifferently, “What is it?”

“Ahaha, nothing, I just didn’t think Shizun would like something like this.”

“Why would I like children’s things.” Chu Wanning replied calmly, “I bought it for Xia Sini.”

“.....”

What an act.

Mo Ran’s brows twitched. Let’s see how much longer you can keep this up.

The auctioned items continued to be presented one by one, and while everything afterwards were also unique spiritual medicine and treasures,

they held no value for both Mo Ran and Chu Wanning. The two sipped on tea s they waited for the holy weapon ‘Guilai’ to appear.

Mo Ran leaned by the window, his black shirt wrapped tightly around his thin waist, making his shoulders look broader and his legs longer. He glanced down at the lively event down below, then looked up to gaze at the reserved Rufeng booth upstairs.

“By the way, Shizun, how did uncle settle the affair at the Peach Blossoms Springs? You never told me the details.”

“It’s not really settled. This affair can’t get bigger than it is lest we alert the enemy. Even though the Sect Leader knows the truth he couldn’t make a big deal of it, but he did end things completely with the feathered tribe and brought both Shi Mei and Xue Meng back to Shisheng Peak. The fight was severe at the time, and the disciples of several sects all saw. Some thought the Peach Blossoms Springs aren’t reliable and had already left. I imagine this Ye Wangxi is the same.” Chu Wanning finished an orange osmanthus cake and reached for a second one, “The Sect Leader told the outside world that you caused trouble, and currently shut in Sisheng Peak in reflection, so this could hide your tracks for a while at least.”

Mo Ran scratched his head, “Sounds like quite the mess, I’ve really troubled uncle…”

Just as he was grumbling, the Pavilion Master of the Xuanyuan Pavilion standing upon the nine-petaled lotus platform suddenly used an amplification spell to clear her throat, and the sonorous and pleasant voice instantly echoed throughout every nook and cranny.

“The next auction number is a rare treasure of the highest grade, extremely hard to come by, and is considered within the top ten in our auction guide of the past three years.”

With only those words, silence fell.

After a moment, the crowd was like splashing a spoon of clear water into a pot of boiling oil, and instantly everything exploded. Almost everyone’s eyes were glinting, and they whispered excitedly to each other.

To be able to rank in the top ten among the items auctioned off at Xuanyuan Pavilion in the past three years, just what grade of a treasure could this be? For something like this, nevermind buying, to a lot of people, a simple glance of such a thing with their own eyes was already an extreme good luck. The buyers were becoming more and more excited, and the air was so tense it was almost tangible.

The people down below were stretching their necks to look, and those in the booths also lifted the blinds. All eyes were on the lotus platform.

Mo Ran wondered in a soft voice, “Is it the holy weapon Guilai?”

Chu Wanning didn’t speak.

Along with the gap at the centre of the platform cracking open once more, the clear voice of the Second Pavilion Master of Xuanyuan Pavilion echoed.

“Presenting the next treasured item, the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast.”

“What?!”

Mo Ran was stunned, his hands gripping the window sill, “It’s not a holy weapon?!”

Chu Wanning hadn't expected this either, and he rose to his feet abruptly, coming to Mo Ran's side, looking down the building with him. From within the centre of the lotus platform slowly rose a stone divan, and crisscrossing upon the divan were eight iron imprisonment chains as thick as arms, locking a living creature that was struggling unceasingly. However, that living creature was completely covered by a wool blanket, and it was hard to see what it was underneath with a first look.

But that didn't affect the boiling excitement in the least.

"The Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast", no matter its class or appearance, was already in itself a renowned name in the world.

Legends say during the HongMeng Period in history, before the heavens and the earth were separated, the demon clans and the human clans both lived upon the cultivation continent. At the time, there was a branch of demons called the "Butterfly-Boned clan". Their martial might was weark, but their bodies contained an immense amount of spiritual energy. To consume the blood and flesh of the Butterfly-Boned clan, or to engage in intercourse with them, could both greatly enhance a human's cultivation. Those without a spiritual foundation could instantly have one form, and those who did have one could enter zongshi level directly. And it was precisely because of this that during the beginning of World Chaos, they suffered the tragedy of clan extermination. They were either captured to be intercourse slaves, or they were directly killed for their flesh and blood to be devoured.

Presently, the real Butterfly-Boned clan had long since been eradicated from the world, among the vastness of people, there would still be descendents whose veins flowed the blood of the Butterfly-Boned clan.

The blood of the majority of them possessed zero effects, and were no different than ordinary cultivators. However, there were also a very small number of those who'd show signs of returning to their ancestral ways. The blood and flesh of those people weren't as strong in effect as their ancestors during the HongHuang Period, but they could still greatly enhance a cultivator's ability.

These people were called "Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feasts", and this 'feast' had two meanings.

A feast in bed, or a feast of the flesh.

Meaning they could be placed by the pillowside to be mated, or eaten directly. Whether it be the former or the latter was entirely dependant on the buyer.

Someone of the Butterfly-Boned clan with ancestral characteristics weren't seen as 'human' in the cultivation world. Even though they were no different than ordinary people, out of personal greed, the cultivation world had deemed them to be 'merchandise'. Thus, while selling Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast was a horrifying ordeal, it did not violate any taboos.

It's just, a just and dignified zongshi like Chu Wanning didn't look pleased in the least.

"This Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast was not obtained by Guyue'ye. This is an entrusted sale, thus the Xuanyuan Pavilion will be taking a thirty percent of the agreed transaction payment as commission. Will the honored xianjuns keep a clear account when bidding, and bid within your ability."

Once the Second Pavilion Master had spoken, she snapped her fingers crisply, and the wool blanket covering the divan fell with the signal.

Abrupt silence blanketed the pavilion.

Everyone was staring at the body chained upon the stone divan with such focus, even breathing and heartbeats could almost be heard within the large Xuanyuan Pavilion.

It was a young girl of a delicate, satin body, skin as a white as snow. Long locks like silk draped down her naked body, and she was wrapped in only a see-through silk tulle, her full and smooth bare body was trembling, like frozen fresh snow, dampened jade, she was glowed gently under the light.

Eight iron chains firmly restrained her delicate body, and clanged along with her struggling, but easily aroused the men's savage desires. Even heartbreakers who had seen endless number of people would admit without hesitation that this girl was a unique, fine piece of work.

"Supreme treasure of the highest grade. A female Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast at her ripening age." The Second Pavilion Master smiled, then approached to release one of the chains. Before that girl could fight back her hand was caught as fast as lightning, and raised to the air, "Hanlin the Sage had marked her arm with a dot of chastity cinnabar. Will everyone see clearly. She is still a virgin."

A snow white cloth was bound around the girl's mouth, her pitiful cries muffled, and only large beads of tears rolled down from the corners of her eyes, those golden tears confirming her identity as a Butterfly-Boned clan who maintained ancestral traits.

Some were sucking in their breaths, some were swallowing hungrily, an atmosphere such as this suddenly made Xuanyuan Pavilion not an establishment filled with cultivators, but a house squeezed full of starving

wolves with drool coming from the corner of their mouths as they greedily eyed their prey.

PA!

Chu Wanning's cool gaze withdrew and landed on Mo Ran.

Mo ran's face was blanched, his nails digging into the wood. He had actually broken a corner of the window sill with his grip.

"What's wrong?"

"No, ...Nothing." Mo Ran inhaled deeply before he managed to calm himself, and shook his head at Chu Wanning, "I just think selling live humans like this is… very disgusting."

He wasn't telling the truth.

His eyes quietly returned to the form of that Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast.

This woman was the number one beauty of the cultivation world he had taken for a wife after he had titled himself emperor in the previous life——

Song Qiutong!

Author's Notes:

Ye Wangxi

Courtesy name: None

Nickname: None

Occupation: The last disciple of Rufeng Sect's First Elder

To put it simply: Raised by his stepfather

Social Appearance: The sect leader’s right-hand man, a reliable Rufeng gentleman

To put it simply: A lackey.

Current favourite: The young master of Rufeng Sect

Favourite food: Grilled fish

Dislike: Cowards

Height: 176cm

Ch.81 This Venerable One’s Bu'gui!

Meanwhile, in Rufeng Sect’s private room on the third floor, Ye Wangxi stood tall and elegant by the intricately carved ornamental wooden railing, eyebrows drawn tightly together and lips pressed into a thin line.

“Ye-gongzi, Elder Xu sent us here for that holy weapon. If you bid on the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast as well, I’m afraid we won’t have enough left……”

“It’s fine. I’ll use my own funds.”

The attendants saw that Ye Wangxi had already made up his mind, so they exchanged a couple of furtive glances but said nothing else.

The Second Pavilion Master of Xuanyuan Pavilion announced crisply: “The starting bid is ten million gold. Ladies and gentlemen, bidding is now open.”

“Eleven million.”

“Twelve million.”

The commotion rose alongside the soaring price.

“Nineteen million!”

“I bid twenty five million!”

With the bid shooting up by six million in one go, quite a number of cultivators sighed and sat down, shaking their heads. At this time, several

silver tabs floated down from the second floor booths to the action master. She collected them from the air and nimbly fanned them out in her hand, a price written on each tab.

“The current highest bid.” She scanned the tabs, then announced clearly, “From the Xuan booth, thirty five million.”

“Thirty five million?!”

The crowd sucked in a cold breath and collectively turned to look at the Xuan booth on the second floor. Lights glowed hazily from behind the gentle drifting of the silver curtains, but there was no way to see just what kind of person was sitting inside.

“You could buy a whole palace on here with that money.”

“Whose bid was it, a little excessive don’t you think……”

“To have that kind of money to throw around, gotta be from one of the ten great sects. I wonder which one?”

Chu Wanning’s eyes were closed. Hearing the price, he asked Mo Ran: “Did you bring enough money?”

“Absolutely not!” Meeting Song Qiutong here was the last thing he’d expected to happen, and Mo Ran only snapped out of his shock when he heard Chu Wanning call for him. He asked, alarmed, “What does Shizun mean to do?”

“Buy her.”

Mo Ran’s eyes opened wide as he waved his hands frantically: “No way, don’t do it, this woman will just be a burden, where would we even put her? We’d have to rent an extra horse to travel and book an extra room at night, nope, don’t do it.”

“Who said anything about bringing her along? I’ll just let her go after.” Chu Wanning opened his eyes and held out his hand with a straight face, “Money.”

Mo Ran clutched his money pouch: “I-I don’t have any!”

“I’ll pay you back when we get back.”

“This money is for the holy weapon!”

“Don’t you already have Jiangui? What do you need another for? Hand over the money!”

“……”

Mo Ran felt a headache coming on; this Song Qiutong…… when he met her in the past life, she was a disciple of Rufeng Sect, and he was razing Rufeng Sect’s city to the ground. His heart had clenched at the way she looked a little like Shi Mei, so he spared her life. As time went on, she showed

herself to be clever and docile, and her temperament was rather similar to Shi Mei's as well, so he eventually made her his empress.

That was one of Mo Ran's biggest regrets.

Chu Wanning and that kind heart of his inside that cold exterior actually wanted to buy her—how could Mo Ran possibly allow that to happen? Don't even mention forty million gold, he wouldn't even take that woman for four coppers.

As a matter of fact, even if they paid him forty million, he still wouldn't take her!

They were stuck in a stalemate when a tab floated down from the third floor. It was gold.

A buyout tab!

The golden tab indicated the highest bid at Xuanyuan Pavilion—there is no price written, for the tab itself denoted fifty million gold. Once this kind of bid gets put down, no one really even has the means to keep bidding anymore, thus "buyout tab."

The crowd was dead silent for a second before bursting into an uproar.

"Rufeng Sect!"

"Rufeng Sect pulled out the buyout tab!"

Chu Wanning turned away from Mo Ran and his death grip on his money pouch to look outside. They were at just the right angle to see the first

room on the third floor. Ye Wangxi didn't care for things like concealment; he had long ago pulled aside the snow moon silk curtains meant for secrecy, and was currently standing by the carved railing with his hands clasped lightly behind his back.

His expression was solemn, handsome face betraying nothing. He glanced down at the ruckus below, seemed somewhat aggravated, and turned to walk back into the private room.

Mo Ran let out a breath and said to Chu Wanning: "Shizun can rest easy. I lived with this Ye-gongzi back at the Peach Blossom Springs, so I'm fairly acquainted with him. He's a good person, he won't do anything cruel to that Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast."

Meanwhile, inside Rufeng Sect's room on the third floor, Ye Wangxi sat down at the table covered with satin cloth intricately embroidered in gold and silver, and poured himself a cup of fragrant tea. Knocks sounded from the outside when he finished the tea.

Ye Wangxi's voice was gentle and polite: "Come in."

"Ye-xianjun, I've brought the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast for your inspection."

"Thank you. You can go."

Xuanyuan Pavilion's maid left, and there was nothing but silence in the room for a while. The Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast knelt on the floor, bond hands and feet by spells, panic in her eyes as her whole body

trembled, her eyes shaped like peach blossoms red at the edges from crying, looking truly pitiful.

Ye Wangxi glanced at her, not a thread of impropriety in those clear, principled eyes of his, and lifted a hand to dissipate the spells.

“It’s cold on the floor. You must be scared; have a seat and some warm tea.”

“.....” The Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast was still trembling, beautiful eyes wide and translucent like glass. She stayed where she was, cowering on the floor, too scared to talk, much less move.

Ye Wangxi sighed and gestured for the attendants to bring her a cloak.

“Please don’t worry, miss. I didn’t buy you for cultivation purposes. Put on the cloak first, then we can talk.”

“You…… you……”

Seeing that she was still not moving, only looking pitifully up, Ye Wangxi shook his head with an exasperated smile and got down on one knee to be eye level with her.

“My name is Ye Wangxi, may I ask your name?”

“This one’s name is……Song.” She gave Ye Wangxi a hesitant look through teary eyes, “Song Qiutong……Thank you, Ye-gongzi.”

Downstairs, Mo Ran was deep in thought.

In the past life, Song Qiutong was already a disciple of Rufeng Sect by the time he met her. Ye Wangxi must have saved her from the auction house back then, too.

Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feasts generally aren’t treated the same as regular people, but it’s a different matter if they’re a disciple of a major cultivation sect.

Mo Ran sighed internally. He didn’t know Ye Wangxi that well, only that he was an upright, principled person, and had been second only to Chu Wanning in terms of strength back then. Mo Ran had crossed swords with him once while slaughtering the seventy two cities of Rufeng Sect; that fierce, imposing swordsmanship and dignified posture had left a deep impression.

Seventy two cities of Rufeng Sect spread across the land, and Mo Ran had taken them all without the slightest bit of effort. And those lords of the cities, with their run-on titles and widespread tales of might and glory, each and every one of them were as dirt beneath his boot.

Save for this Ye Wangxi, and only this Ye Wangxi—the seven cities under his command had given Mo Ran no end of troubles. Even in the end, when the

cities had fallen and that person knelt bloodied in a field of corpses, his eyes were still clear and unrelenting.

The NanGong leaders of the Rufeng Sect had long since fled by then, and countless others were groveling for their lives at Mo Ran's feet.

But Ye Wangxi only knelt there with his eyes closed and brows drawn tightly together, his expression frosty.

Before killing him, Mo Ran had asked, genuinely: "Will you surrender?"

"I will not."

Mo Ran had smiled from where he sat on the gilded seat adorned with dragon and phoenix, meant for the master of Rufeng Sect. Beneath dark lashes, his eyes swept across the throngs of people; ordinary disciples aside, there were six or seven city lords and more than a dozen generals, all of them prostrating on the dusty ground and trembling.

A crow circled in the ashen grey sky above banners the color of blood, cawing. Mo Ran lifted a nonchalant hand: "Kill them all."

Before death, Ye Wangxi had said: "There is not a single man in all the seventy cities of Rufeng."

Blood splattered across the air.

Mo Ran held in his arms his newest acquisition, the beautiful Song Qiutong, her loveliness unparalleled, delicate body trembling nonstop at the hellish scene before her.

“Don’t be afraid, there’s a good girl. You’ll be staying with this Venerable One from now on.” Mo Ran stroked her hair, smiling, “Come, tell me your name again? What did you do at Rufeng Sect? I forgot what you said earlier.”

“This one’s name is…… Song Qiutong.” Her voice was frightened, “I was…… I was Ye Wangxi’s…… maid……”

Ye Wangxi’s maid. That’s what she had told Mo Ran back then.

As for how Song Qiutong, a Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast, had been allowed into Rufeng Sect, and how she became Ye Wangxi’s maid, Mo Ran had no idea. Until today, at the Xuanyuan Pavilion after rebirth, when he finally realized that it was Ye Wangxi who paid an exorbitant sum to save her from the clutches of danger.

But hardly anyone knew that a large part of the reason why Ye Wangxi was finally defeated by Mo Ran was thanks to information divulged by Song Qiutong.

The thought made Mo Ran scowl, the loathing he felt toward Song Qiutong growing even deeper——he must have been out of his mind to think this woman was anything like Shi Mei.

“The last item of this auction is a masterless holy weapon.” The Second Pavilion Master’s pleasant voice interrupted Mo Ran’s thoughts, “Put up for auction on behalf of a third party.”

There were always some rumors floating around before each auction session as to what kind of precious treasures will be up for sale. Thus, in contrast to the wild reaction to the “Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast” earlier, the gathered crowd of cultivators, although antsy still, actually settled down a bit.

The white jade lotus bloomed once again, and the stone platform rose slowly, carrying a satin case embellished in silver with celestial bodies and elegant landscapes.

The satin case was slim and intricately embroidered, and anyone in the know could tell with a single glance that the fine needlework came from the famed embroidery house of Gusu, XianYun Pavilion. The holy weapon aside, just this case alone was worth hundreds in gold.

“This holy weapon was found at the burial mound on the Jun Mountain. Its former master had passed, and we at Xuanyuan Pavilion have verified that it has yet to take a new master.” The Second Pavilion Master paused before continuing, “As everyone knows, a holy weapon’s name is engraved on its body. However, time has worn away the inscription on this holy weapon, and only one character remains discernible—Gui [Return].”

Someone muttered: “Enough prattling, open the box already.”

“Aiyo, let it be, you’ll get used to it, Xuanyuan Pavilion always goes at it like this. Gotta talk it up before showing us the goods.”

“I guess.”

Amused by the chatter, Mo Ran turned toward Chu Wanning to quip about it, only to see Chu Wanning’s face pale as frost, his sword-straight eyebrows tight and strained as slender fingers of cold jade pressed against his temple. Startled, he hurriedly asked: “Shizun, you okay?”

“Suddenly…… suddenly don’t feel so good.”

“Don’t feel good how? Did you catch another cold?” Mo Ran scooted over and felt his forehead, “Your temperature’s fine.”

“.....” Chu Wanning shook his head without saying anything, looking all out of sorts.

Unsure what else to do, Mo Ran offered: “I’ll pour you some tea.” He filled a cup with steaming tea, paused, then added a bit of the just-purchased Tapir Fragrance Dew.

Sage Hanlin’s medicines were renowned the world over, and Chu Wanning indeed seemed better after drinking the tea mixed with Tapir Fragrance Dew, some color coming back to his face as he turned his attention back to the auction downstairs. Mo Ran tidied up the tea set and poured him another cup.

“Although there is no way to know this holy weapon’s full name, since the stars have aligned to bring it back into the world, and its inscription already contains the word gui [return], Xuanyuan Pavilion has named it ‘Guilai’ [To Return] for the time being.”

Someone in the crowd finally lost his patience, yelling: “Pavilion Master, you’ve talked it up enough, we’re quite built up, open the box and let’s have a look at the holy weapon itself already.”

The Second Pavilion Master smiled: “All things in due time, Xianjun. In accordance with the laws of the cultivation world, when the master of a holy weapon passes, the weapon shall be inherited by his blood heirs. ‘Guilai’ was found at a burial mound, and we have no way of knowing its original master’s identity. However, once the case is opened, all present are welcome to reach out with their spiritual energy and test the weapon; if it resonates with someone, that will mean that the person is of the original master’s bloodline, and ‘Guilai’ will naturally belong to that person, free of charge.”

“Hahaha, as if something that coincidental could ever happen.”

The gathered cultivators burst into laughter.

“That’s right, what are the chances.”

“Might as well try it tho, can’t hurt.”

The Second Pavilion Master beamed at the crowd and agreed crispy: “Indeed, it can’t hurt to try your luck. Now then, if I can ask for your attention, we will be removing the lid.”

She snapped her fingers, and a pair of Guyue'ye disciples, both young girls of around fifteen or sixteen, approached from either side. They flew up and landed gracefully on the lotus platform, and placed their slender, jade-

like hands on the satin case. Each had an intricate crystal key that they inserted carefully into the keyholes on the case.

There were two clicks, and the case unlocked.

Watching the scene before him, Mo Ran found himself thinking back to when he had acquired Jiangui at Jincheng Lake. It was clearly said then that only “one’s most beloved person in the world” could open Ever-Yearning, but for some reason the brocade box had opened in Chu Wanning’s hands.

The audience held their breath, countless eyes staring from underneath hooded cloaks at that narrow box. The gold embroidered lid opened slowly as the very air in the room strained with tension like a bow pulled to the limit, and despite the thousands of people present, it was so quiet that even the sound of a single hair falling to the ground could be heard.

Every single person was staring unblinkingly at the ancient blade revealed inside the box, aged by time. Some greedily, some curiously, some appreciatively……

Only Mo Ran’s eyes flew wide open the instant he saw the weapon lying in the box, all color draining rapidly from his face.

He had lived two lifetimes, owned two holy weapons, and crossed blades with over a dozen other wielders of holy weapons. He had thought that he wouldn’t care for whatever holy weapon the Xuanyuan Pavilion was selling.

But he was wrong.

“Holy weapon Guilai.” The Second Pavilion Master’s crisp voice shattered the silence, “A long blade, four feet in length, three inches in width.

Scabbardless, with a body of pure black that does not reflect.”

Mo Ran’s fingertips trembled minutely as two words slipped past his lips.

“Bu'gui……” [No Return]

No Return……

Affairs of the past upon vermilion bridge in emerald green;

Another year goes but still you do not return.

——

“Mo Ran, now that you have your own holy weapon, why do you ask me to seal its spiritual cognizance, rather than give it a name?”

“To answer Shizun, this disciple is uncultured, and there’s only one chance to name it. I worry that I’ll pick a bad name and be stuck with it.”

“A-Ran, have you still not decided on a name for your long blade yet? Surely you can’t just keep calling it ‘blade’ this ‘blade’ that.”

“It’s fine, it’s fine, I’m just taking my time thinking about it. It’s a holy weapon, after all, it deserves a super awesome name, hahaha.”

Then, Shi Mei died.

Mo Ran wanted Chu Wanning to release the seal so that he could name his holy weapon “Mingjing.”

But at that time, Chu Wanning had said that his spiritual energy was still corrupted from the fight against the ghost realm, and he truly did not have the strength to release the sealing spell, so he could only leave it at that.

Later, Mo Ran and Chu Wanning completely severed relations, and Mo Ran was loath to ask him about the unsealing anymore. And so the bloodstained long blade remained nameless through all those years and countless battles. But it no longer mattered; not a soul in the world was unaware of Mo Weiyu and the hellish blade in his hand that fed on blood and hatred.

In the end.

Chu Wanning died as well.

And the name-sealing spell that had been on Mo Ran's blade for more than a decade disappeared with him.

That night, Mo Ran downed copious amounts of pear blossom wine. A bit tipsy, he ran his hand along the ice-cold body of the blade, no longer able to tell if what he felt was ecstasy or sorrow. He flicked it and listened to the reverberations from within like the sound of drums and horns on the battlefield, like a haitang chilled to the bone. He lay on the roof of Wushan Palace, laughing uncontrollably, from delighted to deranged.

He couldn't remember if he had shed any tears that night, only that, when he woke in the morning, the long blade that had gone nameless for over a decade had been engraved with two clear-cut characters.

“Bu'gui.”

You will not return.

Ever again.

But why did the weapon that had accompanied him through countless battles in the last lifetime appear in this reborn world, and how did it end up at YuanXuan Pavilion’s auction?!

Before Mo Ran could think on it further, all the thousands of cultivators at the auction house released streams of spiritual energies, each rushing to commune with Bu'gui.

Mo Ran: “……”

There’s no use. Since it was Bu'gui, and since Mo Ran was here, there definitely wouldn’t be another person in the world who could command this long blade.

But did its appearance have something to do with that little bastard hiding behind the scenes? If so, then for him to release Bu'gui into the world at this time meant that he knew that Mo Ran and Chu Wanning were trying to track him down, and that his goal wasn’t to test for other spiritual essences.

Then what was he trying to do?!

And also, was this Bu'gui real? Or was it merely bait, like those fakes at Jincheng Lake?

Mind filled with questions, Mo Ran reached out with a tendril of his own spiritual energy.

If Bu'gui wasn’t a fake, then it will surely resonate with him. The resonance can’t be too obvious, to avoid notice, so, just a little bit……

He had only just released the tiniest thread of spiritual energy when a faint groan came from behind him.

“.....Shizun?!”

Mo Ran whipped his head around to find Chu Wanning collapsed at the table, brows locked and lips blue, snow white robes spread out like smoke, his handsome face paler than frost. He had actually passed out, eyes screwed shut like some chronic illness was flaring up.

Mo Ran never would have expected something like this to happen out of the blue; he panicked, pulling back his spiritual energy and running to Chu Wanning’s side, cradling him in his arms: “Shizun, what’s wrong?!”

Ch.82 This Venerable One Can’t Believe It

Outside the Fragrance Inn of Rainbell Isle stood the willowy innkeeper, all dressed up with pearl bracelets jingling on her wrists as she leaned against the door, eating snake gall-fried melon seeds.

Most people end up staying at her place whenever Xuanyuan Pavilion holds an action, since she was clever on top of being pretty, a flicker of those beautiful eyes and she could easily guess what it was her guests wanted.

It was just past noon, and the sun beamed brightly from overhead. The innkeeper spit out some melon seed shells, thinking that the auction should be over in another two hours or so. The inns at Rainbell Isle were all fairly expensive, and the visiting cultivators don’t tend to stay, so she didn’t expect to make much from rooms today. But that’s alright, these cultivators, vigilantes, and whatnot still have to eat before leaving, and she fully intended to squeeze them for dinner.

She flicked some bits of fruit peel off her skirt, then turned to yell toward the waiter inside: “ErFu, wipe the tables and chairs down again, and fetch a basket of the melon seeds I fried, put a plate on every table. Gotta get ready for our guests tonight.”

“Alrighty boss, right away.” The waiter jogged off.

Done bathing in the sun and snacking on melon seeds, the innkeeper grinned contently and was just about to head inside to supervise the work when she suddenly noticed a black-white silhouette at the end of the road and approaching fast. Once close, she saw that it was a handsome cultivator dressed in black and holding someone in his arms, just as he burst into her inn at full tilt in a burning panic.

“A room, room room room!!”

“.....”

Maybe because of how suddenly he had bust in and how strangely he was acting, but the waiter only stared at him in bewilderment with his mouth hanging open.

Mo Ran roared angrily: “I said I want a room! What are you, deaf? Where’s your boss!!”

“Aiyo xianjun.” The voice of a young woman sounded from behind him, a little simpering and a lot apologetic, hard to be mad at a voice like that. Mo Ran turned around and came face to face with the innkeeper’s agreeable smile, “My apologies for the wait, he’s new. I am the innkeeper, please feel free to come to me if you need anything.”

With his dark, handsome eyebrows raised, Mo Ran hurriedly repeated: “Give me a room!”

The innkeeper looked him over quickly and discreetly: he was wearing a cloak, so probably an attendant at the Xuanyuan auction, but the hood had fallen off in his haste to reveal his handsome face that yet had a trace of the tenderness of youth; but that wasn’t important, what was important was the brocade pouch embroidered with a giant tortoise that was tied

around his wrist—it was a qiankun pouch# from Xuanyuan Pavilion, specifically gifted to its patrons to carry purchased goods in.

He has money.

The innkeeper's eyes gleamed.

Lots of money.

She glanced at the person in his arms next. He was covered in a cloak and his face was turned inward, so she couldn't see what he looked like, but the innkeeper's eyes were sharp as a hawk's, sweeping quickly over those snow-white robes made of high-quality silk before zoning in on that hand peeking out from the wide opening of a sleeve.

Long and slender, porcelain-fine skin, delicate fingertips, shapely joints.

A beauty.

The innkeeper understood immediately.

Sure, it's a beautiful man, but it's not like dual cultivation between men is unheard of in the cultivation world, nothing to bat an eye at.

"DaFu, open a room." The innkeeper wasted no time and asked no questions, ordering briskly with a snap of her fingers, "Get the best one we have."

Chu Wanning’s sickness came suddenly and without the slightest sign. It was a good thing they were at Guyue'ye’s domain, where good medicines physicians were readily available.

The sage doctor’s eyes were closed as he took Chu Wanning’s pulse with lightly calloused fingertips on his wrist, not uttering a single sound for a long time.

Mo Ran couldn’t wait any longer: “Doctor, how is my Shizun?”

“It’s not a big issue, but……”

Mo Ran seriously couldn’t stand people that talked in circles and beat around the bush like this. He pressed, eyes wide: “But what?”

“But it’s quite strange; your master’s cultivation is remarkable, achieved by few in this world. Yet my careful examination just now revealed that his spiritual core is exceedingly fragile, even more so than that of a fledgeling cultivator.”

If cultivation is water, then the spiritual core is the vessel holding the water.

One’s spiritual core is inborn, while cultivation is built up slowly over time. It’s easier for someone with an innately powerful core to cultivate, but once one’s cultivation reaches a certain point, it would begin to bolster the spiritual core, so generally speaking, the cultivation and the core are interdependent and complementary.

An eminent zongshi like Chu Wanning would certainly have an extremely robust core, so physicians don’t generally bother to check when taking his pulse.

Mo Ran was shocked: “How is that possible?!”

“I thought the same. But I checked time and again, and it was the same every time.”

“My Shizun’s spiritual core is weaker than a fledgeling cultivator’s? H-how could that be, there’s no way! Could you please take another look, maybe there was a mistake somewhere?”

“I have always been most cautious in my practice, and have never said anything I am not absolutely certain of. If the young xianjun doesn’t believe me, then feel free to get a second opinion on his core, it will be the same.”

Mo Ran was stunned.

The doctor continued: “Precisely because your master’s spiritual core is so fragile, and he appears to have received communion from a powerful weapon just now, one that has some sort of resonance with him yet does not belong to him, so he suffered rebound as a result, and then lost consciousness because his core could not take it. I will prescribe some medicinal decoctions, have him take it and get plenty of rest, he will be fine.”

Mo Ran saw the doctor off and came back to sit by Chu Wanning’s bed with his cheek propped up in one hand, watching him in a daze.

A weak core?

How is that even possible……

But the old man just now couldn’t possibly have known what happened at Xuanyuan Pavilion, yet correctly surmised that Chu Wanning had encountered a powerful weapon earlier, so he likely wasn’t spouting nonsense.

And also, that “Bu'gui”; Mo Ran had only just released a tiny bit of spiritual energy at Xuanyuan Pavilion earlier when Chu Wanning collapsed all of a sudden, so he didn’t get a chance to see if that long blade was indeed his holy weapon from the past life. But if so, then why would Bu'gui resonate with Chu Wanning? And cause a rebound?

He stared at Chu Wanning, spacing out while his thoughts tied themselves into a big knot. He didn’t know how long had passed when Chu Wanning’s brows started scrunching up, his eyelashes quivering like he’s having another nightmare.

He had no idea what compelled him to, but Mo Ran reached out and gently smoothed out his brows: “Shizun……”

“.....”

“Shizun…… Chu Wanning…… I’ve already lived two lifetimes, but could it be that there are still secrets about you that I don’t know?”

The innkeeper finished boiling the medicine in the inn’s kitchen in short order, and came upstairs to deliver it.

Mo Ran tasted it—ridiculously bitter as expected; Chu Wanning hated bitter things. Mo Ran sighed and called back the innkeeper who was just about to leave.

“Innkeep, do you have anything sweet?”

“Aie…… we make fresh sugar candies, but today’s batch is all gone already. I can send someone to go buy some if xianjun would like?”

Mo Ran looked at the steaming medicine and shook his head: “Nevermind then, the medicine will be cold by then, it has to be taken hot to be effective. Thanks though.”

“Ah, no problem, please feel free to call on me if you need anything else.”

Having said that, the innkeeper left tactfully, closing the door on her way out.

Mo Ran carried the medicine over and set it down by the bed, then sat at the edge of the bed with one hand on his knee, reaching out with the other to help Chu Wanning up: “Shizun, it’s time for your medicine.”

Mo Ran had plenty of practice feeding him medicine from the last lifetime; holding Chu Wanning in one arm so that he was leaning against himself, he scooped up a spoonful of the medicine with his other hand, blowing to cool it, and then slowly fed it to him.

Thinking about it now, this is already the second time since his rebirth that he’s taking care of Chu Wanning. He dislikes this person, yet feels such unease whenever he gets sick; he really couldn’t understand it.

“Bitter……”

The person in his arm tasted it despite being still unconscious, pulling his eyebrows together and turning away, refusing to drink any more.

Mo Ran was already used to him acting like this; holding another spoonful, he tugged him back around and coaxed patiently: “One more, you’ll feel better after, here.”

And fed him another spoonful.

Chu Wanning coughed up half of it, eyebrows furrowing even more.

“So bitter……”

“It’s sweet, the next one is sweet, come come.”

“Nngh……”

“The next one! Promise! It’s unbelievably sweet! This Venerable One had people go out and find the sweetest syrup in all the land!” Mo Ran was so distracted coaxing Chu Wanning into drinking the medicine that he forgot himself for a moment, absentmindedly running his mouth on words from the past life, “It’s delicious, you’ll regret it if you don’t open up~”

Just like that, he managed to sweet talk Chu Wanning into drinking the whole bowl. Mo Ran let out a breath after the last spoonful, and was just about to get up and tidy things up when there was a sudden flash of white, and a slap landed soundly on his cheek before he could even react.

“You liar, get the hell out!”

Chu Wanning snapped, then his head dipped and he went right back to sleep, leaving Mo Ran with his mouth hanging half open, holding his cheek pitifully. He was just about to get mad when the person in his arm groaned softly like he was dreaming about something distressing, his face blanching.

Seeing him like this, Mo Ran couldn't even get mad anymore. He didn't have any candy, but his gaze landed on the qiankun pouch sitting at the head of the bed, and, struck by a sudden idea, he took out a bottle of Tapir Fragrance Dew. He tapped Chu Wanning's cheek with his hand, not too gentle but not too hard, and let that count as revenge.

"Wait here a bit, I'll go make you some sweet dew water to drink."

"....."

Chu Wanning didn't respond, so Mo Ran moved to lay him back down. But when he leaned closer in the process, he heard a low exhale, and then a slurred mumble: "It……wronged you……"

Mo Ran froze: "What?"

Chu Wanning's eyes were tightly closed, his eyelashes trembling incessantly as if going through something excruciating, the blood draining from his face bit by bit. He seems to have fallen into another dream, one that was even more frightening than the last. He shook his head minutely, an uncharacteristically sorrowful expression appearing on that habitually impassive face.

"I……it was I……"

For a split second, Mo Ran felt his heart stutter erratically, a strange feeling flooding his chest as if there was a secret right in front of him, separated by only one last layer of haze, a secret he was on the very verge of unveiling. Staring fixedly at Chu Wanning, he asked quietly: "You what?"

"It was I……who wronged……you……"

He felt dazed all of a sudden; he didn't know if the dim light of the candle was making him see things, but he thought he saw a glimmer of wetness in Chu Wanning's thick eyelashes.

It was I who wronged you.

The words left his lips light as mist, but sounded to him like the crashing of thunder.

Mo Ran shot up abruptly from the bed and then immediately went stiff, pupils contracting into tiny pinpoints as he stared disbelievingly at the person on the bed. His expression changed instantly, heart pounding like a stampede of horses and hands clenching tightly into fists, feeling the blood in his body catch on fire in one moment and then freeze over in the very next.

"What did you say? ……Wh……"

After a moment of being frozen in shock, Mo Ran suddenly seized Chu Wanning by the throat, his eyes flashing with danger, the guise of guileless naivety that he had worn since rebirth vanishing into thin air, "Chu Wanning, what did you just say?"

"Say it again! SAY IT AGAIN!!"

It was I who wronged you; I won't blame you, in life or in death.

It was a curse he could never forget, a nightmare that had haunted him for two lifetimes.

How many times had he closed his eyes only to hear these words sighed by his ear, though the speaker was long gone from the world.

But these were words that Chu Wanning had spoken in the past life only as he lay dying; why would he, now——why would he——

Unless Chu Wanning was also reborn?!

Ch.83 This Venerable One Wants You

>>noncon kissing, noncon mention

The unhinged thought made Mo Ran see red. Reason had left him, and he shook uncontrollably as his hand tightened around Chu Wanning's throat, pressing for a response in a low-pitched roar.

If he says the rest of it, if he says "in life or in death." Then definitely…… definitely……

"Ngh!"

A stifled groan sounded by his ear; Chu Wanning couldn't breathe, his face flushed from the lack of air as his struggles grew weaker.

Mo Ran stilled, madness and clarity chasing one another across his red-tinted, wide-open eyes before he abruptly snapped out of it and hastily let go. Chu Wanning slumped heavily back onto the bed, the five stripes of finger-shaped bruises stark against his neck gradually calling Mo Ran back to his senses.

"....." He opened his mouth, wanting to call 'Shizun', but it wouldn't come out; he tried to say 'Chu Wanning', but his voice failed him there too, until finally, hesitantly, he uttered hoarsely, "You……"

His throat felt parched, as if scorched by fire; Mo Ran swallowed with difficulty while picking up the scattered pieces of his rationality, scenes from yesterday flashing before his eyes: Chu Wanning has never acted strangely in this lifetime, there's no way he was reborn.

But then why would he say those words—his dying words in the past life, ”it was I who wronged you”—now, at this time?

Weren’t those words that Chu Wanning had uttered only to save Xue Meng, to save those sanctimonious cultivators, empty words that he had said only because he had no other choice?

He had never believed, never wanted to believe that Chu Wanning would genuinely admit his wrongs to him, that he would actually say something softly compassionate to him. No matter what, Chu Wanning was definitely lying to him, he definitely detested him. No matter what, this Shizun of his had always looked down on him, had never treated him with sincerity.

He didn’t regret killing him at all.

He didn’t regret……

Mo Ran turned away, slowly closing his eyes.

He didn’t want to stay here even a single second longer; what did it matter to him if Chu Wanning lives or dies!

He turned to leave.

He wanted to leave.

But his feet refused to move.

It was I who wronged you.

In his memories, that cold, handsome face, covered in blood as it was, had looked gentle in the very end. At the edge of Kunlun’s Heavenly Lake, that person, lying in a pool of blood, had slowly lifted a hand and poked his

forehead; his fingers were already ice-cold, yet there was warmth in those phoenix eyes. But Mo Ran had been sure, back then, that he was only seeing things.

I won't blame you, in life or in death.

Chu Wanning had whispered, even as a trail of blood dripped slowly from his eyes.

"Mo Ran……"

The person on the bed murmured in his dream; just two quiet syllables, and the person being called began to tremble all over. By the time he realized what was happening, Mo Ran was already standing at the side of the bed, one hand braced against the headboard as he leaned over Chu Wanning, staring fixedly at his pale face.

Those thin, lightly colored lips opened slightly in another utterance.

"Mo Ran……"

Closing his eyes, Mo Ran drew his brows tightly together as his fingers dug into the cold, hard surface of the quince wood, as if trying hard to restrain something. But he couldn't in the end, and it came out in a raw whisper: "Chu Wanning, did you mean it?"

"Everything that you said, did you mean it all……?"

His chest hurt so much it felt like it might burst; since there's no way Chu Wanning was also reborn, then for him to say these words now, it must mean that, at this point in time, he already feels remorse in his heart that he hadn't treated him right.

Did he mean it?

Chu Wanning was only talking in his sleep, of course he wouldn't answer. But still, Mo Ran waited wishfully for one.

"....."

He waited with his eyes closed for a long while, but there was only silence. Mo Ran sighed quietly and reluctantly opened his eyes.

Only to be met unexpectedly by a pair of hazy phoenix eyes, half-lidded between wakefulness and slumber.

He didn't know when Chu Wanning had opened his eyes, but it was clear from his face that he wasn't truly awake and aware, that it was only a momentary stirring between bouts of torment. That pair of eyes the color of the night sky were vacant and glazed, as if they held eternity within.

Yuheng of the Night Sky was always piercing as lightning; he rarely ever looked so dazed.

Without those habitual sharp edges of his, the person lying there looked so unexpectedly beautiful, the corners of his eyes tinged with a faint redness, looking at him so unguardedly.

Mo Ran felt a violent tremor in his heart and a tightness in his throat; voice low, he murmured: "You……"

He looked much too like the way he had when they made love in the past life; something stirred inside Mo Ran, and for a moment he felt as if he was still at Wushan Palace, and Chu Wanning was his prisoner, his personal plaything. The thought made his mouth feel dry and his breaths grow heavy.

I can't……

I don't like him.

Don't touch him anymore.

The sins of the bygone life are already in the past; in this life, we're nothing more than master and disciple.

And so Mo Ran stayed as he was, looking down at Chu Wanning with one hand braced against the headboard, holding himself back from crossing that line. His hair pooled over his shoulder from where it was tied back in a ponytail, the tips brushing against the pillow.

Chu Wanning lay there fully dressed with his long hair spread loosely about him. His expression was dazed and insensate at first, and some time passed before Mo Ran's reflection slowly appeared in his eyes. Chu Wanning hesitated, and then, as if still caught in the clutches of the nightmare, unable to discern the when and the where, he reached out slowly with a hand, paused in mid air for a moment, and at last touched Mo Ran's brow.

"It was I who wronged you……"

He spoke the words with an uncharacteristic gentleness, the way he had in the past life.

Mo Ran felt something inside him collapse with a thunderous boom.

Blood boiling and head feverish, all the sense and rationality he had worked so hard to retrieve fell apart in a mere instant. Without even thinking about any of it, he had already given in to that familiar desire, leaning down and ravenously capturing those slightly parted lips in his own. Instantly, the past came crashing back like a wave, melting away the surroundings like snow and frost. He felt as if he was back at Wushan Palace, amidst silky red satin, illuminated by the light of candles gilded with dragon and phoenix, and, beneath the red draperies, this person was struggling and spitting curses, panting and humiliated yet unable to get away, helpless against his unyielding grasp.

“Nn……”

The noise that Chu Wanning let out between the slide of warm wetness drove Mo Ran mad. All that about not liking him, hating him, and not touching him again, all of it vaporized into thin air.

Mo Ran felt as if he hadn’t yet died, that the lightly trembling body beneath his still belonged to him.

He wanted to kiss him, to hold him, to humiliate him and torment him until this lofty, immaculate person is unable to take any more, until he cries and begs and loses himself between the sheets.

“Chu Wanning……” He murmured hoarsely.

A wave of heat rolled through him, washing over his very soul; even the tips of his fingers felt like they were on fire.

Once again closing his lips over those cool, soft ones, still tasting slightly of the medicine's bitterness, the beating of his heart was like the thundering of drums inside his chest as he kissed with abandon, mad with desire. He knew this person through and through; since his rebirth, he had been loath to be intimate with him because of the resentment he held, but, kissing him now, it felt like pure ecstasy, a high so intense it ate away at him, like the first taste of sweet dew on the tongue of a traveller dying of thirst in the desert, like being enveloped in the soft warmth of a fur coat warmed over the fire pan in the bitter cold of a freezing night.

He thought that he would surely have nothing to do with him in this reborn life.

He hadn't expected to lose to his desires in the end, to be driven out of control by just a few words from him, to be kissing him like this.

If not for the fact that he just couldn't get Chu Wanning's robes open, and got pricked by something falling out of his robes while trying, he might have given in and taken his Shizun right then and there without any thought, consequences be damned.

Clang!

Something metallic pricked Mo Ran's finger and fell on the bed, rolling a little before coming to a stop.

Mo Ran was far too turned on to mind the scratch, only throwing an irritated glare at the object before turning back to Chu Wanning's ridiculous robes. It was one thing when he kept his distance and didn't touch, but now that he was on top of him, the feelings from his past life came rushing back, and just the thought of how Chu Wanning's smooth, narrow waist had felt under his hands made him feel unbearably hot and heavy.

But Chu Wanning's silken white robes were impossible to get off, almost like they were enchanted with some kind of spell!

Mo Ran cursed under his breath and slammed his fist against the headboard before resentfully climbing off the bed to go fetch his blade to make short work of that thrice-wrapped belt sash.

As he was sitting up, he saw that metallic object out of the corner of his eyes. He didn't pay it any mind at first, but then a bolt of clarity flashed suddenly through his arousal-addled mind.

He stilled, then his head snapped around to look at that thing again.

It was a golden hair clasp, vibrantly colorful and decorated with orchids and butterflies. The very same one that he had bought for Xia Sini at the Peach Blossom Springs after days of saving up his feathers.

He had personally pinned it to Xia Sini's ponytail to cheer up his sullen little shidi, saying: "Little kids should wear lively colors like gold and red."

Mo Ran picked up the hair clasp, feeling like he had been doused in cold water, staring at it in a stupor.

Hang on……what does this mean?

Why would Chu Wanning have something that he gave to Xia Sini?!

Could it be……

A frightening thought appeared in Mo Ran's mind. He turned around slowly, and his gaze, still dark with desire, landed on Chu Wanning. His Shizun had passed out again; Mo Ran stared at his face, looking at those lips reddened from his kisses, and his heart skipped a few beats.

No way, absolutely not.

He must be out of his mind……

Was Chu Wanning not just messing with him?

Is, is……Xia Sini——seriously Chu Wanning's son?

Mo Ran shuddered at the thought, feeling like his head was about to explode!

Author's Notes:

Weiyu : (raising his hand) Can't have a home run? I protest.

Chu Wanning: Protest ineffective, keep dreaming.

Xue Meng: Protest ineffective, keep dreaming.

Meatbun: Protest ineffective, keep dreaming.

Jinjiang Administrator: Protest ineffective, keep dreaming your impossible dreams.

Ch.84 This Venerable One Stole a Kiss and You Don't Even Know

When Chu Wanning woke up, it was to the sight of Mo Ran spacing out at the table with his cheek propped up in his hand, the reflection of the candle flame flickering in his pitch-black eyes, bright in the vacant gaze.

“.....”

He thought about getting up, but could feel no strength in his limbs and had to give up.

The patterned lilac curtains wafted gently. He turned onto his side, watching Mo Ran without a sound, but that silly boy only remained lost in thought, not at all noticing that his Shizun was awake.

But who could blame him? Anyone who finds out that their lover has already had a son with some other woman would be just as shocked.

Was Xia Sini really Chu Wanning’s child? How could that be…… Chu Wanning is so aloof and particular, which woman would even be capable of catching his eye?

Besides, if this whole thing is for real, then he must have had this child in the past life too, but in all the years they had spent together then, Chu Wanning couldn’t have been further from what one would expect of a married man, in his daily conduct and in between the sheets.

But then how else to explain this golden butterfly hair clasp!

Mo Ran banged his head against the table in anguish, just about to lose it from how confusing it all was!

He wasn't that smart to begin with, and never could wrap his head around any twisty turny things like this; the more he thought the more his head hurt, until he finally grabbed his head and flopped onto the table with a despairing "ngah" and stayed there, unmoving.

"Mo Ran, what are you doing?"

Said an even, soothing voice, pleasant like the chime of scattering jade, with a slightly hoarse undertone.

Mo Ran bounced up instantly in surprise: "Shizun, you're awake?"

"Mn." Chu Wanning coughed lightly before looking up at him, "Is this…… Rainbell Isle's inn?"

"Y-yeah." Mo Ran stood and went over to the bed, where he noticed a small tear on Chu Wanning's lower lip. His face immediately turned red as he thought back to how he had lost all control in his lust-induced haze and very nearly made a serious mistake.

Seeing his perturbation, Chu Wanning asked: "What is it?"

"Nothing nothing." Mo Ran waved his hands and hastily changed the topic, "Anyway, Shizun suddenly fainted at Xuanyuan Pavilion, so I carri…... cough, brought you here to rest. Then I got a physician to take a look at you and prescribe some medicine, and then……"

Heard you sleeptalking, got reminded of some past affairs, couldn't help myself and kissed you.

But of course he couldn't say such things. Mo Ran's voice trailed off, his gaze uncharacteristically frantic, flustered even.

Hearing that he was examined by a doctor, and seeing the strange expression on Mo Ran's face, Chu Wanning felt his heart drop—maybe he had found out about the poison that turns him small. His hands on the quilt tightened subconsciously as he asked in a hoarse voice:

"What did the physician say?"

"He said Shizun was affected by that holy weapon, and that's what made him faint." Mo Ran hesitated for a moment before continuing, "Shizun, your spiritual core……"

"Don't worry about it, it's just a bit weaker than the average core."

Mo Ran blinked. He was thinking about how both Chu Xun and Chu Wanning had scars over their hearts and considering the possibility of some kind of connection there, but the way Chu Wanning talks about it, that doesn't seem to be the case. He couldn't help asking: "But how? Shizun is so powerful, there's no way your spiritual core is frail by birth. When did it start?"

“A long time ago. I was injured once, many years ago, and it’s been like this ever since.” Chu Wanning waved his hand indifferently; that’s not what he was concerned about——”Did he say anything else?”

Mo Ran shook his head: “Nope.”

Chu Wanning looked thoughtfully at him in the candlelight’s dim haziness: “Then what were you banging your head on the table for just now?”

“.....” Mo Ran tried and failed to hold it in, so he threw caution to the winds and took out the golden butterfly hair clasp from his sleeve, setting it in his palm.

“I found this.”

“.....”

“On you.”

The hair clasp glinted in the light as Chu Wanning’s heart sank lower and lower.

So he had been found out after all.

He sighed quietly. A few moments passed in silence, neither of them speaking. Finally, Chu Wanning closed his eyes, and was just about to come

clean when he heard Mo Ran mumble in a small voice: “Shizun, is Xia-shidi…… truly your son?”

Chu Wanning: “.....”

He opened his eyes, the blood that had been frozen in his veins a moment ago beginning to circulate again. He was lost for words for a while as he stared silently at Mo Weiyu, who stood by the bed with a complicated expression, and then, slowly, a clear verdict formed in Chu Wanning’s gaze: “Moron.”

“That’s right.” Chu Wanning lifted a hand and calmly took back the hair clasp before Mo Ran could even react, “Didn’t I already tell you before? Why are you asking again.”

Mo Ran buried his face in his hand: “I’m just……making sure……”

But despite Chu Wanning’s repeated confirmations that Xia Sini was indeed his flesh and blood, Mo Ran still didn’t quite believe it. Shoving down his intense feelings of dismay, Mo Ran decided to grill Xia Sini about it the next time he sees his little shidi. Until those two actually acknowledge their blood ties to one another, he’d sooner die than believe it!

Chu Wanning got some strength back in his limbs after a bit of rest, and moved to sit up in bed.

“My clothes……”

He ran his hand over his collars and paused, frowning: “Why is it so disheveled?”

Mo Ran: “ Cough. ”

Fearful that he might remember some fragments of what happened earlier, Mo Ran hurriedly steered the topic away: “Shizun, you must be hungry right? I heard the food at this inn’s pretty good, especially the wensi tofu, let’s go down and get a bite? My treat.”

Chu Wanning shot him a cold look: “What, with the money I gave you?”

But still brushed his voluminous sleeves and opened the door to go downstairs.

Rainbell Isle’s dishes were similar to Yangzhou’s—light and refreshing, with a tendency toward sweetness, very agreeable to Chu Wanning’s tastes.

The auction was over by now and many of the attendants have already left, and the two of them had also requested a private booth, so there wasn’t much of a need to wear cloaks to conceal their identities anymore. Taking their seats inside, a waiter came and poured them each a cup of biluochun green tea and handed them a menu before retreating.

“Shizun can look through the menu first.”

“You can order. I’m pretty ok with all the Jiangnan style dishes.” Chu Wanning said as he lifted the cup and took a small sip of the tea.

But his brows furrowed as soon as the tea touched his lips: “.....”

Mo Ran: “What is it? Too hot?”

“.....It’s nothing. Maybe the weather is too dry, my lip is a bit cracked.” Chu Wanning replied as he touched the corner of his lips uncertainly.

Weird, when did that happen?

“.....”

Mo Ran lowered his head guiltily.

It’ll be a while before the food is ready, so Chu Wanning took the time to discuss what happened at Xuanyuan Pavilion with Mo Ran. They had left early, so they didn’t know who won the holy weapon in the end, but that shouldn’t be too hard to find out just by asking around.

An assortment of Yangzhou dishes began to cover the table as they talked. Chu Wanning felt like they had gone over all that they could with what they knew, so he stopped asking questions to look over the food lining the table instead. He paused for a moment before lifting his eyelids slightly to look at the person across from him, whose smile was just a tad nervous.

Chu Wanning asked: “Have you been to Jiangnan before?”

Of course Mo Ran had gone to see the apricot blossoms and misty rains of Jiangnan in his previous life, but he hadn’t forgotten that he was only seventeen right now and only joined Sisheng Peak two-ish years ago, so he immediately shook his head: “Nope.”

Chu Wanning’s eyelashes lowered back down, expression neutral as he said in a clear voice: “But you ordered all the best dishes.”

“.....!!”

Only then did Mo Ran realize that he had ordered every single dish according to Chu Wanning’s tastes. He was thinking only of making sure Chu Wanning eats well so that he can recover his strength, completely forgetting that he shouldn’t be this familiar with these regional dishes.

“I worked in the kitchens of an entertainment house when I was young, so I’ve heard of these dishes even if I haven’t had them before.”

Luckily, Chu Wanning didn’t press the issue: “Let’s eat.”

Seafood was a big part of Jiangnan dishes, especially here on the Rainbell Isle, where there were baskets full of crab and shrimp and strings of fish everywhere the eye could see, so the square beech table was naturally laden with seafood. Crispy fried eel with sauce poured over, sweet and sour squirrel fish crunchy on the outside and tender on the inside, steamed mantis shrimp, chrysanthemum sauteed sea snail, and braised silver carp. It smelled heavenly.

And aside from those, the meat and vegetable dishes, and the desserts as well, were just as exquisitely made and elegantly plated.

There was stewed crab meatballs, pork trotter aspic, shredded tofu simmered in chicken broth, soup dumplings, wensi tofu#, and more#.

With his cheek propped up in one hand, Mo Ran watched the waiter set down the last dish—osmanthus cake—then snuck a glance at Chu Wanning, wondering which dish he’s gonna go for first.

He pondered for a minute, and secretly placed his bet:

Definitely the meatballs.

It's Chu Wanning's favorite Yangzhou dish, after all. And, sure enough, as soon as the dishes were all out, his chopsticks reached unhesitatingly over in that direction.

Mo Ran sighed to himself; this person is always so predictable, be it eating things or doing things, always the……

Plop . An adorably plump meatball landed in Mo Ran's bowl.

…...same?

Mo Ran's head snapped up, the surprise from being favored so appearing slowly on his face: "Sh-shizun."

"Thanks for taking care of me these past few days."

Wait, did he hear that right? Mo Ran was bewildered.

Did Chu Wanning just thank him for taking care of him????

He had never said any such thing in the entirety of the last lifetime!!!!!

Chu Wanning watched as the young man across from him slowly turned red, his eyebrows lifting and moving apart and his eyes getting rounder and rounder, a tuft of hair curling up from his head to sway happily back and forth. He didn't quite know how to react, but Chu-zongshi still had to preserve his dignity, so he took another lofty sip of tea.

Ow, his lips……

Truth be told, during those days he spent by Mo Ran's side as Xia Sini, Chu Wanning had began to feel a little guilty. When he thought about it late at night, he had to admit that he really was too harsh of a person, and had been overly stern with Mo Ran. So he told himself that, when he gets back to normal, he won't carry on like that anymore, that he'll do better.

When he met with Xuanji at the Peach Blossom Springs, Chu Wanning had hemmed and hawed for a good long while before finally forcing the words past his lips to ask how to be less intimidating to disciples.

Xuanji was understandably taken aback before answering: "First, you have to actually show them that you care."

Show them that you care……

Thinking that Mo Ran had probably never had the meatballs before, Chu Wanning parted his lips to explain: "Stewed crab meatballs are made with finely minced high-quality streaky pork, mixed with shrimp roe, crab meat, and crab roe and formed into meatballs. The meatballs are simmered in clear broth with bok choy, then finally arranged in a red clay pot for a colorful presentation."

"....."

Mo Ran was dumbfounded.

What's he reciting the menu for?

But Chu Wanning thought that patiently introducing new dishes to his disciple was a form of showing him care, and so in the course of the meal, Mo Ran tried every dish in turn and got an earful of descriptions that sounded like they came straight out of 《Jiangnan Recipes》.

If not for Chu Wanning's low, soothing voice, Mo Ran probably would've flipped the table and left.

"Hey hey, did you hear yet? Linyi Rufeng Sect won the last item at the Xuanyuan Pavilion auction!"

The private booths were divided by bamboo screens, and the people in the next booth over were a bit loud, their conversation drifting easily over to Mo Ran and Chu Wanning.

Chu Wanning abruptly stopped introducing "pork trotter aspic" to exchange a look with Mo Ran, and they both listened in with rapt attention.

A rough-sounding male voice was talking: "Of course I have, a holy weapon right? Three hundred million gold, paid on the spot. Aiyo that price, it was more gold than I've seen in my entire life."

"Sheesh, is that all you care about, don't you know that Rufeng Sect also spent fifty million gold on a Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast!"

“Heavens, aren’t those for eating or dual cultivating? Can’t believe the biggest sect in the world would use such a reprehensible method of cultivation, and right out in the open too, how scandalous!”

“Actually, Su-xiong, using Beauty Feasts is a perfectly reasonable cultivation method, not some prohibited thing at all. They may look like us, but they’re ultimately not human. It’s no different from eating fairy fruits to advance your cultivation, so there’s really nothing wrong with it when you get down to it.”

“Hmph, we’ll just have to agree to disagree……”

Someone else laughed lightly: “The one who bought the Beauty Feast is apparently some young disciple of Rufeng Sect who rarely comes out, a Ye something Xi. I heard he looks decent enough, wouldn’t have expected some guy like that to rely on screwing women to cultivate. If you ask me, Rufeng Sect hasn’t got long left.”

Still another person chuckled: “What’s wrong with that, who doesn’t love a beauty?”

Then their conversation turned to roundabout debates on ethics and morality, nothing worth paying attention to.

Chu Wanning repeated quietly: “So Rufeng Sect bought the holy weapon?”

“Sounds like it.”

Chu Wanning seemed troubled: “That makes things more difficult. We’ll have to go to Rufeng Sect to investigate further……”

Mo Ran “ah”-ed as he remembered the issue, muttering: “Shizun used to be in Rufeng Sect.”

“Mn.”

“Don’t wanna go back?”

Chu Wanning looked irritated at the mere mention of going back to Rufeng Sect, brows furrowing as he said: “They may be a famed sect in the upper cultivation world, but I once……”

Before he could finish, there was a sudden commotion over by the main hall. Someone was yelling loudly: “Innkeep, we’ll give you five hundred gold, get rid of these people and clear this place out immediately, our young master is reserving the whole place today.”

Author’s Notes:

Crab, steamed mantis prawn, fish. All these descriptions came from Zheng Banqiao's collection; as these phrases aren't common usage, to avoid misunderstandings, I'm making it clear that these are not my original constructions and am stating where they came from.

Adding on what these people love and hate to eat the most:

Chu Wanning

Loves: Stewed crab meatball, lotus crisp

Hates: Mala [spicy and numbing] hotpot

Mo Ran

Loves: Chilli oil wontons

Hates: Salted beancurd

Xue Meng

Loves: Mala hotpot

Hates: Salted beancurd

Shi Mei

Loves: Saozimian [noodles with minced meat]

Hates: Tanghulu [candied hawthorn fruit]

Ye Wangxi

Loves: Sweet and sour fish

Hates: Fried pancake with spring onion filling

Mei Hanxue

Loves: Fish mint

Hates: Pork (This is very good, very halal)

Rufeng Sect's young master who will appear in the next chapter

Loves: All kinds of meat, especially pork (This is very not good, very not-halal)

Hates: Wensi tofu

So hungry...I'm escaping I'm escaping

Ch.85 This Venerable One Isn't Someone You Can Get Rid of so Easily with Just Fifteen Hundred Gold

The innkeeper's apologetic voice drifted over: "Goodness, my lord is so generous, five hundred just like that, this humble one is so flattered! But we really must be courteous to all our guests if we hope to keep doing business, so we can't just hustle everyone else out, you see. How about this, we have a spacious private room inside called the Guiwu Pavilion, it's reserved just for honored guests of means like yourself, let me show——"

She didn't even get to finish the sentence before there was a loud clattering of tables and chairs being overturned.

"What even is there to see! Who the hell cares about your Guiwu [Returning Fog] Pavilion or Wugui [Tortoise; also slang for cuckold] Pavilion ——god damn, what kinda shitty name… don't want it! Get rid of them and we'll pay you a thousand!"

"Aw, but my lord looks like such a scholarly, reasonable person, surely he won't force such a difficult decision on this humble one, right?" The innkeep lied through her teeth without so much as batting an eye, simpering coyly, "There are really too many guests here already, if my lord dislikes Guiwu Pavilion, I can certainly offer another room, it's a little smaller but just as elegant, and I'll throw in an entertainment package with song and dance, free of charge, how's that?"

"No! Absolutely not! Fifteen hundred! Tell 'em all to get lost!" The boorish voice bellowed, "Quit dragging your feet! Our young master will be cross if

the place isn't ready when he gets here!"

"Wow——" A thousand gold might be a lot to the average person, but it was a laughable amount to the once-emperor of the mortal realm—just the trinkets he used to casually throw at Song Qiutong to humor her were priceless treasures. And so his eyes were round with amusement as he chewed idly on his chopstick, laughing to Chu Wanning in a low voice, "Shizun Shizun, check it out, that dude thinks he can get rid of us with just fifteen hundred."

Chu Wanning shot him a glance, then lifted the bamboo curtain to look downstairs.

There was a crowd in the main hall. They were dressed in plain clothes that concealed their sect, but every one of them had a high-quality blade glinting at their waist and a faewolf slobbering by their side. The value of the blades were indeterminate, while the faewolves had a market price but were next to impossible to come by—getting just one was already no small feat for a minor sect; for these people to each have one, they were clearly from a prestigious sect.

All the guests stopped eating to stare apprehensively at them. It was so quiet inside the hall that one could hear a pin drop.

Suddenly, a white blur flashed into the inn, bright as snow. There was a beat of silence as everyone took in what it was, then a burst of frantic clamoring as all of them scrambled backwards away from it, with the more easily spooked people shrieking: "M-monster!!"

It was a snow-white faewolf, at least three people tall, eyes crimson as blood, coat glossy as satin, fangs the length of a grown man's arm glistening coldly.

But on that massive, vicious beast sat a handsome young man with an arrogant expression, casually reclined with one leg over the other. He was dressed in a set of sleek hunting gear over scarlet raiments with gold-embroidered sleeves, and had on a silver helmet emblazoned with a lion swallowing the sun, a lock of red tassel hanging from its crown. His weapon, a jasper bow, laid over his knees.

As soon as those showy cultivators saw him, all of them dropped to one knee with hand pressed to their chest, saying in unison: "Greeting the young master!"

"Alright, already." The young man waved his hand, looking irritated, "Can't even take care of a little thing like this, greeting my ass!"

"Pfft." Mo Ran couldn't help laughing as he remarked quietly to Chu Wanning, "If they're greeting ass, then doesn't that make him the ass?"

"....."

The young man sitting stop the soft fur at the faewolf's nape looked cross indeed: "Where's the boss of this shabby place?"

The innkeeper was frightened, but still stepped up with forced calmness, smiling apologetically: "That wold be this humble one, my lord."

“Oh.” He shot her a glance, “I’m going to stay here tonight, but I’m not used to having this many people around. Have a talk with them, I’ll make up your losses.”

“But my lord……”

“I know it puts you in a tough spot. Here, take this and give each table an apology on my behalf. And if anyone really doesn’t want to leave, then just let them be.” He tossed the innkeeper a pouch, and she opened it to find it filled with golden nine-turn returning pills—these pills allow the taker’s cultivation to grow in leaps and bounds for ten days, and a single pill cost more than two thousand gold on the market. The innkeeper was shocked by this extravagant display at first, and then discreetly breathed a sigh of relief.

No cultivator would turn down something like this; with these pills, it would be perfectly acceptable to ask everyone to leave.

The innkeeper went around the tables apologizing and compensating, and the young man yawned before glaring down at his attendants: “The lot of you are all useless, do I really have to do everything myself.”

The attendants looked at one another, then there was a scattering of “.....Gongzi is ever brilliant and indomitable.”

The guests dispersed in short order; other than Chu Wanning and Mo Ran, who didn’t care for money or cultivation pills, everyone else accepted the recompense and left with zero complaints to go stay elsewhere instead.

The innkeeper reported back: “Gongzi, everyone left, but two guests declined, saying it’s already late and one of them is unwell, so they don’t want to go elsewhere……”

“Nevermind them, no need to hassle an invalid.” The young man waved his hand, unconcerned, “Long as they don’t bother me.”

Chu Wanning, the invalid: “……”

The innkeeper beamed and said warmly: “Gongzi is such a kind person. It’s getting late, would Gongzi like to rest or have something to eat first?”

The young man replied: “I’m hungry. No need for rest, bring me a meal.”

“Of course, my humble store will certainly bring Gongzi only the best. Our chef’s signature dishes are crab [xie fen] metaball, pork trotter aspic……”

“Angry [also pronounced xie fen] meatball?” The young man was clearly not from the south and didn’t much care for southern dishes. He blinked at the name of the dish, then waved his hand with a frown, “Pass, can’t even understand these ridiculous names.”

Maybe he was just some insanely rich merchant, and not a high-born young master after all.

Innkeep: “.....Then what would Gongzi like? We will do our utmost.”

“Easy.” The young man gestured at his attendants, “Five catties of beef for each of them, ten for me, and then a catty of soju and two legs of lamb.

That’ll do, just to tide us over, shouldn’t eat too much late at night anyway.”

Mo Ran: “Wow……”

He turned to Chu Wanning, thinking to make fun of the guy’s bottomless appetite, only to find Chu Wanning staring fixedly at the young man with a hazy, indecipherable expression.

Mo Ran asked absently: “Shizun seems to know him?”

“Mn.”

He was just offhandedly asking, and hadn’t expected Chu Wanning to actually know him. Mo Ran tripped over his words in surprise: “Wha? Th-then who is he?”

“The only son of Rufeng Sect’s leader.” Chu Wanning said softly, “Nangong Si.”

“.....” No wonder Chu Wanning knew him, he used to be with Linyi Rufeng Sect after all, of course he would know what the sect leader’s son looked like. And it was also no wonder that he himself didn’t know the guy, since he was already dead from some illness when he was going around butchering Rufeng Sect in the previous lifetime.

Back then, he had thought that this son of the sect leader must’ve been some sickly cripple, but the guy in front of him now was healthy, lively, and had ego to spare.

……How could a guy like this die of illness? Some kind of sudden plague maybe?

Downstairs, Nangong Si was digging in happily, inhaling all ten catties of beef and both legs of lamb in no time at all, and gulping down no few bowls of wine on top. Mo Ran watched speechlessly from upstairs.

“Shizun, isn’t Rufeng Sect all about refinement and stuff? What’s up with their young master then? He’s even less proper than our Xue Mengmeng.”

Chu Wanning shoved his head away from where it had nosed over, even though his own face was still turned to peer at the scene downstairs: “Don’t just make up nicknames for your fellow disciples as you like.”

Mo Ran laughed ‘hehe’ and was just about to say something else when he paused, suddenly realizing something. Chu Wanning’s finger was pressed against his forehead, pushing him away, his sleeve draping softly over his face like a wisp of mist in the process; it was made of some kind of extremely light material, like silk or satin but not quite, and felt both warm and cool, almost like water.

Back in the room earlier, when he was reeling with desire and couldn’t get Chu Wanning’s robes off, he thought it was just on too tight.

But looking carefully at it now, Mo Ran discovered that the robes were actually made of “frozen mist silk” from Kunlun Taxue Palace.

Kunlun Taxue Palace was the most aloof and detached sect in the upper cultivation realm; its disciples were inducted at five, and were sent into secluded cultivation in the sacred land of Kunlun one year later, where they must stay until they manage to cultivate their spiritual cores. Although spiritual core was innate and the cultivation was just to awaken it, it was still a long process that often took ten to fifteen years. Since others were barred entry during this time, the disciples' needs became a problem—food was one thing, since the sacred land was adjacent the Wangmu Lake so the Taxue Palace disciples could always go fishing for food, but it's not like they could just weave their own clothes.

And so the "frozen mist silk" was created.

Clothes made from this silk were not only light as mist, they were also naturally enchanted to be unstainable by common dust and grime so as to not need washing unless splashed by things like blood.

But the most amazing property of this silk was its ability to morph in accordance with the wearer's body, which was absolutely necessary for the disciples of Taxue Palace who enter the sacred land as small children at five, and couldn't leave until they were young adults of fifteen or twenty. Clothes made of "frozen mist silk" would grow with them so that they have fitting clothes during those long years.

——But what was Chu Wanning doing wearing robes made of this special material?

Mo Ran squinted, a spark flashing through his mind. He suddenly felt like something was off, like he had been mistaken about something from the very start, but what was it……

“Excuse me, may I ask where the innkeeper is?”

Mo Ran’s thoughts were interrupted by a confident yet friendly and courteous voice.

He looked down to see the group Rufeng Sect disciples that were at Xuanyuan Pavilion earlier. The one at their lead was leaning halfway inside, heron-patterned mantle lightly adrift as he held the door curtain open with his sword.

“Aren’t they Ye Wangxi’s people?” Mo Ran perked up immediately.

Rufeng Sect had seventy two cities, so its disciples often didn’t even know one another, and Nangong Si was sitting by himself in a private room with his back to the door, so the group of newcomers glanced over their fellow disciples of the same sect inside the inn, dressed in plain clothes, and didn’t recognize any of them.

Ye Wangxi vs Nangong Si, this was sure to be entertaining.

“My apologies, but we’ve already been reserved for tonight.” The innkeeper hurried over while silently cursing herself for forgetting to close shop, “Please look elsewhere, we’re truly so sorry.”

The young man at the lead looked troubled: “ Sigh , what to do…we’ve already checked the other inns, they’re all full up. There’s a frail young lady with us who’s in dire need of some rest, so we were hoping to find somewhere for her to get a good night’s sleep. May I trouble you to ask if the one who reserved this inn would consider letting us have a few rooms?”

“That…... he probably won’t be willing.”

The young man bowed and implored politely: “Please ask anyway. It’s alright if he’s unwilling.”

The innkeeper didn’t even get a chance to respond when one of Nangong Si’s attendants at a table nearby slapped the table and stood up in a rage: “What is there to ask! Get out, out! Don’t disturb our young master while he’s eating!”

“That’s right! Aren’t you embarrassed, taking a woman to bed while wearing Rufeng Sect’s uniform, dragging your sect name through the mud!”

The young man hadn’t expected such a misunderstanding, turning bright red as he said indignantly: “Why do you slander us so? We of Rufeng Sect have always been principled and virtuous, of course we wouldn’t conduct any such impropriety. This young lady was kindly saved by our young master, how dare you speak such nonsense?”

“Your young master?” Nangong Si’s attendant glanced toward the private room, and, seeing that his young master was still drinking his wine, taking no notice of them, took it as silent permission to chase them out, so he relaxed and snickered loudly, “Everyone knows there’s only one young master of Rufeng Sect, so I wonder who this young master of yours is?”

“That would be me, Ye Wangxi of Rufeng Sect.” A gentle, graceful voice sounded from outside the door.

Every head in the room turned toward the door: “Ye-gongzi——”

Ye Wangx was dressed in all black, his handsome face taking on a note of delicacy in the candle light. He stepped inside, followed by a veiled woman with nervous eyes—Song Qiutong.

“.....” The vein at Mo Ran’s temple throbbed viciously at the mere sight of her.

Her again. Just his luck…...

Nangong Si’s attendants were momentarily taken aback by Ye Wangxi’s appearance, then contempt surfaced on the faces of some of the less-composed ones.

Ye Wangxi was the adopted son of Rufeng Sect's chief elder, and used to be attached to the the sect's "shadow city." As implied by the name, the shadow city specialized in training the shadow guard#. The leader of Rufeng Sect was originally having him trained to be the next leader of the shadow guard, but his cultivation nature turned out to be unsuitable for the cultivation method of the shadow guard, so he was reassigned to the main city and now acted as the sect leader's right-hand man.

Due to his upbringing as a shadow guard, Ye Wangxi habitually kept a low profile, and very few people knew of him. However, the sect leader regarded him extremely highly, so much so that, in recent years, there had even been rumors within the sect that Ye Wangxi was actually the sect leader's bastard child. Perhaps because of this, Nangong Si, the legitimate heir, was on bad terms with Ye Wangxi.

Since their young master disliked him, it was only natural that the attendants had low opinions of him as well.

They were junior to Ye-gongzi and technically shouldn't offend him, but they were Nangong Si's personal attendants and reported directly to him, so after a long moment of awkward, frozen silence, a less reserved one of the attendants laughed coldly and said: "Well, Ye-gongzi, please take your leave, I'm afraid there's no place for you here."

"Gongzi, since they already said there's no space, l-let's go look elsewhere." Song Qiutong tugged at the hem of Ye Wangxi's clothes with slender

fingers, a note of fright in her voice, “And this place is so expensive, I dare not waste any more of Gongzi’s money……”

Upstairs, Mo Ran rolled his eyes—it’s always that weak, pitiful-sounding tone with her; she had tricked him with it back then, and now she was tricking Ye Wangxi the same way.

Ye Wangxi was just about to speak when an enormous white shadow darted out from the inner room, headed straight for Ye Wangxi’s back.

Song Qiutong called out in alarm: “Gongzi watch out!!!”

“Awoooooh! Woooooh!!!”

Howling loudly, a snow white faewolf bolted to Ye Wangxi and started running circles around him excitedly.

“……”

Everyone was silent.

Ye Wangxi looked down at the three-people-tall faewolf that was currently rolling around on the floor stickily, surprised: “Naobaijin?”

It was Nangong Si’s faewolf mount, named Naobaijin [cornelian platinum/white-gold] for its scarlet eyes the color of cornelian, its coat

white as snow, and the gold of its claws.

If Naobaijin was here, then so was Nangong Si. Ye Wangxi obliged the big furry head that was nudging over for pats while looking around.

Shaa ——

The bamboo curtain was lifted by a hand extending from a scarlet, gold-embroidered sleeve.

Leaning idly against the wall of the private room with his arms crossed, irritated expression half-covered by the bamboo curtain, and still holding a bottle of wine in hand, Nangong Si shot Ye Wangxi a glance and sneered: “Interesting, why do you always show up wherever I go? With the way you’re always trailing after me, where am I to put my face if people start gossiping about us?”

Author’s Notes:

Wolf cub: I'll give you five hundred, leave.

Pupper: No.

Wolf cub: I'll give you a thousand, leave!

Pupper: No!

Wolf cub: I'll give you a thousand five hundred! Are you going to leave!

Pupper: In my previous life, this entire world was this venerable one's, you can shut it, you short-lived bastard!

Wolf cub: You dare insult me! *&# ! &* Awooo!!!!!!

Pupper: Woof woof arf arf arf!!

Lady boss: 'Ello? Animal Control? There are two rabid dogs fighting in my shop, yes, one's a husky, another's an Alaskan...yes, yes, yes, that Alaskan is also carrying a Samoyed called Naobaijin...yes, all three look like they've never gotten their rabies shot, very dangerous…

Ch.86 This Venerable One's Ex-Wife Isn’t Low-Maintenance

“.....” Ye Wangxi choked visibly at his words, but didn’t get mad, instead taking a moment to gather his bearings before saying, “You misunderstood. I’m here on the sect leader’s orders to buy something from Xuanyuan Pavilion, not following you”

Mo Ran and Chu Wanning exchanged a glance.

——The holy weapon.

Nangong Si swung the jar of wine danging from his hand, his face darkening even more: “So my Father’s asking you to fetch his things for him now, huh? What, do I have no hands or no legs that I can’t do it for him?”

“.....A-Si, that’s not what I meant.”

“Who said you could call me that?” Nangong Si lowered his brows in a scowl, lightning crackling in his eyes, “Ye-gongzi, don’t think you can be so impudent with me just because Father is blind enough to be friendly with you…… aren’t you disgusted of yourself?”

“I call you so at the sect leader’s behest. If you dislike it, you can bring it up with him.” Ye Wangxi paused for a few moments, then said, “What’s the point in taking it out on me.”

“Don’t you use my Father against me!”

Nangong Si drew in a breath and forced himself to calm down. There was a cold light in his dark eyes, like a silvery moon in a night sky saturated with beacon smoke.

“Ye-gongzi.” He seemed to be dragging the word out, “I’m afraid that Father told you to call me A-Si because he has certain misconceptions about your position in the sect, but I’d advise you to know your place. Don’t take a mile just because you were given an inch—after all, no matter what kind of facade you put on, you’ll never be my equal by reason of your birth alone.”

A hint of something dark seemed to flash across Ye Wangxi’s refined features. He lowered his thick curtain of lashes and said, quietly: “The young master is right, but I……have never once thought to be the young master’s equal.”

The change in the form of address made him feel a bit better. Nangong Si lifted the jar and downed some of its contents; the wine burned its way down his throat, but he always could hold his liquor. He stared at Ye Wangxi for a while longer, then scoffed and waved a hand: “That’s what I thought. Just look at the way you are now, how could you possibly even……”

He caught himself before letting slip something he shouldn’t in public and abruptly pressed his lips together, saying no more.

“.....”

As for Ye Wangxi, even after being humiliated and insulted so, his lashes were still lowered, and no one could see if it was anger or indignation in his eyes. He gave the onlookers nothing beyond a calm, gentle face, dauntless yet reserved.

The atmosphere was uneasy to the extreme.

Nangong Si looked around awkwardly for a bit before his gaze landed on the woman behind Ye Wangxi. As if to cover up the near blunder just now, he cleared his throat and tipped his chin toward the woman, asking: “Someone you saved?”

“Mn.”

“Where’s she even from? Don’t just go bailing out random people.”

“It’s alright, she’s from Xuanyuan Pavilion’s auction.”

Nangongsi had no interest in the auction, nor did he waste any energy looking into it, but he couldn’t help his surprise at hearing that Song Qiutong was bought from there. His originally unconcerned gaze becoming sharp all of a sudden as he stared at Song Qiutong’s face for a while before saying: “So is this thing a Slave-Boned, or a Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast?”

In the cultivation world, only two types of people could be openly bought and sold: Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feasts, and the Slave-Boned.

The Slave-Boned are those born of the union between humans and demons. People fear the demonic nature of such crossbreeds, so once they’re found out, their vital energy is destroyed and a curse is used to put a slave mark on the bone of their shoulder blades, and they are henceforth condemned to servitude.

But the Slave-Boned don’t go for much and are by no means rare; they usually just end up being either servants of the big sects or playthings of the rich and powerful. Xuanyuan Pavilion wouldn’t even bother auctioning some run-of-the-mill thing like that.

Sure enough, Ye Wangxi replied: “Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast.”

Nangong Si, suddenly interested, walked past Ye Wangxi to look at Song Qiutong, circling around her like he was inspecting merchandise. He frowned: “What’s wrong with its leg? Is it defective or something?”

“.....She was injured when they captured her. We applied a salve, it’s healing.” Ye Wangxi paused, “That’s why we can’t walk around too much and were hoping to stay here tonight.”

Nangong Si said nothing, only narrowing his eyes before suddenly diving down to the side of Song Qiutong’s neck and taking a big whiff like some feral wolf. The lecher-like move frightened her so much she paled instantly, frozen in place clutching her clothes like she’s about to faint.

“Doesn’t smell any different from normal people.” He rubbed his nose and sneezed, “And some kinda perfume powder……”

Waving his hand, Nangong Si asked offhandedly: “How much?”

“Fifty million.”

“Silver?”

“Gold.”

Nangong Si’s eyes shot wide open: “Ye Wangxi are you crazy? Do you know how many top-grade whetstones that is? And you fucking buy a woman to bring back to me? What, is Rufeng Sect’s money not money to you?”

“I didn’t use the sect’s money.” Ye Wangxi paused for a moment, then continued, “And I didn’t buy her for you.”

“You——!” The anger that had only just subsided roared right back to life, and Nangong Si snarled, “I see how it is!” He turned to glare at Song Qiutong, getting more irritated the more he looked, and that veil just straight-up pissed him off, so he ordered, “You, take that shitty rag off your face!”

Song Qiutong, spooked, clutched tightly at Ye Wangxi’s sleeve, shrinking behind him and saying in a pitiful voice: “Ye-gongzi, I……I don’t want to……”

Ye Wangxi’s slender figure wasn’t as tall or muscular as Nangong Si, but there was no fear in his eyes as he tilted his head up slightly to look at the other: “Young master, since she doesn’t want to, just let her be.”

“You talk too much. You saved her, so she owes Rufeng Sect her life, and that means she has to listen to me. Take it off!”

“I saved her, yes, but the moment I did, I also set her free.” Ye Wangxi said, “So please don’t force her, young master.”

“Ye Wangxi! What the hell!” Nangong Si punched the door frame in anger, “What do you take me for? You just really gotta go against me huh? If I tell her to take it off then she damn well better take it off. I’ll let you guys stay if she takes the damn thing off, else get the fuck out!”

Ye Wangxi only sighed almost imperceptibly before turning to Song Qiutong: “Let’s leave.”

This time Nangong Si wasn’t the only one to choke; Ye Wangxi had the holy weapon with him, there’s no way they could let him go just like this. Chu Wanning immediately said: “Go stop him.”

“Ok ok.” Mo Ran was just thinking the same thing anyway, but then he suddenly paused, “Shizun, where would he sleep though?”

“He can have half of our room.”

“.....Uh.” Mo Ran looked uneasy for some reason, “That’s probably not a good idea.”

Chu Wanning gaze flicked upward slightly: “Why not?”

“There are some things Shizun doesn’t know about, but it’s best if we don’t stay in the same room as him. Besides, he won’t agree to it anyway, since he’s actually……”

He was just getting to the important part when he was interrupted by the sound of Nangong Si kicking over a table downstairs, cups and dishes clattering to the floor, then a screech as he dragged a bench over and put

his foot on it, bellowing: “Who said you could just leave?! What are you, revolting or some shit? Get back here!”

“.....” Even Nangong Si’s attendants looked awkward now.

Young master……wasn’t it you who just told them to get out?

But Ye Wangxi seemed long-used to Nangong Si’s unreasonable temper fits, pretending not to have heard anything as he tapped Song Qiutong on the shoulder and gestured at her to ignore the crazy person behind them.

“Ye Wangxi!”

“.....”

“Ye Wangxi!!!!”

“.....”

“YE——WANG——XI!!!!!!!!!!”

The vein at Ye Wangxi’s temple twitched and he looked back despite himself, only to be unexpectedly met with an oncoming wine jar hurtling directly toward him. Pupils contracting, he was just about to dodge when a blur of white flashed in front of him.

“AH——!”

A delicate voice cried out in pain, startling everyone in the room, especially Ye Wangxi and Nangong Si.

Song Qiutong had blocked the hit for Ye Wangxi in the nick of time, and was bleeding profusely where the heavy jar of red clay had hit her on the forehead. She touched the blood with a trembling hand fair as jade, and tears of pain immediately began to fall.

“Don’t touch it; let me see.”

“I’m okay, as long as Gongzi didn’t get injured……”

“Can’t you talk without throwing things?” Ye Wangxi said in a sullen tone, shooting Nangong Si a blame-laden glare before turning to his own attendant, “Get the Jinchuang medicine#.”

“Gongzi, we ran out.” The attendant said quietly, “Should I go buy some?”

Nangong Si hadn’t expected this to happen either; he forced himself to remain calm, but there was a bit of guilt in his eyes. He mumbled with a stiff expression: “I, I have some…… A-Lan, fetch my medicine bag.”

Ye Wangxi, still angry, pressed his lips into a thin line and ignored him.

Nangong Si stood there stiffly holding the little bottle of medicine for a good while, but Ye Wangxi didn’t so much as glance at him the entire time. He couldn’t let down his pride, so he shoved the bottle roughly at Song Qiutong instead: “Here, use it if you want, I don’t care.”

Song Qiutong was like a frightened little deer, first looking shakily toward Ye Wangxi, only accepting the medicine when she saw that he was silent but did not stop her, and then even lowered her head in a bow to the person who had injured her, saying quietly: “Thank you, Nangong-gongzi.”

Not having expected the girl whose skull he had nearly cracked to thank him, Nangong Si was taken aback for a second before quickly snapping out of it and waving a hand with an awkward cough: “No problem.”

That night, Ye Wangxi’s group ended up staying at the inn after all.

A multitude of candles flickered in the inn like a scattering of stars in the sky.

Mo Ran sat by the window with his cheek propped up and his thoughts wandering. It had been nearly two years since his rebirth, and so many things have happened quite differently from how they had in the last lifetime; it was strange, watching the same people do different things.

Song Qiutong, Ye Wangxi, Bu’gui……

With the passing of time, these familiar people and object from his past life had once again reappeared in this life. Only this time, he absolutely will not take Song Qiutong to be his wife again. As for Ye Wangxi, his name will soon resound throughout the cultivation world, second to none but Chu Wanning.

And then there was Bu’gui.

Agitation flooded his chest when he thought about the long blade that had accompanied him through his previous life.

“Shizun.”

“Yes?”

“You’ve been drawing that talisman for an hour already, isn’t it done yet?”

“Almost.” Chu Wanning said. By the dim light of the candle, he carefully put down the finishing strokes with a brush dipped in cinnabar to reveal a vivid, elaborate drawing of a soaring dragon.

Mo Ran shuffled over to look.

“What’s that?”

“Rising Dragon Array.” Chu Wanning answered.

“What does it do?”

“It can detect all spells in the area, big or small. If our mysterious person intends to use the holy weapon to test for spiritual essence, there is sure to be some kind of trace left on the weapon. This way, we’ll know if the weapon’s appearance was mere coincidence or part of his plan.”

“Wow, neat. But then why didn’t Shizun use this back at Xuanyuan Pavilion?”

“.....You’ll understand once I awaken it.”

Chu Wanning pricked his finger and brushed the blood across one of the dragon’s scales. The little dragon on the paper instantly began to glow

golden, its eyes and tail moving around nimbly.

Chu Wanning spoke: “Are you a real dragon?”

A squeaky voice came from the paper: “Yup yup, this Venerable One is a real dragon.”

“Prove it.”

“Stupid mortal! What’s there to doubt!”

“I’ll know you to be a real dragon if you can jump out of the page.”

“What’s so hard about that! Just give this Venerable One a quick sec! Hah!”

There was a flash of golden light, and a mighty little dragon the size of the palm leaped out the paper, wiggling its body and baring its fangs, and flew a circle around Chu Wanning, quite pleased with itself, making a ruckus as it boasted: “Hahaha, hahaha, I’m a dragon big and real, big and real, I know lots of secrets, lots of secrets, but I’m not gonna tell you, not gonna tell you, not, gonna, tell, you!”

Chu Wanning’s eyes, clear as an icy lake, swept coldly over the little eel before covering it under a cupped hand and turning to Mo Ran with a deadpan face: “You see?”

“I see……”

“Let go! You stupid mortal! You’re messing up this Venerable One’s whiskies!”

Chu Wanning lifted his hand and poked curtly at the blood-colored scale at its throat: “Shut up and get to work.”

Author’s Notes:

Nangong Si

Courtesy name: Wuju

Nickname: None

Occupation: The heir of Rufeng Sect

To put it simply: An officialling

Social Appearance: A youthful, handsome talent of the upper cultivation realm who leads hordes of fans

To put it simply: A gangster with a bunch of underlings

Current favourite: Naobaijin

Favourite food: Pork ribs

Dislike: Vegetables

Height: 185cm

Ch.87 This Venerable One Doesn't Want You to Take Any More Disciples

The little dragon went and returned like the wind, zooming back in through the window only ten minutes later to holler: “I got it, I got it, so many magic traces in this inn, wahahaha!”

“Hey lil’ eel, what are you, afraid the neighbors won’t hear? Yell louder.” Leaning on the table, Mo Ran extended a finger and stroked the little dragon’s body. Its tail swung over with a woosh to smack his hand, but didn’t hurt at all, only tickled instead—it was made of paper, after all.

“Don’t touch this Venerable One, you annoying prettyboy! This Venerable One has yet to take a wife, can’t just let you cop a feel like that!”

Mo Ran burst out laughing: “Wait what now? A paper dragon like you wants a wife?”

“Wha——! Puh puh puh! Who’re you calling paper! You damn mutt!”

“Huh, how come even you call me that? Is your surname Xue or something?”

“Xue? Hmph, idiot brat, this Venerable One is the Dragon of the Candle, mighty and unmatched, splitting the heavens and cleaving the earth, day and night as I open and close mine eyes, summer and winter with the draw of mine breath! My name is Zhu Jiuyin, and don’t you forget it!”

“.....Yeeeah, didn’t get a word of that.”

“Wayayaya!” The little dragon did cartwheels in anger, smashing into the candlestick with its little head the width of two fingers, making the flame flicker and the wax sway. Mo Ran hurriedly went to steady the candle, but the little dragon bit his hand as soon as he reached out, not that it felt like much of anything, being paper and all. Zhu Jiuyin got picked it up by the tail and flung to the side by Mo Ran, going splat against the collars of Chu Wanning’s robes and drooping glumly there.

“Chu Wanning.” The little dragon lifted one of its whiskies and prodded him weakly, “That mangy mutt hit me.”

Chu Wanning didn’t even feel like wasting any breath on it, peeling it off himself and casually slapping it onto the table: “What spells did you find?”

“Hmph hmph, you gotta call this Venerable One ‘Dragon-Taizi’ three times first, then——”

Chu Wanning pinned it with a cold glare: “Speak.”

“.....”

The little dragon bloated with anger at the disrespect, its whiskers pointing straight up as it glared at Chu Wanning with its beady little eyes, that venerable mouth of its hanging half open, huffing and puffing until it heaved up a gush of ink.

Chu Wanning narrowed his eyes: “Waste any more ink and I will set you on fire.” He reached for its tail as if to dangle it over the fire, “Then you’ll be a real candle dragon.”

“Alright alright alright! You win! You win! I’ll tell you! I’ll tell you alright? Jeez!”

The little dragon spit a couple more times, sending some more ink splattering while muttering not-at-all-discreetly: “So damn mean, no wonder I never see no wife, even after all these years!”

“Eh?” Mo Ran blinked and snuck a glance at Chu Wanning, grinning cheekily, “Didn’t Shizun say something about a Shiniang?”

“.....” Chu Wanning ignored him, sword brows lowering as he snapped at the little dragon, “Less talking, more writing!”

“Hmph! Stinky man!”

Plopping onto the writing paper laid out on the table, the little dragon gathered ink in its claw using magic and began to scrawl messily on the page, muttering the whole time.

It couldn’t be helped that it couldn’t simply name the spells that it saw——there was a limit to how much information a brain of paper could process, after all, it’d be too much to expect it to figure out what the spells were based on the leftover magical traces, so it could only draw them out. Luckily, Chu Wanning was more than capable of discerning the original spells, watching the little dragon scrawling along with lowered lashes and naming them as he went.

The little dragon drew a waning moon.

Chu Wanning: “Soothing spell. Someone here has insomnia.”

The little dragon drew the seven stars of the Big Dipper.

“Celestial defense array. Someone has defenses set up.”

The little dragon drew a rouge box.

“.....radiant countenance spell.”

“Pfft,” Mo Ran laughed, raising his hand to say: “I know this one! A simple beautification and skin care spell that girls use at night; probably that Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast?”

Chu Wanning didn’t comment, seeming a bit agitated that every spell so far has been irrelevant and inconsequential. He furrowed his brows and tapped a slender finger against the table: “Next.”

The little dragon drew a heart.

Mo Ran wondered: “What’s this?”

“Heart-clearing spell.” Chu Wanning said, frustrated, “It’s unimportant. Someone’s meditating, is all. Next.”

The little dragon drew a dog head, all crooked.

“……Beast-taming spell……” Chu Wanning put a hand to his brow, “You, pick the important spells to draw. Skip the trivial ones for cosmetics and playing with dogs and helping people sleep and whatnot. Next.”

The little dragon looked up and fumed: “Well aren’t you picky!”

“Draw!”

Out of fear of getting tossed into the candle flame and becoming a real “candle dragon”, the little paper dragon could only huffily wipe its little claws across the paper again, this time drawing an extremely complicated, mysterious-looking array.

“Looks like two circles, with a cross, and then a vertical line straight down, some kind of Yin-Yang Divination looking thing?” Mo Ran’s eyes opened wide, “Shizun, could this be what our guy put on the weapon……”

“No.” Chu Wanning only took one glance and he could already feel a headache coming on, “Sound-changing spell.”

“Oh? What’s it for?”

“Some people want to change their own voice, either because they dislike it or else out of some other necessity. This sound-changing spell lets them do that, it’s not a difficult spell.” Chu Wanning paused, then said, “But it damages the throat if used for an extended period of time, such that it’s very difficult to go back to the original voice……There’s something unusual about this spell, I wonder who’s using it.”

But Mo Ran only grinned: “Ah, so that’s what it’s for. Makes sense then.”

Chu Wanning sighed and was just about to move on when he paused, eyes flickering as if realizing something, and turned abruptly to look at Mo Ran.

“What do you mean it makes sense…...do you know something?”

“What could I possibly know? I was just thinking it’s pretty normal for someone to dislike their own voice. Who knows, maybe it’s that Song girl, maybe her voice is actually hoarse and grating, and she wanted to make it sound sweeter?”

“……” Chu Wanning smoothed down his sleeve, “Thinking about nonsense all day.” Then he turned back to the little dragon: “Next.”

The little dragon drew another heart.

Mo Ran: “Oi, didn’t Shizun just tell you to skip things like heart-clearing spells?”

“Puh, what do you know, brat.” The little dragon shot him a seething glare, then suddenly smacked its tail onto the paper, putting an inky blotch on the heart and then proceeding to spread it around until the entire heart was colored black.

“What’s this? Black-hearted spell?”

Chu Wanning seemed a little awkward, and was silent for a while before saying: “No. It should be an affection spell.”

“What’s that?”

“It’s similar to the Xuanyuan Pavilion’s pill of obsessive affection.” Chu Wanning answered, “It bewitches a person to develop feelings of love and affection toward the caster, things like that. Generally used by women.”

Mo Ran opened his eyes wide: “No way? Could it be that Song Qiuting……”

“How would i know about such things.” Chu Wanning seemed irate, flinging his broad sleeve and saying, “Other people’s love affairs are none of my business, why would I care who’s messing around with whom.”

“But Chu Wanning ah, are you sure you don’t care about this affection spell?” The little dragon said gleefully, tail swaying this way and that, “This one’s pretty interesting if you ask me, if you’re willing to call me Dragon-Taizi three times, then I’ll……”

Chu Wanning looked down at it with murder in his eyes: “Shut up and draw the next one.”

“Hmph! You’ll regret this!”

“Are you going to draw or not?”

But the little dragon stopped drawing, sitting down with a plop and scratching its belly with its little claw.

Chu Wanning said coldly: “What, out of ink?”

“Idiot, out of spells.” The little dragon rolled its eyes, “I’ve drawn so many already, and it’s still not enough for you? There’s no more, that’s all there is, this inn is perfectly clean aside from these.”

Both Chu Wanning and Mo Ran’s expressions shifted slightly. Mo Ran asked: “That’s it?”

“That’s it.”

Chu Wanning: “There isn’t one for assessing spiritual foundations?”

“Nope.”

The master and disciple exchanged a glance, disbelief written on both of their faces. If the mysterious person was using the auction to find another spiritual essence, then he must have put some kind of assessment spell on the holy weapon, but now it appeared that the holy weapon had no spell at all on it——were they mistaken then? Did the long blade’s appearance have nothing to do with the mysterious person?

Noting their silence, the little dragon soared into mid air and flew around left and right, whining: “Oi, pay attention to this Venerable One, drawing is exhausting you know! Where’s this Venerable One’s round of applause?”

Chu Wanning was already irritated to begin with; at its hollering, he simply lifted a hand with a sweep of his sleeve and summoned a yellow talisman in the air. The little dragon shrieked miserably at the very sight of it, yelling: “I don’t wanna I don’t wanna I don’t wanna I don’t wanna!!!!” But got sucked into the talisman anyway, turning back into a drawing. A tap of Chu Wanning’s fingertip, and the drawing itself also faded slowly away.

It kept squeezing its eyes in affront at Chu Wanning even as it was disappearing.

Chu Wanning said: “I’ll call you when you’re needed.”

Tears streamed down the little dragon’s face: “You only ever remember me when you have need of me! Chu Wanning, you’re heartless……”

“Get lost already!” Chu Wanning was originally still being civil to it, but his brows dipped in anger at these words and he folded the talisman flat in half with an unceremonious slap of his hand before tucking it back into his sleeve.

Nighttime. Chu Wanning slept on the bed, Mo Ran took the floor.

Both troubled with worries.

They hadn’t expected the holy weapon to be free of any spells whatsoever. Did the mysterious person have some way of gauging spiritual foundation that they didn’t know about, or was he just not in a hurry to find a replacement with strong spiritual energy?

“Mo Ran.”

He called to him in the darkness.

Mo Ran responded reflexively with a “Hm?”

“Let’s go back to Sisheng Peak tomorrow.”

Mo Ran’s eyes opened.

“Huh?”

“If that person would let an opportunity like the Xuanyuan auction just slip past, then he probably already has some other method of searching. I’m afraid we won’t find out much just carrying on like this. So let’s go back to Sisheng Peak first, I’ll have the sect leader message the other nine great sects in secret to check for any spiritual essences within their own sects, and to safeguard any that they find. Better than sitting on our hands hoping he just happens to show up.”

“Will that be okay? What if the mysterious person is one of the sect leaders?”

“That’s very unlikely, but it doesn’t matter even if he is. He already knows we’re after him anyway.”

“But how will Shizun make all those sect leaders listen to uncle?” Mo Ran asked, puzzled, “Tell them everything?”

“That’s not necessary, and they might not believe it anyway.” Chu Wanning replied mildly, “I have my ways.”

Mo Ran asked: “Which is?”

“I’ll take disciples.”

“!!!!!”

“I’ll have the sect leader tell the other sects that the frequent breaches in the ghost realm barrier poses a great danger to all, and that Yuheng of Sisheng Peak intends to accept up to five additional disciples to train in the use of techniques such as the Shangqing Barrier and the Shisha Barrier.” Chu Wanning said quietly, “Those sects have tried time and again to invite me to teach, specifically for these barrier techniques. If I put out the word that I’m willing to impart these techniques, they’ll come. And, since I accept only those with outstanding spiritual foundations, they’ll have to test all of their disciples to select the candidates, thereby fulfilling our goal.”

But Mo Ran didn’t reply, his face going pale in the darkness: “Y-you’re going to take more disciples?”

“If fate would have it.”

Chu Wanning rolled over, his voice quietening as if getting tired.

“I’ll take the names of the candidates and have them practice standard barrier techniques by themselves first. If any among them manage to persevere for three years or so, then why not……”

In the darkness, listening to the voice from the bed slowly drifting off, Mo Ran felt like a jar of vinegar had been spilled in his chest, so sour it made his heart ache.

Take on more disciples?

You only ever took three in the last lifetime, picky as you are, how come you're not being picky now? How could you take on more disciples just like that!

He kept wanting to say something to him, but every time the words got to his lips, they never got past.

Chu Wanning fell asleep, blissfully unaware of the sea of vinegar raging within Mo Ran.

It was cold at night. Mo Ran pulled on an outer garment and go up, calling to Chu Wanning in a low voice a couple of times to make sure he was really asleep, then quietly opened the door and snuck out of the room.

The halls of the inn were still and silent. A few red silk lanterns glowed peacefully with a low light, gentle circles of orange reflecting on the wooden floor like so many ripples.

Chu Wanning may have already tested the holy weapon.

But Mo Ran had yet to test his Bu'gui.

A holy weapon within a hundred feet of its master could be called to his side with a simple spell. Mo Ran didn't get a chance to check if it really was his weapon from the past life back at Xuanyuan Pavilion, how could he possibly miss this chance now?

His fingertip glowed with a crimson light.

Lowering his eyelashes, Mo Ran said in a low voice: “Bu’gui, come!”

There was nothing but silence for a few moments, but then the muffled sound of a blade rang out suddenly from somewhere in the distance. The sound was barely audible but it reverberated in his ears, hammering his heart.

Mo Ran’s eyes shot open: “Bu’gui!”

It was Bu’gui. The long blade was struggling, crying blood, its deep roar racing to him across oceans of blood, across lifetimes. It was as if he could hear Bu’gui weeping and crying for him, but it was trapped, confined by something Mo Ran knew nothing of.

It could feel its master’s call but could not answer. There was something missing, something severing their connection.

But they once had a pact, once saw the beautiful sights from the tallest mountains together, and once waited for death together, in the scent of the last remaining bit of warmth at Wushan Palace.

There was something forcing them apart, but still their bonds remained, like tendons linking torn flesh.

Mo Ran’s eyes were red and welling with tears, whispering: “Bu’gui……”

It’s you.

Why can’t you return to my side.

Who’s stopping you.

Wh……

Creak .

The quiet sound of a door opening.

But in this suffocating darkness, it was loud as the crash of thunder.

Author’s Notes:

Shizun: Wishing everyone a happy Christmas Eve

Dog: Have a prosperous Year of the Cock!

Peacock: What nonsense is the one upstairs talking about! I'll wish everyone here an early Happy New Year!

Shi Mei: It's not Christmas yet, so I'll say Merry Christmas first~

Wolf cub: Wishing everyone a joyous Year of the Dog with Naobaijin!

Ye Wangxi: Why do I feel like "joyous Year of the Dog" sounds like cussing someone out...

Mei Hanxue: Wishing everyone that they have a beauty to accompany them every day ^_^

Little Paper Dragon: Look for Zhong Wu Yan when you have problems, and run to Xia Ying Chun when you have none#! Chu Wanning, you shallow-hearted man! Let me out now!!

Ch.88 This Venerable One Meets Another Reborn Person

His head snapped up to look in the direction the sound had come from.

A person in a floor-length, gold-patterned black cloak appeared at the end of the hall. His figure was tall and straight, and his entire body was covered under cloth—even his face was shrouded behind a curtain of black silk. All that was visible was a pair of eyes, but the darkness made it hard to see even those eyes clearly.

The person held a blade in his hand.

A narrow blade, completely black, unmatched in sharpness.

Bu'gui.

"Who are you!"

"It doesn't matter who I am." The person said coldly; his voice sounded strangely warped, as if it had been intentionally distorted, "All you need to know is that I know who you are."

A chill ran through Mo Ran, but he forced himself to stay calm.

"I'm just a disciple of Sisheng Peak, so what if you know me, what's your point?"

"A disciple of Sisheng Peak? Heh, that's not wrong, but have you forgotten that you're also Taxian-Jun, Emperor of the Mortal Realm, a vicious ghost that slew his teacher and spit on decency, a soul that fled the road to the underworld?"

Mo Ran's blood grew colder with every word.

He felt like he had fallen into a frozen cave.

Taxian-Jun.

Who bathed all seventy two cities of Rufeng Sect in blood.

Emperor of the Mortal Realm.

Who married the most beautiful woman in the world, who killed teacher and family alike, who tread on countless people to come out on top.

The person continued in an icy tone: "You are Mo Weiyu."

Mo Weiyu.

Evil beyond redemption, may he die ten thousand deaths and be denied reincarnation.

Mo Weiyu, deserving of naught but to be torn to pieces at Sisheng Peak, his heart and eyes dug out, he ought not get an intact corpse!

"WHO ARE YOU!!!!"

Mo Ran saw red. The youthful demeanor disappeared completely off his face to be replaced by a ruthless, fiendish snarl as he stood off against that person at the end of the hallway, on the very verge of lunging at the other's throat and ripping it to pieces along with all of those names he never wanted to hear again!

The person lifted a hand wrapped in black silk, and the entire hallway was instantly covered in layers of ice, dividing the space between them.

“You can’t call this blade anymore, can you.” The person walked closer, slow and leisurely, stopping some ten paces away, “Emperor of the Mortal Realm……or maybe it’s better to call you Mo Ran now? How laughable, have you ever taken a good look at yourself, the way you are now?”

“A heart that is no longer cold and hard like steel; staying by Chu Wanning’s side as you have, even actually developing some fondness for him.”

“Rebirth, rebirth. I wonder where that person is, the one you swore to protect in the last lifetime?”

Mo Ran’s expression changed instantly: “Shi Mei?! What did you do to Shi Mei?!”

The person did not answer, only sneering coldly: “Do you know why you can’t call Bu’gui anymore?” He traced a fingertip slowly along the black body of the blade, “It’s because your soul is about to change, your hatred about to dissipate……your regret, as you lay dying, was that you couldn’t protect your Mingjing-shixiong, and your wish was that, if there was a next lifetime……that you definitely won’t fail him again.”

Those piercing eyes turned on him.

“Mo Ran, have you lived up to that?!”

“I——”

“The ghost realm barrier is soon to rupture, and what happened back then is sure to repeat. Do you intend to watch him die again? Do you plan to beg Chu Wanning for mercy again? ——All you’re doing is letting your second chance go to waste, you don’t deserve to touch Bu’gui ever again.”

“I don’t need you to tell me that!” Mo Ran roared, enraged, “What happens between me and Shi Mei is no one else’s business! Since you already know I’m a reborn person, then who are you? The fake Gouchen? Or some dead ghost that’s been reborn just like me!”

“Heh……” The person snickered lightly, “Some dead ghost that’s been reborn…… yes, I suppose I am some dead ghost that’s been reborn. Or did you really think, with the way the world is right now, that you were the only one who was graced by the heavens to be reborn?

Just who exactly is this!

Blurry faces flashed frantically through his mind, one after the other.

The ones who had died before him in the past life.

Xue Zhengyong, Madam Wang, Chu Wanning, Song Qiutong, Ye Wangxi……

Or the ones who had charged Wushang Palace just in time to see him off.

Xue Meng, Mei Hanxue, the executioners from the ten great sects……

Who is it…… who is it!!!!!!

Just who found out his secret, seized his weakness! Of all his demons from a lifetime ago, just who climbed out from the underworld to chase him down and force him back on the road to ruin! Who is it!

But in the split second it had taken for him to think, there was a sudden flash before his eyes and the man had already moved to stand right in front of him with a flurry of robes. The sheer strength of this person, even after rebirth, rattled Mo Ran.

Bu'gui was already pressed against his chest; just a bit of pressure and it would pierce through his flesh and into his heart.

"Mo Weiyu, I thought you to be a devoted person in matters of affection, but perhaps your Mingjing-shixiong simply doesn't have the fortune of your favor. Even in your second life, you still care nothing for him."

Mo Ran gritted his teeth: "Bullshit."

"Is it though?" The person smirked darkly, one hand closing around Mo Ran's throat and then sliding slowly down to rest on his chest, "Does he truly have any place in your heart? Even the little bit of memory you used to cherish has long since worn away, is there even anything left anymore?"

Mo Ran growled: "As if you would know who's in my heart better than I do! You've blathered on long enough, why don't you just take off that veil and

show me your face already!”

“Don’t be in such a hurry.” The person’s voice was like smoke and his gaze like mist, both with a thread of contempt, “I’ll show you when you’re about to die in this life.”

“You die first, you——”

He didn’t even finish the sentence when he suddenly felt a bone-chilling cold underfoot. Mo Ran looked down to find that the person’s icy thorns had already climbed up his body without him knowing.

Ice spells, ice thorns…… water elemental……

Who is it, who from the past life used such spells……

He had met with far too many adversaries, and his head was a complete mess as he scrambled to remember them all.

Xue Meng, fire.

Chu Wanning, metal and wood.

Ye Wangxi, earth.

Xue Zhengyong, earth.

Just who is it, why couldn’t he think of someone who had such powerful control over ice.

“You’re not wrong, I’ll die too. But, Mo Weiyu, that won’t be for a long, long time.”

The ice spread quickly over his entire body.

This person’s strength was truly terrifying; Mo Ran released some spiritual energy to fend off the ice, and was immediately felt a burst of immense and oppressive force bearing down on him.

This person before him might rival even Chu Wanning!!!!

Water elemental.

Who!!!!

For one fleeting instant, a blurry face seemed to flash through his mind, but that person’s hand clamped down on his neck before he could focus on it.

Fingertips wrapped in black silk caressed his throat. There was no reflection in that person’s dark eyes.

“Your Majesty needn’t concern yourself with the length of my life.” He spoke slowly, “More importantly, let me help you retrieve some basic human emotions so that you don’t screw up my plans doing everything but what you’re supposed to.”

“Nngh——!”

There was a wet sound of something being cut into.

Bu'gui cried out in sorrow as it pierced its former master's flesh.

"It's not deep. Just getting some of your blood to bind the seal."

True to his word, the person only took some blood from the wound to mark between his brows, then began chanting some kind of incantation.

A searing pain exploded in Mo Ran's head. He cursed loudly: "FUCK. YOUR. MOTHER! The fuck did I do to you last lifetime, did I chop you into mincemeat or kill all eighteen generations of your ancestors or some shit? Fucking hell, the fuck you doing!!"

"Shh, hold still. It's just a virtue spell."

"I don't fucking care if it's a virtue spell or a vice spell, can you stop grossing me out#? Fuck off!!!"

"Mo Ran ah." The person sighed softly while drawing a seal at his brow, "How could you bear to tell me to fuck off?" He paused, then resumed chanting, "Heart lesser than water, fervor unstoppable. Heart gate……open."

Agony burst abruptly through his chest!

"You……"

The ice was dispelled all of a sudden. Mo Ran stumbled, legs giving out as he sunk slowly to his knees, face pale and colorless.

“You should thank me.” Expression apathetic, the black-robed person looked down at him through lowered lashes for a while, then said evenly, “I’ve heightened the emotions in your heart, love and hate clearer still. Surely you should be able to figure your own feelings out now? If you still don’t know to do all in your power, up to and including giving your life to protect Shi Mei, even after all this, then you……are truly useless, nothing more than an unwanted child tossed aside!”

So this virtue spell makes love and hate more intense and clear-cut?

Why would this person go to such lengths to preserve Shi Mei’s life……

Water elemental……

These were the last scattered thoughts in his head before his consciousness faded.

Mo Ran crumpled to the floor with a thud, thick curtains of lashes closing over his eyes. The black-robed person stared coldly at him for a while, then slowly crouched down to take his pulse, thinking for a short moment before lifting a hand to gather a brilliant blue light in his palm.

“Forget.”

The black-robed person uttered in a low voice. The blue light glowed brighter still, and Mo Ran’s tightly locked brows slowly relaxed.

When he wakes, all he will remember is going out and trying to summon the holy weapon to no avail. He will remember nothing else, nor will he know that there is another reborn person in this world.

And the virtue spell, though its effects last for only a few days, is excellent for showing the lost where their desire truly lies.

“With your emotions heightened, you just might wake up to find yourself even more in love with Shi Mingjing, so in love that you want nothing more than to dig out your own heart and give it to him.” The black-robed person said in a cold voice.

“See you later, Emperor Taxian-Jun.”

The storm blew over and the waves settled back down. Mo Ran opened his eyes the next morning to find himself lying on the floor next to Chu Wanning’s bed. He turned his head to the side—the window seemed to have been blown open by the wind sometime during the night; it was half-closed, swinging gently in the morning breeze, creaking every time it contacts the wooden beam.

It was quiet inside the room. Mo Ran didn’t have to check the bed to know that Chu Wanning was still asleep.

The sky outside the patterned window was a dull teal. The morning sky was often pale before the rising sun breaks through the clouds to dust a blush on her cheeks and bathe her in warmth; few people rose this early, so she didn’t bother painting her wan, tired countenance.

The breeze from the outside carried the faint scent of fresh grass and morning dew.

Mo Ran lay there for a while, waiting for consciousness to come to him before sitting up, only to feel a stab of pain in his shoulder.

That's weird, why's there a rip in his clothes, and dried blood under it?

He stared at it blankly for a while.

Didn't he go out last night to test Bu'gui? He seemed to remember that it didn't respond at all, so it was probably a fake. And then…..

Tsk, can't remember.

Looking around, he found a thick nail sticking out from the dark brown floor. Must've gotten scratched by the nail then; was he so deeply asleep that he didn't even feel it?

He draped an outer robe over his shoulders and looked toward the bed.

Chu Wanning lay there, peacefully in repose. He had long since gotten used to him being all aloof and high-up, enjoying the best, while he himself had to settle for the leftovers, like making do with the floor at the foot of the

bed. But he felt extra irritable today for some reason, glaring at that person's figure with an itch in his teeth.

"How come you always get the bed while I have to sleep on the floor? Sure the saying goes 'respect your teacher,' but doesn't it also say to 'love your young'?"

Mo Ran was irked.

And he only got more disgruntled when he remembered the nail sticking out from the floor that gave him a cut for no damn reason.

It was still early, and he didn't want to curl up pitifully on the floor anymore, so he climbed on the bed and closed his eyes to go back to sleep.

The bed was spacious enough that the two of them, one facing left and the other facing right, didn't have to touch.

They had once slept in each other's arms; now they slept with an invisible barrier in between.

In the last lifetime they had been skin to skin, limbs entangled, and, in the most frenzied days, he wouldn't even pull out after making love to him. These two who had once been so intimate now lay on opposite ends of the bed to sleep.

Ch.89 This Venerable One's Past Affair With You

>> dub/noncon; reminder to close the tab and walk away if you don't wanna see it

When Mo Ran woke again, it was already bright outside and the sun was high in the sky.

Mo Ran rolled over and blinked—Chu Wanning was surprisingly still asleep.

Maybe it was the effect of the tapir fragrance dew, or maybe it was because of his poor health lately, coupled fitful sleep often troubled by dreams, but he was still deeply asleep even at this hour. His back was turned to him, long, inky hair spilling loosely across pillow and bed, the color of the night.

Mo Ran: "……"

Since Shizun wasn't up yet, there was even less reason for the disciple to be any kind of industrious. The bed was too comfortable, might as well lie around some more.

But it was boring just lying around, so Mo Ran scooched closer and started playing with Chu Wanning's hair.

Shizun's hair always smelled faintly of flowers; soft as smoke, fine as mist, it was one of Mo Ran's favorite things to touch.

He brushed his fingers through those misty strands, the smooth, satiny feeling wrapping around his fingers and making him feel all tingly inside.

The patterned, dark-colored bed curtains drifted gently in the breeze that swept through the window.

He narrowed his eyes; certain parts of him were particularly energetic in the mornings, and with such a pleasant sensation at the tips of his fingers, one that was so familiar, so…...

He held a lock of Chu Wanning's hair to his nose and breathed in.

The long, soft strands called to mind things from the bygone past.

Ever since his rebirth, he had tried his best to not think too much about the more lustful segments of their wanton history together, but for some reason, he simply felt like indulging in some reminiscence this morning.

His throat felt a little dry.

He didn't want to touch his body anymore, but hair should be fine. Closing his eyes, he pressed his lips lightly against the inky darkness between his fingers.

This inky darkness……

It was the same inky darkness back then, at Sisheng Peak's Wushan Palace, falling around Mo Ran like a curtain. He held that man's slender waist

between his hands, the feeling of lean muscles beneath his fingertips completely different from the feel of a woman.

Chu Wanning worked himself up and down where he straddled Mo Ran's hips. It must have hurt, by the way his sharp brows were pulled so tightly together and specks of light glistened in those phoenix eyes, ferocity and despair tinged a vivid red. He was so resentful, so unresigned, yet so helplessly pitiful.

From his place as the victor, Mo Ran's voice was even and not without malice as he made demands of him.

"Faster."

"....."

"Are you tired already? Moving this slowly."

But even like this, Chu Wanning's ironclad will remained firm, refused to yield. He breathed out, hatred in his watery, red-tinged eyes, then he bit down on his lip and began to move, fast and rough, almost as if in self-punishment.

It was agony.

He did it again and again; even when his arched back began to shudder and cold sweat drenched his body, still he didn't beg, didn't even make a sound.

Through the long inky strands hanging before his eyes, Mo Ran's eyes were bright in the darkness of night, burning with animalistic desire, madness, ecstasy, gratification.

“.....Ngh!”

A stifled groan—it seemed the man on top of him finally couldn’t take the pain any longer. Mo Ran’s eyes darkened as he sat up without warning and wrapped his arms around the sweat-soaked body that was trembling ever so slightly. He tried so hard to endure it, but still he trembled…… and the change in position only sheathed Mo Ran even deeper inside of him; he felt like his stomach might get pierced through.

That cruel, ruthless person caressed him, his touch tender yet venomous.

“Chu Wanning, did you ever think you’d end up like this one day, sitting in my lap, taking my cock?” He gripped him tightly in his arms, fucking slowly in and out, nuzzling intimately as a shiver ran through him.

“Yuheng of the Night Sky, Beidou Immortal…… heh, in the end, you still had to open your legs and ask me to fuck you.”

Hands wandering along the other’s waist, he thrust in deep, feeling Chu Wanning’s tightness around himself. He was so intoxicated that there were practically fireworks going off in his chest, but he put on a front of calm indifference as he tormented and humiliated him.

“Didn’t you say I was lowly, didn’t you look down on me? But Chu Wanning, now it’s you who seeks my favor.” He sunk his teeth viciously into the other’s jaw, “Look down, look at how you’re sucking me in, hm? Between the two of us, just who’s the lowly one here, my good Shizun?”

“.....” Trembling, Chu Wanning closed his eyes. He didn’t want to hear these dirty words.

It was..... his first time……

With the person he had once liked, but it was torture worse than death.

“Open your eyes.”

Came the callous order by his ear.

“I still have Xue Meng. You know what I’ll do if you don’t listen.”

There was no choice; slowly, he opened his eyes, brimming with tears that he refused to let fall.

The hand on his jaw forced him to look down where he was taking his disciple’s cock. The sound of flesh against flesh, the stickiness of blood mixed with thick fluids, all of it was unbearably wanton.

“Up a little.”

There was no strength in his legs, but he didn’t want Mo Ran’s help, the last tattered piece of his dignity forcing his body up by strength of will alone. The hardness inside him slid out until only the engorged head was pressed into his entrance.

Mo Ran wrapped his hand around his length and thrust in shallowly a few times—not too deeply, just enough for Chu Wanning see himself get breached. Chu Wanning’s lashes trembled the whole time, maybe from pain, or humiliation, or arousal.

“You are such a slut.” Mo Ran said in a low voice, “If I’d known sooner, I would’ve fucked you back when I was your disciple.”

He was an uncultured scoundrel after all, no manners or elegance to speak of.

The vulgar words cut into Chu Wanning's heart like a blade.

He lifted his head, closed his eyes, and spoke for the first time that night in a voice that was raw and raspy.

He said:

"Mo Ran, just kill me."

The hand on his waist twitched imperceptibly.

Then Mo Ran smiled, sweet as ever, framed by a pair of charming dimples.

"Okay."

Chu Wanning's eyes flew open.

In those watery eyes that made his blood boil with arousal, Mo Ran saw the reflection of his own twisted smile.

"I won't stop you if you want to die. But you don't get to choose how. I'll have you get fucked by a thousand people while Xue Meng watches. Actually, Xue Meng should join in too. How about it?"

"You——!"

The cruel words stung him like poison, and, like a venomous scorpion, Mo Ran watched his work with glee, watched the blood drain from Chu Wanning's face and the way those slightly parted lips trembled faintly despite his restraint. Mo Ran suddenly felt a deep sense of satisfaction, tinged with pity, but also delight and arousal. He pulled Chu Wanning back into his arms and buried himself deep inside of him, fucking relentlessly

into him at an unforgiving pace, almost frenzied: “Hah, just how gullible are you, to actually believe that?” He let out a deep laugh before kissing him ravenously, his hands rubbing and stroking him as he said between heavy breaths, “Don’t think too much, I was just messing with you.”

Chu Wanning seemed like he was about to fall apart with every thrust, but more than that, it was almost as if his soul had already shattered.

“Just messing with you.” Mo Ran’s breaths came out in harsh pants; it wasn’t enough, so he pushed him down to the ground and leaned over him, bearing down with his weight and lifting his leg to fuck into him deeper, snapping his hips with abandon.

“How could I bear to let anyone else touch you like that…… you’re mine…… mine alone……”

Pale, slender fingers scrabbled against the floor, but there was nothing to hold onto.

Chu Wanning was helpless in the end; he could only let him do as he pleased, until his consciousness began to fade and the light in his eyes grew dim.

Suddenly lifting his hand, he covered his eyes.

Softly, he said: “Mo Ran……”

“Mo Ran, if you still have any compassion in you…… any conscience……”

His eyelashes trembled against the back of his hand.

“Then please…… don’t do this anymore……”

“Mo Ran……”

His voice broke on a sob.

It was the first time Mo Ran had ever seen him cry in the past life.

“Mo Ran, I can’t take it anymore……”

“It hurts……”

Chu Wanning rolled over suddenly, jolting Mo Ran out of his debauched reminiscing. The past dissipated like a scattering of birds, leaving only his heart thumping against his ribcage.

The long strands between his fingers slipped away, but that person turned toward him, his face so close now that he could see his individual eyelashes.

How beautiful , he thought.

In all fairness, Chu Wanning’s looks weren’t gentle or soft by any means. His features were handsome, sharp and intense as if cut by blades, and actually more masculine than average.

But that only made it all the more enticing.

Mo Ran wanted to see this proud, unbending man come undone beneath himself.

His heart beat faster and faster.

He stared at Chu Wanning's face, gaze drifting inch by inch until it landed on those lightly colored lips that were slightly parted in sleep.

He leaned in subconsciously.

Just a little closer and their lips would meet.

The sweet taste of dew.

Mo Ran's throat worked in a swallow; his mouth felt dry. A little closer, just a little more……almost.

Suddenly, a flash of clarity shot through his arousal-addled mind and he froze, face deathly pale.

What was he doing!!!!

Quickly sitting up, Mo Ran stared at the man in the bed——Chu Wanning, Chu Wanning, no matter how much he'd bedded him before, that was all in the past already! The fuck was he doing, had he lost his mind??

Was it possible that he really did like him?

Mo Ran paled at the thought, so unsettled that he couldn't think straight.

He drew in a deep breath and buried his face in his hands, scrubbing forcefully, and then, cursing under his breath, he pulled on an outer robe and left in a hurry, as if running away.

Author’s Notes:

boss: I spent so much fucking effort to grant you a peek into your heart, but not only did you not think of Shi Mei at all, your head is filled with the little act by you and your shizun? Looks like I'm Santa Claus, coming here just to deliver your car keys to you, idiot! My rage is endless!

The previous life has smut, and is naturally accompanied by glass shards, I won't warn for knives in the previous life, I've already said it's all car knife car knife knife car knife car, haha, besides, are you scared when you see the word count

Actually it's because important content was deleted~

Take this small car for now, after all this is a flashback, we'll start the bigger car in this lifetime~

Ch.90 This Venerable One's Idiom Explanation is Just Fine

It was already noon by the time Chu Wanning finally woke up.

The tapir fragrance dew was certainly very effective, and he managed to get a full night's rest, undisturbed by dreams. Yawning, he sat up slowly.

"Mo Ran?"

That disciple of his loved to sleep in far more than he did, so it was a surprise when he couldn't find him still on his floor bed. Chu Wanning blinked, then tried calling for him again.

No reply.

He stood and smoothed down his robes, putting up the wispy strands of his long hair while walking over to the sectioned-off front room. Steam rose from behind the screen divider that was elegantly painted with the image of wild birds soaring through clouds woven between mountain peaks, as if there was someone bathing behind it.

"...Mo Ran."

Standing on this side of the divider, Chu Wanning tried again.

Still no reply.

Growing suspicious, Chu Wanning knocked on the wooden frame of the divider. After several attempts with no response still, he finally walked around to the other side of the divider with furrowed brows.

This part of the room was specifically for washing and bathing, and there was a large bath barrel made of camphor wood right in the middle. Chu

Wanning glanced hastily over it—it was filled with hot, steamy water and floating with bathing herbs set out by the inn earlier, but there was no one to be seen.

But, looking around again, Mo Ran's clothes were folded neatly over the wooden frame.

He couldn't possibly have bathed and then ran out naked right?

Chu Wanning's temples throbbed as he shoved the terrifying through aside, lips pressed tightly together and face slightly ashen.

He turned and was just about to leave when a 'glug glug' sound came from behind him.

Chu Wanning looked back to see bubbles rising to the water surface from under all the herbs and petals floating in the barrel.

——There's someone inside?

No sooner had the thought crossed his mind than a naked young man sprung up from the barrel with a splash like a dragon soaring out from the water. Chu Wanning was so startled that he subconsciously backed up two steps.

It seemed he was holding his breath underwater earlier and so didn't hear Chu Wanning calling for him from the outside. Standing up from the water when he couldn't hold it any longer, the upper half of his body was fully exposed while he shook the water from his hair like a dog drying itself. All of it splashed right on Chu Wanning's robes.

"Mo Ran!"

“Ah!” He froze in the middle of shaking his head, eyes opening wide and round, clearly not having expected him to be there when he came out of the water. He gasped, “Shizun!”

“You...”

His eyes swept across the young man’s well-proportioned figure, with shoulders that have already become quite broad, the lines of his body firm and defined, supple and youthfully taut. Droplets of water followed the contours of his toned chest, gathering into little rivulets that trickled slowly down, sparkling and dazzling under the sunlight.

He looked just like a beautiful merman, half out of the water, eyes watery and glistening, a couple of petals in his wet hair that clung to his body.

Mo Ran wiped the water off his face and moved toward Chu Wanning’s direction with a grin, shoulder blades flexing like a leopard as he folded his arms over the edge of the bath barrel and tilted his head up to beam brightly at him.

Chu Wanning found himself a little dizzy and his face a little warm, asking on instinct: “What are you doing?”

“Taking a bath.”

“In the morning?”

“Hehe.” His conscience was a bit guilty—he was actually rinsing off with cold water trying to put out the fire in his loins; it worked well enough, but then, since he had already stripped anyway, he felt like he might as well take a bath too. The soak put him in a good mood, so he dived down to

practice holding his breath. He certainly hadn't expected Chu Wanning to wander in like this.

"What's that goofy smile for?" Chu Wanning knit his brows, trying to cover up the heat steaming his brains with the cool tone of his voice, "Why didn't you wake me up if you were up early? Messing around over here by yourself like this, throwing your clothes all over the place, where are your man——"

"Shizun. You…got some water here."

There was a splash as he lifted his hand to wipe Chu Wanning's cheek.

"——ners."

Mo Ran laughed; he forgot that his hand was wet too and would only get even more water on Chu Wanning's cheek.

Chu Wanning stood frozen in place, the air around him going down several degrees in temperature. His face was strained and his lips were pressed together, only his eyelashes quivering occasionally.

It was like he was trying to train a hunting dog only to get nuzzled by the crafty pup instead.

"...Get out and get dressed. We have to head back to the sect."

In the end, Chu Wanning threw these words out with a cold expression and left with a swoosh of his sleeves.

But, where Mo Ran couldn't see, the tips of his ears were red.

Just like how, where he couldn't see, a pair of dewy, complicated eyes, still tinged with yearning, stared helplessly after him as he left, all the way until he disappeared behind a corner.

The cute smile vanished off Mo Ran's face to be replaced by frustration.

He smacked the water in annoyance, then scooped some up to scrub forcefully at his face.

What the actual hell.

What was wrong with him today?

All he did was look at him a little while bathing, touched his face briefly.

He had only just managed to suppress his arousal, and now he's hard again…

"Why did it take you so long just to get dressed?"

Chu Wanning turned toward him from where he stood by the window, his robes drifting gently in the breeze and fine strands of hair softly caressing his jade-like cheeks as he chided with exasperation in his voice.

Mo Ran coughed and mumbled vaguely: "I was drying my hair with a spell but I'm n-not very good at it, so it took a while. Sorry to keep Shizun

waiting.”

A bit surprised by the uncharacteristic propriety of his words, Chu Wanning shot him another glance before saying: “Go get packed since you’re done washing, then we can go rent a boat. I don’t feel like riding swords, and I’m tired of horses too, so let’s go by water, enjoy some sights on the way.”

“Okay, sounds good.” Mo Ran didn’t even dare look at him for too long, coughing a couple more times as cover.

Chu Wanning frowned: “What’s wrong with your throat?”

“...Nothing.”

He turned hastily to go pack. Then they stopped at a store to pick up some snacks and dry foods for the trip before heading to the docks to rent a vessel.

They went down the Yangtze River, and whenever they came across impassable areas, they would expand the wooden wings of the boat and soar through the sky on a magical draft instead. The travel wasn’t fast, but it was peaceful and relaxing.

Eight days later, they arrived at Sisheng Peak, the wooden boat coming down to dock by the mountain gate.

Mo Ran lifted the bamboo curtain for Chu Wanning to step out from the cabin first before following after. It was late at night, and the moon hung bright overhead. Yuheng Elder had already written to Xue Zhengyong before with explicit instructions to not send a reception, so they didn’t meet with anyone until they’d already climbed up the stairs to the main gate, where there were four disciples guarding the entrance.

“Yuheng Elder!’

“Mo-gongzi!”

For some reason, panic flashed across the faces of the disciples at the sight of them. Before they could react, the four of them dropped to their knees on the ground, looking up as they entreated urgently: “Elder, Gongzi, there are people inside right now seeking retribution against you! The Sect Leader sent a messenger bird to tell you two to keep away for now, but looks like that fat bird wasn’t fast enough! Please go hide out at Wuchang Town for a bit, definitely don’t go inside right now!”

Chu Wanning narrowed his eyes: “What exactly is the matter, to have you all this panicked?”

“It’s people from the upper cultivation realm, they’re accusing Elder of demonic cultivation, and want to take you to Tianyin Pavilion[92] for an inquiry!”

“Tianyin Pavilion?” Mo Ran repeated, alarmed, “Isn’t that the prison collectively set up by the ten great sects, especially reserved for only the most heinous of criminals?”

“That’s the one! Th-they’re here about that incident at Butterfly Town!” A female disciple among the four said anxiously, “Does the Elder still remember? That time when you were caned as punishment!”

“That can’t have been anything more than misuse of cultivation techniques or embroiling ordinary people, at most . Besides, Shizun has already

accepted punishment for it. Why did they suddenly bring up that old affair again, and even going so far as to involve Tianyin Pavilion." Mo Ran frowned, "And what's this about demonic cultivation?"

"We don't know the details either, but we heard that every single person at Butterfly Town died overnight, killed by some half-ghost half-deity thing that seemed to be doing someone's bidding. The ghost-deity is exceedingly powerful, and the average wandering cultivator definitely wouldn't be able to order her about, so those people from the upper cultivation realm are sus…suspecting Yuheng Elder of having done it!"

Chu Wanning: "....."

"Pfft." Mo Ran laughed, "And there I was getting worried. That's just a simple misunderstanding, easy enough to explain away, there's no need to hide." He turned to grin at Chu Wanning, "Shizun, can you believe these people? If you expel some small fiend, they'll say you're taking opportunities from the younger ones, and if you purge a major demon, they'll accuse you of practicing demonic cultivation and keeping some ghost-deity to do your bidding. At this rate, we'd best stop doing anything at all, just sit home meditating all day like they do."

But Chu Wanning wasn't laughing. His expression looked terrible, and he was silent for a while before asking: "Every single person at Butterfly Town is dead?"

"That's what I heard. Not a single survivor."

“.....”

Chu Wanning closed his eyes.

Seeing his strange expression, the female disciple asked uneasily: “Elder?”

“The incident was not my doing, but it may have occurred because I was not sufficiently thorough in the exorcism. If I am indeed to blame, then I would not shirk my responsibility.” Chu Wanning opened his eyes slowly, “Mo Ran, let’s go in.”

Inside Loyalty Hall, twelve lamps of coiling bronze lined the sides, each ten feet in height with nine layers of branches extending from the central stand, shorter toward the top and longer toward the bottom, for a total of three hundred and fifty six candle lanterns that lit up the main hall of Sisheng Peak so brightly that it practically looked like daytime.

Xue Zhengyong, dressed in full martial attire, stood tall on the high platform of the hall, looking like an iron-cast statue as he stared down the people below with predator-like eyes.

“Li-zhuangzhu, I’ll say it one last time. Yuheng Elder is not at the sect right now, and moreover, I can guarantee with my very life that what happened at Butterfly Town was not his doing. So quit throwing around all these baseless…whatchamacallit…”

Next to him, Madam Wang whispered discreetly from behind the cover of her sleeve: “Allegations.”

“Ahem, quit throwing around all these baseless whatchamacallit allegations!” Xue Zhengyong declared with a grandly imposing sweep of his hand.

Madam Wang: “……”

Not counting the guard disciples of Sisheng Peak, there were some thirty-odd people standing in the hall, dressed in bluish-green robes, carrying horsetail whisks in their arms, and wearing jinxian-style[93] hats on their heads—disciples from the recently established, up-and-coming Bitan Sect of the upper cultivation realm. The man at their head was about fifty-some years old, with a pair of long whiskers that stuck out to the sides and drifted in the airflow like those of a catfish—it was none other than the leader of Bitan Sect himself, Li Wuxin.[94]

Li Wuxin twirled his whisker as he sneered: “Xue-zhangmen, I’m only here to reason with you because your sect is yet considered a righteous one. The tragedy at Butterfly Town happened only after your Yuheng Elder and his disciples went to perform exorcism. Other than the three of them, the Chen household had no contact whatsoever with any other cultivators. There is evidence and witness both, you have no choice but to admit fault in this matter.”

Xue Meng, standing next to his father, couldn't take it anymore and rebuked: "And what fucking right do you lot even have to speak? When have you ever taken it upon yourselves to deal with any of the lower cultivation realm's problems? All you ever do is sit on your hands trying to cultivate yourselves to immortality, but as soon as something happens you immediately try to lay the blame on my Shizun, how is that fair!"

"Xue-gongzi." Instead of getting mad, Li Wuxin directed a meaningful gaze at him and smiled, "I've heard of you before, that people call you son of the phoenix. But meeting you in person today and witnessing your, heh, poise and composure, has certainly been a, shall we say, eye-opening experience."

"You——!"

Li Wuxin rolled his eyes and turned back to Xue Zhengyong: "Xue-zhangmen, we of the upper cultivation realm adhere strictly to the laws, and we intend to get to the bottom of this. If you really will not cooperate and hand over Yuheng, Mo Ran, and company, then I will have no choice but to go entreat the foremost sect in the cultivation world, Rufeng Sect, to come take charge of the investigation!"

Xue Zhengyong's always had a fierce temper. He scoffed at the threat: "Hoh. I'm well aware that your Bitan Sect is chummy with Rufeng Sect, but even if it was Nangong Liu himself standing before me today, I'd still tell

him the same thing——I will not hand them over, this has nothing to do with Yuheng."

Xue Meng followed up: "Well then, Li-zhuangzhu, kindly see yourselves out."

"See that? Did everyone see that! See how difficult and unreasonable they are, aiding and abetting!" A man's shaky voice suddenly burst forth from the crowd, "The same thing happened back then, when that Mo guy stole my friend's things, and we came here courteously trying to seek justice, they just brushed us off and kicked us out just like this! Li-zhuangzhu, you saw it right? If Sisheng Peak is allowed to continue acting so outrageously above the law, the lower cultivation realm will be done for!"

He had barely finished talking when a quiet chuckle came from the entrance.

Everyone turned collectively toward the gate—there, in a shadowed area not reached by the light stood a blue-robed young man in light armor, leaning casually against the intricate carvings of the vermillion doorframe as he watched the scene within the hall with a languid expression.

He was extremely handsome, skin supple and firm under the candle light, practically glowing.

"I say, Chang-gongzi, when exactly have I ever stolen anything from your friend?" His smile was soft and charming, "Pray tell, that Rong San…or was it Rong Jiu? I can't remember. Anyway, that pretty boy, is he your friend, or

is he your paramour? Rather deceptive of you, hm? What if you hurt his feelings?”

The one with the woeful complaints was none other than that merchant Chang from Yizhou, the very same one who had declared that he wasn’t done with Sisheng Peak before.

Chang-gongzi whipped his head around, startled to see Mo Ran at first, but then something flickered in his eyes and he started howling in misery:

“Mo Weiyu, you bastard, Jiu-er and my friendship is of mortar and pestle,[95] perfectly innocent. He’s already met with such a tragic death at the hands of your fiendish ilk, yet you——you still dare slander his name!”

“What?” Mo Ran’s heart dropped, his eyes widening slightly, “Rong Jiu is dead?”

Chang-gongzi said, angrily and tearfully: “His parents are from Butterfly Town, and he met with misfortune while visiting home some days ago. That was how I found out about you and your Shizun’s evil deeds! And why I went to Li-zhuangzhu for justice!”

But Mo Ran’s opinion of Rong Jiu was the opposite of positive, so he only gave a curt wave of the hand after the initial shock had passed: “Friendship of mortar and pestle? So, like, you’re the pestle and he’s the mortar, pound pound pound? Not sure how that’s innocent but okay.”

“M-Mo Ran!” Chang-gongzi hadn’t expected any of that and was quite affronted: “Y-you illiterate reprobate! You, you——”

“ Cough …” It was a bit much for Madam Wang too.

Only Xue Zhengyong blinked and said nothing. What mortar and pestle, can’t be anything good; he felt like his nephew’s words made quite a lot of sense actually, nothing wrong with ‘em.

From the darkness of night came a sigh like the depths of mountains and the shattering of jade, like the melting of an icy lake, deep and indescribably lovely, and then a slender, well-proportioned hand...

Delivered an unceremonious slap right to Mo Ran’s face.

“Such obscenity. Friendship of mortar and pestle means a friendship that disregards status and means, like that between Gong Shamu and Wu You.” Chu Wanning appeared at the door with a dark expression and a cross tone, “What are you doing hanging around the door being an embarrassment, get the hell inside!”

“Shizun!”

“Shizun!”

Surprised and overjoyed to see him, Xue Meng and Shi Mei came forward to greet him.

But Xue Zhengyong’s eyes widened in irritation and exasperation both: “Yuheng, what are you doing back here all of a sudden?”

“How long were you planning to hold out by yourself if I didn’t come back?” Chu Wanning strode calmly into Loyalty Hall, his handsome face appearing almost immortal-like in grace and elegance under the candle light. He came to a stop before the golden seat inside the hall and exchanged a nod with Xue Zhengyong before turning with a flourish of his wide sleeves.

“Chu Wanning of Sisheng Peak, humble bearer of the title of Yuheng Elder. It seems you have questions for me; I would not refuse you answers.” Li Wuxin was staring in shock, but Chu Wanning, phoenix eyes like smoke, spared him only a glance before continuing in an even tone.

“Kindly do enlighten me.”

Author’s Notes:

Mini-theatre [Each character asks to be enlightened]

Chu Wanning: Heard that everyone thinks that I don’t have enough top energy, heh, please enlighten me.

Weiyu : Heard that everyone thinks that my bedroom skills aren’t good, heh, please enlighten me.

Xue Meng: Heard that everyone thinks that I’m not straight enough, heh, please enlighten me.

Shi Mei: Heard that everyone thinks that I’m a black-hearted lotus, heh, please enlighten me.

Ye Wangxi: Heard that everyone thinks that I’m a girl, heh, please enlighten me.

Mei Hanxue: Heard that everyone thinks that I’ve already made an appearance in the novel, heh, please enlighten me.

Meatbun: That bro surnamed Mei at the end, no one thinks that you’ve already appeared, heh, if you’re not happy with that, come hit me.

Ch.91 This Venerable One's Shizun is a Pro

Upon the great hall, this man's glamourous robe was white as snow; he stood with his hands folded behind him, the silk of his robes soft and light like clouds, expansive sleeves reaching the ground. While his expression appeared solemn and dignified, his eyes were slightly lifted, the lashes draping down; amidst the politeness there were three parts scorn, and three parts arrogance.

Li Wuxin had never imagined that he was the Yuheng Elder, and instantly his face dropped, "Chu, Chu…"

Chu Wanning spoke calmly, "Li-zhuangzhu, it's been a while."

"Why is it you!" Li Wuxin who was only just clever-tongued now couldn't utter a single word, his face paling like dry wax, "We lost all communication with you after you left Rufeng Sect, and here we thought you went to wander the world, yet who knew, you, you were actually casting pearls before swines!!"

Chu Wanning snorted, his eyes rather cool, "Thank you for thinking I am a pearl."

"....."

"Alright, enough small talk, let's discuss serious matters. There's been word that you think I've murdered the five hundred civilians of Butterfly Town to practice evil spells. This incident was not done by me, but since Li-zhuangzhu has come all this way, I'm sure some things have already been misunderstood. I have more important things to attend to, so I won't

accompany Zhuangzhu to the Tianyin Pavilion. If Zhuangzhu has any questions he wants to ask, please ask them here now."

Then, like he was too lazy to even stand, Chu Wanning sat down in his seat. There's a designated seat for every elder within the Loyalty Hall; Chu Wanning's seat was situated on Xue Zhengyong's left, lined with fine bamboo mat and draping with half a roll of bamboo screen. Compared to Lucun Elder's flowery seat beside his, filled wholly with fresh blossoms, it truly appeared much too meagre and simple.

In these past years, Chu Wanning had never tried to purposely conceal his name, but to say he kept a low profile wasn't wrong either, so while the younger generation of Bitan Sect had heard of his name, they didn't know just how powerful he was. But Li Wuxin wasn't like them. He'd been around the block for years, so how could he not know about the infamous Yuheng Elder?

His fists clenched tightly in his sleeves, and he kept stealing glimpses at Chang-gongzi.

If it wasn't that he had already accepted a lavish payment from the Chang family, how would he have gotten landed with this messy deal. At first he thought the Yuheng Elder of Sisheng Peak was but some famous cultivator, yet who knew it turned out to be Chu Wanning who hadn't shown his face!

Had he known it was him, he would never have gotten himself roped into this mess no matter how much they paid him. Now he could neither proceed nor withdraw, what should he do…

While Li Wuxin kept his expression schooled, he was miserable inside.

Yet one of his direct disciples just had to be ignorant, thinking that it was this Yuheng Elder who was being unreasonable and his master didn't know how to handle him, so he spoke up thinking he was being clever, "Elder Chu, you recently went to Butterfly Town to exorcise evil, correct?"

Chu Wanning raised his lashes and gave him a look, "That's correct."

"Then, were you the one who sealed that ghost bride too?"

"Are you speaking of Luo Xianxian?"

"I…" Words died in that young man's throat. He had only known that the evil that went berserk in Butterfly Town was a ghost bride, but he didn't actually know more than that, so when Chu Wanning returned the questions, he didn't have any responses. He turned red, "In any case it's that ghost girl! Why do you have that many questions? She's young, about fifteen-sixteen, how many newly wed who died wrongly can there be in a small town?"

The corner of Chu Wanning's lip curled coldly, "Butterfly Town has the custom of marrying the dead, there's at least fifty if not a hundred ghost brides, so I really don't know which one you're speaking of.

"You——"

"Cease that familiar address, how improper. Stand down now, you boorish disciple!"

After having scolded that disciple who wanted to stand out, Li Wuxin changed face completely to one that was pleasant and agreeable, and he turned to Chu Wanning, "Chu-zongshi, it's the first time this disciple of

mine has left the mountain, he doesn't know the rules so please don't be hard on him. The ghost bride he spoke of is indeed that Luo Xianxian."

Chu Wanning furrowed his brows slightly, "Luo Xianxian's resentful spirit went berserk?"

"Indeed." Li Wuxin sighed, "That ghost girl lost her mind. Never mind killing everyone in the Chen family, she went and slaughtered the entire town. By the time I led my disciples to go seal her, there was practically no one left in Butterfly Town still alive."

"How can that be…" Chu Wanning muttered.

"I had heard that the one who involved in this affair was Yuheng Elder of Sisheng Peak. There's something questionable about this whole business, which was why we've come knocking. Besides, I've obtained two things while at Butterfly Town. Chu-zongshi, please come examine them closer and see if they've aught to do with you."

He retrieved a bloodied yellow silk cloth from his sleeve as he spoke, intending to hand it to Chu Wanning.

But unexpectedly, Xue Meng stepped forward and blocked him with an irritated hmph, "I'll take it!"

"Um…"

"My Shizun likes to keep clean, he won't touch anything touched by outsiders!"

It was a bit of an exaggeration—Chu Wanning wasn't actually germaphobic, he just didn't like touching things stained by those he didn't like. Nonetheless, Chu Wanning couldn't stand Li Wuxin in the first place,

so he allowed Xue Meng to mess around without saying a word, and only lowered his lashes as he sipped the hot tea Shi Mei served.

Li Wuxin swallowed his indignant anger since he couldn't do anything, and could only sneer as he passed the yellow silk to Xue Meng.

Under the candlelight, all eyes were focused.

Chu Wanning shook open that silk cloth. He only took a glance and his face dropped.

"The Passings Service Spell…"

"That's right. Chu-zongshi, based on my investigations, you were the one who temporarily sealed this resentful spirit Luo Xianxian, and before you left, you gave a copy of this Passings Service Spell to the only daughter of the Chen family, and told them to copy and recite it once a day for ten years, is that correct?"

"That's correct."

"That Passings Service Spell is in Chu-zongshi's handwriting, is that correct?"

"...That is indeed the case."

"But Chu-zongshi, at the end of every passage of this Passings Service Spell you've given, there are extra characters for a different spell. I trust you know what it is!?" Li Wuxin's voice was suddenly raised.

"Mark of the Returning Billows, a reversal spell!——Every time people in the Chen family completed a copy of the Passings Service Spell, they would then draw this reversal spell symbol, forcibly turning this spell that was

meant to send off the dead into a spell that causes harm, encouraging the destruction of the seal until Luo Xianxian turned into a savage ghost and went berserk! Not a soul in the Chen family knew the ways of cultivation, so besides Yuheng Elder who personally gave them this silk cloth, I really can't think of a second person who could have taught them how to draw a spell this powerful!"

"Watch your words, old man!" Xue Meng was outraged, "If my Shizun wanted to kill them, why would he need to take such a huge detour?! What spell, reversal spell, can't writings be forged? You think it's my Shizun who drew it? Well maybe I'm suspicious it's you son of a bastard who copied it in secret so you can frame people!"

Li Wuxin smiled without mirth, "Xue Meng-gongzi, what's a young'un like you doing interrupting when the elders are speaking?"

Xue Zhengyong spoke up, "Li-zhuangzhu, isn't it a little farfetched to say Yuheng did this based on a silk cloth? My son is right, handwriting can be imitated. If someone wanted to frame Yuheng, they could simply copy his spell a few times and have it look similar."

"Then this begs the question of who Chu-zongshi's arch-nemesis is who'd go through all this just to harm him."

Mo Ran who had been quiet on the side all this time suddenly chuckled drily.

Li Wuxin looked to him, then recalled that whole vulgar talk of mortar and pestle and couldn't help but frown, "What are you laughing about now?"

"I'm laughing at how you're all so busy making speculations but totally forgot about one thing."

Xue Zhengyong, curiously, “What thing? Ran-er, what’re you thinking?”

“ I’m not that well-read, but it just so happens I know a bit about this Mark of the Returning Billows, and I just so happen to know how to draw it.” Mo Ran laughed, “Here, look, isn’t this it?”

As he spoke, the tip of his finger gathered a smudge of red spiritual power, and while he leaned lazily against the pillar, the spiritual power spread intricately in midair, and soon, a sophisticated and exquisite Mark of the Returning Billows was reflected in the air, as pretty as fireworks.

Xue Meng was shocked, “You mutt, that’s amazing, when did you learn this?”

Mo Ran laughed, “It’s there in Shizun’s books. I thought it was interesting so I memorized it.”

Then he casually pointed at that bright red spell, making it rise gradually into the sky, riding over the heads of all present. That red reversal mark glowed brilliantly, streaming bits of broken sparks.

“How’s that. Why don’t you all go ahead and compare this spell I drew with the one on that cloth, see if they don’t look exactly the same?”

The disciples of Sisheng Peak all love a good spectacle, and when they saw Chu Wanning stoically tossing that silk cloth onto the table, looking like he silently consented to Mo Ran’s method, they all immediately clamoured over, crowding into a circle to compare the two in detail.

Those from Bitan sect were all standing stiff at first, but afterwards they couldn’t help but be curious themselves, some even hoping to pick faults, so they all gathered around too.

All those people looked it over for a good while, and in the end came to one conclusion.

What Mo Ran drew was exactly the same as the spell on the silk cloth, almost as if they were done by the same person.

Li Wuxin's idiot disciple from earlier spoke up again, completely shaken as he pointed at Mo Ran, "Good going! So you confess! You're the one who committed the murders, right!"

Mo Ran: "....."

Chu Wanning spoke evenly, "What's your name?"

"Hm? You're asking me?" That idiot disciple was taken aback, then he stood tall, holding his head high and puffing his chest out, and proclaimed proudly, "The thirteenth direct disciple of Wuxin, Zhen Congming."[96]

"Pfft." Mo Ran snorted.

Chu Wanning, on the other hand, barely even reacted to "Very Smart'—after all, he himself had a name like "Scare you to death."[97] He only said coolly, "Young ones should learn to keep their mouths shut when the elders are speaking."

These words were obviously mocking Li Wuxin's comment on Mo Ran earlier, and when Li Wuxin heard, his face flushed the colour of pig's liver; while he was extremely frustrated, there was nothing he could do, so he could only beat around the bush with a hmph, "Chu-zongshi's disciples are certainly outstanding young men, what skill, to be able to draw this spell exactly the same as a zongshi does."

“Li-zhuangzhu, it’s not just me. If you knew how to draw this spell, it’d look exactly the same as mine and Shizun’s too.”

“What are you trying to say?!” Li Wuxin glared at Mo Ran.

Mo Ran laughed, “The strokes to the Mark of the Returning Billows are complicated; the level of skill, the heaviness of the ink, no element can be amiss. Which is why it doesn’t matter who drew it, it’ll all come out the same. This has absolutely nothing to do with writing style. If a drawing is even slightly off, the spell won’t work.”

“Complete nonsense!” To be corrected by a junior before a crowd, Li Wuxin couldn’t help but become outraged from embarrassment, all the hairs of his beard standing on end, “What spell in this world would require such trickiness! I may not have ever practiced this spell, but I know that’s all complete nonsense. Don’t you go making things up, you little bastard!”

“He’s not making up anything.”

Li Wuxin was already at the end of his patience now, and he exclaimed in anger, “Chu Wanning, you’re speaking without proof! How would you know! How can you know?! The flaws and weaknesses of a spell are usually known only to its creator. Do you dare proclaim yourself the creator of the Mark of the Returning Billows?!”

Chu Wanning lifted his eyes and gazed towards him stoically, then took another sip of tea before replying leisurely, “Daren’t I? Then I’ll tell it to you now.”

Li Wuxin: “???”

“I created the Mark of the Returning Billows.”

Li Wuxin: “.....”

Author’s Notes:

[The crazy nicknames of various characters]

Chu Wanning: Xia Sini (Homophone for “scare you to death”)

Mo Ran: Zhong Quangong （Homophone for “loyal dog tops”)

Xue Meng: Bu Zilian （Homophone for “not self-obsessed”)

Shi Mei: Zhen Bailian （Homophone for “real white-lotus”)

Ye Wangxi: Nan Haizi （Homophone for “boy”)

Mei Hanxue: Bu Haose （Homophone for “not lecherous”)

Ch.92 This Venerable One Revisits Butterfly Town

Everyone present was shocked by his words.

Especially the Bitan Sect disciples, their expressions flipping as if struck by lightning!

In the cultivation world, the average cultivators memorize spells, the better cultivators understand spells, and the top-notch cultivators adapt spells.

But far above and beyond the average, the better, and the top-notch stands still another tier of cultivators—those who have no need for memorization, have long since understood, and are unsatisfied with adaptation, those who have grasped the final step:

Creation.

These are the masters who refine unique pills and elixirs, the experts who craft unparalleled arms and armor, the geniuses who draft unprecedented spells and talismans, people whose skill commands the title of “Zongshi.”

To the common cultivators, these zongshi were only a name in a scroll, or else a seal on a magical treasure. Those young disciples from Bitan Sect never could have even imagined that the individual they dared try to arrest and bring to Tianyin Pavilion for interrogation was one such god-like person.

Li Wuxin's forehead was already covered in a sheen cold sweat, but as the leader of the sect, he had no choice but to put up a front and keep at it. He forcibly squeezed out a smile, his waxy yellow face the color of rice shells gleaming with a layer of grease.

"What a coincidence that this Mark of the Returning Billows was created by Chu-zongshi himself, this one has truly… ahaha, truly misunderstood Chu-zongshi. However, while fighting with the vengeful ghost of Luo Xianxian at Butterly Town, this one also obtained another item. I wonder if this item might have something to do with Chu-zongshi."

Chu Wanning furrowed his brows: "What item?"

Li Wuxin waved his hand, and "Very Smart" quickly brought over a brocade box.

"A weapon."

Chu Wanning gazed silently at the box for a while before suddenly speaking: "Is it a willow vine?"

"!!!!"

This time, everyone including Mo Ran's eyes opened wide in disbelief.

Li Wuxin's voice shook as he spoke: "H-how did you know——unless it really was you, but… just what exactly is happening!?"

A golden light burst to life in Chu Wanning's palm, lengthening inch by inch until it coiled onto the floor, and as the glow dimmed down, a length of willow vine, leaves unfurled, appeared before the onlookers.

Chu Wanning was unfazed. At this point, he was already certain that the incident at Butterfly Town was done by the same person as those at Jincheng Lake and Peach Blossom Springs, so he said: "Li-zhuangzhu, the weapon in the box is this one, yes?"

"Y-yes." Li Wuxin's voice nearly gave out on him.

The brocade box was opened, and inside was indeed a length of willow vine, exactly the same in every way.

Chu Wanning narrowed his eyes.

He was already suspicious when that "Jiangui" that was used to kill the feathered tribe folkes and frame Mo Ran appeared at the Peach Blossom Springs; this confirmed his suspicions.

"Li-zhuangzhu, mind if I take a look at it?"

Li Wuxin mulled it over; things weren't exactly going his way right now, it'd be best not to offend Chu Wanning any further. So he said: "Chu-zongshi is too polite, I'm only here to ask about the situation in the first place. Please feel free to look all you want, I'd be only too thrilled to get your thoughts on it, why would I ever refuse?"

But Chang-gongzi was less than thrilled to hear this; he came here to pick a fight and spent so much money getting Bitan Sect to back him up, what was this damned old man trying to do, switch sides now that he'd met some pushback?

He threw one meaningful look at Li Wuxin after another, each and every one an angry glare.

Li Wuxin paid him no heed, but Mo Ran noticed those looks from the side and mocked: “Chang-gongzi, are your eyes okay? You’ve been squeezing them an awful lot!”

Meanwhile, Chu Wanning took the willow vine from the box and looked over it in detail

Sure enough, although it was no different from Tianwen and Jiangui in appearance, its life force was extremely weak, nothing like that of a holy weapon with a master—this was clearly a “dead thing.”

“Heartpluck Willow…”

Xue Meng and his sharp hearing froze at these words: “What?”

“This piece of vine, and the ones used to kill the feathered tribe folks back at Peach Blossom Springs as well, they were all broken off of the Heartpluck Willow.” Chu Wanning replied.

“Ah!” Shi Mei called out, surprised, “So that’s what it is?”

“Back then at Jincheng Lake, before the old dragon passed, he said the fake Gouchen had a certain spell that required a strong wood elemental spirit to maintain. He had in all likelihood taken some branches from the holy tree before destroying Jincheng Lake. Although the spiritual power therein will gradually fade after the holy tree fell, it should still suffice for some time.”

Chu Wanning’s slender fingers traced the golden leaves.

“He even made full use of these ones that have been practically depleted of spiritual power, either as fake evidence in a set up, or else giving them to his puppeteered pawns as weapons.”

A flame ignited in his hand as he spoke. He held the vine that was a mirror image of Tianwen to the flame, and it caught fire instantly, the blaze reflecting in the eyes of the onlookers, some shocked, others stupefied.

“This is not my weapon.” Chu Wanning let it scorch the tip of the branch before closing his palm around the flame, extinguishing it. He tossed the willow vine aside and said, mildly, “Tianwen is possessed of abundant spiritual energy. Even the Sanmei True Fire couldn’t hope to burn it, much less an ordinary fire spell.”

Li Wuxin opened his mouth, then closed it. But then didn’t want to give up that easily, and opened it again.

“I’ve also heard about the Peach Blossom Springs incident. Word has it that Sisheng Peak’s Mo-gongzi murdered the Great Immortal Lord of the feathered tribe…”

“Oi, I didn’t kill anyone.” Mo Ran waved his hand.

Xue Zhengyong, visibly displeased, was unyielding on this matter: “As I’ve already explained to all the sects, that was not done by my nephew. Li-zhuangzhu, I won’t be this polite the next time you bring it up.”

His reaction seemed to have stirred something in Mo Ran’s mind; he stilled, a flicker of something indiscernible flashing past those habitually smiling eyes. He muttered: “Uncle…”

Chu Wanning spoke: “The incident at Peach Blossom Springs was a set-up. The situation being what it was, I had no chance to defend my disciple’s innocence at the time. But since you of Bitan Sect came all this way seeking the truth today, I can certainly tell you the whole story.”

In the flickering light of the candle-lit lamps, Chu Wanning gave a concise summary of the events of Jincheng Lake and Peach Blossom Springs. By the time he finished, the disciples of Bitan Sect were all stunned speechless, and Li Wuxin was sweating so much his clothes were soaked through. He dithered for quite a while before saying: “Does Chu-zongshi mean to say that there’s someone in the world at this very moment who has practically mastered the ‘Zhenlong Chess Formation’ of the three forbidden techniques?”

“That’s correct.”

“How could that be! That’s a forbidden technique! E-even the leader of the number one Rufeng Sect couldn’t hope to acquire the scroll for a forbidden technique——”

Chu Wanning cut him off: “I spoke nothing but the truth. Whether or not you believe it is up to you.”

“Impossible.” Li Wuxin insisted with a pale face, and he laughed loudly through trembling lips, as if he could convince himself it was only a joke if he just laughed it off as one. “If there really is someone out there who has mastered the Zhenlong Chess Formation, the world will get thrown into disarray and everything in the upper and lower cultivation realms alike will be rewritten!”

Ex-Emperor Taxian-Jun Mo Ran was a little miffed: “That guy only ‘knows’ it, he hasn’t ‘mastered’ it. If he had, do you really think things would still be this peaceful right now?”

Li Wuxin’s whiskers quivered, and he was just about to say something when all of a sudden a sword flashed through the door and a Bitan disciple, covered in blood, stumbled off from the sword. The disciple threw up a mouthful of blood before turning his tear-streaked face up to Li Wuxin and crying: “Zhuangzhu, it’s awful! The barrier you set around Butterfly Town broke! Vicious spirits rushed out, and my seniors used their own bodies to block them from escaping for the time being, but...all thirty of my shixiong who were guarding the barrier sacrificed themselves in order to hold back the vicious ghosts, leaving only me to come report…”

He drew in deep, shuddering breaths, and then suddenly started wailing.

“Zhuangzhu! Hurry and notify all the sects of the upper cultivation realm! All the dead people in that town are being controlled! It’s a forbidden technique! A forbidden technique!!”

“What!!!!”

Li Wuxin stumbled backwards into a pillar, looking pale and haggard like a corpse dumped out of its coffin.

“There’s no way we can hold it off with just us…” That disciple cried miserably, his tears washing the blood off his face, “Zhuangzhu!!”

Then, suddenly noticing Xue Zhengyong, he turned to grovel toward him as well.

“Xue-zhangmen, I’m begging, please go as well! All of my shixiong… I… how can I face them…” He continued rambling incoherently for a few moments, then suddenly closed his eyes and howled toward the sky in grief.

“They’re all… all dead!!!!!”

The hall was deathly silent for a moment before bursting into an uproar.

Xue Zhengyong was level-headed in the face of disaster, immediately telling Madam Wang to go send messages to the other eight great sects of the upper cultivation realm, and sending Xue Meng to go gather the elders.

“Chu Wanning?”

“There’s no time to waste, I’ll head over first.”

“But you don’t know how to ride swords…”

Before Chu Wanning could respond, Mo Ran rushed over, eager to meet that “master” of Zhenlong Chess Formation.

“Don’t worry Uncle, I’ll take Shizun there.”

Chu Wanning threw him a glance but said nothing, a silent assent.

The two of them walked out of the hall together. Shi Mei stood frozen in place for a while, pale-faced, before suddenly snapping out of it and saying: “M-me too…”

But by the time he ran outside Loyalty Hall, they were already gone. Just then, Xue Zhengyong called him back, saying not to go running off alone, so he could only go find Xue Meng and wait to head off together with the second group.

As for Bitan Sect, Li Wuxin had lived a life of luxury all this time and never once ran into anything this big, but the old guy still wanted to save his face, so he drew in a breath to collect himself, then set about instructing people to take care of the messenger disciple and contact the elders of his own sect, gathering forces as well in preparation to make a good showing at Butterfly Town so as to regain some dignity.

The assembly set off grandly from Sisheng Peak, rushing through the sky toward Butterfly Town like hundreds of shooting stars. Standing on his sword at the head of the fleet as they flew through the clouds, Li Wuxin couldn’t resist stealing a sidelong glance at those disciples of the lower cultivation realm’s number one sect.

He never could have expected that he would one day head into battle alongside such rabble, the very people he had always looked down on, and his feelings were a bit complicated for a moment.

Travelling by sword, they crossed a thousand miles in no time, and as the clouds before them parted ways to reveal a stream of demonic light the color of blood shooting straight up into the sky, Li Wuxin had no more thought to spare for matters of the upper or lower cultivation realm——

Because floating in the sky was an enormous, flickering array of crimson light the size of the town itself, delineated neatly into the checkered pattern of a chessboard. And on that chessboard, like so many carved figurines, hovered the silhouettes of all the dead townsfolk; five hundred households, over one thousand people, looking like a dense forest of human flesh.

Li Wuxin cried out despite himself: “I-it really is… Zhenlong Chess Formation!”

Xue Zhengyong, expression dark, addressed Li Wuxin: “Li-zhuangzhu, I’ll take my people to the southeast side, but we’ll have to trouble you and yours to take care of the northwestern side. The other sects aren’t here yet, we’ll have to hold out for now.”

There were more pressing matters right now than his use of the term “we”, so Li Wuxin nodded: “Got it, got it.”

Xue Zhengyong cupped his fist in his other hand toward him in a gesture of respect and led the disciples of Sisheng Peak down to land on the southeast side of Butterfly Town. The defensive barrier made of the flesh and blood of Bitan Sect's guarding disciples was already on the verge of collapse, the field of its spiritual energy barely holding out. And on the other side of the translucent barrier roamed masses of walking corpses.

"Chu Wanning!"

Seeing a man in drifting white robes beside another in blue-silver light armor standing in front, Xue Zhengyong called out: "What's the matter? Is the barrier irreparable?"

Chu Wanning had already been here for a while. Xue Zhengyong couldn't understand why the barrier was still in such a sorry state with the number one zongshi of barriers standing right there.

But he got no response from Chu Wanning. Xue Zhengyong was just about to call again when Mo Ran turned around and gestured at him to not.

"Uncle, shh. Come over here."

Xue Zhengyong walked over: "What is it?"

"Don't disturb him."

Mo Ran pointed at Chu Wanning.

Although standing, his eyes were closed and his hands were held pressed together, and his lips were completely colorless.

Xue Zhengyong started and reached out to feel the pulse at the side of his neck, then asked in alarm: “Soul Projection?”

“Yeah. It’s all ghosts in there, couple thousand of them, but we couldn’t find Luo Xianxian, so she’s probably in the deeper parts of the town. We don’t know what exactly is happening yet, or what the guy behind all this is plotting this time, so he went to go find Luo Xianxian to ask.”

“She’s already a vicious ghost gone berserk, what even is there to ask!” Xue Zhengyong smacked his leg in anger, “Reinforcing the barrier is more important right now!”

“Don’t!” Mo Ran said sharply, “Shizun temporarily cast his soul out using Soul Projection precisely because it’s all dead people in there, and this way he can go in covertly without alarming the enemy. If the barrier gets reinforced now, it’ll get Shizun killed!”

“WHAT?!” Xue Zhengyong exclaimed in a panic, “You stay right here and keep an eye on him, I’ll go tell Li Wuxin!”

Mo Ran nodded, then added: “I’ll send up a blue colored signal as soon as Shizun’s soul returns, then we can start mending the barrier from all directions. But before then, Uncle must absolutely not allow them to mend it, or it’ll cause the thousands of ghosts to begin devouring in a frenzy,

Shizun only has his soul in there, he won't be able to defend himself against that."

"I know, I know already!" Xue Zhengyong was already a distance away before he'd even finished his reply.

Mo Ran lifted his eyes toward that barrier on the brink of failure.

"There's not much time left. Shizun, you've found Luo Xianxian by now, right?"

He spoke in a quiet voice as he turned to look at him, and in his worry, reached out without thinking to close his hand around Chu Wanning's ice-cold one, wholly unaware of his own actions.

"Almost…"

Just then, Shi Mei touched down nearby alongside Xue Meng and the rest, but unexpectedly, when he looked up from the crowd, the sight that greeted him was that of the pair before the barrier with their hands entwined. He froze, color draining from his face, then bit down on his lip and slowly turned his head away.

Author's Notes:

Warning!

The content that follows will uncover the first wave of truths from the previous timeline, and will develop a crucial, climactic plot event. Both mains will be facing the important turning points in their lives in this lifetime, to give a weak hint, the last huge wave of knives for Shizun, and the first wave of knives for Mo Ran are coming. In order to keep the pace of the novel unaffected, until this arc ends, there won't be any mini theatres.

Promise me, that no matter what you read next, do not perform the dangerous stunt of voring Meatbun alive, thank you! Thank you! If you're unhappy about anything please vent it on 1.0 dog QAQ or form a dog-beating squad with Mengmeng...Meatbun is innocent = =

Thank you CEOs!!! Running away fearfully….

Ch.93 This Venerable One's Shizun, Who Dares Touch!

>>gore

Chu Wanning's living soul roamed the inside of the barrier.

Everywhere he went, he found the wandering of ghosts and the vague shadows of lost souls. But the strange thing was those mangled corpses—the heart had been dug out of every single one of them before death; their chests were empty, some with bits of artery and pieces of flesh drawn outside, others with the white of their ribcage visible.

He knew something was off, but the defensive barrier around Butterfly Town grew weaker with every passing moment and he couldn't afford to tarry. He sped toward the Chen Manor with all haste.

He arrived there to find four cauldrons, each half the height of a man, placed in the four cardinal directions outside the Chen Manor and giving off fumes that grew increasingly denser. Rather than the typical white, the fumes were respectively colored red, blue, brown, and gold.

Fires were lit under the cauldrons, each filled to the brim with blood, but once closer, he found masses upon masses of red-colored flesh piled up beneath the boiling blood.

Human hearts!

The cauldrons were stuffed full of the hearts that were missing from the bodies of the deceased!

“Sand Amassed Into Tower…”[98]

Chu Wanning muttered to himself.

He suddenly understood why, even after having searched for so many days, they couldn’t find any trace of that person’s pursuit for the spiritual essence——that lunatic, to think he’d actually go this far!

Per this so called “Sand Amassed Into Tower”, the hearts of hundreds of people with the same elemental are dug out and gathered together. By the resentment of the dead, the resulting power—while not as strong as that of a spiritual essence—would still be significant for a short amount of time.

But why Butterfly Town?

Why Luo Xianxian...

Stepping into the Chen Manor, its courtyards and halls in utter disarray and everything toppled over, he found Landlord Chen and Madam Chen hanging from the ceiling beams, both missing their hearts as well. But unlike the townspeople outside, they had not reanimated, for both of their bodies from the waist down had been ripped to threads by some savage force, the mutilated mess no longer bearing any resemblance to legs.

He made a round through the main hall and didn’t find Luo Xianxian. Further in, inside the Chen family’s ancestral shrine room, he saw a bowl of minced meat in front of each and every memorial tablet, as if in offering.

Looking closer, there was half an eyeball mixed into the mince, and a segment of a finger…

Feeling nausea rise in his throat, Chu Wanning was just about to leave when a burst of crisp laughter came from above.

His eyes snapped upwards as the white paper lanterns swayed and the candles inside lit up one after the other.

Luo Xianxian sat on a ceiling beam, dressed in the vivid red of wedding robes and dangling a pair of feet bare and delicate like jade as she rocked gently back and forth, contemplating Chu Wanning with a tilted head.

“Uh-oh, you found me.”

She giggled; Luo Xianxian looked no different, but behind that gleeful expression, her soul was nothing like the bashful girl Chu Wanning had met back then. Arrogant and unbridled, blazing like a flame, her eyes were big and round still, but they flickered now with a demonic red.

Luo Xianxian had demonized.

Tianwen could interrogate a ghost only once. Chu Wanning had already used it on her when he came to Butterfly Town to exorcise evil the first time, and so could not do so again. The only thing he could do now was to suppress the demonic nature within her soul, call back her original consciousness, and ask her then.

Chu Wanning spoke, “Luo Xianxian, why are you here?”

But hidden inside his sleeve, he was already preparing to unleash a spell.

“Pft,” the petite girl spat. “I feel like it, not that it’s any of your business.”

Chu Wanning shook his head, eyebrows knitting even tighter until it looked like there was a scar carved between his brows.

“Over there in the bowl, is that Chen Bo’huan’s younger brother?”

“Oh, him,” Luo Xianxian couldn’t care less. “Only the row on the left. The row on the right is that little Yao bitch.”

“.....!”

“Of all the men out there, she just had to try and steal my husband, just cause she’s the governor’s daughter. Getting chopped into mincemeat is exactly what she deserves!”

Luo Xianxian had already lost it completely by this point; her temperament was nothing like that in life, and she couldn’t recognize the man before her as the “Yanluo-gege” who once fought to requite her.

Chu Wanning’s heart dropped upon hearing that Chen-Yao had also met the same fate. In a low voice, he inquired, “Then...the young daughter of the Chens…”

“She was kind to me, I wouldn’t treat her poorly.”

Luo Xianxian smiled as she spoke, her lips vibrantly red as if painted with blood.

Rubbing her belly, she said smilingly:

“That’s why she’s in here.”

“I ate her. This way little sis will always be with me, and no one will be able to bully her.”

“...You’ve truly gone mad.”

A blinding light burst to life in his palm even as he spoke, the flash of golden brilliance instantly illuminating the whole room. Chu Wanning leapt up and flung a curse onto her forehead as she yelled in surprise.

Demonic screeching filled the room!

Chu Wanning acted with speed and purpose, promptly drawing ten golden chains in an instant to bind her.

He pressed the tips of pale, slender fingers to the center of her brow, his eyes flickering with fire and lightning, his expression dark as thunderous clouds.

His thin, lightly-colored lips parted slightly as he silently chanted an incantation.

Luo Xianxian’s eyes bulged outwards and saliva dripped from the corner of her lips, her originally pretty face twisting into something terrifying in the chanting, “Shut up! Let me go! Blood for blood, I’ve done nothing wrong!”

Chu Wanning paid her no heed, eyes cool and downcast as the light at his fingertips grew brighter still.

“AAH——!” Luo Xianxian began to shriek hysterically. “Let me go! LET ME GO!!! MY HEAD! IT HURTS! I CAN’T TAKE IT ANYMORE!!!!!!”

She screamed and wailed, but then suddenly stopped, a sinister crimson lighting up her eyes as the corner of her lips quirked up eerily.

She snickered lightly.

“Is that what you were hoping to hear?”

“!!”

Phoenix eyes widening, Chu Wanning pulled back his hand and leapt backwards in the same instant.

In a flurry of white, he dodged Luo Xianxian’s Soul-Shattering Strike just in time, the silk of his robes settling gently around him as he landed a distance away on the veranda.

Luo Xianxian stood up slowly, no sign whatsoever of the faked agony just now. The Purification Spell actually had no effect on her; instead, she seemed even stronger than before!

“Did you really think a measly Purification Spell could do anything to me?”

Luo Xianxian sneered.

“I’ve devoured the life force of this town’s thousand-odd people, and am now on the cusp of cultivating a body of flesh. Then I’ll go take my husband back from the netherworld, and we’ll leave this place and be inseparable. How could I possibly let you ruin it for me on the final stretch!?”

Her original nature was gone; all that she knew now was her desire to be with Chen Bo’huan forever.

An idea occurred to Chu Wanning. He asked in a low voice, “Who told you you could cultivate a body this way?”

“What’s it to you?”

Chu Wanning replied coldly, “Whoever it was, he lied to you. Your original body is already no more, the only way to acquire another is through the cycle of reincarnation. There is no such thing as achieving rebirth by consuming the life force of a thousand people. He tricked you into slaughtering all the townspeople only to gather their hearts for his own ends.”

“...!!” Luo Xianxian’s eyes widened. “Impossible! He wouldn’t lie to me!”

“Who is ‘he’?”

“He...he’s…” She mumbled over and over, then clutched her head shrieking, “I don’t know! I DON’T KNOW! I want a body! I want to live!! I

DON’T WANT TO DIE!!!!!!!!! He didn’t lie to me… he didn’t lie to me… you’re the one that’s lying… that’s right, you’re the one lying!!!!!!”

A swoosh of red silk, and the ghost was rushing toward Chu Wanning with her claws extended!

Just then, an ominous sound thundered from the skies above. Chu Wanning dodged Luo Xianxian’s attack and looked up to find a long, narrow crack in the defensive barrier, ripped through by the overwhelming resentful energy of the town. The life energy of those outside seeped in through the crack, and all throughout the town came the roars of the undead!

The barrier was about to break.

He was out of time!

If he doesn’t recover Luo Xianxian’s consciousness soon, he’ll have no choice but to kill her.

And then there went their last lead...

Outside the barrier, Li Wuxin looked up at that horrifying crack in midair and yelled toward Xue Zhengyong, “Are we still not mending the barrier?! We gotta mend it! If it breaks and the thousand-some walking dead all come rushing out, we won’t be able to hold them back!!”

“Just a little while longer!” Xue Zhengyong’s expression wasn’t much better, large droplets of sweat beading on his forehead. “Don’t mend it just yet, Yuheng is still inside. Just wait a little while longer.”

Li Wuxin cursed under his breath, his heart beating wildly at the sight of that barrier cracked like an egg. He snarled, “And how much blood do you think will be spilt if the barrier fails?! How will you answer to the entire cultivation world then!” Then he whipped around to yell at his disciples, “Have the messages been sent yet? When will the other sects get here?!”

The disciple in charge of messages was drenched in nervous sweat. “The other eight great sects all said that this is a serious matter that must first be reported to their respective sect leaders, and that the sect leaders and elders will have to discuss things before they can send any aid.”

“.....” Li Wuxin’s face darkened even more. “What about Rufeng Sect? Nangong-xianzhang has always been mettlesome, surely he isn’t so spineless?”

“Uhm…” The disciple was at a loss for words when the communication talisman suddenly started glowing. He quickly read it and announced, overjoyed, “Rufeng Sect is coming! They just sent word that they’re sending people over right now!”

Sure enough, within ten minutes, a wave of blue clouds appeared on the horizon, which, once closer, were not clouds at all, but a drove of nearly a thousand strong, each donning blue mantles emblazoned with the heron, flying through the sky on swords lined up in impeccable formation.

And, at their head, were Nangong Si and Ye Wangxi.

Nangong Si rode in astride his faewolf Naobaijin, jaded bow on his arm and full quiver across his back, an imposing air about him, the arrogance and intemperance of youth writ clear on his face.

Ye Wangxi was dressed all in black as before, with a cloak embroidered with the heron of Rufeng Sect on top, looking seven parts handsome, three parts beautiful.

“What is this?!”

Nangong Si saw the sorry state of the barrier and immediately blew up, his furious gaze scanning the crowd and skipping right over the people from Sisheng Peak of the lower cultivation realm to land on the sect leader of Bitan Sect, the only one here even remotely fit to be addressed by him.

“Li Wuxin! Do you not see that crack in the barrier? What are you lot doing just standing around, don’t you know to mend it?!”

Li Wuxin was Nangong Si’s senior by far, but Nangong Si was the sole heir of the foremost sect in the cultivation world, so he could only grin and bear

it even as his entire face flushed red under the admonishment.

“Young master Nangong, little do you know, but the barrier remains in disrepair only at Xue-zhangmen’s insistence…”

And with that, the hot potato was tossed to Xue Zhengyong.

“Sisheng Peak?”

Nangong Si glanced at Xue Zhengyong and let out a hmph, perhaps in contempt or perhaps something else.

Then he waved his hand and turned to speak to his personal attendant, “Just go patch the shitty pot up, all this yammering almost had me thinking it was something serious.”

Ye Wangxi tried to stop him, “Young master——”

But Nangong Si wouldn’t even spare him a glance. And, even stranger, Song Qiutong was here as well, face shrouded behind a layer of white silk and eyes downcast, looking demure and obedient as before, but today she stood with Nangong Si rather than Ye Wangxi.

Rufeng Sect was nothing if not expeditious, and obeyed none but their own leaders. Especially those personal attendants of Nangong Si's, the lot of them stepping up in sync, completely ignoring any and all explanations as they immediately set about laying down the seals and arrays to mend the barrier.

"WAIT!"

Xue Zhengyong had only just interrupted four or five people's attempts, yet when he turned around, there was another already forming the mending seal and sending it flying in a streak of blue light toward the crack in the barrier.

Blood drained from Xue Zhengyong's face as he yelled, "YUHENG!!!!"

There was a sudden BANG! And sparks flew everywhere.

At the very last second, just as the seal was about to reach the crack, it was cleaved apart by a flash of crimson like a bolt of blood-red lightning!

All heads snapped up collectively to see a young man with a length of willow vine in hand, guarding the barrier where he stood on his sword in mid air. His features were bright and friendly, as if naturally shrouded with warmth, but right now his eyes were sharp and unyielding, gaze alight like the flaring leaves of the vine raised in his hand, coursing with a light the color of blood and erupting with sparks.

High above them in the air, Mo Ran's brows were drawn low in a frown as he spoke darkly, "Didn't I fucking say that no one is to touch this barrier? Are y'all newbs deaf or stupid?!"

He loathed Chu Wanning, but that was between the two of them.

Be it the past life or this one, on pain of death, he absolutely will not allow anyone other than himself to touch so much as a hair on Chu Wanning.

He's said it before—he's the only one allowed to kill the one he hated, the only one allowed to wreck him, to torment him.

In his fit of rage, he couldn't help the savagery of his past life from rearing its head, bleeding through into his demeanour and making it deviate completely from his usual playful and easy-going young master attitude.

Xue Zhengyong, Xue Meng, and even Shi Mei were taken aback by this display of his, to say nothing of those of Rufeng Sect.

Author's Notes:

1.0 Dog is pretty much possessed by 0.5 Dog near the end in this chapter, he reclaimed his bastard energy hahaha, we'll count him as 0.75 Dog~

Ch.94 This Venerable One Sees the Heavenly Rift Again

>>mild violence and gore for the rest of book 1

Nangong Si looked displeased, his gaze dark like rolling, molten iron.

The line of his sight scanned past and paused for a moment on Mo Ran's blazing red Holy Weapon before it moved on.

"Who's that?"

"He's the gongzi from Sisheng Peak, surname Mo," Ye Wangxi replied.

"Mo?" Nangong Si knitted his brows slightly. "The one that was picked up off the streets some years ago?"

"En."

Nangong Si gave Ye Wangxi a side-eyed glance. "You know him?"

"We resided in the same place at Peach Blossoms Springs."

Nangong Si sneered. Who knew what that meant, but when Ye Wangxi saw his reaction, his quietly handsome face paled some, eyelashes dropping, then he pursed his lips and fell silent.

"Since he has to keep waiting then I might as well grant him some face," Nangong Si said. "A master of a Holy Weapon at such a young age, I gotta see what he's made of."

Mo Ran, however, had no time to mind the Rufeng Sect. He turned around, his robes whipping in the wind. The barrier had already cracked, there wasn't much time left——

Chu Wanning, are you not done yet?

SHA! Luo Xianxian's nails ripped through the silk curtain. The white cloth fluttered and the plain fabric was shaken into thousands of pieces of falling snow.

Chu Wanning only sensed an incredibly familiar presence, but he couldn't quite put his finger on it. He widened his eyes. "Tianwen?!"

No.

It wasn't Tianwen.

But when he parried with her, there was an energy that was incredibly similar to Tianwen coming from her person.

The inner curtains of the huge Chen household were like a thin mist, locking within it a living soul, a vicious ghost. After having exchanged a dozen moves, the fog in Chu Wanning's mind dispersed, and a thought struck him, waking him up. Suddenly, he understood.

"Heartpluck Willow…"

Luo Xianxian was already dead, her body cremated to ashes. Back then, she could only depend on old Madame Chen's body in order to haunt, so there was no reason why she should be able to show her true form now.

That mysterious man had taken a withered branch of the Heartpluck Willow and temporarily fabricated a shell for her, allowing for her soul to come back.

The broiled hearts of the people outside and the steaming haze of fumes. Metal, Water, Fire, Earth, they were all waiting for Xianxian's 'Wood', the

body of the Heartpluck Willow.

Just what was that man planning!

Had he gone through all this trouble just to have Luo Xianxian regain her flesh body so she could slaughter her way into the Ghost Realm to be with Chen Bo'huan once more? Who would do all this for her?

All her relatives had died.

Relatives…

A relative!!!

Something stirred in Chu Wanning's mind, and his blood boiled and rushed. He suddenly recalled, back when he first met Luo Xianxian, she had told him something——

She had a brother, who'd gone missing many years ago…

Was it him?

"All in my path shall die!"

Luo Xianxian was a real flesh body, Chu Wanning was a living soul. While her spiritual powers were nowhere near his, when solid met air they were evenly matched for the moment.

In the blink of an eye, her blood red nails came lunging towards his heart. In order for his soul not to suffer damage, Chu Wanning abruptly dodged, then flipped his hand and tapped between her brows.

"It's useless. You can do it however many times you want, but the purification spell can't hurt me!" She laughed savagely, throwing her head

back to howl to the heavens, and summoned from all around them bands of corpses from Butterfly Town.

"You feral ghosts, obey my command! Gather here and drink blood til there is no more!"

Terrifying wails and howling started to ring. Butterfly Town had been trampled to complete pandemonium, and the berserking, heartless undead all came rushing to the Chen Manor when they heard her call.

The walking corpses came pouring like a flood, shrieking and roaring like crashing waves dying in the howling winds. The blood-curdling cries were like the screams of a battlefield, and in an instant, all could hear them clearly, inside and outside the barrier.

Outside the barrier, the cultivators were shaken.

Inside, Chu Wanning battled all alone.

There was only his silhouette, his lone soul, a streak of white standing before Luo Xianxian. She was laughing in glee, madness and wretchedness filling the depths of her eyes. But a gentleman was like a bamboo, and he remained unfazed in the face of hundreds of ghosts. Only his brows were furrowed deeply, a layer of gloom shadowing over his eyes.

"Luo Xianxian, do you still remember what you once told me?"

"Hm?" She didn't seem to expect he'd ask this, and was slightly taken aback.

In her daze, Chu Wanning had already flapped open his sleeves and leapt onto the top of the courtyard of the Chen Manor. His silk boots, untainted and pristine, landed upon the edge of the black sandalwood eaves.

"You once told me you never wanted to become a vicious ghost, and you also said you didn't want to hurt anyone."

As his voice dropped, winds from all around picked up.

Chu Wanning raised his gaze and looked over, and saw a heavy black troop of corpses pouring in from every direction. He knitted his brows slightly and suddenly swung an expansive sleeve, the haunting winds whipping the robes of this living soul.

Between his hands, there was suddenly a golden glow.

"Please excuse my offense."

All of a sudden, thousands of willow vines pulled out from the ground!!

Blood flowed all over Butterfly Town, dead corpses covered the ground, and in an instant, millions of gashes opened, thick and strong roots of willow trees broke through the earth one after the other! They glowed a blinding gold, appearing like millions of chains, and bound every fleeing corpse!

Chu Wanning's eyes were closed, his long hair a whipping mess before a face as cold as melting snow in a stream.

He called darkly, "Tianwen, Ten Thousand Coffins."

Then his eyes flashed open, blazing like lightning.

Those rows upon rows of golden drooping willows suddenly flashed brilliantly, and countless branches started sprouting out and growing in dense numbers, trapping those walking corpses that were still roaring and struggling. Then right after, a gap cracked open in every willow tree, and as

the hole widened, the trees dragged all the dead into the gaping hole before brutally sealing them within.

Ten Thousand Coffins.

The largest drooping willow emerged from the courtyard of the Chen's household, and fast like the sharpest arrow, it chased after the dodging Luo Xianxian.

However, that Luo Xianxian had a body made from the Heartpluck Willow herself; Heartpluck Willow, Tianwen, Jiangui, they were all born of the same body, all seeds Gouchen-shanggong had brought to the mortal realm from the heavens, and so the Ten Thousand Coffins of Tianwen couldn't immediately catch up to the small and swift shadow of Luo Xianxian.

Her vividly red robes, embroidered with a golden phoenix, rolled in the winds like waves as the giant willow followed after her, pulling taller and taller, breaking through the barrier and gunning straight for the skies.

Outside the barrier, the entire crowd was shocked into silence by this sky-shattering tree; there were some with weaker spiritual powers who already couldn't hang on, their legs going weak by the Zongshi's oppressive presence, and they fell to their knees soundly.

The willow tree that sprouted with the spirit of Tianwen grew taller and taller, almost to the point where it could reach the moon. Chu Wanning had unleashed his spiritual powers to a point he never had before; there were already cultivators around Butterfly Town whose eyes were bloodshot, and even Nangong Si, with his cultivation, was having difficulties breathing, his chest tight and his heart beating rapidly.

Nangong Si gritted his teeth. "A character like this exists at Sisheng Peak? Yuheng Elder?"

Next to him, Li Wuxin was calm; he was the head of a sect after all, so he could still hang on. "Nangong-gongzi, this man is Chu Wanning, I'm telling you!"

"WHAT?!"

Under such heavy oppression, Nangong Si was dumbstruck, letting out an “ugh” as he spat out a mouthful of blood.

"It's Chu... Zongshi?"

"Young Master, please don't speak anymore."

Seeing him hurt, Ye Wangxi raised his hand and pressed on two meridian points on Nangong Si's body, helping him circulate his spiritual powers. Yet unexpectedly, Nangong Si wasn't grateful in the slightest, and roughly pushed him away, wiping hatefully at the blood on his lips, "Don't touch me."

"…"

"Ye-gongzi, allow me." Song Qiutong was a Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast so she wasn't greatly affected. She came forward gracefully, her pair of eyes delicate and scared as she gazed at Ye Wangxi, nominating herself in a small voice.

However, Ye Wangxi didn't seem to be as friendly as he was when they first met, and actually ignored her.

Having received the cold shoulder, Song Qiutong turned her head to gaze at Nangong Si with her watery eyes. Nangong Si's attitude towards her had become much better since the beginning, but he also declined. "Your help isn't needed. I was just shocked by someone I haven't seen in many years. I'm not that weak, if you have the free time, go help other people."

Over on this side, Mo Ran didn't notice at all the things that were happening between Song Qiutong and the two gongzi of Rufeng.

He'd dropped next to Chu Wanning's empty body, lifting his head to watch Chu Wanning's living soul engaged in the heat of battle with Luo Xianxian. Then he looked at that band of corpses temporarily sealed by thousands of willow trees, his heart and mind both alarmed and nervous.

It must be known that to use a spell like this, even under normal circumstances it'd exhaust spiritual powers greatly. Never mind that Chu Wanning's soul was currently out of body?

Just how unpredictably strong was this man's ability…

Before he could finish his thought, there was a sudden splitting cry.

The Heartpluck Willow couldn't defeat Tianwen after all, and beneath the lonely moon, Luo Xianxian was bound by the willow vine, branches and leaves sprouting so fast she was swallowed rapidly. That gigantic, sky-reaching tree enveloped her in its gap before that ancient willow that had crossed the clouds finally, slowly, shrank down towards the ground, gradually descending below, until it finally stood equal once more with the other ancient great trees.

At this point the barrier had been completely shattered, however, since the Ten Thousand Coffins formed by Tianwen were still keeping all the walking

corpses hostage, there was no immediate danger.

Xue Zhengyong didn't dare to relax, and ordered the rest of the people of Sisheng Peak to stand guard before every willow tree just in case. As for the others, they all followed the flow and dashed straight for the courtyard of the Chen Manor. Since the situation was dire, Mo Ran didn't think too much as he immediately swept up Chu Wanning's cold body and rushed over too.

When the group arrived, the ancient willow chaining Luo Xianxian had already transformed into a solid coffin. She lay within, her expression sometimes savage, sometimes sad, her eyes sometimes vicious, sometimes aggrieved.

From her lips, two separate voices continued to switch between one another, one full of madness as it shouted, "WHY DO YOU OBSTRUCT ME!! WHY OBSTRUCT ME! YOU ALL DESERVE DEATH! ALL OF YOU!!"

The other was soft and helpless. "Yanluo-gege, is it you... is it you who's come? Please I beg you... Save me... I don't want to hurt people... Please..."

Those two voices changed between each other, and after a long while, dead silence fell within the coffin.

At this point, the spiritual power of Chu Wanning's living soul was already at its limit, barely holding on. Yet, relying on his will alone, he pressed his fingers between the brows of the girl inside the coffin.

"Who are you?"

The closed eyes of the female ghost slowly opened, and it was still vivid red within.

Li Wuxin blurted, "Not good!!"

Just as he was about to charge forward to take the maiden's life, Chu Wanning pointed into the air and a strike of lightning dropped down, blocking his way.

"CHU WANNING, YOU——!"

Chu Wanning ignored him, and only stared at the delicate girl who slowly sat up from within the coffin.

She opened her blood red eyes, yet there was not a trace of killing intent in them, instead they were full of panic and loss as she answered softly, "I am Luo Xianxian."

When Chu Wanning heard her answer, he finally breathed in relief, dropping his lashes as his living soul dispersed.

A moment later, the man in Mo Ran's arms softly twitched, and Mo Ran quickly put him down, letting him lean against a colonnade on the side. He bent one knee to the ground, kneeling to be at his level and spoke, "Shizun, you're back?"

Chu Wanning's phoenix eyes were dazed, and it took a moment before they slowly focused.

He glanced at Mo Ran. He'd exhausted too much of his spiritual powers and was a man with a weak spiritual core, and so he appeared somewhat weak, the colours of his face no better than when his soul had been out of his body, still equally pale.

"En..." Chu Wanning responded, and leaned where he was for a moment before slowly rising to his feet using the colonnade as support.

With slow steps he came before Luo Xianxian, and dropped his eyes to gaze at her.

Luo Xianxian opened her tiny mouth a little, watching him in shock. "Yanluo-gege... Why am I here? W-what happened?"

"Other things aside." While Chu Wanning was physically weak, his eyes were still bright and sharp, and he cut straight to the subject. "Tell me, who was the one who fabricated your body? This is an important matter, do you remember?"

"I..."

Chu Wanning waited, but because of nervousness, his nails dug into the stone colonnade, nearly to the point of breaking.

"It's not very clear, but there are some impressions..." Luo Xianxian mumbled. "It was a man, he... he..."

Next to them, Xue Meng was also getting impatient. "Think harder!"

Luo Xianxian strenuously tried to recall her memories. "At the time, everything was in a daze, I really didn't see his face clearly, but I heard his voice, he's got a bit of a northern accent... It seems to be... it seems to be..."

"AH!!" She suddenly exclaimed, terror filling her face. "I remember now! It's him! IT'S HIM!!! THE CLEMENTINES!! THE CLEMENTINE THIEF!!!"

"What clementines, what nonsense..." Xue Meng grumbled.

However, Chu Wanning instantly understood—— What she meant was that madman who chopped off the clementine tree she bumped into when she

was young!

There was a man from Linyi whose heart died at twenty.

Who was it…

Linyi, it couldn't be Rufeng Sect, could it?

Was it…

Yet right then, a sharp crash of thunder suddenly exploded in the sky, and the Zhenlong Chess Formation that enveloped the entire sky above Butterfly Town flashed red.

"Not good!" Xue Zhengyong instantly shouted. "Keep watch on the Ten Thousand Coffins at your sides!! The formation creator has probably noticed by now, something's gonna happen!!!"

Right at that instant, sand flew and debris rolled, smoke and dust began to rise from all around.

All the cultivators were on high alert, their backs against one another, holding their long swords before them.

Chu Wanning's eyes darkened, and he turned to Luo Xianxian. "Get up! There's a white piece from that man left in your body, don't be controlled by him any longer, I'll help you purge it. Once the white piece falls, you must leave immediately. Go to the Underworld and return to the cycle of reincarnation, you must not linger in the mortal realm!"

Chu Wanning stopped. There was a sudden chill that rushed to his head, sparking in a flash. His gut instincts sensed danger, and he shouted to Luo Xianxian, "Leave, quickly!"

But it was too late.

“AH!!!!”

There was a sharp scream.

From the heart of the Zhenlong Chess Formation in the sky above came a blood red light, and it struck like lightning right onto the willow vine-made body of Luo Xianxian.

RUMBLE!

Firelight roared to the skies!

“Luo Xianxian!”

The silhouette of the girl quickly contorted in the sea of fire, and in a split second, a wisp of a fragrant soul rose to the skies, mixing together with the thick fumes that stank of burning.

The soul mingled with the fumes, the fumes and the soul forming one entity.

Where Luo Xianxian once stood, there was suddenly a stream of jade-green light that shot toward the heavens.

“A spiritual essence of the wood element?!”

In an instant, all blood left Chu Wanning’s face, and his eyes turned extremely hostile. He’d been thinking about this wrong——He’d been thinking about this whole thing the wrong way!! Whilst alive, Luo Xianxian must’ve been someone who possessed great wood-elemental spiritual energy. The culprit behind the scenes wasn’t trying to raise a wood

element Heartpluck Willow with Metal Fire Water and Earth, but instead he was waiting for enough resentment to gather to form that crash of thunder, have it strike upon Luo Xianxian's body and have her resentful spirit become the temporary source for the Heartpluck Willow!

Metal Wood Water Fire Earth, all five spirits were now complete.

He could now do whatever he wanted to…

Chu Wanning lifted his head to look to the sky. Everyone was looking at the sky. Everything stopped; in that moment it was terrifyingly quiet.

Then, all of a sudden.

The earth started to quake!!

It was practically the same as what they had once seen in the ancient city of Lin'an, in the illusion at Peach Blossoms Springs.

Above Butterfly Town, a gigantic purplish black rift ripped open across the skies. Inside, it seemed to hold endless, bloody chaos, death, pestilence, and hatred, like the eye of the devil himself as it slowly opened.

Li Wuxin pointed at that rift and yelled with a trembling voice, "The Infinite Hells— The barrier to the Infinite Hells— It's— it's broken!!!!"

"The heavenly dome above Butterfly Town has been torn, the door to the Ghost Realm is open!!"

Ch.95 This Venerable One's Calamity From His Past Life

That thin layer separating the world of the Yin from that of the Yang was already far from the sturdy barrier it had once been in ancient times, and the occasional tears and gaps were common occurrences that hardly even warranted any alarm at all from the cultivation world.

But right now, a bloody eye had ripped straight across the heavens, instantly casting the sky and the earth alike in an unnatural, eerie hue as debris whipped through the air.

A once-in-a-generation calamity, the Heavenly Rift!

With the exception of Mo Ran, none present had ever personally experienced such an immense catastrophe. And so, be it Li Wuxin with his head of white hair, Xue Zhengyong who had been through countless battles, Rufeng Sect of the upper cultivation realm, or Sisheng Peak of the lower cultivation realm, every single one of the thousand-some people gathered here were stunned, at a complete loss for what to do.

But Mo Ran was even more horrified, as if struck by lightning; he could practically feel the thick stench of blood from the past life washing over him, the ruthless massacre, the endless spilling of blood——

This was it! That very same Heavenly Rift!

In the previous lifetime, this was when Shi Mei died. He was working to repair the barrier together with Chu Wanning, but due to having limited spiritual energy, he was counterattacked by the masses of ghosts and demons spilling forth, and fell from high above…

But that clearly wasn't supposed to happen yet, not for another three years! Mo Ran remembered that snowy night with such clarity—it was right after New Year's Eve, there were pieces of red scattered across the snowy ground from spent firecrackers, and the faint smell of smoke still lingered in the air. He had only just celebrated the New Year with everyone else the night before, indulged in the Tusu Wine reserved for the occasion.

Mo Ran looked up, slightly tipsy.

Under the warm light of the candle, Shi Mei's eyes were like the waters of spring, tender and affectionate from every angle.

Sisheng Peak was alive with laughter and merriment.

He had thought, back then, that this was wonderful. That even if he ends up never making a move on the one he liked, he'd be content just to stay by his side for the rest of his life and look at him from a distance, just like this.

The festivities came to a close and the disciples headed back in scattered groups. He and Shi Mei left from Mengpo Hall together, the moonlight reflected on the snowy ground lighting their way. Shi Mei looked a little cold, so he took off his outer robe and draped it across the other's shoulders without a word. And, emboldened by the alcohol in his system, he snuck a couple glances more than usual.

Beauty like fresh snow, pure and untouchable.

“A-Ran.”

“Hm?”

“You drank a little too much today.”

“Haha, did I?” Mo Ran laughed a little, but the rest of the laughter died in his throat.

Because Shi Mei had cupped his face with his slightly cold hands, making his already warm cheeks burn even hotter. Mo Ran’s eyes opened wide, and a tremor ran through his body.

Shi Mei said with a smile, “Mhm, look at you, only three cups and your face is all red.”

“I-It’s just kinda hot.”

Mo Ran scratched his head goofily, his face burning up even more.

He had been so easily satisfied back then, simply liking someone, not needing to have his feelings returned, not daring to dream of more.

That person had only touched his face, and he already felt like he had been blessed by the heavens, staring in a daze as words abandoned him.

His inky black eyes were watery with amazement and gratitude.

They bid each other goodnight in front of the disciple quarters. Before leaving, Shi Mei had turned to smile toward him, draped in his robe and backlit by the beautiful glow of moonlight against the snow.

“A-Ran.”

He was already about to leave, but he whipped around like a spinning top in an almost panicked haste at the sound of his name, for fear that he might miss something.

“Y-yes!”

“Thanks for lending me your robe.”

“It’s nothing! I’m hot anyway!”

“And,” Shi Mei’s gaze grew even softer, so warm it could almost chase away the long winter, “A-Ran, actually, I…”

Bang!

A firework exploded in the distance.

Mo Ran didn’t catch what he said; or perhaps Shi Mei didn’t actually say anything more.

By the time things quieted down again, Shi Mei was already pushing open the door to his room.

Mo Ran called out in a panic, “Wait, what did you say just now?”

But Shi Mei was uncharacteristically teasing, blinking his eyes as he replied, “Good things can only be said once.”

“Shi Mei——”

But that soul-alluring person did not acquiesce, speaking with only the lower half of his elegant face visible from beneath the cold-proofing curtain.

Bearing a soft smile that Mo Ran would remember for the rest of his life.

“It’s late, I’m going to bed. If I still feel like telling you in the morning.”

He paused, soft lashes drooping like leaves of the mimosa plant.

“I’ll tell you then…”

But who could have known that morning would bring with it the Heavenly Rift.

In the end, Mo Ran never got to hear what Shi Mei had to say, and the most tender dream of his life was dyed a bloody scarlet.

How many times had he dreamt of that smile on Shi Mei’s face behind the half-rolled curtain, of how beautiful and gentle it had been; he couldn’t be sure if he was seeing things, but he felt like that smile held boundless feelings.

Time and again for the rest of his painful life, he dreamt the rest of that dream.

In his dream, Shi Mei would say that he liked him, and he would wake up grinning, happy, so happy that for a moment he would even forget that Sh Mei was dead, that there was already no turning back.

Grinning happily, he would think about the rest of their life, think about what delicious foods to make for his beloved person, such important things were worth putting some thought into, after all.

But then, grinning and grinning, tears would start to roll.

He buried his face in his hands.

He'll never know the words that scattered into the wind on that snowy New Year's Eve.

Ripping through thousands of miles of heavy clouds, the Infinite Hells opened.

Countless evil spirits and demonic fiends poured forth from the rift like a legion set to besiege a city. Screams from all around him jolted Mo Ran abruptly from his memories.

Nearly crazed, he shouted frantically, pushing through the chaotic, surging crowd, beside himself with panic, searching——

"Shi Mei!!!!!"

“Shi Mei——!!! Shi Mingjing!!!”

“Where are you? Where are you?”

I don’t know why the Heavenly Rift came three years early.

I don’t know if I can protect you the way I am right now.

But I can’t bear to see you get hurt again, can’t bear to watch you die again…

Please, live…

It’s my fault, for not getting strong enough to protect you right away, I was stupid, didn’t think things through, didn’t consider that this might happen, where are you…

“A-Ran…”

Between the clashing of weapons, he heard a faint voice.

“Shi Mei!!!!”

There he was, next to Xue Meng, shielding them against the onslaught of evil spirits with a screen of water. Mo Ran ran toward him, unheeding of everything else, his throat tight and hs eyes stinging.

“You damn mutt, get over here already and help out!” Xue Meng fought with the might of ten men, but the waves of corpses were a ceaseless tide, and more and more sweat appeared on his forehead as he said through gritted teeth, “Hurry up!”

He didn't need to say any more; Mo Ran leapt into the air and there was a flash of red as Jiangui answered the summon.

He brandished the willow vine, and the holy weapon destroyed an entire row of the vicious ghosts in one lash, turning them instantly into dust. Mo Ran turned his head to yell toward Shi Mei, "Stay close, come here behind me!"

"I want to go help Shizun…"

"DO NOT!!!!!!" The words struck pure fear into Mo Ran's heart!

He absolutely would not allow Shi Mei to go anywhere near Chu Wanning in this fight, not this time.

His memories from the past life overlaid and blended with the sight before him now.

——Back then, he had said the same thing.

"I want to go help Shizun…"

"Alright, hurry over, it'll be safer over there with Shizun, stay with him and let him protect you."

How absurd…

Let him protect you.

Chu Wanning, Chu Wanning, Mo Ran planned and calculated for every possibility, but he had forgotten to consider that that person was Chu Wanning!

Cold-blooded and heartless.

Head full of “the common people”, but not a single care to spare his own dying disciple!

“Don’t go over there! He can take care of himself!”

His entire head felt numb from the overlapping visions of two lifetimes. Eyes bloodshot, Mo Ran roared toward Shi Mei, “DON’T GO ANYWHERE, STAY RIGHT HERE!”

“But Shizun used up so much of his strength just now…”

“He’ll live! Just worry about yourself!”

Scowling darkly, he directed another powerful lash at the surging waves of undead as he spoke, sending flesh and blood flying and chunks of brain splashing to the ground.

His current level of spiritual power was a far cry from what it had been in his past life, but the forms and movements came to him easy like second nature—after all, his body had been through countless battles, had crossed blades with the likes of Ye Wangxi and Chu Wanning. He fought on, undaunted even against the millions of savage undead.

The rift in the sky grew bigger and bigger.

The fiends that had been confined within the Infinite Hells for hundreds of years poured into the mortal realm like a a violent deluge, mixing with the walking corpses of Butterfly Town that had struggled free of the willow vines on the strength from the sudden influx of Yin energy. The situation grew increasingly terrifying and out of control, frenzied and frantic like a pot of boiling oil with water poured into it. The ghosts and demons grabbed living people and tore into them with abandon like a swarm of locust descending on a field of crops; those from Sisheng Peak were used to demonic encounters in their daily operations and could still hold out, but the same could not be said for Rufeng Sect and Bitan Sect as countless ones of their cultivators screamed, blood spurting high into the air!

Chu Wanning was too far away for Mo Ran to see how things were on his side.

But he caught sight of Ye Wangxi and Nangong Si amongst the masses of people. They may not get along, but their fighting styles were strikingly similar

He saw Ye Wangxi toss aside his sword to summon a long bow in a flash of blue light, while Nangong Si's bow was like a crescent moon in his hand. They exchanged a glance before dashing past one another to take one side each, aiming at the densest gatherings of undead corpses and drawing their bows back to the fullest.

Woosh!

They released at practically the same time, the white of the arrow fletchings slashing through the skies with a sound like the screeching of birds.

Tempered with spiritual power, the arrows were shrouded by blades of cutting wind as they flew through the air, ripping right through any fiends in their way…

Looking quite pleased with himself, Nangong Si reached back for another arrow.

But the quiver on his back was empty.

“Out already?”

“Here.”

Before he even had the time to get mad, Ye Wangxi had already tossed him another bundle of arrows.

“You never bring enough.”

“...Hmph!”

Nangong Si scoffed, but this was hardly the time or place to be stubborn over appearances, so he accepted the arrows and the two of them returned to their respective fights.

An hour went by in no time; they beat back masses of the vicious fiends, but even more flooded out from the ghost realm to replace them.

Li Wuxin cut down a dozen spirits in one slash, then turned to yell toward Xue Zhengyong, “We can’t keep going like this, we have to fix the barrier!”

Xue Zhengyong glanced at the four golden arrays glowing from the distance in each of the four directions of the town.

He huffed out a breath and snapped back crossly, “Easy for you to say, do you know how to fix this barrier? Do you even have anyone who knows anything about barriers?”

“I——” Li Wuxin’s expression was sullen. “Barriers aren’t one of my sect’s specialties.”

“Then shut the fuck up! How many Yuhengs do you think there are? Chu Wanning is holding down the four critical points right now, or else if these damn ghosts get out from the blockade, everyone in Shuzhong will be done for! If us cultivators are barely holding on, how do you expect the common folk to survive?!”

“Shuzhong being done for is better than the entire cultivation world being done for! If you don’t get someone to go mend the Heavenly Rift right now, it’ll be out of our hands!”

Xue Zhengyong’s temper flared at his words, and when he swung his metal fan to summon a powerful gale toward the vicious ghosts, he let it slice open Li Wuxin’s cheek as if inadvertently. “And why should the people of

the lower cultivation realm die just to keep your precious upper cultivation realm safe?"

"Don't put words in my mouth! I'm saying that some sacrifices have to be made for the greater good! If this Heavenly Rift had happened at my Bitan Sect, I would've sacrificed my entire sect to keep the peace in the land!"

"What a thing to say, Li-zhuangzhu, but talk is cheap." Tiger-like eyes round with fury, Xue Zhengyong was so angry that he ended up laughing instead. "The entrance to the ghost realm is located in my Shuzhong, it is not and never will be in your Bitan Sect, however many generations pass! So, what, the entirety of Sisheng Peak should just sacrifice itself a thousand, a million times for 'peace in the land'?! Li-zhuangzhu, what a thing to say!"

The two were locked in stalemate, going at it while fighting off demons and fiends, when a streak of snow-white brilliance swept in from the western horizon.

Before they could even ascertain whether it was friend or foe, a burst of frenzied instrumentals came from the clouds above like a tempest, resounding and resonating as a deluge from the heavens, but also akin to a shower of arrows—for they saw no weapons, but it felt as if the glint of blades was everywhere at once, as if they could hear the braying of war steeds and see fire beacons lit up along the walls of the stronghold.

"Kunlun Taxue Palace!"

Xue Zhengyong's head snapped up to look at that stretch of snowy radiance. This close, he could see that it was indeed a multitude of cultivators riding in on swords, each dressed in robes of frozen mist silk, with peach blossom petals drifting about their persons. All of them, male and female alike, were beautiful and gentle-looking, with their appearances frozen in their early twenties by virtue of their cultivation method.

Some of the Taxue Palace disciples stood on their swords, while others sat, half of them cradling pipas in their arms, the other half holding guqins on their knees, the chords streaming forth from the sky above, tumultuous and frenzied yet clear and flowing, making the spirits and undead below shriek in agony, yet keeping them in place as if trapped under an invisible net.

The man at their head had striking features with light blonde hair and jade green eyes. He was clothed in silken robes the color of fresh snow, with a pendant hanging at his forehead like a droplet of water, and within the collars of those robes, his neck was fair and slender, like a fragrant, delicate blossom in a porcelain vase. Kunlun was a snowy, frigid land, so he wore fox fur draped over his shoulders on top of the silken robes, adding even more poised elegance to his appearance.

He held an magnificently exquisite pipa in his arms, and his brows were furrowed as he plucked the strings with his slender fingers, luminescent petals of peach blossoms dancing about him with every note.

"Imperial winds across four seas, waters of virtue ever clear; don not the liveries of war, for today we shall triumph."

The chords eased off slightly and he glanced down at Xue Zhengyong and company, just about to say something when an irate holler sounded from a distance away, “Mei Hanxue! You damn mutt! Why the hell is it you!!”

It was Xue Meng, darting over to stand under Mei Hanxue’s sword even as he kept yelling, tilting his head back to curse, “Of all the people out there, Kunlun Taxue Palace sent your unreliable ass?!”

Turning toward the commotion, Ye Wangxi was irritated as well at the sight of that man with his pipa and his fluttering flower petals and snowflakes.

“...It’s him?”

Nangong Si: “What, another acquaintance of yours?”

“I wouldn’t call him an acquaintance,” Ye Wangxi was less than pleased to see Mei Hanxue, but unlike Xue Meng, who stomped up to curse him out, he turned around to leave immediately, only saying, “Just fought with him once.”

Nangong Si’s curiosity was piqued. “Oh? How is he? Any good?”

“Heh,” Ye Wangxi sneered coldly, “He had women do all the fighting for him, how do you think he is?”

Nangong Si: “.....”

Author’s Notes

Here it comes!

The battle of the heavenly rift that blackened this dog from an ordinary human into Taxian-Jun in the previous lifetime! Stick your neck out, dog! The knife swings downwards!

Ch.96 This Venerable One's Hatred Born In This Life

It was no wonder that Ye Wangxi despised him; this Mei Hanxue was that "dashixiong" from the Peach Blossom Springs that got countless female cultivators to coo and squabble jealously over him.

Nangong Si had initially thought that the new arrival was some powerful character, but it only turned out to be some pretty boy that relied all on looks; all of his interest vaporized in an instant, and he turned back to the battle at hand.

Mei Hanxue glanced at Xue Meng, a little exasperated, but paid him no mind as he lowered his brows and his fingers danced over the strings of the pipa. Hearing the notes, the hundred cultivators of Taxue Palace spread out in all directions——

"Guqin division, play the Song of Alkaid;[99] pipa division, perform the Magic-Cancelling Dance."

At his command, the ensemble changed its tune immediately, countless strong, fast-paced chords gathering in the air into a resounding refrain that scattered the clouds.

Immediately, all the demonic fiends stopped fighting, standing in place instead with their necks outstretched and hollow stares on their faces.

Seeing this, Li Wuxin remembered that those of Kunlun Taxue Palace were not only masters of music, but also knew something of barrier mending. Delighted, he tilted his head up and yelled, “Esteemed nephew[100] Mei, would you happen to know how to mend the Heavenly Rift?”

Paying no heed to that gross “esteemed nephew” address, Mei Hanxue answered, “The Heavenly Rift of the Infinite Hells is beyond my abilities.”

“Ah, this…” Li Wuxin’s face paled, then he swept his sleeve and let out a long sigh.

“Hanxue, what about the barrier around Butterfly Town, would you be able to hold that down?”

The speaker was Xue Zhengyong. Sisheng Peak and Taxue Palace have always been on good terms, so Mei Hanxue, seeing a familiar senior, bowed courteously before answering, “I can try.”

“Great!” Xue Zhengyong clapped his hands together. “Go guard the barrier in the four directions, make sure the demons don’t get out, and call Yuheng back——”

“Yuheng Elder?”

“Ah, my damn memory, forgot you’ve never met Yuheng before. Don’t worry, you’ll know him when you see him, just look for the person holding down the barrier right now.”

“Got it.” Mei Hanxue, calm and collected, flew off toward the edge of the town with a tilt of his sword, like a shooting star upon the wind.

Nangong Si nocked three arrows onto his bow and shot in three directions at once. Between the thrumming of the bowstring, he saw Mei Hanxue shoot past with speed and grace, while the rest of the people from Taxue Palace continued to suppress the enemy with musical chords. Surprised in spite of himself, he asked Ye Wangxi, “This person seems quite capable after all, why did you call him a pretty boy who relies on women to do the fighting?”

“.....”

Ye Wangxi was baffled as well, but the fiends were moving slowly right now, presenting an ideal opportunity to take them out, so he didn’t waste time trying to figure it out, replying only, “It seems he didn’t go all out against me back then,” before turning back to the enemy and saying no more.

Four of the ten great sects were now present, making the fight against the Heavenly Rift somewhat less of a desperate struggle, but still harrowing nonetheless.

Although the fiends currently on the ground were frozen by the chords of Taxue Palace, more and more oozed out from the bloody eye connecting to the ghost realm by the minute, shrieking and howling. The force from Taxue Palace was positioned in the air, but couldn't defend themselves while playing, so the demonic fiends rushed toward the pipa and guqin players between the clouds.

They had no choice but to divert a portion of their force to play the song of defense, instantly weakening the song of suppression and exorcism and allowing the masses of fiends on the ground to resume their frenzied rampage.

Even worse, as the door to the ghost realm opened wider still, some high level demons consumed enough of the mortal realm's Yang energy to break free of their fetters and cross into this world as well, dragging their chains and shackles behind.

These were nothing like the minor fiends from before; they were possessed of both their corpse and resentful soul in one, and were much more powerful and vicious, far beyond what the average cultivator could handle alone. Instantly, some stragglers were slammed over in one strike, their chests skewered right through by bony claws——

With a wet gushing sound, blood splattered all about as the high level demons ripped the spiritual energy-filled hearts from those cultivators and bit greedily into them, fresh blood squelching out and streaming down the rotting flesh of their faces.

Mouths covered in blood and dangling with pieces of flesh, the demons grew even stronger, plunging into the crowd and seeking their next meal like beasts of prey.

Instantly, all hell broke loose!

Xue Zhengyong shouted, “Set arrays and form groups! Stay together, don’t run off!”

But some had already lost their head to fear, running about in hysterics, screaming and crying as they fled every which way. The stench of blood in the air grew stronger; the demonic fiends amassed like the tide, as did the corpses of the dead...

Letting fly arrow after arrow, Nangong Si was going all out when a hanged ghost with its blood red tongue dangling from its mouth rushed in and latched onto him, raising its claw and going straight for his chest.

Ye Wangxi was too far away when he turned and saw, all color draining instantly from his usually composed face——

“A-Si!!!!”

“Gongzi!”

In the nick of time, Song Qiutong sprung over with her sword and stabbed the hanged ghost in the arm. But she’s never even killed a person before, much less a ghastly fiend like this, so she let go right after in fear, the long sword falling to the ground with a clang.

The hanged ghost lunged out at her in rage, and Nangong Si switched bow for sword to block in front of her as he yelled, “Get away from here, hurry!”

Song Qiutong’s eyes glistened with tears, saying, “Qiutong’s life was saved by Rufeng Sect, this one cannot possibly leave…”

Nangong Si had little experience in dealing with women, but seeing her delicate demeanor and that determination in her eyes, he felt a squeeze in his heart and couldn’t help cursing under his breath as he called, “Ye Wangxi!!!”

“Ye Wangxi! Get the hell over here! Look after her for me!”

Ye Wangxi arrived covered in blood, grime and filth staining his handsome face. He grabbed Song Qiutong by the arm and said harshly, “Go find Qin-shixiong and stick with him.”

“I’m not leaving, I can still help,” she pleaded. “Young master, I want to stay by your side.”

“Ye Wangxi, make sure you protect her!”

Ye Wangxi’s face darkened immediately; being the upstanding gentleman that he was, he rarely ever showed such anger on his face.

“Nangong Si,” the syllables trembled, broken. “You must have lost your mind.”

Then, paying no more mind to the other two, he took hold of his sword and vaulted away back into the surging masses of undead.

More and more high level demons appeared, mixing into the crowd like daggers slicing open the stomach of the fish, peeling off its scales, glistening scales sticky with blood, rising and falling.

It was every man for himself as the fiends surrounded the living, wanting nothing more than to devour each and every one of them, drag them into the Infinite Hells. Mo Ran, Xue Meng, and Shi Mei fought back to back against the demons in all directions, but the clearing around them was shrinking as the enemy closed in. There was a wet sound as Xue Meng cut the arms off a fierce fiend, and foul blood shot several feet into the air.

The attacking fiends saw that this person was strong, and so circled around toward Shi Mei instead. Shi Mei's hands were held in a spell sign, but his spiritual energy was draining, and the waterlight array flickered in brightness...

Knowing that they won't be able to hold out for much longer at this rate, Mo Ran made up his mind, saying, "Shi Mei, put up a shield array. Xue Meng, get in."

"What?" Xue Meng got mad immediately. "You telling me to be a wimp?!"

"Just listen to me and get in! Is this the time to be stubborn about appearances? Look around you, you think we can kill this many ghosts?!"

Shi Mei said, “A-Ran, what are you going to do?”

“Don’t ask so much, just do as I told you,” Mo Ran gentled his tone, “it’ll be alright.”

The circle around them closed in even more. Mo Ran urged, “Quickly, there’s no more time.”

Shi Mei could only adjust his hand seal to raise a layer of blue-colored shielding array around Xue Meng and himself. Seeing the array complete, Mo Ran pulled out the weapon hidden in his sleeve and swiped it across his palm to sprinkle the array with his own blood, marking it with his spiritual energy. Then, gaze darkening, he called out in a low voice, “Get to work!”

Jiangui flared bright at his words, each leaf ablaze with the glow of scarlet spiritual energy, like so many sharp daggers hanging from the willow vine as it suddenly grew in length by tens of feet. Mo Ran closed his eyes, recalling in his mind the sight of Chu Wanning unleashing his killing technique, and when he opened them again, in his eyes were reflected the countless ghastly fiends closing in.

He whipped Jiangui high up into the sky above, sparks erupting off the vine and raining down.

Mo Ran held up his arm, his sleeve whipping in the wind.

In that moment, his silhouette seemed to overlap with that of Chu Wanning in his mind, the two moving in perfect sync.

“Wind.”

A burst of force that ravaged the land and urged the very clouds above, pulling low the sky itself!

Behind Mo Ran, Xue Meng and Shi Mei watched as an enormous light array in scarlet bloomed like a red lotus from hell, fierce gales whipping the ground like formless blades as Jiangui whirling into a blur in Mo Ran’s hand, sending dust and debris swirling into the air, the overwhelming force pulling countless fiends into the maelstrom and grounding them into mince!!!!

Chu Wanning’s area killing technique, “Wind.”

Mo Ran could already use it this well...

By the time the tempest settled down, there was absolutely nothing left in the area.

Both Xue Meng and Shi Mei wore shocked expressions when Mo Ran turned around, but he had no time to celebrate, feeling only that he was far from where he needed to be—if he had the cultivation level that he

once did right now, something so trifling as a fracture in the ghost realm barrier would've be nothing to him.

"Look over there!"

Someone suddenly called in the distance.

Everyone looked up to see several contingents high up in the sky, riding in on swords from various directions, each group dressed differently and shrouded by different spiritual energies.

The Heavenly Rift of the Infinite Hells had finally urged the sects of the upper cultivation realm into action. The glowing swords touched down one after another, bringing a massive influx of reinforcements—over here were the graceful and charming personages from the Rainbell Isle, and over there were the solemn and dignified monks from Wubei Temple.

Finally, the ten great sects were all present.

Even stronger demons were crossing into this world, endless like swarming locust, but with the sudden arrival of reinforcements, they were no longer so outmatched.

At the same time, Mei Hanxue and Chu Wanning finally completed the spiritual transfer, the color of the barrier at the cardinal directions of the town changing from gold to blue.

With Mei Hanxue guarding the borders, Chu Wanning rode the wind into the center of the battle, landing gracefully where the fighting is most

fierce.

He looked up at the rift in the sky, completely open by now, with some kind of immeasurable and terrifying evil vaguely perceptible from within.

He could practically feel the entity's insane strength, as if it had drunk the blood and consumed the brains of millions...

The barrier must be sealed now, or else that great evil being suppressed within the Infinite Hells will break free and cross into the mortal realm!

Chu Wanning couldn't help wondering if this was what the person behind the scenes was after, to unleash some kind of great evil from hell into this world?

But to what end?

"Shizun!"

Shi Mei called anxiously after him.

Chu Wanning turned toward the voice.

Memories from the past life once again overlaid the present scene.

"Shizun!"

Shi Mei had called for him the same way back then.

Chu Wanning turned toward the voice.

Shi Mei panted in the snow, covered in blood and grime, but his eyes were firm and determined. "Shizun is going to mend the Heavenly Rift?"

“Mn.”

“But that… that’s not just any fracture, that’s a fracture into the Infinite Hells, how will Shizun manage by himself?”

“.....”

“Let me help. I studied the defensive arts at the Peach Blossom Springs, I won’t get in Shizun’s way…”

It was almost as if he could hear the exchange between the two, so many years ago, that determined life and death.

Mo Ran felt his blood run cold and his head go numb. Without warning, he grabbed Shi Mei and pulled him behind himself, then shoved him into Xue Meng, yelling, “Xue Ziming, keep an eye on him! Look after him!!”

Xue Meng’s eyes widened. “You going somewhere, mutt?”

“I…”

The wind picked up, carrying with it the stench of blood.

There was no flurry of snowflakes in the sky; at least some things were different from the last lifetime.

Mo Ran’s gaze landed on Shi Mei, lost and helpless, feeling his heart clench but then fill with relief.

This barrier cannot be mended by Chu Wanning alone.

But aside from his three disciples, no one else had the familiarity with his spiritual cultivation to work together with him in rapport. So one of them had to go.

The wind whipped fiercely through the battlefield, thousands of miles of desperate slaughter.

Bracing himself, Mo Ran pulled Shi Mei into his arms. It was the first time he had ever held him like this so openly and directly; he held him for a moment, and then abruptly pushed him away.

Shi Mei.

This time, I'm afraid the one to die will have to be me.

"I'll go help Shizun seal the barrier," Mo Ran declared in a tone that left no room for argument. Narrowing his eyes, he directed another deep, meaningful gaze at Shi Mei.

Suddenly, he didn't care what others might think anymore, didn't care that Xue Meng was right there, didn't care that he might get rejected. He had waited for two lifetimes, loved for two lifetimes, and now he was leaving, and might not be able to come back. Standing in the ferocious wind, he wanted to say a few final words to his beloved.

"Shi Mei, actually, I…"

But just then, as he opened his mouth to speak, the roars of vicious fiends drowned out his voice.

That momentary impulse, boiling hot like lava, grew cold in that momentary pause, and in the end fizzled out.

“A-Ran, did you want to say something?”

A reflection from his past life flitted across Mo Ran’s eyes; he saw Shi Mei’s gentle smile from behind that half-rolled curtain.

How cruel it had been.

It had stayed with him, for his whole life until death, and it was everywhere that he looked.

The rims of his eyes a little red, Mo Ran grinned.

“Nevermind, good things can’t be said twice.”

Shi Mei: “You…”

“I’m off to go help Shizun. When I come back… if I still feel like telling you.” Dimples deep, gaze filled with love. “I’ll tell you then…”

With that, he turned and headed toward Chu Wanning.

Shi Mei won’t die now.

At least he won’t die in front of him.

Mo Ran suddenly felt as if the sky was more open and the ground more vast. He supposed that the figure in front of him, white robes billowing, will be the end point of this reborn life of his.

His Shizun, who held the world in his heart.

As Shi Mei lay dying, for the sake of completing the mending of the barrier, for the sake of purging the rampaging fiends, Chu Wanning had ruthlessly chosen to leave.

This time, the one to repair the barrier with him was himself. Chu Wanning despised him so much, disliked him so much, there was no way he'd put down his esteemed reputation as the Beidou Immortal to mind the life or death of someone so insignificant as himself.

"Shizun."

He came to a stop in front of him, Jiangui glowing in his hand.

"This barrier is hard to repair, let me help."

The situation was dire; Chu Wanning shot him a wordless glance in silent acceptance.

He leapt up to stand at the highest point of the Chen Manor, with Mo Ran following after.

Chu Wanning spoke, "Set the Discernment Barrier."

Following his instructions, Mo Ran moved in concert with him, one to the left and one to the right, the tips of their fingers glowing with the seal of the Discernment Barrier as they lifted their hands into the air in concert.

"Invoke!"

Their spiritual energies streamed forth from their bodies at the invocation, working in rapport and each holding down a vital grounding point of the

array, using the surge of their cultivation to form a gold-scarlet barrier that expanded outwards.

Any demonic fiends touched by the barrier would shriek as if burned and flee back into the eye of the ghost realm. The barrier grew clearer and brighter by the second, and below their feet rose a pair of coiled dragon platforms formed of spiritual energy, lifting the two of them high into the skies above.

In the glaring gold and scarlet light of the barrier, the ghost eye slowly began to close, but, as if refusing to yield, the resentful spirits within grew even wilder.

The resentful energy spilling forth grew stronger with each inch of the closure, and by the time they were some thousand meters away from the rift, the corruption from within was practically palpable.

In his reborn body, Mo Ran felt as if a heavy weight was beginning to settle over his shoulders, like an immense rock weighing a thousand tons was pressing against his chest, making it hard to breathe.

Across from him, Chu Wanning's spiritual energy was still strong and steady, streaming unceasingly into the barrier.

One inch, another inch.

The corruption in the air had concentrated into one spot; it felt as if countless daggers were digging into his very flesh and bones.

"Shizun…"

As his consciousness slowly began to fade, he seemed to see memories from the past again.

Shi Mei and Chu Wanning working together to repair the barrier, and it was mere moments before the worlds of Yin and Yang would be separated once again. The vicious ghosts that were about to be deprived of Yang energy once more saw that Shi Mei's side was much weaker; they gathered together and lunged toward Shi Mei as one.

Shaa!

In only an instant, Shi Mei, who had been doing his best to maintain the balance of the barrier, was pierced right through!

The scene replayed, almost exactly the same way.

Only, this time, it was Mo Ran whose heart was pierced through by a thousand ghosts.

From the Heavenly Rift, a cascade of demonic fiends broke through the heavy clouds and punched through Mo Ran's chest in an instant. Mo Ran saw red before his eyes, and it wasn't until a moment later that he came to his senses and realized that that was his blood bursting forth from his own chest.

Drowning in the suffocating stream, he strained to turn toward Chu Wanning, only to be met with the sight of the man's pristine white robes and coldly impassive face, not even sparing him so much as half a glance.

Resentment flooded his chest.

Setting into deep hatred.

He fell from the coiled dragon platform, blood seeping from the corner of his lips, chest dyed a deep crimson.

The fall took only a moment, but it felt like an eternity, like a drowning person sinking slowly to the bottom of the sea, never again to hear the soft whispers of the living world.

Chu Wanning hadn't lifted single finger on his behalf.

Hadn't tried to stop them.

Couldn't even be bothered to glance his way.

When he fell, the scarlet spiritual energy dissipated, and just like in the previous lifetime, Chu Wanning chose to pour the remainder of his powers into the portion that Mo Ran wasn't able to mend, and, by his strength alone——

Forced the barrier shut with a thunderous bang!

But the fiends left on this side of the gate, cut off from the Yin energy of the ghost realm, immediately went into a frenzied rampage against the cultivators, mowing through countless of the living in mere moments, utterly annihilating the formations of several sects.

Chu Wanning descended. When Mo Ran fell, a layer of light had formed beneath the coiled dragon pillar to cushion his fall.

But his whole chest had been pierced through and blood pooled on the ground beneath him, no different from Shi Mei back then.

Chu Wanning beat back the fiends that rushed toward Mo Ran and, with a backhanded wave, dropped a protective barrier around him.

“Shizun…”

The person behind him murmured quietly.

“Are you leaving…”

Mo Ran coughed out blood, but there was a grin on his face.

“Are you leaving again?”

Outside the flowing golden barrier, that person continued to stand with his back to him. Mo Ran opened his mouth, but his throat filled suddenly with the taste of iron.

“Chu Wanning, are you made of wood? You don’t know what it is to feel sad, to be selfish, do you…”

“Chu Wanning…”

“Chu Wanning…”

His vision blurred. He was covered in wounds from the battle; blood streamed from a cut on his forehead, flowed into his eyes, and as he threw his head back and laughed with abandon into the skies above, laughed as if he had gone mad, bloodied tears fell down his face.

His voice broke on a sob. “Chu Wanning, turn around! Look at me...are you really going to leave…”

Won’t you look at me one last time.

I’m dying.

Back then, when it was Shi Mei, you had at least spared him a glance.

You…

Do you truly…

Dislike me this much? Look down on me this much?

Why else would you refuse to look at me, just this one last time? Why won’t you turn around?

“Shizun…”

His eyes brimmed with blood and tears.

The last thing he saw, through the golden barrier, was the back of that lone person’s white-robed figure as he walked away.

To go suppress demons.

So, in the end, it turned out that in his heart, there was no one else less important...than Mo Weiyu.

Ch.97 This Venerable One...

“Mo Ran, Mo Ran.”

Someone seemed to be calling him.

He opened his eyes, bleary and dazed, to an unfocused white silhouette. Vaguely, he felt as if this person looked like Chu Wanning, but at the same time he also didn’t quite dare to believe it. He felt that person’s hands folded over his chest, channeling an unbroken stream of spiritual energy into the wreckage there that was still bleeding nonstop.

So warm…

Who?

He blinked arduously, trying to get a look at that blurry figure.

“Mo Ran…”

“Sh-Shizun?”

He fought down the blood welling in his throat to ask in a murmur.

He felt something warm and wet fall on his cheek. Slowly, his vision cleared up enough to see a pair of phoenix eyes, softly beautiful with a hint of melancholy like the apricot blossoms of Jiangnan, against a face that was deathly pale and stained with blood. Mo Ran was at a loss as he stared dazedly at him—he had never seen such an expression on Chu Wanning’s face before.

His Shizun had always been coldly impassive, but the person before him now was crying.

Mo Ran reached up with a hand, wanting to touch, wanting to check if it was real or just the hallucinations of a dying man. But, the tips of his fingers mere inches from that person's face, he paused.

Sometimes, hating someone was a kind of habit. If, suddenly, he shouldn't hate him anymore, then he wouldn't know what to do.

He didn't dare touch.

He was afraid it might be real.

But also afraid it might not be.

Behind Chu Wanning, he saw mountains of corpses and oceans of blood; he couldn't quite tell if it was the battleground at Butterfly Town, or if he had already gone to hell. He was well aware that he had committed countless evils, had sinned irredeemably, that he belonged in the Infinite Hells, never again to be reincarnated.

But Chu Wanning…

He was a good person.

Why would he be here with him, to suffer an eternity in hell?

"Just a little more," Chu Wanning's voice was distant and hazy, as if uttered through the depth of an ocean. "You have to stay awake, or else…"

He watched blood seep from the corner of Chu Wanning's mouth.

The golden light grew brighter and brighter until the person before his eyes was suddenly enveloped in the blinding glow, turning into the form of a child.

“Or else you are no disciple of mine.”

“Xia-shidi!”

Chu Wanning turned into Xia Sini right in front of his eyes. Mo Ran was so shocked that his wound suddenly blazed with pain, and he passed out again before he could process a single thought.

“Mo Ran.”

A voice so soft it was almost a sigh; he didn’t know if it was a hallucination of the past life or a lingering murmur by his ear.

“I’m sorry, it was this master’s fault…”

This again! This again!!

Chu Wanning, I don’t want you to apologize, I want you——

To what?

He faltered, not knowing what it was that he wanted.

If he didn’t want him to apologize, then what did he want him to do?

His eyes shot open. Breathing harshly, clothes soaked through with sweat, Mo Ran looked up to see a clean, tidy room, sparsely decorated.

He was back at his room in Sisheng Peak.

He actually lived…

Disbelievingly, he glanced around himself, then raised a hand that was a bit cold to feel the injury on his chest. It was wrapped in several layers of bandages; blood had seeped through the gauze and dyed it red, and it hurt a little when touched, but underneath, his heart was still beating rhythmically, powerfully, beating with the promise of the rest of his life.

He lived.

He lived!!!

Blood coursed wildly, powerfully through his youthful body, making the tips of his fingers tremble, thrumming through his very soul.

He heard the sound of curtains being lifted. Mo Ran looked up from where he was sitting on the bed and came face to face with the beauty that had just entered. It was probably cold outside; his long black hair cascaded loosely over a white mantle lined with fur, and when he lifted those soft, bright eyes, there was a faint redness at their corners, more beautiful than any makeup.

Shi Mei hadn't expected Mo Ran to be awake already, and started a little before saying, "A-Ran? Y-you…"

"Shi Mei! Shi Mei!"

Mo Ran called his name a bunch of times, eyes bright and glittering like obsidian. He jumped off the bed, ignoring the protests of his wound, and grinned toothily while throwing himself on Shi Mingjing, hugging him tightly, ecstatically repeating over and over.

"I'm so glad! You're alive! I'm alive! It's over, it's all over!!"

The Heavenly Rift had been the greatest calamity of his past life; fiends and demons had descended from above, taken Shi Mei, and pushed Mo Ran into the abyss of sin.

It was the one thing that had kept him constantly on edge after rebirth, fearful that it would happen all over again, that he would be left all alone again, treading on the bones of those he had once loved and cared for on the lonely path toward an empty Wushan Palace.

But the heavens were not unkind to him, and everything had changed when he'd stood up, willing to die in Shi Mei's place.

He won't be all alone anymore, abandoned and rebuked by all, won't be forced to Liangshan Mountain in the dead of night, henceforth a lonely wanderer; from now on, the curse is broken——

He had truly escaped the nightmare of his past life now, truly been reborn.

Mo Ran clung to Shi Mei for a long time before letting go, his eyes bright like fireworks, glittering like the starry night.

Shi Mei stood there, dazed and unmoving, while Mo Ran wrapped his arms around his shoulders and looked down at him, smiling. They stayed like

that for a long time before Shi Mei slowly broke out of his daze and leaned in of his own accord to press his forehead against the lower side of Mo Ran's jaw.

"A-Ran."

"Mhm?"

When Shi Mei lifted his face, he wore a faint smile, but his eyes were a little wet.

"I'm so glad you're ok."

Smiling, Mo Ran stroked his hair, then took his hands in his own, reassuring, "Silly, of course I'm ok, why wouldn't I be? I…"

Before he could say more, the curtain was lifted again as someone else strode in.

"Xue Meng?"

"....." What a petty guy, probably still upset that he got outdone at the Butterfly Town battle—he wore a sullen expression, and his lips were pressed into a thin line. Seeing Mo Ran up and about, he only paused for a beat before turning to speak to Shi Mei. "When'd he wake up?"

Shi Mei hesitated for a moment before answering, his voice sounding a little worried, "Just now."

"...I see," Xue Meng acknowledged, still refusing to look at Mo Ran.

Mo Ran thought to himself, look at this little brat, sulking so much just cause he got showed up, it's like he got his candy stolen or something.

But he was in quite the good mood, so he was willing to overlook it. Smiling, he said, “Looks like I was out for a while huh, who brought me back?”

“Who else?” Xue Meng flung his sleeve and folded his hand behind. “Of course it was Shizun.”

“Ah.”

Mo Ran was taken aback by his words, fragments of blurry memories from when he’d been drifting in and out of consciousness passing before his eyes. He was just so overwhelmed with shock and elation, now that he was awake, that he was even less sure if the things he’d seen back then were real or not.

He mumbled, “Shizun… Xia-shidi…”

Hearing his murmur, Xue Meng jerked almost imperceptibly before saying, stiffly, “So, you saw?”

“What?”

“That Xia-shidi is Shizun.”

Mo Ran was still only guessing, and his entire face went pale at being suddenly told outright like this. “WHAT!!!”

Xue Meng’s head snapped toward him, a strange expression on his face like he was using all that he had to keep something in check, “What? I thought you already knew.”

Mo Ran yelped, “How would I know that! I just, when I was drifting in and out, and it was all blurry… I thought I might have seen the two of them overlapping… I…”

He thought about the time he’d spent with Xia Sini at the Peach Blossom Springs, the two of them sleeping in the same bed; he thought about when he lost control at the Rainbell Isle, the golden hair clasp that had fallen out as he tore at Chu Wanning’s robes.

And the handkerchief, embroidered with a haitang blossom.

Clothing that grew and shrunk with its wearer.

The little jar of chicken soup, held tightly in Xia Sini’s arms.

The way he had looked up at him and called him shixiong, and how he had patted him on the head, grinning as he said that we’ll be brothers from here on out, shixiong will dote on you.

One after another, the memories materialized before his eyes and then scattered like smoke; now it was Chu Wanning, his face impassive, expression much too cold, and now it was Xia Sini, his lips pressed together, refusing to talk.

He had once said to Xia Sini that Chu Wanning was no good, that he disliked him.

He had also once patiently brushed Xia Sini’s long hair.

His hair was so soft, flowing between his fingers like liquid ink.

Now that he thought about it, they really were so much alike...

Mo Ran felt like his head was going to explode. He paced in place, back and forth, muttering, “Shizun is Xia-shidi… Shizun is Xia-shidi… Shizun is…”

He came to an abrupt stop, almost crazed.

“You’ve got to be kidding me! How could Shizun possibly be Xia-shidi!!!”

“A-Ran…”

Mo Ran didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. “S-sure they’re pretty similar in a lot of ways, but… but they’re not the same in the end. Xia-shidi is such a good person, how could——”

“The hell do you mean by that.”

Xue Meng cut him off, pinning him with a sharp glare.

“Xia-shidi is such a good person? So, what, such a good person cannot possibly be Shizun?”

Mo Ran countered, “Of course I’m not saying that Shizun isn’t a good person. It’s just that Xia-shidi has always been so sincere with me, and I basically saw him as my own little brother, how am I supposed to just accept you suddenly telling me that he’s actually Shizun…”

Xue Meng snarled, “Xia-shidi is sincere huh, is Shizun insincere then?”

Hearing the temper rising in his voice, Shi Mei hurriedly tugged on his sleeve.

“Young master, remember what uncle said! A-Ran just woke up, he…”

But Xue Meng shook him off, his brown eyes still fixed on Mo Ran’s face, so infuriated that even the vein at his neck was throbbing, looking like a hissing viper just about to sink its venomous fangs into its prey, ready to devour.

“Mo Weiyu, you better explain to me right here and right now, why can’t Shizun be Xia Sini? Where does he lack sincerity, huh? Tell me clearly, which part of him is fake to you?!”

The flood of demanding questions only annoyed Mo Ran a little; after all, it wasn’t like he hadn't seen Xue Meng pissed off before—in the last lifetime, Xue Meng’s temper had been more or less like this in every single one of their encounters after he b ecame Emperor Taxian-Jun.

But still, it was irksome. Mo Ran frowned and snapped, “What’s it to you? That’s between me and him.”

“Between you and him?” Xue Meng repeated. “Have you ever even thought about him?”

Mo Ran was so mad he laughed instead. “The hell’s your problem, Xue Ziming, seriously, when’d you go mental? C’mon Shi Mei, let’s go to Loyalty Hall, maybe Uncle and Shizun know what’s up with him.” He brushed past Xue Meng to leave, pulling Shi Mei along.

Xue Meng stood rooted in place for a while, as if trying hard to hold something down, but his restraint cracked as Mo Ran was just about to

step out of the door, and he whipped around, roaring, “MO WEIYU, HAVE YOU EVER SPARED A THOUGHT FOR THIS SHIZUN OF YOURS?!”

“.....”

Mo Ran only felt even more agitated; his steps halted, originally cheerful and relaxed brows drawing low into a scowl.

Shi Mei squeezed his hand, whispering uneasily, “Don’t mind him, he’s been a bit irritable lately. Come on, let’s go.”

“...Mn.”

But his hand had only just made contact with the curtain, hadn’t even lifted it yet, when Xue Meng’s voice rang out again, stifled, inflamed and distraught, like it had leapt out from a fire.

“Mo Weiyu, you fucker, you piece of shit.”

The curtain dropped back down with a swish.

Mo Ran closed his eyes, then opened them.

“A-Ran…”

Shi Mei tried to pull him back, but was gently pushed aside.

He turned his face, and then his body. The two of them were about the same age, but Mo Ran was already taller by a chunk, and he could look quite cold and menacing when he wanted to.

Mo Ran suddenly smiled, but his black eyes were deep and without the slightest hint of a smile.

He spoke, “So I’m a piece of shit now, huh.”

“Xue Ziming, I’ve never treated Shizun with anything but respect, nor did I stand by and watch at the battle of the Heavenly Rift. The barrier to the Infinite Hells couldn’t be mended by his strength alone, so I stepped up to help. Let me ask you, as his disciple, have I done anything wrong?”

“……”

“My strength falls far short of his, so I wasn’t able to hold out till the end when mending the barrier. I fell from the coiled dragon pillar, but he didn’t even spare me so much as a single glance, uncaring of whether I lived or died. Let me ask you again, in my shoes, would you not feel bitter and disappointed?”

“Mo Ran…”

Finally giving voice to the thing that had eaten away at him for two lifetimes, Mo Ran’s handsome features twisted into something dark as he spoke of his sore spot. He forced out each individual syllable, slowly and clearly enunciating every word. “As I see it, I’ve done my duty, and owe him nothing. What gives you the right to stand here in front of me and call me a piece of shit? ...Xue Meng, do you think I’ve never cared for him? You’re wrong, I have.”

“But he’s made of stone,” Mo Ran continued in a low voice, every word like a knife to his heart, drawing blood. “Xue Meng. Listen to me, I don’t care what a powerful cultivator he is in the eyes of the world, what a prestigious zongshi, that he’s Yuheng of the Night Sky, Beidou Immortal, none of that is important.”

"What's important is that, at the battle of the Heavenly Rift, I nearly died. But when I begged for him to look back, spare me a glance, he wouldn't even give that to me."

It was such a chilling, enraging thing.

But he was strangely calm as he spoke of it; only his eyes were a little red.

“And, Xue Meng, I can guarantee you—no matter who it was falling from the pillar back then, even if it wasn’t me, even if it was you or Shi Mei, he wouldn’t have saved you.”

Because I saw it with my own eyes.

He had turned and left his own disciple’s body to cool in the snowstorm that filled the sky.

“There’s nothing more important than his good name as the Beidou Immortal, after all,” Mo Ran sneered coldly. Maybe it was the poor lighting, but he looked a little forlorn.

“You’ll live if you’re lucky. Die if you’re not.”

His last word was still lingering in the air when there came a blur before his eyes alongside a rush of wind.

The room was narrow and Shi Mei was behind him, so Mo Ran couldn't dodge even though he sensed it coming, for fear of letting him come to harm, so he stood his ground and took the blow.

Xue Meng lunged at him like a cheetah, gripped him by the collar, and a loud 'PA!' rang out in the air as Xue Meng slapped him across the face, holding nothing back.

Getting slapped out of the blue like that, Mo Ran's temper flared as well. He twisted his wrist to seize the raging youth, snarling through gritted teeth, "Xue Ziming! The fuck do you think you're doing?!"

Xue Meng didn't answer, instead roaring, "Mo Weiyu, you bastard!!"

He had absolutely no interest in talking it out, rampaging like he was on something with no sense or reason to speak of, getting into a brutal brawl with Mo Ran right there in that desolate little room, going at each other's throats like a pair of trapped beasts, like they wanted to rip each other to threads, tear one another apart and swallow the other, blood, bones and all. A single lamp flickered in the room, casting their maddened silhouettes against the wall of stone, like a shadow play of beasts tearing into one another, like a picture of raging demons.

Suddenly, Mo Ran heard Xue Meng choke back a sob.

It was so quiet that he thought he must have heard wrong.

But just as he thought that, several drops of tears landed on the back of his hand.

Xue Meng suddenly let go of Mo Ran and shoved him away, then curled up on the ground, wrapping his arms around his knees, and started bawling miserably right there.

Mo Ran's cheek was still red and swollen, but he was utterly stumped at this turn of events, thinking that it wasn't like he'd actually pulled out any deadly moves, surely he hadn't hurt him that bad, and besides, it was this cousin of his who threw the first punch to start with, why all of a sudden...

He was still puzzling it over when he heard Xue Meng's voice, screaming hoarsely between broken sobs.

"How could you say he didn't save you! How could you say he didn't save you!"

Tears rolled down his cheeks, impossible to stop.

To the side, Shi Mei saw that Xue Meng couldn't keep things under wraps after all, so he sighed and, looking down, said no more.

Xue Meng choked out between sobs, "He'll be so sad if he heard you say that from down below…"[101]

These words were too sudden, Mo Ran couldn't quite process them immediately. He asked in a daze, "What?"

Xue Meng only kept crying. His venomous fang had pierced into Mo Ran's neck, but it had also pricked himself.

He wept so miserably, so brokenly, wiping desperately at his face, at his eyes, his gaze flickering between ferocity and sorrow.

He wouldn't get up from where he crouched on the floor.

He stayed there with his face buried in the crook of his arm for a long, long time.

Mo Ran felt a slow numbness climb up from the bottom of his feet, until his entire body felt frozen.

He felt his lips move. Heard his voice ask.

"Xue Meng, what did you just say…"

Xue Meng cried for a long time, or maybe it wasn't actually that long at all, only that it felt like far too long to Mo Ran as he waited for that thunderous jolt of an answer.

"Shizun…" Xue Meng finally choked out, "he's gone."

For a moment, Mo Ran had nothing to say. His whole body felt cold; distantly, he heard the words, but he couldn't seem to understand them.

Gone?

What do you mean gone?

Gone where?

Who's gone… who's gone!!!

WHO'S GONE!!!!!!!!!

Xue Meng lifted his head slowly; there was hatred in his eyes, and mockery, and the deepest pain and loathing.

“Do you know why he didn’t look back?”

“.....”

“Father said that sealing the Heavenly Rift took all that he had. Did you think you were the only one struck by the fiendish energy of the ghost realm? The Discernment Barrier is twinned! Whatever damage you took, he suffered the same! It’s just that he endured it, and said nothing of it to anyone.”

Mo Ran felt a droning between his ears.

When he didn’t save Shi Mei in the previous lifetime, was that also because…

Mo Ran didn’t dare finish the thought. The tips of his fingers trembled.

“No way… but he was so poised…”

“When had he ever been anything but poised in front of others?” Fresh tears welled up and overflowed in Xue Meng’s eyes as he spoke, “All of his spiritual energy had already been exhausted by the time he came down from there. Why do you think he put a protective barrier around you and left without looking at you?”

Xue Meng’s words dripped with tears of blood.

“Shizun knew he couldn’t hold out for much longer. His cultivation was high, so all the fiends would be drawn to him the moment he showed any

weakness… Mo Ran, Mo Ran… did you think he left because he abandoned you…”

Mo Ran: “.....”

“He left to protect you! Mo Weiyu! So that you wouldn’t get caught up in that!”

“The fiends went berserk when the Infinite Hells closed, the battle dragged on till nightfall, countless were killed or injured, who had time for you?! Even my father didn’t know you were gone until he was already back at Sisheng Peak with an injured Xuanjii Elder,” Xue Meng paused for a moment, breathing harshly, before forcing the rest of the words through the tightness in his throat. “Mo Weiyu, he was the one who brought you back… he was the one who took the pill that lets him recover his original form, so that he could pull you from the bloody wreckage, from the mountain of corpses, he was the one already covered in wounds himself, but still gave you the last remnant of his spiritual power…”

“No way…”

“He was the one who brought you home; you were still unconscious, and his spiritual energy was completely drained. He was no different from an ordinary person at that time, couldn’t use any techniques at all, not even a communication spell. He could only carry you on his back and climb up the stairs of Sisheng Peak, step by step…”

“No…”

“Over three thousand steps… he… without any spiritual power…”

Mo Ran closed his eyes.

He could almost see, under the pale moonlight, Chu Wanning carrying himself as he was on the verge of death, climbing slowly up those endless stairs, white robes stained bloody.

That person had been so distant and unreachable, so pristine and untarnished.

Beidou Immortal, Yuheng of the Night Sky.

Mo Ran's throat felt tight, and his voice shook when he spoke, "No way… how… did he…"

"I wondered the same," Xue Meng stared into the distance at a loss, the rims of his eyes red.

"When I saw him, I thought that surely I had gone mad, that I was seeing things. Because I was also thinking," he sighed the rest, "how...did he…"

"No way…" Mo Ran suddenly let out a sob and clutched his head, murmuring helplessly, "No way…"

"The stairs are still stained with a trail of blood; that's the road he took to bring you home." Xue Meng's hatred made him ruthless. "Go look for yourself, Mo Ran. Go look."

"NO WAY!!!!!!"

Shock and helplessness beyond what he could bear sent Mo Ran into a rage. He grabbed Xue Meng without warning, hauled him up off the ground, and slammed him against the wall, his face twisting into something bestial.

“No way, no fucking way! How could he have saved me? He’s always disliked me, always looked down on me!”

“.....”

Xue Meng said nothing for a moment, then suddenly grinned miserably.

“Mo Weiyu, it’s not that he looked down on you.”

In the flowing candlelight, Xue Meng lifted his eyelashes, clumpy with tears, and leveled him with a gaze filled with hatred.

“It’s that I look down on you.”

Mo Ran: “.....”

“I look down on you, Xuanji Elder looks down on you, Tanlang Elder looks down on you… who the fuck do you think you are,” Xue Meng chewed up the words and spit them in Mo Ran’s face. “You son of a bitch.”

“YOU——!”

Xue Meng burst out laughing all of a sudden, tilting his head back to look up at the dim ceiling. “Mo Ran, out of the entirety of Sisheng Peak, the one who thought the most highly of you was him. But this is how you’ve paid him back.”

He laughed and laughed until he squeezed his eyes shut and tears began to fall again.

This time, he wept quietly.

“Mo Ran, your Xia-shidi, my Shizun, he’s dead.”

Mo Ran had been bitten by the most venomous snake in the world. Startled, he abruptly let go as if burned, and stumbled backwards, finally understanding those words for the first time.

His entire body began to tremble.

Xue Meng suddenly called to him, “Ge.”

Mo Ran continued backing away, but his back collided against the ice cold wall; there was no escape after all.

Xue Meng finally stopped crying.

But his voice was flat, like he was dead.

“Ge, we don’t have a Shizun anymore.”

Author’s Notes:

Big white cat’s talking corpse: [thanking jjwxc readers]

Pup: “.....”

Ah, forget it, pup 1.0 is glitching right now, 1.0 OS corrupted, give him some time alone to digest the truth. Mengmeng, you do it.

Xue Mengmeng: [rest of the thanks]

Book II: Same Destination

Ch.98 Shizun, I'm Begging You, Please Pay Attention To Me

Sisheng Peak has a cliff with a funny name called "Aaaaah".

There were lots of stories in the sect as to how this name came about, the most common one being that people often fell off of it due to how steep it was, thus the name "Aaaaah".

But Mo Ran knew that wasn't it.

The cliff rose high into the clouds, a difficult climb even for apes, and it was extremely cold, its peak covered in snow year-round. This was where the dead of Sisheng Peak were kept while awaiting their funerals.

He had only ever come here once in his past life.

That time wasn't much different from right now; it was also after the rift of the Infinite Hells, the bloody battle that ended countless lives, Shi Mei amongst them. Refusing to accept the reality, he had knelt by Shi Mei's coffin for days on end, gazing at his face inside, looking almost as if he wasn't dead at all...

"It's called Aaaaah from back when your dad passed," was what Xue Zhengyong had told him as he kept him company in the cold of the Frostsky Hall in the past life.

"I only had the one brother. We founded Sisheng Peak together. But your dad… he was just like you, stubborn. He barely even got to enjoy the good life, or maybe he got sick of it, but one slip against the demons, and he was gone."

It was freezing inside Frostsky Hall. Xue Zhengyong took a swig from the sheepskin of wine he had brought before offering it to Mo Ran.

“You can have some, just don’t tell your aunt.”

Mo Ran didn’t take it, didn’t even move.

Xue Zhengyong sighed, “This cliff is called Aaaaah because I was so miserable in those days, it felt like my heart had been dug out. All I did was stay here with your dad and cry. I sound pretty awful when I cry, just howling like AAAAH, and that’s where the name came from.”

He glanced at Mo Ran and clapped him on the shoulder.

“Uncle isn’t well-read or anything, but life is ephemeral like the morning dew, over in a blink. Just think of it as Mingjing having gone on a bit ahead of you; you can be brothers[102] again in the next life.”

Mo Ran’s eyes slid slowly shut.

Xue Zhengyong continued, “Condolences and whatnot are just words. If you’re sad, then just cry. If you don’t want to leave, then stay and keep him company. But you have to eat, and drink your water. Go get a bite at Mengpo Hall first, then you can come back here and kneel as long as you want, I won’t stop you.”

The Frostsky Hall was frigid and silent, white silk drifting lightly within the grand hall, like gentle fingers brushing the brow.

Mo Ran opened his eyes slowly.

The coffin was the same as the one in his memory, cast from the black snow of Kunlun, lustrous and translucent, threads of cold streaming from the surface.

Only, the one lying inside was now Chu Wanning.

Mo Ran never would have thought that the one to die in the Heavenly Rift of this lifetime would be Chu Wanning.

He was taken by surprise, he didn't know how to react.

Faced with this person's ice-cold body, he actually didn't feel much of anything, not joy from the death of his foe, nor grief from the passing of his Shizun.

Mo Ran stared at Chu Wanning through lowered lashes for a long time, almost doubtful. His face looked even colder than usual, truly covered in a layer of frost now, specks of ice clinging to the lashes of his closed eyes. His lips were a pale blue, and his skin was nearly transparent, the light blue of the veins visible like minute cracks on porcelain.

How could he have been the one to die?

Mo Ran lifted his hand to touch Chu Wanning's cheek; it felt cold.

His hand trailed down, to his throat, his neck; there was no pulse.

And then to his hand.

He gripped his hand; the joints were already starting to stiffen, and the skin there felt rough.

Mo Ran thought it strange—the tips of Chu Wanning's fingers were lightly calloused, but his palms had always been soft and delicate. He looked closer despite himself, only to see scores of lacerations, open cuts that, although cleaned, will never heal now.

He remembered Xue Meng's words.

"His spiritual energy was completely drained. He was no different from an ordinary person at that time, couldn't use any techniques at all, not even a communication spell. He could only carry you on his back and climb up the stairs of Sisheng Peak, step by step…"

And when he couldn't do it anymore, couldn't stand anymore, he crawled on the ground, on his knees, dragging him, until his fingers were torn, and his hands were covered in blood.

All to bring him home.

Mo Ran muttered hollowly, "Was it you who carried me back?"

"....."

"Chu Wanning, was it you…"

"....."

"I won't believe it unless you nod," Mo Ran said to the person in the coffin, his expression placid as if certain that the person before him would wake up. "Chu Wanning, give me a nod. Just one nod, and I'll believe you, and I won't hate you anymore… just one nod, okay?"

But Chu Wanning only continued to lie there, cold and expressionless, as if he didn't care the slightest bit whether Mo Ran hated him or not; he

himself had left with a clear conscience, leaving others to survive with their guilt.

This person, whether alive or dead, was always more maddening than he was sympathetic.

Mo Ran suddenly sneered. “Then again,” he said, “when have you ever listened to me.”

Staring at Chu Wanning, he suddenly felt that it was all so absurd.

All these years, he hated Chu Wanning because he looked down on him, and the hatred deepened because he didn’t save Shi Mei.

Turning and twisting, this hatred persisted for more than ten years, but one day, all of a sudden, he was told that——

“When Chu Wanning turned and left back then, it was to protect you.”

He was suddenly told that——

“The Discernment Barrier is twinned. Whatever damage you took, he suffered the same.”

His spiritual energy was spent, he couldn’t even protect himself anymore, he…

Great, just perfect. Chu Wanning is right in everything he does. Then what about him?

Head in the dark like a know-nothing idiot, running around in circles like a god damn clown, hissing and snarling in his hatred for so long.

And for what?!!

A brief misunderstanding is like a smudge of dirt on a healing wound. As long as it's discovered in time, washed off, and the salve re-applied, everything will be fine.

But if the misunderstanding goes on for ten, twenty years, and the person trapped in the web puts in endless hatred, too many cares, countless restraints, and even his life.

These emotions will scab over and grow into new skin, forming part of the body.

And then, to suddenly be told that "That's not it, that's all wrong."

What to do then? The dirt from back then had already lodged under the skin with the passing of time, had already immersed into the blood.

The healed flesh would have to be torn open again to remove that bygone hatred.

A misunderstanding of one year is a misunderstanding.

A misunderstanding of ten years is an injustice.

A misunderstanding of a lifetime, from life to death, is fate.

Their fate was blighted.

The heavy gates of the Frostsky Hall opened slowly.

Just like in the previous lifetime, Xue Zhengyong, a sheepskin of wine in hand, walked heavily to Mo Ran's side and sat down on the floor next to him.

"I heard you were here. Uncle will keep you company."

Xue Zhengyong's fierce eyes were still red, clearly having cried not long ago.

"And him too."

Mo Ran said nothing. Xue Zhengyong twisted open the cap and took several big gulps before suddenly stilling, wiping roughly at his face and forcing a grin as he said, "Yuheng never liked it when I drank, now… sigh , no, nevermind, nevermind. I'm not even that old, but I've already seen off so many friends. Ran-er, do you know what kind of feeling that is?"

"....."

Mo Ran lowered his lashes.

Xue Zhengyong had asked him the same question in the past life.

Back then, all he saw was Shi Mei's lifeless body, what did he care if others lived or died? He didn't understand, nor did he want to.

But how could he not understand now?

Before he had been reborn, he had stood alone in the empty halls of Wushan Palace.

One day, jolting awake from a light slumber in which he had dreamt of bygone days spent as Yuheng's disciple, he had the sudden impulse to go see his old room at the disciple quarters. The narrow room, unused for so long, was covered in dust when he opened the door and stepped inside.

He had found a small fragrance burner toppled on the floor, knocked over by someone, some time. He picked it up and reflexively went to put it back to its original place.

But the years had flowed by like a rapid stream; holding the burner, he suddenly froze.

“Where did I used to keep this burner?”

He couldn’t remember.

His eagle-like gaze swept across the attendants at his back, but their faces were nothing but blurs, he couldn’t even tell one from another.

But of course these people wouldn’t know where in the room of his youth the emperor used to keep this fragrance burner.

“Where did I used to keep this burner?”

He couldn’t remember, and anyone who could was already dead or gone.

How could Mo Ran not understand how Xue Zhengyong felt right now.

“Every now and then I would remember some joke from my youth, out of the blue, and just blurt it out, but then realize that not a single person who gets it is even around anymore.”

Xue Zhengyong took another swig of wine and, lowering his head, let out a mirthless laugh.

“Like your dad, or our friends from before… or your Shizun…”

Fragments of light reflecting off the wetness in his eyes, he asked, “Ran-er, do you know why this cliff is called Aaaaah?”

Mo Ran knew what he wanted to say, but he was too distraught right now to want to listen to Xue Zhengyong talk about his dead father, so he responded, “I know. It’s because Uncle used to cry here.”

“Ah…” Xue Zhengyong paused and blinked slowly, wrinkles deep at the corners of his eyes. “Did your aunt already tell you?”

“Mn.”

Xue Zhengyong wiped away his tears and inhaled deeply. “Alright, okay, then you already know what Uncle wanted to tell you. Go ahead and let it out if you’re sad, it’s alright. There’s no shame in crying for someone.”

But Mo Ran didn’t cry, maybe because his heart had already become hard as iron from two lifetimes of this. Compared to how devastated he had been back then when Shi Mei died, the current him was so very calm. So calm that he was unsettled by his own numbness, unaware that he was actually this heartless.

Xue Zhengyong finished drinking and stayed a while longer before getting up, his movements a little unsteady; maybe his legs had gone numb from kneeling for so long, or maybe he had drank too much.

His broad hand clapped Mo Ran on the shoulder. “The Heavenly Rift’s been closed, but we still don’t know who’s behind it all. Maybe that was the end of it, but there might also be another big battle coming up. Ran-er, make sure you go down and eat something, don’t wreck your body.”

Having said that, he turned and left.

It was night time, and outside Frostsky Hall, a waning crescent hung high in the skies above. Treading through the snow that covered the cliff year-round with half a skin of wine in hand, Xue Zhengyong’s voice, deep and rough like a broken gong, rang out in a short tune from Shuzong.

“Greeting old friends but half are gone, meeting only in cups of wine. Beneath the osmanthus tree hides a pot of wine, a drink shared between aged faces and streaks of white. The first light of dawn shatters the dream and all depart, leaving me alone with my old tears. I’d give what remains of my life to the God of Dreams, if only to call you back cup after cup.”

It was different from the past life after all; the one who died wasn’t Shi Mei, but Chu Wanning, and so Xue Zhengyong was struck by even deeper sorrows.

With his back facing the open gates of Frostsky Hall, Mo Ran listened to the lingering sound of that hoarse voice, resounding yet mournful. Slowly, the voice grew distant like a soaring eagle, until it was swallowed by the wind and snow.

The world thus blanketed by a layer of bright white, the moon high in the vast, boundless sky washing over everything until it was all so faint and insubstantial, leaving only one line to echo over and over.

“Leaving me alone with my old tears...leaving me alone with my old tears…”

Mo Ran wasn’t sure how long had passed when he eventually left Frostsky Hall to walk slowly down the mountain.

Uncle was right, the Heavenly Rift may have been closed, but things might not be over yet. Chu Wanning isn’t here anymore; if there is to be another battle, he’ll have to fend for himself.

It was already late by the time he got to Mengpo Hall, and there was no one else around aside from the old woman making the late-night supper.

Mo Ran asked for a small bowl of noodles and found a corner spot to slowly eat. The noodles were hot and numbing, warm in his stomach. The dimly-lit Menpo Hall was hazy when he looked up between large ravenous bites through the thick screen of steam.

He vaguely recalled how stubborn he had been in the past life after Shi Mei's death, how he had refused to leave or eat for three days straight.

And how, later, when he had finally been talked into leaving Frostsky Hall to go eat something, he had happened across Chu Wanning in the kitchen, his back facing him as he clumsily rolled wrappers and mixed fillings, and how there had been flour and water on the table, and a couple rows of wontons, neatly lined.

"Clang."

The loud sound of everything being swept off that table rang out from the bygone past, stilling the chopsticks in the hands of the present Mo Ran, making it hard for him to swallow.

At the time, he had thought that Chu Wanning was taunting him, that he purposely wanted to hurt him.

But, thinking about it now, maybe Chu Wanning really did only want to make him a bowl of wontons in place of the departed Shi Mei.

"Who the fuck do you think you are? Do you have any right to use the things he used? To make the food he did? Shi Mei is dead , are you happy now? Or do you have to hound all your disciples to death or madness before you're satisfied? Chu Wanning! There is no one left in this world who could make those wontons ever again, no matter how much you imitate him, you'll never even come close!"

Each word a stab to the heart.

He went back to eating his noodles, not wanting to think about it anymore.

But it wasn't that easy; his memories wouldn't leave him be.

He remembered Chu Wanning's face with such clarity, clearer than ever before; his face had betrayed nothing, not joy and not sorrow. He remembered every detail of that moment with such unprecedented clarity.

He remembered the faint trembling at the tips of those fingers, the smudge of flour on the side of that cheek.

He remembered the plump, snowy wontons all over the floor.

He remembered how Chu Wanning had lowered his lashes and then bent down to slowly pick them up from the floor, those wontons that could no longer be eaten, and then threw them away himself.

Threw them away himself.

There was still more than half the bowl of noodles with peas left.

But Mo Ran couldn't eat another bite. Pushing the bowl away, he fled this place that was going to drive him insane. He ran madly through Sisheng Peak, as if trying to outrun this decade-long misunderstanding, as if trying to get back those ridiculous years, as if trying to catch up to that person who had left Mengpo Hall all alone that day.

Catch up to him so that he could say.

"I'm sorry, I was wrong to hate you."

In the darkness of night, Mo Ran ran aimlessly, he ran and ran… but he saw fragments of Chu Wanning's shadow everywhere he went: The Platform of Sin and Virtue, where he had taught him to read and trained him in the sword; Naihe Bridge, where he had shared an umbrella with him as they walked together; Clearsky Hall, where he had endured punishment by striking, and left all alone.

He felt more and more distraught, more and more helpless.

Suddenly, he ran into an open clearing, and it abruptly felt like the haze had dissipated and he could see the bright moon high above again.

Breathing heavily, he stopped running.

The Heaven-Piercing Tower...

The place where he had died in the past life. The place where he had met Chu Wanning for the first time.

Mayhem in his eyes like a battlefield in chaos, heartbeats wild like the beating of war drums, unable to ward off the tidal surge of the past and helpless to avoid its relentless assault, he had been forced here in the end.

Where the moonlight was a pale white, and the breeze a gentle caress. Where they had first met.

Mo Ran finally stopped running; he knew he couldn't escape it, the fact that, in this life, he was bound to owe Chu Wanning.

Slowly, he walked up the steps, walked toward that magnificent haitang tree. He reached out and touched the bark of the trunk, dry and hard like a calloused heart.

It had already been nearly three days since Chu Wanning's death.

Mo Ran looked up; the flowering tree was gentle as it always had been. Only then did a bout of boundless sorrow suddenly well up in his chest, and, pressing his forehead against the trunk of the tree, he finally started crying, tears falling like rain.

"Shizun, Shizun…" He murmured between choked sobs, repeating, over and over, his words from when he first met Chu Wanning. "Won't you pay attention to me… pay attention to me…"

But though things remained the same, the people have changed, and in front of the Heaven-Piercing Tower now there was only him. No one paid attention to him, no one would come again.

The reborn Mo Ran had the body of a youth, but inside was the soul of the thirty-two year old Taxian-Jun. He had seen far too much life and death, tasted all the joys and sorrows that the world had to offer, and so, in this reborn life, he never really showed much genuine emotion, always muted as if hidden behind a mask.

But right now, the loss and anguish written on his face was so raw, so vulnerable, so genuine, so naive.

Only now was he truly like an ordinary youth who had lost his Shizun, like a child who had been abandoned, like a stray dog that had lost its home and could never again find its way back.

He said, pay attention to me.

Pay attention to me...[103]

But, in the end, his only answer was the rustling of the leaves and the dancing shadows of the flowers.

The person with the striking features under the haitang tree that year would never again, could never again lift his head and look at him—not even just one last glance.

Author’s Notes:

Big white cat’s talking corpse: [thanking jjwxc readers]

Pup: “QAQ”

Pup.exe is still glitching, big white cat shoots him a glance, sighs, and takes the script from his hands.

Big white cat reading pup’s lines for him: [the rest of the thanks]

Ch.99 Shizun's Third Weapon

That night, Mo Ran slept leaning against the haitang tree.

There were many places at Sisheng Peak that had traces of Chu Wanning having lived there; if he wanted to pay his respects, there was no place more suitable than Red Lotus Pavilion. But only leaning against this tree dulled the ache in his heart, only here could he feel a faint connection to the world of the living.

He had once thought that taking Chu Wanning as his master was the greatest misfortune of his life, that it was a mistake from the very start.

Only now did he finally realize that the unfortunate one wasn't him, wasn't Mo Weiyu, but the one standing beneath the flowers that day, head lowered and lost in thought. The unfortunate one was Chu Wanning.

"Xianjun xianjun, pay attention to me."

Vaguely, he seemed to recall that being the first thing he had said to Shizun. Maybe not those exact words—it had been too long ago, and he no longer remembered too clearly.

But he could still clearly remember the look on Chu Wanning's face when those eyelashes flickered up, bewildered and startled.

And how gentle he had looked.

Lying beneath the flowering tree, Mo Ran thought that, if time could flow backwards to the day he chose his master, that he absolutely, no matter what, shouldn't cling to Chu Wanning to accept him as disciple again.

Because the price for the flicker of those eyelashes in that instant was the endless entanglement to follow, was Chu Wanning's very life.

Two lifetimes.

He had been ruined in his hands.

For two lifetimes...

His throat moved in a swallow as he closed his eyes against the rising threat of a sob. A long, long time passed in an agony that felt like a million ants gnawing at his heart before he finally drifted off into a light slumber.

And then, in his dreamscape, that segment of memory that he hadn't dared touch since his rebirth struggled free of its chains, raised its knife, and carved out his heart.

The him of that time had stood at the very top of the human realm, and Chu Wanning, spiritual core abolished, was imprisoned in his palace.

But he had been targeted by several assassination attempts in a row, the last of which had been perpetrated by Xue Meng and Mei Hanxue. Mo Ran was too powerful to yield to them his life, but he did sustain grave injuries from it and had to stay in his palace and recover for more than a month before he got his strength back.

Shuzhong was a rainy place; even more so during those days, pitter-pattering without stop.

Fingers pale as jade clutching the edge of the heavy brocade cloak draped over his shoulders, Mo Ran stood beneath the stoa, gazing at the grey skies above, the expression on his face one caught between mirth and madness. He didn't speak, but anyone could feel the twisted nature radiating from his person; he had been born with such a handsome face, but the light in his eyes was dark and ruthless, devoid of any warmth.

And the longer he sat on that throne, the darker it became.

Footsteps sounded from behind him. Without looking back, he said, "You're here?"

"Are you going to lay waste to Kunlun Taxue Palace?" Chu Wanning's voice rang out faintly in the grand hall.

Mo Ran replied, "And what if I am?"

"...Have you forgotten what you promised me? That you wouldn't go after Xue Meng's life anymore."

Mo Ran's voice was calm and even as he spoke, "Shizun came all this way and didn't even stop to ask how my injuries are doing, or whether I'm cold standing out here in the wind; all he cares about is who I'm going to kill."

"Mo Weiyu, I came to tell you to stop doing things that you'll end up regretting."

“Heh, regret? Shouldn’t you be the one regretting? Your core is already shattered from our fight back when you tried to stop me from razing Rufeng Sect; you’re just an ordinary person now, without the strength to oppose me now that I’m going to raze Taxue Palace. Don’t you regret not minding your own business back then?”

Mo Ran turned to look over his shoulder at him, a flicker in his eyes and a cruel smile tugging at the corner of his lips. “Chu Wanning, you worthless cripple, what exactly do you hope to stop me with?”

Chu Wanning couldn’t find any words for a long while, maybe because he really did have nothing left.

A loud clap of thunder suddenly split the skies and rain poured forth, streaming down the roof and spilling from the eaves.

Finally, Chu Wanning closed his eyes, and when he opened them again, all that he said was a quiet, “Don’t go.”

Mo Ran turned around with a flutter of black robes.

Framed by the ashen skies behind him and torrential rain amidst freezing winds, he looked at Chu Wanning within the hall. “And why shouldn’t I go? I’ve already given Xue Meng his chance. That year, when you willingly gave yourself to me for his sake, I kept my word and spared his life in exchange for you——But now he’s the one after my life, so, tell me, why shouldn’t I go?”

“.....”

“Well? Nothing to say?” Mo Ran scoffed. “Go on, berate me, curse me out, say something. Chu Wanning, where did all that might of yours go? I

already know Xue Meng's your favorite, your best disciple, you think he's earnest and sincere, and I'm just the mud on the bottom of his boot."

"That's enough." Chu Wanning's brows were knitted tight on his pale face, as if trying to hold something back.

"That is not enough! How could it be?" The sight filled Mo Ran's heart with a savage glee, anger, ecstasy, hatred, and jealousy scorching his heart with their intensity.

His eyes glinted as he paced back and forth.

"There's no second chance, Chu Wanning, there's no second chance for him. I'm going to kill him, and I'm going to skin him for a rug, drink wine from his skull! I'll scoop out his insides, chop him up, and stew him! You can't stop me! ——Chu Wanning, you can't stop me!"

Eyes reddened, he grew more enraptured the more he raved, frenzied and crazed.

When suddenly a hand fisted the collar of his robes and another landed on his face.

"Snap out of it!"

Chu Wanning's face was so close he could see the quiver of his eyelashes and the wetness in his eyes.

"Mo Ran...wake up already, wake up…"

“I am awake!” The burn of his cheek only drove him further into madness. Glaring at Chu Wanning’s face, he felt a sudden flare of anger. “I’m perfectly fucking awake! You’re the one that’s asleep! Are you blind?!”

He shoved him off and ripped open the collar of his robes to reveal bloodstained bandages.

“Are you blind, Chu Wanning!” He roared, jabbing at his own chest, and when even that didn’t feel like enough, ripped the gauze right off to show the bloody mess beneath...

“Who do you think did this? Your good disciple! Xue Meng! If he had aimed his Longcheng just a bit more to the side, I’d be dead right now! So tell me why the fuck should I let him go!”

“As far as you’re concerned, his life is a life, but mine doesn’t count, is that it?!” In a fit of rage, Mo Ran grabbed Chu Wanning’s hand without warning and pressed it to his bloody wound. “Didn’t you want to stop me? Fine, here’s your chance, go on and dig out my heart then! ——Chu Wanning, why don’t you just dig out my fucking heart then!!!!”

“.....” The tips of Chu Wanning’s fingers, cold as ice, trembled.

Mo Ran glared at him, furiously, ruthlessly, the veins at his neck throbbing.

His voice was raw and raspy as he said, “Go on, dig it out.”

The deluge of rain against the roof was frenzied madness.

Dead silence.

Neither moved.

An indeterminate amount of time passed before Mo Ran finally let go of Chu Wanning's hand and, breaths low and harsh, declared in a deep voice, "I'm taking Xue Ziming and Mei Hanxue's lives."

"....."

"Go ahead and hate me, Shizun," he said, "My life's already like this anyway, our lives are already like this. None of us can turn back now, so might as well just keep going in the darkness. I'll just drag some old friends along for company on my way to hell."

That day, looking at the black robes on his back as he walked away, Chu Wanning finally spoke.

He said, "Mo Ran, if you destroy Taxue Palace and kill Xue Meng, then I'll die in front of you. I have nothing left to trade you with, but at least I can still choose death."

Hearing that, Mo Ran paused before turning to look over his shoulder, a smile spreading across his handsome face against the dreary backdrop of wind and rain.

"This Venerable One will not allow you to die."

“.....”

“Lest you forget, even when all the blood had drained out of your body, I still managed to take you back from the very gates of death. You’re gonna spend the rest of this life with me no matter how much you disgust me,” after venting his madness, Mo Ran’s expression gradually returned to its usual calm, cold and threatening. He said, “My good Shizun, just be good and stay here at Sisheng Peak. When I capture Xue Meng, I’ll bring him back here so he can get a good long look at the god that he worries overs day and night writhing under me like a wanton little slut. After all, in consideration of our shared past, it’s only right that I grant him the courtesy of full comprehension before he dies.”

But, against all expectations, Chu-zongshi was still Chu-zongshi.

One month later, standing proudly at the summit of Kunlun Mountain, in front of the Heavenly Lake, Mo Ran did exactly what he said he would. He captured Mei Hanxue and Xue Meng and tied them to pillars of ice before using Zhenlong Chess Formation to control all the thousands at Taxue Palace to slaughter one another as they were forced to watch.

The snowy mountain, once pristine and majestic, was dyed crimson in an instant. Blood ran into the lake, seeped into the ground.

Mo Ran sat calmly before the palace gates, eating grapes brought by the servants and smiling as he watched the scene.

Looking at Xue Meng, his eyes glazed and unfocused, he asked, “Mengmeng, do you like it?”

“.....” Xue Meng didn’t react, as if having lost his hearing.

Pleased, Mo Ran smiled even more affectionately as he said, “Cousin staged this show just for you, are you enjoying it?”

“...Spare Taxue Palace.”

Came a faint, abrupt murmur. Mo Ran blinked. “What?”

“Spare Taxue Palace.” There was no light in Xue Meng’s usually bright eyes. “Let them go, let Mei Hanxue go… I was the one who tried to kill you that time. Just kill me, leave everyone else out of it.”

Mo Ran couldn’t help but laugh. “Are you trying to talk terms with me?”

“No.” Xue Meng’s eyes were hollow as he said, “I’m begging you.”

The darling of the heavens said, I’m begging you .

Mo Ran’s eyes gleamed, the demon in his heart delighted by these words. As if amused, he gripped Xue Meng by the jaw and forced him to look up at himself, and was just about to say something when a burst of radiant green lit up the skyline.

“What’s going on?”

His retinue didn’t even get a chance to respond before a spiritual array, flowing and resplendent, stretched out from high above the towering peak to cover all the thousands of miles of Kunlun Mountain.

And there, above the array, stood Chu Wanning, robes white as snow fluttering lightly amongst the clouds.

A guqin of an unusual shape hung in the air before him, pitch black all over with its tail end curving upwards into a flourish of branches blooming with dew-laden haitang blossoms that glowed with a luminous radiance.

——Chu Wanning's third holy weapon, "Jiu'ge".[104]

Author's Notes:

Even though 0.5 mutt is hopelessly perverse and insane, but strangely I like writing 0.5-related plot events very much, hahahaha~

You're welcome to help previous timeline's Shizun ferociously whip this previous timeline mutt, hahaha~

Ch.100 Shizun's Last Words

Mo Ran's blood ran cold.

He had only ever seen Chu Wanning's guqin Jiu'ge once in his life, when he summoned it at their life or death battle before, its chords splitting the skies and sundering the clouds.

All that had been under the control of Zhenlong Chess Formation at the time, from the living people to the beasts and spirits, recovered their consciousness under the effect of Jiu'ge's chords, Mo Ran's million-strong army of chess pieces thrown into utter disarray by one song.

But summoning a holy weapon requires use of the spiritual core and consumes a large amount of spiritual energy.

Chu Wanning couldn't even call Tianwen anymore, so how did he suddenly manage to call forth Jiu'ge, which was even stronger than Tianwen?

The battle above the Heavenly Lake that day had been no less fierce than the deathmatch between master and disciple back then.

But Mo Ran's memory of it was a blur, because, after that bloody battle, there was finally no one left by his side he could talk to.

Truth be told, in the last lifetime, all the way until death, Mo Ran never could figure out just how Chu Wanning was able to summon Jiu'ge using just the strength of his soul.

It was a kind of connection that didn't exist between any holy weapon and its master. But Chu Wanning managed it.

That day, in the sound of the guqin, Mo Ran's Zhenlong chess pieces shattered into dust one after another. Jiu'ge's strength was even more pure and indomitable than the first time he saw it many years ago, so much so that he had even suspected that Chu Wanning's spiritual core hadn't been shattered at all, that he had merely been faking it all those years, enduring the indignities and biding his time, waiting for the chance to take revenge in one fell sweep.

Later, he even couldn't help thinking, it'd be great if that really was the case. If Chu Wanning really was just pretending, then maybe things wouldn't have gone that far.

If only.

Jiu'ge nullified Mo Ran's forbidden magic, returning awareness to the cultivators that had been slaughtering one another, and even shattered the enchanted ice pillars that had been keeping Xue Meng and Mei Hanxue bound.

Mo Ran leapt high into the sky, robes whipping in the wind and eyes filled with both anger and delight. He couldn't wait to see just how many more surprising skills Chu Wanning had up his sleeves.

He landed on top of the barrier and strode over to stand before Chu Wanning.

That pair of pale, slender hands slowed and laid over the strings of the guqin, halting its sound.

Chu Wanning lifted his head, his face pale like snow beneath the sun.

He spoke, “Mo Ran. Come closer.”

Not knowing why, he walked over.

Chu Wanning moved his fingers and several streams of jade colored light flew toward Mo Ran’s chest. He was startled for a moment, thinking that Chu Wanning meant to kill him.

But the light didn’t hurt at all, only hovering in front of his chest before diffusing slowly into his skin and flesh, bringing with it untold warmth.

“I’ve healed your wound from Xue Meng,” Chu Wanning let out a soft sigh. “So just let him off, Mo Ran. If even he’s gone, who will you go to in the future when you want to reminisce about the past…”

Mo Ran didn’t even have time to process the meaning behind his words when the sturdy barrier beneath his feet disappeared abruptly, along with Chu Wanning’s summoned guqin, Jiu’ge.

He immediately raised his hand to call forth his blade Bu’gui to maintain his footing between the clouds, but Chu Wanning fell, gentle like a wilted leaf, as if the song just now had exhausted all that remained of his strength.

“WANNING!”

His expression changed immediately as he urged his blade downwards, catching that person in his arms just before he would have fallen into the ice-cold waters of the Heavenly Lake.

“Chu Wanning! You——you…”

Chu Wanning’s eyes were closed. Blood seeped from his nose, his mouth, his eyes, his ears.

He had always valued his dignity, keeping his back ramrod straight even when he was imprisoned at Wushan Palace and rarely ever allowing his appearance to be anything less than prim and pristine. But now he bled from all seven orifices of the face, that usually clear and refined countenance a disheveled mess.

Chu Wanning swallowed a mouthful of blood and said in a hoarse voice, “You said… that life or death is not up to me… but you see, Mo Ran… you’ve underestimated your Shizun after all… if I’ve made up my mind to leave, you can’t stop me… even if you tried…”

“...Shizun...Shizun…” Mo Ran stared at him, feeling a chill wash over his heart, feeling his scalp go numb as he called out helplessly.

Chu Wanning smiled, his expression seeming almost glad. “I’ve kept living these past few years because I didn’t want to give up, always thinking… thinking that I’ll just keep you company for a few more years, try to teach you… not to commit any more sins… but now… now…”

Mo Ran trembled as he held the person in his arms. He suddenly felt terrified.

Terrified.

Such an emotion hadn't been part of him for more than ten years, but now it rushed back in a wave, nearly carving out his heart.

"Now I know that, perhaps, it takes my death for you to… stop doing evil…"

He stopped talking, as if in immense pain. Forcibly summoning Jiu'ge was more than his body could handle, and his insides were ripping apart, another mouthful of blood spilling forth. Mo Ran, holding him in his arms, landed by the Heavenly Lake, his expression crazed with an undertone of anguish as he channeled spiritual energy into his chest nonstop.

But that powerful stream of spiritual energy only sunk uselessly into Chu Wanning's body like a clay ox into the sea.

Mo Ran panicked. Taxian-Jun clutched the person in his arms tightly to himself, trying and failing, again and again, to give him spiritual energy.

"It's useless...Mo Ran, I used the last of my life to summon Jiu'ge, this is it for me. But if you… still have any clarity in your heart… then please… forgive…"

Forgive whom?

Xue Meng, Mei Hanxue?

Kunlun Taxue Palace, or the entire cultivation world?

Yes, yes… he'll forgive them all! As long as Chu Wanning lives, as long as this person he hated to the core doesn't die like this.

Chu Wanning lifted a trembling hand, and a cold fingertip—as if in pity, but also almost tenderly—poked lightly at his forehead.

He said, “Then please…forgive...forgive yourself…”

The ferocity on Mo Ran’s face froze in that instant.

Forgive whom…

As he lay dying, just whom was he worrying over?

Forgive...yourself…

Was that what he said?

Holding him in his arms, Taxian-Jun seemed somewhat at a loss, but also somewhat delighted; anguished, but also perfectly contented.

“Forgive myself? Your last wish is for me to forgive myself?”

Mo Ran muttered, eyes bloodshot, then he suddenly burst into laughter, laughter that sounded like a raging inferno piercing through the skies and burning away all reason and rationality.

“HAHAHA——HAHAHAHAHA——FORGIVE MYSELF? CHU WANNING, YOU’RE EVEN CRAZIER THAN ME! HOW NAIVE——HAHAHAHAHA——”

All of Kunlun Mountain echoed with his deranged, miserable laughter, his twisted, unrecognizable, terrifying laughter.

Surrounded by the sound of Mo Ran's crazed laughter, Chu Wanning swallowed another mouthful of blood. If he still had the strength, his expression would've been one of anguish, but he didn't even have the strength to furrow his brows anymore, only that pair of phoenix eyes… those eyes that had once been sharp, or resolute, or harsh, or gentle, those eyes were now filled with sorrow.

Clear as the snow over the Heavenly Lake, hazy as the frost over the roof tiles.

Slowly, Chu Wanning's eyes grew unfocused, his pupils dilating. Slowly, what had once been bright and sharp as lightning could no longer see clearly.

In the end, he said in a quiet voice, "Don't laugh anymore, I can't bear to see you like this…"

"....."

"Mo Ran, this whole life, no matter what happened in the end… it's all because I failed to teach you well, because I called you deficient by nature and beyond remedy… It was I who wronged you; I won't blame you, in life or in death…" There was no color left on Chu Wanning's bloodless face, even his lips were a pale blue. Arduously, he lifted his gaze to look at Mo Ran's face; he wanted to cry, but it was blood that flowed slowly from his eyes and trickled down his face.

Chu Wanning wept. He said, "Do you… truly hate me so much… that you will not grant me so much as a moment of peace… even at the very end…"

“Mo Ran...Mo Ran… don’t do this anymore, wake up, turn back… turn back…”

Wake up…

He told him to wake up, but he himself, with his hollow eyes open, went to sleep.

Mo Ran didn’t believe, he refused to believe, that Chu Wanning had died just like this.

That the great zongshi of an era, high and lofty, his Shizun, the person he hated the most, had died just like this.

Lying in his arms at the edge of a Heavenly Lake dyed red by blood.

Growing cold, bit by bit, cold as frost, frozen like ice.

Chu Wanning’s face was covered in blood. Mo Ran stared for a bit with his head lowered, then raised his sleeve and tried to wipe it clean.

But there was too much blood. The more he wiped, the more he dirtied that originally clear and clean face. Mo Ran pressed his lips together and wiped harder.

All he got was a face smeared with blood.

Even the facial features were hard to see now.

He finally stopped laughing.

Closing his eyes, he murmured quietly, “You won this time, Chu Wanning. I couldn’t stop you from dying.”

He paused, then opened his eyes back up. They were deep and dark, yet a fire burned within the abyss.

He continued, “But you’ve underestimated me as well. I can’t stop you if you don’t want to live, but you also can’t stop me if I don’t want you to die.”

Without publicizing his death, Mo Ran brought Chu Wanning back to Sisheng Peak.

He was already immensely powerful by then, well capable of keeping a dead body from decay for all of time——so he kept Chu Wanning’s body at the Red Lotus Pavilion, forced him to “live on” like this.

It was too difficult for him to acknowledge that he had killed the last person in the world who still worried for him.

As long as he could keep Chu Wanning’s body from turning into ash; as long as he could still look at him every day.

He could still think that Chu Wanning wasn’t dead.

And there would still be somewhere for him to unload his deranged hatred, somewhere for him to entrust his twisted love.

Taxian-Jun had finally gone completely insane.

After Chu Wanning left, he would go to the Red Lotus Pavilion every single day to look at his corpse. At first, eyes flashing with malice, he would spit and curse before that body, saying, “Chu Wanning, it’s what you deserve.”

“You cared for every single person beneath the sun but me, you hypocrite.”

“What kind of master even are you? I must’ve been fucking blind back then to take you as my master! You bastard!”

And then, later, he would ask, relentlessly, every single day, “What’re you doing still asleep? When are you gonna wake up?”

“I’ve already let Xue Meng go, isn’t that enough for you? Get up already.”

Every time he said such things, the servants by his side wondered if he had lost it and gone mad.

His wife, Song Qiutong, also thought he had gone mad. The prospect frightened her, and so, lying beside him after a rare night of intimacy, she took the chance to say, “A-Ran, the dead won’t come back. I know you’re sad, but…”

“Who’s sad?”

“.....”

Song Qiutong was adept at reading faces, especially after these years spent at Mo Ran’s side, every step careful like treading on thin ice. Seeing his ill-tempered expression, she immediately shut up and lowered her eyes, saying, “This one misspoke.”

“Nono,” but Mo Ran didn’t let her off so easily this time, narrowing his eyes as he pressed, “since you’ve already spit it out, don’t just swallow it again. Go on, tell me, who’s sad?”

“Your Majesty…”

There was thunder in Mo Ran’s dark eyes. He sat up abruptly and seized Song Qiutong by her delicate neck, lifting the woman he had just entwined with in one hand and throwing her off the bed.

His face twisted into something dangerous and beast-like.

“What do you mean the dead won’t come back, who’s dead? Who’s not coming back?” Mo Ran pushed each word past gritted teeth, aggressively and forcefully. “No one’s dead, no one needs to come back, and no one’s sad!”

Song Qiutong’s lips quivered; she wanted to struggle, but as soon as she uttered the words “Red Lotus Pavilion…” just that half of a sentence, and Mo Ran was already seeing red.

“What are you trying to say, there’s no one but a sleeping Chu Wanning at the Red Lotus Pavilion! What exactly are you trying to suggest! Bitch!”

Seeing him fly into an uncontrollable rage, Song Qiutong’s heart lurched, unsure what outrageous insanity he might do at this rate, and so she threw caution to the winds and gambled it all, raising her voice to say, “Your Majesty, that person lying in the Red Lotus Pavilion is already dead, yet you wallow there every day, how can this one… how can this one not worry?”

She picked her words carefully to avoid blame, even framing her own selfish desire as concern for Mo Ran.

Mo Ran stared at her, his breathing gradually calming down as if the words had gotten through to him somewhat. He stopped raging at her.

He took a moment to steady himself before saying, “I’ve made you worry.”

Song Qiutong let out a breath of relief. “This one wishes only for Your Majesty’s well-being, and would gladly die for it. Your Majesty is deeply compassionate, but you must not be so despondent.”

“Then how do you think this Venerable One should be?”

“Forgive this one for saying so, this one only means well for Your Majesty, but it’s time to bury Chu… Chu-zongshi… he’s already gone, keeping his empty body around like this will only cause Your Majesty more pain.”

“And? You have more to say, don’t you? Might as well let it all out today.”

Seeing his expression gradually relax, the heart in Song Qiutong’s throat settled back down in her chest.

She lowered her eyelashes and tilted her head slightly with her eyes half-lidded; she knew that she looked most like Shi Mingjing this way.

She was well aware that Shi Mingjing was Mo Weiyu’s weakness, though she couldn’t understand why it was that, no matter how much she dressed

up like him and carefully imitated his demeanor, she just couldn't arouse Mo Ran's interest.

Although this temperamental man liked her company, he only ever touched her when he was either feeling very low or very drunk. Song Qiutong thought that maybe it was because Mo Ran didn't really like women, but whatever it was, it clearly had nothing to do with Shi Mingjing.

Not just her, but all of Sisheng Peak knew that the man who died many years ago was Emperor Taxian-Jun's true love.

What the hell was Chu Wanning.

Song Qiutong felt that he was no more than a plaything used by Taxian-Jun to vent his lust, a man he had already grown tired of fucking. Chu Wanning may have traded his life for Mo Weiyu's disquietude and remembrance, but she knew it was nothing more than a momentary guilt, a temporary feeling of being unaccustomed.

She was confident in her face, this face that looked like Shi Mingjing; that living dead in the Red Lotus Pavilion was no match for her on this basis alone.

But Mo Ran can't be allowed to continue on in his madness like this. The world these days was in chaos, wars left and right, and she was terrified that she might have chosen to follow the wrong master—she wasn't young anymore; if Mo Ran was to lose his standing, she probably wouldn't be

able to find another sky-reaching tree on which to climb to the top. And so she sincerely, wholeheartedly hoped that Mo Ran would pull himself together and stop being insane.

So she mulled it over, weighing the risks against the rewards, and in the end summoned up the courage to say, “And once Chu-zongshi is gone, there will be none worthy of the Red Lotus Pavilion.”

Mo Ran said, “Right. Go on.”

“This one thinks, with that being the case, the pavilion will only remind Your Majesty of the past, so…”

“So?” Mo Ran narrowed his eyes.

“So perhaps it’d be best to seal away the Red Lotus Pavilion after this. A pavilion serving only one master is a good tale.”

Author’s Notes:

Miss Song is working towards her great demise.

Miss Song's graduation thesis 《An essay on how tragically one can die if they lack the ability to grasp the heart of the situation》

Big white cat’s talking corpse: [thanking jjwxc readers]

Depraved Taxian-Jun of the previous lifetime: Me? You dare to make this venerable one read out the thanks? Sure, see if anyone thanks you tomorrow, hmph.

Ch.101 Shizun, the Last Flame in This World

Mo Ran said nothing for a long while. Then he smiled brightly.

“A pavilion serving only one master is a good tale, huh. Well said.”

His shapely feet tread casually across the ice cold surface of the stone floor, the blue vein on top flexing as he came to a stop in front of Song Qiutong.

Then Mo Ran lifted one foot and tipped Song Qiutong’s chin up with his toes, forcing her to look up at himself.

“You’ve been keeping all this bottled up for quite a while, hm?”

He looked at her frightened, panicked face with a smile. “Empress Song, you know, there were a number of things in the past that I never asked you about. Since you’re feeling so generous with these words from the bottom of your heart today, why don’t we just just it all out, hm? Come, let’s have a nice chat.”

“Let’s start with the most recent one. The day I went to Taxue Palace, I clearly remember locking Chu Wanning in the sleeping palace before leaving. So tell me, how did he appear at Kunlun Mountain? Just who let him out and allowed him to come find me?”

Song Qiutong’s entire body shuddered. She said, “I don’t know!”

She was in such a panic to explain herself that she even forgot to say “this one”, slipping into “I” instead.

Mo Ran said with a smile, “Alright, you don’t know about this one. Next one, then. That year, when I made you empress, I also assigned you to

manage Sisheng Peak. And then I had to go to Yin Mountain afterwards to take care of some stuff. Chu Wanning was being disobedient at the time, so I had him locked in the water prison to reflect on himself…"

Song Qiutong's face grew pale as he brought up this matter, and her lips began to quiver.

"Using prison inspection as an excuse, you went to visit him, but were thoroughly scorned by him…"

"Y-yes," Song Qiutong said hurriedly, "but Your Majesty… A-Ran, I've already told you about this incident back when it happened, Chu-zongshi had told me to get lost in such a disparaging manner, and then even proceeded to insult not only myself but Your Majesty as well. I couldn't hold back my anger at the time… I…"

"This Venerable One knows," Mo Ran smiled faintly. "You couldn't hold back your anger at the time, but Chu Wanning had committed grave crimes, and his punishment couldn't be arbitrarily increased without this Venerable One's permission. So you carried out a minor discipline, had all ten of his nails pulled out and stinging thorns inserted into the tip of each finger."

Song Qiutong's eyes were filled with panic as she scrambled to say, "Your Majesty, you praised me for doing well when you returned!"

Mo Ran smiled, "Oh...? Did I?"

“You… you said that those with a foul mouth should be treated exactly so, and you even told this one that the punishment was a bit light, that if he speaks rudely again in the future, to… to break his fingers…” Her voice trailed off as she spoke until, in the end, looking at the terrifying smile on Mo Ran’s face, she collapsed to the ground with tears in her eyes. “A-Ran…”

Mo Ran let out a soft sigh. He smiled, “Qiutong, that was so long ago, this Venerable One no longer remembers what he said or didn’t say back then.”

“.....” She had already guessed Mo Ran’s intention just now, but her body still shuddered violently at his words.

“This Venerable One’s been having dreams lately. Dreams about that day, returning from Yin Mountain and going to the water prison to find him with both hands festered and covered in blood…” Mo Ran spoke slowly, but his voice suddenly tightened toward the end, and a cold light flashed in his eyes. “This Venerable One was not happy.”

Song Qiutong said helplessly, “Your Majesty, Your Majesty… no, A-Ran… let me explain… please calm down and let me explain…”

“This Venerable One was not happy.”

But Mo Ran only continued on as if he had heard nothing, lowering his face, devoid of any expression, to look cooly at the woman huddled on the floor.

“Indulge me a bit, won’t you?”

His expression like frost and snow, paired with such a haughty request, gave Song Qiutong goosebumps and made her scalp go numb in spite of all her years at his side with her life on the line like cohabiting with a ferocious tiger. She could smell the scent of the coming storm. Lifting her dark brown eyes, she looked meekly up at him as she crawled over and nestled by his ankles.

“Of course, anything A-Ran says. What can I do to make A-Ran happy? I’ll definitely… definitely…”

Mo Ran leaned over and grabbed her jaw, forcing her face upwards.

He put on a lovely, innocent smile.

Just like the one he wore back when he first saw her at Rufeng Sect, showing twin pools of sweet dimples as he pulled at her sleeve and said, “Little shimei, what’s your name? ...Aiyah, don’t be afraid, I won’t hurt you. Talk to me, okay?”

She shuddered.

After so many years, with practically the same expression and the same tone, he said something else altogether.

He said, sweetly and gently, “Qiutong, this Venerable One knows you mean it, that you’ll do anything to make this Venerable One happy…”

His fingertip caressed her soft lips.

The part of her that looked most like Shi Mingjing.

Mo Ran’s eyelashes trembled slightly as he stared calmly at that pair of petal-like lips. In the end, he said, “Then go wait for this Venerable One on

the road to hell.”

“!!!”

Gently, he asked, “Okay?”

Tears welled past Song Qiutong’s eyes immediately, not out of sadness, but out of fear. She already knew, as soon as Mo Ran brought up her abuse of Chu Wanning back then, that it wasn’t going to end well for her, but the most she thought it’d be was punishment by the rod or losing her title; she never, not even with all of her courage, thought that Mo Ran would actually…

That he’d actually! That he could actually bear to!

He... he…

Madman.

He’s gone mad...he’s gone mad...

Mo Ran threw his head back and began to laugh in a low voice, his laughter growing increasingly more arrogant and unrestrained. He laughed as he kicked open the door of the sleeping palace, laughed as he strode outside.

He had always tread with abandon, had trampled countless lives, and now it was her turn.

He’s gone mad...he’s gone mad!!!!

Mo Weiyu has gone mad!!!!

Song Qiutong collapsed to her knees on the floor of ice-cold stone and golden bricks. The passion of intimacy within the sleeping palace had not yet dissipated, but the fires of hell had already began to burn. With her mouth hanging open and she head tilted back, she struggled to look at the sky outside the palace.

It was the break of dawn, and the sky was the color of blood.

Dying red her bloodshot eyes.

In the distance, she heard Mo Ran call, as casual as if he was ordering dinner for the day.

“Guards, take the empress away.”

“Your Majesty——!” Came the panicked reactions of the retinue outside. “Your Majesty, this…”

“Toss her in the cauldron, fry her alive.”

Song Qiutong suddenly couldn’t hear anything anymore, like she had sunken deep into the sea, couldn’t hear anything anymore.

“Fry her alive. Fry her alive, it’ll be a lively good time that way. Haha...HAHAHA…”

He walked further and further away, but the sound of his laughter and shouting lingered over Sisheng Peak like an overflying eagle for a long time.

The rising sun cast a long shadow behind him, a lonely figure on the ground. Slowly, slowly, he walked.

At first, there almost seemed to be the silhouettes of two youths standing with him, and a tall man in white robes.

Then the two silhouettes disappeared, leaving only the white robes to accompany him.

He kept walking, and the white-robed man also disappeared into the golden dawn.

The rising sun was pure and unblemished, and it took away those who were similarly pure and unblemished, leaving only him alone in hell, in an ocean of blood, sinking into the masses of ghosts and fiends.

Leaving only him, all alone, getting lonelier and colder the further he walked.

He walked until he felt like he was already dead, that he had already died…

Becoming more and more deranged the further he walked.

Mo Ran remembered, during the year before he took his own life, that when he looked into the copper mirror, he couldn't even recognize the monster staring back at him sometimes.

He even remembered the night before he died, when he sat inside the bamboo pavilion at the Red Lotus Pavilion, with only an old servant

keeping his company.

He had lazily asked that old servant, “Liu-gong, what kind of person did this Venerable One used to be?”

He continued on without waiting for an answer, staring at his reflection in the pond.

“This Venerable One didn’t used to wear his hair like this when he was young, much less this tasseled crown, right?”

Liu-gong answered with a sigh, “It is as Your Majesty said. The crown and hairdo were at the recommendation of Empress Song after your accession to the throne.”

“Oh, you mean Song Qiutong?” Mo Ran sneered and tipped his head back to take a drink of pear blossom white. “Did I really used to listen to her suggestions?”

Maybe because the end was near, and there was no more need to worry about accidentally prickling the emperor’s sore spot with a stray word and losing his head, but the drooping old man spoke the candid truth.

With his eyes downcast and his hands tucked into his sleeves, Liu-gong said, “Yes, when Your Majesty first ascended the throne, Empress Song was quite favored. There was a period of time when Your Majesty did everything the Empress asked, did… Your Majesty forget all of it?”

“Forget?” Mo Ran chuckled. “I didn’t forget. How could I possibly forget…”

After he married Song Qiutong, someone had leaked her the info that the reason he favored her was due solely to her likeness to the deceased Shi Mingjing.

She was a clever person, so she spared no effort looking into Shi Mei’s mannerisms and bearing, subtly exhibiting the same in their daily life as husband and wife, making it seem almost like the dead had come back.

How could he possibly forget.

Mo Ran smiled mirthlessly, then suddenly took the crown from atop his head and tossed it into the pond without even looking. Startled koi fish leapt from the water, and the person reflected in the water became warped and distorted.

Thus distorted, he undid his topknot and let down his inky hair. He learned by the pondside, letting the rippling, sparkling waters light up his face in a mercurial light.

“There we go. The crown’s gone, and the hair’s down. Old Liu, help me think, what does this Venerable One still need to return to his appearance before the enthronement?”

“Um…”

“A hair tie, right?” Mo Ran looked at his reflection as he said. “That blue hair tie commonly worn by the disciples of Sisheng Peak. Are there any left in the palace?”

“There is. Your Majesty charged this old one with the safekeeping of the disciple uniform you shed when you ascended to the throne. This old one

will go bring it over if that's what Your Majesty wishes."

"Excellent. Go on, bring the whole set along with the hair tie."

Liu-gong left and returned with a stack of old clothes in hand. Mo Ran sat up, and when the tips of his fingers touched the cotton and hemp texture, pieces of the past fluttered up like dried leaves to land on his heart that was full of holes. In a moment of excitement, he picked up an outer robe and tried to put it on.

But the clothing of his youth was already far too small, and it wouldn't fit no matter how hard he tried.

He flew into a rage.

"Why doesn't it fit! Why can't I go back!!!"

He paced like a beast trapped in a cage, madness in his expression, eyes flickering with a dangerous light.

"This is this Venerable One's clothing!! Is this this Venerable One's clothing???!!!! Did you fetch the wrong set!!! If it is this Venerable One's clothing, then why would it not fit!!!!!!! Why would it not fit ——!!!!"

The old servant was already used to seeing his master in the grip of madness like this.

He used to think that Mo Ran was terrifying like this. But today, for some reason, he felt that he was pitiful instead.

He wasn't looking for clothes—he was looking for himself, the him of the past that could never come back.

"Your Majesty," the old man sighed faintly, "let it go; you're not that young man of the past anymore."

"....." Mo Ran was in the middle of raging, and, hearing these words, his head whipped around fiercely to glare at the old man's withered face. But it was as if he was choking on something, unable to get a single word out, only breathing harshly with red-rimmed eyes. A long time passed before he finally spoke, "I'm not…?"

"You're not."

"...I can't go back?"

"You can't go back."

For the first time, a childlike helplessness appeared on the face of that thirty two year old man. He closed his eyes, the jut of his throat bobbing. The old servant stood to the side with his head lowered, thinking that, once he opens his eyes, he'll surely snarl with his fangs out and shred everything before him.

But when Mo Ran opened his eyes again, there was a wetness in them.

Perhaps it was this wetness that put out the inferno in his heart.

Mo Ran opened his mouth and, in a voice that was hoarse and weary, murmured, “I see… I see… I can’t go back… I can’t go back…”

He put down the robe as if exhausted, sat down by the stone table, and buried his face in his hands.

A long while passed before he said, “Then I’ll just tie my hair up.”

“...Your Majesty...why do all this…”

“This Venerable One’s life will end soon, don’t want to be too lonely when the time comes.” He kept his face in his hands as he spoke, his expression indiscernible. “I just want to change my clothes and feel like there are still old friends for company.”

Liu-gong sighed, “That’s just make-believe.”

“Make-believe is fine.”

Mo Ran said.

“Make-believe is better than nothing.”

He pulled his long hair back, wrapping the hair tie around it once, twice. Then he picked up a hair clasp with faded edges from the pile of old clothes, thinking to clip it to the side of his hair like he used to when he was young, but then, looking at his reflection in the water, his hand stilled.

Which side was it on again, the left or the right?

He hadn't used this hair clasp for so long that he could no longer remember. Mo Ran closed his eyes, asking, "Old Liu, do you know how I used to wear my hair?"

"To answer Your Majesty, this old one only came to the palace two years after your enthronement. This old one does not know."

Mo Ran said, "But I can't remember, I need someone to tell me."

"....."

"Where can I find someone to tell me?" Mo Ran murmured. "Who can tell me what I… used to look like."

Old Liu let out a long sigh, but couldn't think of a single name. Truthfully, in his heart, Mo Ran also knew that the old man had no answer for him, and so, uncertainly, he held that black hair clasp to his left, then his right, before settling on the left side and clipping it there.

"That seems right," Mo Ran said. "Let me go ask him."

So he walked toward the inner parts of the pavilion, to the side of the red lotus pond where Chu Wanning's body laid, looking like he was only asleep.

Mo Ran sat down on the ground, propping his cheek in one hand as he said, "Shizun."

The breeze carried the faint fragrance of the lotus blossoms. Looking at that man lying amongst the vibrant, intoxicating red within the pond with his eyes closed, he suddenly felt like he had a lot he wanted to say, but at the same time didn't know what to say at all.

Toward Chu Wanning, he seemed to be always full of emotions, but those emotions were too jumbled, contained too many flavors, and amidst the sweet and the sour and the bitter and the spicy, he couldn't tell if he held more hatred toward this person or more of something else. He really, honestly didn't know how to act toward this person.

He had once told himself that the only reason he kept Chu Wanning by his side was to vent his hatred and sate his desires. But then Chu Wanning died, and he still kept this corpse that he could no longer even entwine with; even the grave had been prepared, but he just couldn't bear to bury him.

What was the use in keeping this cold, unmoving corpse that couldn't speak?

Even he himself wasn't sure.

They've already gone through too much, and that tiny, clean thing at the start had already been completely drowned.

When Chu Wanning was still alive, the two of them rarely had any peaceful, amicable days together.

But now that Chu Wanning was dead, a kind of cruel gentleness grew between the living and the dead. Mo Ran came to visit him often, a jar of pear blossom white in hand, simply looking without saying much.

Right now, besieged on all sides, he knew that his life was at an end. And Chu Wanning's body was the only one left from his past in this Sisheng

Peak that looked no different but held none of the same people, the only one who had stayed with him all this time.

Mo Ran suddenly wanted to have a nice, long heart-to-heart with this cold corpse. Chu Wanning was already dead anyway, he could neither protest nor berate him. No matter what he said, he would have no choice but to lie there and listen.

But when he tried to move his lips, his throat felt tight.

In the end, he only managed to say one thing.

“Shizun, pay attention to me.”

Author’s Notes:

Depraved 0.5 is in a craze again as he is usually, clutches face...who will drag this dog and get him vaccinated for rabies hahahaha

Big white cat’s talking corpse: [thanking jjwxc readers]

Crazy 0.5 Mo Weiyu: Did this venerable one not scare you all yesterday? If so, then, [thanking jjwxc readers]

Ch.102 Shizun's Shizun

Shizun, pay attention to me.

That was the first thing Mo Ran had said when they first met in front of the Heaven-Piercing Tower.

At that time, Chu Wanning's eyes were closed. Mo Ran called to him, and his eyelashes fluttered open.

That was also the last thing Mo Ran had said when they parted for the last time at the Red Lotus Pavilion.

At that time, Chu Wanning's eyes were closed. Mo Ran called to him, but he never again lifted his head.

That one sentence drifted for half a lifetime, from the Heaven-Piercing Tower to the edge of the lotus pond, and finally settled into dust.

All those years of hate and love scattered, went cold.

Mo Ran finished the last jar of pear blossom wine and went down from the southern peak of Sisheng Peak toward the eve of his final day. The next day, the rebel army charged into Wushan Palace to find that Taxian-Jun, a calamity upon the world for the past ten years, had taken his own life at the age of thirty two.

By now, two lifetimes have gone by.

Mo Ran opened his eyes.

He had slept through the night under the flowering tree before the Heaven-Piercing Tower and woke up dazed and lost, unable to tell when he

was.

Absently, he murmured, “Shizun...pay attention to me…”

Only then did he remember that, in this lifetime as well, Chu Wanning was already gone.

In the past life, he had gotten used to every day being a bitter struggle, and Chu Wanning was the one who had walked with him til the very end; he didn’t want to be a vile person again in this life, but Chu Wanning wouldn’t be around to see that now.

Maybe even the heavens couldn’t bear it, or perhaps it was simply fate—Chu Wanning had already grown beyond disgusted with him in the past life, and so in this one he had become the first to leave.

Mo Ran laid his arm across his eyes, holding back the tightness in his throat.

He heard Xue Zhengyong shouting frantically in the distance. His uncle was looking for him, yelling, “Ran-er——where are you? Ran-er!”

Shi Mei was calling for him as well, “A-Ran, where are you… hurry and come out…”

“Ran-er, come back and keep Yuheng company! Don’t do anything stupid, Ran-er!!”

Keep Yuheng company…

Keep him company...

Mo Ran scrambled up from the ground and stumbled unsteadily toward the voices.

He can't collapse, he can't collapse——there are lots of things he still has to do, the person behind everything hasn't been found yet, not to mention the Heavenly Rift could happen again at any time. Sisheng Peak had suffered heavy losses in the catastrophe, and there were countless things needing to be taken care of… Xue Meng was already heartbroken from grief, so anguished he couldn't even get up. He can't also collapse.

So he endured it, forced himself to carry on.

He told himself, it doesn't hurt, it doesn't hurt.

It's not the first time he's been through Chu Wanning's death. It doesn't hurt.

It doesn't hurt…

But how could it not hurt!

Over three thousand steps, he had crawled, carrying him on his back, how could it not hurt…

Draining the very last bit of his spiritual energy, giving it all to him, how could it not hurt...

He had suffered the same injury, but for the sake of not burdening his disciple, he had put on a heartless expression and left by himself… how

could it not hurt...

And in the past life, Chu Wanning had actually suffered the same injury as Shi Mei, it's just that he didn't say anything about it. He didn't say, and Mo Ran didn't know.

So he roared angrily at Chu Wanning, vented endless hatred on him, flipped to the ground those wontons that Chu Wanning, who hadn't even recovered from his own injuries yet, had worked so hard to make for him.

Chu Wanning had bent down in front of him, lowered his head, and then, one by one, picked them up and threw them away.

How…could it...not hurt…

How could it have not hurt!!!!

He had dug out Chu Wanning's heart! How could it have not hurt!!! How could it...

Mo Ran couldn't walk anymore. He stood in place for a long while, trying to suppress it, trying to calm down; his entire body trembled.

It hurts.

He buried his face in his hands, bit down on his lip, swallowed his sobs together with the blood.

A long, long while passed before he managed, just barely, to pull himself together.

He lifted his head, eyes red-rimmed, and drew in a deep breath. And then, slowly, he walked down the steps.

He can't collapse.

"Uncle."

"Ran-er, where did you go? You worried me half to death! How am I gonna face Yuheng in the afterlife if something happens to you?"

"It was my fault," Mo Ran said. "I'm okay now, sorry to have made Uncle worry."

Xue Zhengyong shook his head, not quite sure what to say, and so only patted Mo Ran's shoulder. After a long moment, he said, "It's not your fault, it's not your fault, you're already so much stronger than Meng-er… sigh …"

Mo Ran asked in a hoarse voice, "Where's Xue Meng?"

"Sick. He has a high fever, just drank his medicine and went to sleep. He's inconsolable when awake, just crying all day… it's good that he's asleep," Xue Zhengyong looked exhausted. "The Heavenly Rift of the Infinite Hells caused a huge wave in the cultivation world. Even the upper cultivation world has began to send people to look into the matter. But the person behind it covered his tracks extremely well; Butterfly Town was practically levelled in the bloody battle, leaving no clues to be found."

Hearing this, Mo Ran wasn't at all surprised. That person's abilities were clearly beyond what anyone, including himself, had expected.

Someone who could take Chu Wanning's life obviously wouldn't be careless enough to leave any traces.

"What do the upper cultivation realm people plan to do?"

Xue Zhengyong replied, "They're holding a meeting at Spiritual Mountain with representatives from each sect to discuss the matter. I'm leaving for it tomorrow… but I'm worried about leaving when Meng-er is like this…"

He was right—now that even the number one zongshi in the world Chu Wanning had lost his life in the incident at Butterfly Town, the upper cultivation world cannot simply sit by and watch anymore, however negligent they might be.

"Just who laid down the spells to open up the barrier?"

"What is he after?"

"What's his next move?"

These questions circled in everyone's hearts like vultures. Everyone wanted to know the answers, but extensive investigations had yielded nothing, so there was no choice left but to cooperate.

Mo Ran said, "Uncle, don't worry, I'll help Aunt take care of things in the sect while you're gone."

"That's good, that's good… aye … I really hate having to burden you."

Xue Zhengyong left, and Xue Meng spent all day spacing out, so all the accumulated scrolls of paperwork and jobs fell to Mo Ran.

Mo Ran threw himself into the work, not daring to rest for even one moment, because if he stops to rest, stops to think, then the anguish and regret will drag him down into the abyss and torture his broken soul. He wished that he could bury his head in the scrolls day and night so that he wouldn't have to contend with the endless torment and guilt in his heart.

When the Infinite Hells opened, Yin energy had flooded the mortal realm, and all manners of fiends that had long been suppressed seized the opportunity to escape and wreck havoc across the land. These days, the letters of commission requesting aid from Sisheng Peak have practically piled up into a small mountain. Mo Ran busied himself taking care of it all, forgetting to sleep and skipping on meals, often heading into Loyalty Hall at the break of dawn and staying until late at night before going back to rest.

But even buried in the ocean of paperwork like this, he would still get pricked unawares by the fragments of Chu Wanning left behind.

"...Qingjiang region has been troubled as of late, and most of the eighty two families in Fengling Village are old and ailing, without any means of defense. We are fortunate to have a Holy Night Guardian golem made by your esteemed sect's elder to fend off the fiends for the time being, but it is not a long term solution, so we would like to request…"

A droplet of candle wax slid slowly down, and the wick crackled.

Mo Ran came to with a start; he had been spacing out at the letter for a long time, his finger smoothing over the words “Holy Night Guardian” over and over, and the image in his mind was that of Chu Wanning in the Red Lotus Pavilion, his hair pulled back in a ponytail, holding a sanding file in his mouth as he concentrates on oiling a golem.

Mo Ran let out a long exhale and pressed his fingers to his forehead, rubbing lightly.

Suddenly, he heard someone knocking.

“Shi Mei?”

Dressed in light, simple white robes, the beautiful young man walked in holding a tray and set it down next to Mo Ran’s scrolls, then rolled up his sleeves and stirred the candlelight back into brightness, saying in a gentle voice, “A-Ran, you’ve been working all day, have something to eat.”

“...Alright.”

Mo Ran forced a smile and put down his scroll, kneading at the throbbing pain between his brows.

“I made a bowl of ginseng chicken soup and a couple plates of side dishes,” Shi Mei set out the dishes and felt the temperature through the bowl. “Oh, good, they’re still warm.”

While eating, Shi Mei noticed a loose strand of hair hanging before that handsome but tired-looking face, and reached out to tuck it back in for him.

“A-Ran.”

“Hm?”

“That day… there was something you wanted to say to me?”

Mo Ran’s mind was a jumbled mess, not quite catching on for a moment. He glanced at him and asked, “Which day?”

“.....” Shi Mei pursed his lips and lowered his gaze. “When the Heavenly Rift happened.”

“.....”

“You said you were going to go help...help Shizun mend the Heavenly Rift, and that there was something, that if you still felt like telling me when you came back, then…” He lowered his head, voice drifting off.

In the light of the candle, Shi Mei’s delicate, snow-white ears seemed a little red.

Mo Ran stared for a long time, but couldn’t force a single word out.

He knew, without a doubt, that he loved Shi Mei dearly. But right now, in this moment, he really wasn't in the mood, not even a little bit.

He was shameless and unmannerly, couldn't care less what others said, and knew nothing of things like morality and etiquette.

But that didn't mean he was heartless.

"Sorry," a long moment passed in silence before Mo Ran finally said in a soft voice. "I feel really down right now, and I… don't think now is the time for this, so, about that thing, I'll tell you some other time, okay?"

Shi Mei's head snapped up, his beautiful eyes startled.

Mo Ran forced out a chuckle and raised his hand, then hesitated for a moment before patting Shi Mei's head. "I'm kind of dumb, and there have been so many things to take care of lately, I… I don't know when I'll have a quiet moment to gather my thoughts. I don't want to be careless about it."

Even the warmth of the candle couldn't conceal the gradual blanching of Shi Mei's face.

"Careless?"

He paused, then suddenly smiled.

"A-Ran, it was life or death back then, I thought that what you were going to say at a time like that would've been something you've already given careful thought to."

“I have,” Mo Ran furrowed his brows. “I’ve thought about it for a long time, and it’s never changed, but…”

“But?”

“...But not right now.”

Mo Ran’s hands clenched into fists in his sleeves.

“Not right now, Shi Mei. You don’t know this, but that thing is very important, I don’t want to rush it and tell you at such a miserable time, I…”

“Young master!”

A junior suddenly barged in unannounced, only to see that the one managing sect matters in Loyalty Hall was Mo Ran, and hurriedly lowered his head in a bow, saying, “Ah, Mo-gongzi.”

Having been interrupted like this, the faint blush on Shi Mei’s face faded away as he flicked his sleeves and sat back from where he was leaning forward, taking on a mild, unassuming appearance.

Mo Ran looked up, not noticing this change in his demeanor. “What is it?”

“R-reporting in, there’s an esteemed guest at the sect entrance.”

“An esteemed guest?” Mo Ran repeated, “anyone of note from the ten great sects is at Spiritual Mountain right now, where’s this esteemed guest

from?”

The disciple seemed both scared and excited, face flushed and stammering incoherently for a while before finally managing to say, “I-it’s Master Huaizui[105] of Wubei[106] Temple!!!!”

“What?!”

Even the ex-Emperor Taxian-Jun Mo Ran couldn’t help abruptly getting to his feet, and Shi Mei was startled as well.

“Master Huaizui?”

It was not for nothing that Mo Ran was so shocked—this Master Huaizui was practically a legend in the cultivation world.

This person had long ago achieved enlightenment and ought to have ascended. But when the great gates of the heavenly realm opened for him, he had pressed his palms together and said that he could not break with the mortal realm, could not let go of his lifelong obsession, and could not wash himself of past sins. In the end, the heavenly light disappeared, the lotus blossom wilted, and Master Huaizui ambled away from immortality in his worn-out monk robes, monk staff tapping lightly against the ground.

After declining his chance to ascend and become an immortal, he went into seclusion at Wubei Temple to reflect, and a hundred years passed in the blink of an eye.

One hundred years hence, the cultivation world has only heard of his name without ever seeing his person, and the number of seniors still living who had met him could be counted on one hand.

In his past life, Mo Ran had turned the world upside down and still wasn't able to meet with Master Huaizui. Huaizui had been far, far too old, and passed away on a rainy spring day the year before Mo Ran climbed to the top of the human world; no one knew how old he was when he passed.

Unexpectedly, in this reborn life, Master Huaizui came calling on his own in a late night visit.

Countless thoughts flashed instantly through his mind—though he didn't yet know what exactly he came here for, Mo Ran immediately thought of those rumors about Master Huaizui.

Huaizui...Huaizui!

How could he have forgotten about Master Huaizui!

Last lifetime, when Shi Mei died, he didn't even know that there was such a sagely senior in the cultivation world due to his ignorance. It was only later, when he became emperor, that he learned from the reports of his subordinates that there actually existed a person in this world who could wield the "Rebirth" technique of the three forbidden techniques.

That person was Huaizui.

He had hurriedly sent people to Wubei Temple to request his presence, to call back Shi Mei's soul. But the people he sent returned with the news that the great master had already passed on, that he had missed his last chance to bring Shi Mei back.

But right now, this person of legend was still alive! He was still alive!!!!

How did he forget that! How could he forget?

Mo Ran's heart lurched, and he started trembling all over. A blaze glowed in his eyes as he shot to his feet and hastily said, "Hurry and invite the great master in!"

And then, before the reporting disciple even had a chance to respond, Mo Ran changed his mind. "Actually, I'll go welcome him in myself." But before he took two steps, there was a sudden flash of yellow from the outside.

Neither the candle nor its flame moved.

There wasn't even a hint of a breeze.

No one had seen how he came in, not even Mo Ran's sharp eyes, yet a monk wearing a bamboo hat and worn-out monk robes was already standing imposingly inside Loyalty Hall.

He had moved like lightning and stopped right in front of Mo Ran, the sudden proximity a bit startling.

"This one is imposing so late at night, and shall not trouble Mo-shizhu[107] so."

A deep, mellow voice drifted out from beneath the bamboo hat, startling both Mo Ran and Shi Mei.

How was this the voice of a hundred-year-old man?

Before he had any time to think, the monk took off his bamboo hat. In the candlelit hall, he looked to be about thirty years of age, with a clear appearance and a mild demeanor. His eyes were bright and sharp, but they were calm and clear rather than menacing, like the reflection of light in waters.

“...You are…”

The monk put his palms together and bowed down low. “Amitabha,[108] this humble monk is Huaizui.”

No one had expected Master Huaizui, who was at least a hundred years old, to look even younger than Xue Zhengyong. For a moment, there was only stunned silence.

But Mo Ran knew some things when it came to cultivation. Huaizui was someone who had rejected ascension and chose instead to stay in the mortal realm, and so was no different from an immortal other than that final step of shedding his mortal body and going through the heavenly trial.[109] He relaxed a little after reasoning through it like that, but couldn’t look away from Huaizui.

Huaizui didn’t wish to disturb any more people, so it was just the three of them sitting down in Loyalty Hall. Mo Ran served tea to the great master personally. Huaizui accepted and uttered his thanks, but did not drink, only setting the tea aside on the small sandalwood table and then slowly raising his head.

He was mellow and polite, but cut straight to the point:

“Mo-shizhu, pray forgive this humble monk’s forwardness, but the reason for this humble monk’s coming today is a past acquaintance.”

Mo Ran’s heartbeat sped up abruptly; his vision swam and his fingers dug into the edge of the table with such strength that he nearly crushed it.

He stared intently at Master Huaizui's face as words from his past life resurfaced in his mind once again like drifting flakes of snow——

"There is a rumor that there is someone who has successfully used the Rebirth Technique of the three forbidden techniques. But it's just a rumor, there's no way to know whether there's any truth to it…"

"Where is this Master Huaizui? I'll pay any price to bring Shi Mei back!"

"To answer Your Majesty, Huaizui...has already passed away, many years ago. He wrote nothing in all his life, and, regarding Rebirth, he said only that 'The changing of fate is in defiance of Heaven's will, its dangers immeasurable.' Other than that, he left behind nothing else…"

The words streamed past his ears.

"Master Huaizui had an unfathomable grasp of mortality and reincarnation."

"Rumor has it that he had dealings with the ghost realm. If he yet lived, perhaps Mingjing-shixiong might be returned from the grave, but unfortunately, sigh…"

"Master Huaizui was like a ghost lingering in the world of the living. Anything and everything involving the Yin and the Yang, he definitely had a hand in."

Mo Ran drew in a deep breath, and was surprised to find that his voice trembled a little.

“Past acquaintance… past acquaintance…”

He murmured, his gaze locking with Master Huaizui’s clear eyes.

With his back covered in a sheen of sweat, Mo Ran asked in a voice so quiet it was barely audible, “Who is this past acquaintance?”

The monk stood up slowly; in the dim candle light, there was no shadow beneath his feet.

The sleeves of his thin and simple yellow robe hung low. The robe was fairly worn out, but completely free of wrinkles and drifted lightly in the breeze like the flickering outline of a ghost. This great master was certainly impossible to read.

Mo Ran could practically hear the beating of his own heart. Subconsciously, he stood up with Huaizui, and the two of them gazed at one another.

“Great Master.” If there was a mirror in front of him right now, he would see the thread of hope that had appeared on his face unawares, and the pleading that followed in its wake. “Who… is this past acquaintance…”

Was it him?

Was it him?

Huaizui lowered his lashes and sighed as he pressed his palms together. “My disciple Chu Wanning perished seven days ago. Tonight is the night his soul is set to return. This humble monk cannot bear to send off one so

young, and so came to Sisheng Peak to beg Mo-shizhu's pity, that he might return this old monk his disciple."

Author's Notes:

Big white cat's talking corpse: [thanking jjwxc readers]

Adorable Xue Meng: "....."

Adorable Xue Meng is gravely ill and unable to get up.

We resort to yanking Dog, currently in system meltdown, over: [thanking jjwxc readers]

Ch.103 Shizun, I'm Coming to Find You

So it was… like that…

His disciple…

Mo Ran never would have thought that this exalted monk who was practically indifferentiable between human and ghost was actually Chu Wanning's teacher, and for a moment, he was unable to speak.

It was Shi Mei who reacted first, bowing down immediately in a formal rite of respect and saying in a deferential tone, "I was unaware that the great master was thus related to our late master. This humble one offers Huaizui-shizu[110] his sincere greetings."

But Master Huaizui replies, "There's no need to call me shizu, for Chu Wanning was expelled from the sect by this humble monk long ago."

"Ah!" Shi Mei's eyes widened slightly in surprise. "I see…" He was prudent by nature, so although he was curious, he understood from the faint wistfulness in Master Huaizui's expression that he didn't wish to talk about it, and so didn't ask.

But Mo Ran's thoughts were elsewhere; he pressed urgently, feeling like his very heart was being broiled alive, "Great master, you said that you came here for Shizun, so do you… do you have some means of bringing Shizun back?!"

"A-Ran…"

"Do you know how to bring him back! Tell me the truth! Do you… do you know how…" The rapid pumping of his heart together with the exhaustion

from days of overworking made him feel lightheaded, and as his vision swam, the rest of the sentence caught in his throat, impossible to force out, but the rims of his eyes grew red.

Master Huaizui let out a sigh, “Mo-shizhu, pray take care. But yes, that is indeed why this old monk is here.”

Mo Ran’s face, originally pale as paper, flushed with color upon hearing these words. He stared fixedly at Master Huaizui, his bloodless lips quivering for a moment before managing to speak, “D… do you… really…”

“This old monk did not come to disturb this late at night only to prank the two shizhu.”

Mo Ran still wanted to say something; his throat moved, but only a choked sob came out.

A long moment passed in silence before Master Huaizui said, “The Rebirth Technique alters fate in defiance of Heaven’s will, and is no simple matter. This old monk truly owes Chu-zongshi overmuch, or he would not have resorted to such measures. Visiting Sisheng Peak was a decision made after many days of consideration.”

“Altering fate in defiance of Heaven’s will…?” Mo Ran murmured, turning the words over between his lips, then muttered miserably, “Altering fate in defiance of Heaven’s will… if even a sinner like myself was given the opportunity to alter my fate in defiance of Heaven’s will, then surely such a good person as he should be given the same?”

Half-crazed as he was in the moment, he had actually let slip his own “altering of fate in defiance of Heaven’s will”. Luckily he was mumbling

indistinctly, and no one caught the implication between his words that he was also reborn.

Shi Mei said, “Shizu, since it alters fate in defiance of Heaven’s will, and the Rebirth Technique itself is a forbidden technique, I imagine it must be extremely difficult to carry out, and… won’t necessarily succeed… right?”

“Correct,” Huaizui answered. “This technique involves not only the wielder and the deceased, it also requires a third person to go and find the totality of the deceased’s soul. The journey to rebirth is full of hardships, and the slightest mistake could lead to eternal damnation and complete shattering of the soul.”

Shi Mei: “.....”

“For that reason, this old monk need not disturb anyone else, and came only to ask of Chu-zongshi’s three disciples if you would be willing to tread fire and flood and go through untold dangers for him. If you are not, then even if this old monk opens the gate of rebirth, Chu Wanning still would not be able to return.”

Even before Huaizui’s explanation, Mo Ran had already guessed most of it.

The reason the three forbidden techniques were forbidden was because, unlike ordinary techniques, they required certain sacrifices and involved certain dangers.

In the last lifetime, he had been willing to give his life for Shi Mei; in this lifetime, he’d already decided that in order to repay his debt to Chu

Wanning, he also would not hesitate.

Mo Ran wasn't heartless. It was just that, in the last lifetime, he was never willing to divide his heart and give Chu Wanning even the tiniest piece of it.

Under the candlelight, he looked directly at Master Huaizui as he said, "The great master need not ask Xue Meng. Shizun died because of me. There's no need to involve anyone else in this matter; I, Mo Ran, am willing to take on any and all dangers of this technique alone."

"A-Ran…" Shi Mei muttered, then turned to ask Huaizui, "Shizu's words were already sobering; what will the actual trial be like?"

Huaizui spoke, "Although Mo-shizhu is willing to undertake the risks himself, for the first step of this technique, the more people there are that are willing to take on the risks, the more likely it is to succeed. So let's wait for Xue-shizhu to get here first, and then this old monk will explain it to all of you. This old monk already asked someone to go call him upon first arriving here."

He paused, then smiled toward Shi Mei.

"On another note, please remember not to refer to this old monk as shizu. As mentioned earlier, this old monk no longer holds the position of being Chu-zongshi's shizun."

Now that Mo Ran was finally somewhat calmer, he asked, "Why did the great master… expel our Shizun from the sect?"

Shi Mei, speechlessly: “A-Ran…”

“No matter, it’s not some unspeakable thing,” Huaizui sighed. “When he was young, this humble monk once received the care of a benefactor. But the benefactor was ill-fated and lost his life protecting others during a calamity. It has been a hundred years hence, yet the thought of it still makes this humble monk uneasy. Thus the most important rule of our sect has always been that all disciples must focus solely on cultivation, and, until and unless they reach enlightenment, are forbidden from setting foot in the outside world and getting involved in the matters thereof, so as to not endanger their own lives.”

Mo Ran thought about it for a while, then said, “Shizun couldn’t do it.”

“That’s right,” Huaizui forced a smile. “That little disciple of mine had the same temperament as my benefactor. He grew up in the temple, with little in the way of experience but an abundance of skill and talent. By all rights, he should have been able to cultivate into ascension without incident. But the year he came of age, he went down the mountain to collect ores, and just so happened to run into fleeing refugees…”

Shi Mei sighed, “That being the case, Shizun definitely wouldn’t just stand there and watch.”

Huaizui nodded. “Not only did he not just stand there and watch, after he found a place for the refugees, he left the mountain without permission to

go look into how things were at the lower cultivation realm."

"....."

Sisheng Peak had only just been established back then, and the situation in the lower cultivation realm was far more chaotic than it is now. It went without saying what Chu Wanning saw.

"And when he returned, he told me that he wanted to put his cultivation training on hold so that he can go out into the world to help the injured and save lives."

Shi Mei asked, "Did you agree?"

"No."

"....."

"He was only fifteen then, with a pure, simple nature and a hot temper; it would've been far too easy for him to get deceived by someone. How could I possibly let him go out on his own? Besides, his cultivation was high, but his constitution was poor, and there are all kinds of dangers and dangerous characters out in the world. As his master, this humble monk truly could not help but worry."

Mo Ran said, "But he didn't listen to you in the end."

"No, he didn't. We had a big fight over it. He said how can Shizun just sit there all day with his eyes closed trying to ascend while the common people suffer right in front of his eyes."

“Ah!” Shi Mei exclaimed in surprise.

Such words toward Huaizui would have been extremely harsh coming from anyone else, but for it to come from Chu Wanning, his own disciple at the time, was shockingly improper.

Huaizui’s expression was even, but there was a hint of melancholy there. “This humble monk’s control over his emotions was yet lacking back then, and, in a fit of anger, said to his disciple, you can’t even save yourself, how can you save others?”

“And what did Shizun say?” Shi Mei asked.

“If you don’t know to save others, how will you save yourself?”

The entire hall fell silent at these words.

Because these words came not from Huaizui, but were whispered by Mo Ran. Suddenly hearing him say the same thing that Chu Wanning had said back then, Master Huaizui’s eyes glinted in the light as he gazed silently at the young man before him, and a long moment passed before he let out a deep sigh.

“Is that how he’d been teaching you? He… aye , he really… hadn’t changed at all, still that same unwavering conviction in his path.”

Huaizui’s thoughts were a mess; Mo Ran wasn’t any calmer.

He had always scoffed at that line of Chu Wanning’s, thinking it to be fake righteousness and empty words. But saying it just now, he instead felt anguish like his heart was being engulfed by flames.

Several moments passed before Huaizui's hollow voice sounded once again inside Loyalty Hall.

"It shames me to say this, but I lost my temper that day and told him that if he insists on being stubborn and takes one step out of the temple gates, then we would be master and disciple no more, all ties severed," he paused, as if choked up by that piece of the past, wanting to talk about it in detail yet also not wanting to. After several moments of hesitation, he shook his head.

"As I'm sure you've guessed, Chu Wanning chose to cut ties and leave in the end. It's been many years since then. He and I want different things; so though we both live in this mortal world, our paths have never crossed since."

Shi Mei said, "That's not Shi...that's not the great master's fault."

Huaizui replied, "Right and wrong, truth and falsehood, these are not things so easily grasped. But Chu Wanning was once my disciple, and this humble monk could find no rest since hearing of his death in that bloody battle. Thus I thought to come here and do what I can, try our luck, see if we can bring back Chu-zongshi——"

Clang.

The vermillion-painted doors were forcefully flung open.

Xue Meng stood on the outside, when he'd arrived nobody knew, but he had clearly already heard the most important parts. He was only told that Master Huaizui was here, but had no idea what the old monk came here

for, so he wandered over in no hurry, sipping dejectedly at his bowl of herbal medicine as he walked.

Now, after hearing what Huaizui had said, the bowl had been shattered into pieces on the floor, and the hot medicinal brew had splashed all over him.

But the son of the phoenix didn't seem to feel the burn at all as he cried, "Bring back? Bring back? Shizun can——can come back?!"

He stumbled into the room in a run and grabbed Huaizui unceremoniously.

"Bald donkey, what did you just say? Is this some kind of joke?"

Shi Mei said hurriedly, "Young master, this is…"

"No… that was unbecoming of me," although he didn't know that the person before him was Chu Wanning's master, Xue Meng remembered that he was here to save Shizun's life and hurriedly let go. "Great master, as long as you can bring Shizun back, if there's ever anything you need in the future, Xue Meng will definitely go through hell and high water, risk life and limb for you. Just please… please say it's no jest."

Huaizui said, "Xue-shizhu, there's no need for that. This humble monk came calling this late at night specifically for your Shizun."

He turned to look out the window at the night sky, “It’s almost time. Since the three young shizhu are all here, please allow this humble monk to explain to you the details and challenges of the Rebirth Technique.”

Shi Mei said, “Please do, great master.”

But Xue Meng pressed urgently, “What even is there to say! Save him first! Hurry and save him first!”

Huaizui replied, “Xue-shizhu is understandably anxious, but please know that any mistake could cost not only the shizhu’s life, but could also scatter Chu Wanning’s soul. If that were to happen, he won’t even be able to enter the Wheel of Reincarnation[111] anymore. Would you chance that?”

“I…” Xue Meng’s face flushed red immediately and his hands closed tightly around his sleeves, only loosening after a long while. “Alright, I’ll listen to the great master’s explanation…”

Huaizui took out three plain white silk lanterns from his storage pouch. The white silk of the lanterns were intricately woven with thin threads of gold, and complex spell patterns were embroidered into their centers in thirteen colors of silk threads, circling and interlacing like a spider web meant to capture departing souls.

“These are Soul-Calling Lanterns,” Master Huaizui distributed the three lanterns to the three of them. “Take these, and listen very carefully to what this humble monk is about to say next.”

Mo Ran took the lantern and held it carefully in his hands.

“Each person has three ethereal souls and seven corporeal spirits.[112] The three ethereal souls are the Earth Soul, the Cognizance Soul, and the Human Soul. After death, the three souls leave the body and each go their own way. All of this you already know, but I hazard a guess that you don’t know where exactly each soul goes after death.”

Shi Mei spoke, “May the great master please enlighten us.”

“The Earth Soul and the Human Soul proceed to the Underworld, while the Cognizance Soul remains within the body. It is said that the soul returns on the seventh day, but in actuality, it is only the Human Soul that returns to the world of the living to meet with the Cognizance Soul. The Human Soul generally returns due to some unfulfilled wish; once its wish is realized, it will merge with the Cognizance Soul within the body, and the merged soul will go to the Underworld to reunite into a complete soul and await reincarnation. Many have attempted Rebirth without full knowledge of its intricacies, only to end up calling back only an incomplete portion of the soul, which naturally dissipates in short order.”

After Shi Mei’s death in the past life, Mo Ran had also tried to call back his soul. But, just as Huaizui said, under the pale white moonlight, there was no more than a very faint shadow of that person, which turned instantly into glitters of light.

Mo Ran muttered, “I see…”

Huaizui continued, “Chu Wanning’s Cognizance Soul yet remains in his body, you need not be concerned about it. The important thing is to find his Human Soul and his Earth Soul.”

Xue Meng asked hastily, “Find how?”

Huaizui answered, “Using the Soul-Calling Lantern. This lantern can only be lit using spiritual energy, so you must sustain it with a stream of your spiritual energy and walk through Sisheng Peak with it. If Chu Wanning does not refuse the three shizhu, then the light of the Soul-Calling Lantern will be able to illuminate his Human Soul.”

Mo Ran’s heart dropped at these words. “Then what if Shizun doesn’t want to see us?”

“That’s the first difficulty, and the reason why the chance of success is greater the more people there are willing to look for him. It must be said that, if he has no lingering attachments to this world and has already decided to leave,” Huaizui said, “then the Soul-Calling Lantern will be unable to illuminate him. So as you can see, for the Rebirth Technique to work, everything—time, place, and people—must align just so. If the deceased has no lingering attachments to any of the people who go to search for him, and is unwilling to return to the world of the living, then no one can compel him to come back.”

“.....” Mo Ran’s hands tightened subconsciously around the lantern.

Xue Meng said without pause, “Shizun cared for us the most, how could he be unwilling to come back? Great master, what do we do after finding Shizun’s Human Soul with the lanterns?”

“Once you find the Human Soul, you must then go to a certain place.”

“Where?” Xue Meng asked.

“The Underworld,” Huaizui answered.

All three of them were shocked, not having anticipated actually having to go to the Underworld.

Shi Mei ah’d softly, then lowered those beautiful eyes slightly and asked in a quiet voice, “Um… how would a living person go into Hell?”

“I have my ways, shizhu need not concern himself with that.”

Huaizui shot him a measured gaze and continued, “But of the three of you, no matter who finds Chu Wanning’s Human Soul first, you must wholeheartedly wish for him to return to the living world, and be unreservedly willing to go to the Heavens above and the Underworld below for his sake. If you lack the strength of conviction, then Chu Wanning’s soul will scatter halfway and be impossible to gather ever again.”

Shi Mei: “Um…”

Xue Meng spoke, “The depth of the affection and regard I hold for Shizun are beyond measure. Even if I have to go to the Infinite Hells to find him, I’d have no complaints.”

“...Shizun died because of me,” Mo Ran lifted his eyes and also affirmed, “I owe him far too much, and also have no complaints.”

Huaizui said, “Good. Then listen well: once one of you finds Chu Wanning’s Human Soul, he won’t be perceivable to the others anymore. And, as for the one to find him, you must make sure to keep the Soul-Calling Lantern lit all the way until daybreak, and keep his soul within its light.”

Xue Meng said, “Doesn’t sound difficult.”

“It’s difficult,” Huaizui said. “Once the three souls split, each will generally be missing something. It could be hearing, cognition, or memories… simply put, if you’re unlucky, the Shizun you meet might not be so willing to listen to you, and you might have to think of ways to coax hm.”

Xue Meng: “.....”

Mo Ran’s felt his heart clench with unease. “...Coax him? But what if...what if we say something wrong? He was already hard enough to guess when alive, now that he’s a ghost…”

He was genuinely worried about it, but there had been so much friction between him and Xue Meng for so long that Xue Meng thought he was

deriding Chu Wanning, and so turned to glare angrily at him as he snapped, “What’s so hard about coaxing someone, just remember to not let Shizun out of the lantern’s range.”

Shi Mei asked, “What happens after daybreak?”

“After daybreak, Chu Wanning’s Human Soul will drift into the Soul-Calling Lantern. This humble monk will be waiting by the bridge with a bamboo raft prepared at that time. This place is located at the entrance to the Ghost Realm, and the waters beneath Naihe Bridge flow directly into the Yellow Springs.[113] The raft will ferry the one who finds the soul fragment into the Ghost Realm.”

Xue Meng: “Going to the Ghost Realm on a bamboo raft?”

Shi Mei asked, “Only one person can go? The others can’t help?”

“They cannot. So whoever finds Chu Wanning’s Human Soul will have to go alone into the Ghost Realm to look for his Earth Soul as well. If that person were to give up halfway or have second thoughts, then Chu Wanning’s Human Soul will be devoured by the Soul-Calling Lantern, never again to reincarnate.”

Xue Meng started and almost immediately whipped his head around to Mo Ran to say, “You sit this one out, I don’t trust you!”

Mo Ran kept his silence, shouldering his doubts without argument.

Shi Mei tried to ease the situation, saying, “Young master, A-Ran isn’t the type to just back out like that, so…”

“So what if he’s not?!” Xue Meng snapped. “He’s already gotten Shizun killed once, why should I believe he won’t do it a second time? He’s a god damn scourge!”

Shi Mei said quietly, “The great master is still here, how could you say that.”

“And why shouldn’t I say it? Am I wrong? How many times did Shizun get hurt because of him! Any time he’s around, there’s always trouble.” The rims of Xue Meng’s eyes grew red and his lips quivered as he spoke. Trembling all over, he suddenly lost it and reached out to wrest the Soul-Calling Lantern from Mo Ran’s hands. “Give me the lantern, don’t bring Shizun any more misfortune.”

“.....”

“Give it to me!”

Xue Meng swore at him. Mo Ran said nothing in retort. For the first time in his life, he felt that Xue Meng was right.

Be it before the ghost mistress of ceremonies or at the bottom of Jincheng Lake, which of Chu Wanning’s injuries wasn’t due to him? How many scars did Chu Wanning carry because of him?

A scourge.

Heh…

Yes, that’s right.

But even so, even knowing that he had treated Shizun poorly, even knowing that he wasn't worthy to go beg Shizun to return from the Underworld, he still didn't want to let go of the Soul-Calling Lantern in his hands. And so he held on tightly and stubbornly to that pale white lantern as Xue Meng cursed him out and tore at him, standing still with his head lowered even as bloody scratches appeared on the backs of his hands.

In the end, Xue Meng, breathing harshly, finally loosened his grip on him and said with reddened eyes, "Mo Weiyu, just how long do you intend to hurt him for…"

Mo Ran didn't look at him. He kept his head down and stared at that empty lantern, silent.

He was silent for so long that everyone else thought he wasn't going to respond, when he suddenly said, quietly, "I want to bring him home."

His voice was so quiet.

Pushed down low by the weight of shame and guilt.

So quiet that Xue Meng didn't quite catch it at first, and there was a beat before he abruptly realized what it was that Mo Ran had said. He sneered out a "hah".

" You want to bring him home?"

"....." Mo Ran closed his eyes.

Xue Meng spit at him, every syllable torn to pieces between his teeth, "Have you no shame?"

“Young master——”

“Let go of me. Let go!” Xue Meng ripped his sleeve out from Shi Mei’s grasp, sorrow and resentment flashing in his eyes as he glared unrelentingly at Mo Ran. His voice was raw as he said, “What right do you have.”

Mo Ran’s hands seemed to flinch slightly, and his eyelashes dropped even lower.

For an instant, he felt some kind of strange delirium, as if Chu Wanning was still alive, as if, in the next moment, he would say, “Xue Meng, behave.”

So it turns out that he had always been protecting him.

It was him who took it all for granted.

Mo Ran didn’t know what to say as he held onto that lantern like he was grasping desperately at the last straw.

Head still lowered, he repeated, “I want to bring him home.”

“Is that all you know how to say!! You——”

“That’s enough, Xue-shizhu.”

Master Huaizui finally couldn’t bear to watch anymore. He sighed and said, “Since Mo-shizhu is of a mind to go, just let him. If something really does

go wrong, we can readjust then, but as of right now, everything is yet uncertain, there is no need for Xue-shizhu to be so aggressive."

Xue Meng's expression was dark; he still wanted to say something, but in the end restrained himself in consideration for Huaizui.

But then his restraint slipped and he growled out.

"If anything happens to Shizun, I'll kill you as sacrifice for him."

Huaizui sighed, "Please settle your grievances some other day. There isn't much time left, the important thing right now is to find the Human Soul."

Mo Ran said, "Great master, please begin."

"The Soul-Calling Lanterns have already been enchanted," seeing Mo Ran immediately make to light up the lantern with spiritual energy, Huaizui lifted a hand to stop him. "Shizhu, one moment."

Xue Meng pressed urgently, "Is there still something else?"

"This humble monk wants to reiterate that, if someone does find Chu Wanning's Human Soul, that person will not be able to back out from going to the Underworld. This humble monk will cast a protection spell on that person, but it will still be extremely dangerous for a living person to go into the land of the dead. One careless move, and you might not be able to return alive," Master Huaizui directed a solemn gaze at each of them in turn.

“The dangers of which I speak are no idle threat. Finding Chu Wanning’s Earth Soul in the Underworld might not be too difficult, but the difficult part is having to go into Hell alone and face the unknown. If you’re lucky, you’ll find the Earth Soul in short order, but if you’re unlucky and run into any mishaps, then…”

“We’ll die?” Shi Mei asked.

“Death would be the least of it. I’m afraid that if that were to happen, then both Chu Wanning and the shizhu will be annihilated from the cycle of reincarnation.”

Huaizui continued, “That’s why, if there’s any doubt at all in your heart, it’d be best to return me the lantern. No one in this world has to go so far as to die for someone else, there’s no shame in valuing your own life. If you’re unsure, it’s not too late to turn back.”

“I’m sure,” Xue Meng was the most zealous and hot-blooded to boot, and he exclaimed immediately. “Whoever backs out is a rotten egg,” he said as he glared viciously at Mo Ran.

But he didn’t really understand Mo Ran, after all. This cousin of his was nothing like him. Maybe it was because of all the humiliation he had suffered as a child, but Mo Ran’s love and hate had been ground down into sharp claws; if someone were to hurt him, he would eviscerate them, but if someone were to treat him well, even just a tiny bit of kindness, he would never forget.

Mo Ran shot Xue Meng a sidelong glance before turning his gaze back to Huaizui, “I’m also sure.”

Huaizui nodded and said, “Very well. When you get to the Ghost Realm, find his Earth Soul as quickly as possible. Once the Human Soul and the Earth Soul fuse into one inside the Soul-Calling Lantern, it will light up the road back to the living world. After that, this old monk will take care of the rest.”

It didn’t sound too hard the way he said it, but they all knew that every step of the process was unpredictable and full of dangers. Especially the part in the Underworld; if Chu Wanning’s Earth Soul cannot be found, or if it’s missing cognition or memories and refuses to fuse, then whoever ends up going down to find him might just get stuck down there.

Thus, before the three of them lit up their Soul-Calling Lanterns, Huaizui asked one last time in a slow, solemn voice.

“Once the lanterns are lit, there’s no turning back. This is truly no joking matter, so allow this humble monk to ask one final time: are you absolutely certain? Once you start, there can be no room for regrets.”

The three of them answered as one, “No regrets.”

“Good… good…” A smile spread slowly across Huaizui’s face, half embittered, half gratified. “Chu Wanning, it seems you’ve been a better shizun than I…”

He silently recited the incantation, and the soul lanterns flickered faintly twice before lighting up. A pair of scarlet flames flared up nearly

simultaneously within the lanterns in Xue Meng and Mo Ran's hands, tinging the white silk a vibrant red. A moment later, the lantern in Shi Mei's hands also glowed to life with a faint blue light, the color of water elemental spiritual energy.

"Go."

Huaizui said.

"Success or failure, return or not, all will be decided tonight. If tonight falls through… then… sigh …"

Mo Ran thought of all the ways in which Chu Wanning had treated him well when he was alive and felt a dull throbbing pain in his heart. He couldn't bear to hear the rest of what Huaizui might say, so he said, "The great master need not say more. Even if I have to kneel, crawl, or die, I'll definitely bring Shizun back to the world of the living."

As long as he's still willing.

As long as… he's still willing to come back with me.

Three spots of light set out individually from Loyalty Hall, each vanishing into the boundless darkness of night before long.

Author’s Notes:

There were a lot of people at the hospital today, I only managed to get home at 6pm, clutches face....

Recently I need to spend one to two hours replying to comments, and it's busy at work, so I really cannot reply to all sometimes, please don't feel that I'm doing a haphazard job, bows.

Additionally, when I'm replying to comments, there are some things I really cannot say, so it's exceptionally hard to reply to those. I just want to nag, even though my standard of writing is limited, I still don't want to write a sweet and stupidly naive kind of novel, so the process will look a little tough, really sorry hahahaha

Anyway, some truths in this novel are buried very deeply, and some characters are not wearing only one mask--when everyone's thinking, "Oh, this little tyke is finally showing his true face", it could be that what he's showing, is only his second mask. So I hope that you friends can be patient, and wait for every character to wash off the paint on their faces, revealing each of their true features in the end and restoring every truth~

And since it's the end of the year, if I don't reply to comments sometimes, then it's really because I'm too busy T T or I've gotten to writing the key turning points later on in the text, and I'm scared of getting my emotions affected by the comments section, so I won't reply in that sort of scenario as well, please understand! Thank you!

The second thing is that a young miss in the comments section yesterday didn't understand why Dog still liked Shi Mei. It's actually very simple.

Firstly, Shizun's death had nothing to do with Shi Mei.

Secondly, Dog only knows that Shizun treats him well, but doesn't know that Shizun loves him.

Thirdly, regardless of how Shi Mei actually is, Dog has not noticed any change in him as of yet.

If you think about it closely, with his personality, and maintaining the three conditions listed above, would he develop suspicions about his feelings towards Shi Mei? The answer is obviously no.

If this is handled by writing that Dog switched targets and fell in love with Shizun because of Shizun's death, then his character would crumble completely, turning into a character who falls in love with anyone who dies. What is Dog feeling? It's regret and guilt, it's delayed respect and protectiveness, he can be feeling anything, except love at this stage.

To put it another way, his love for Shizun is not awakened because of Shizun's death. If it were like this, wouldn't he love whoever died for him? That, instead, becomes an insult to Shizun.

Dog stubbornly thinks that he likes Shi Mei, before Shi Mei changes in any way, or without any other reference, how can he understand that what he feels towards Shi Mei is not love?

The change brought about by Shizun's death will affect his worldview and his actions from here on out, and will make him see Shizun as the one closest to him, but will not make him think about love. At this moment, he feels that imprisoning Shizun, etc. in the past life was extremely horrific, so he's completely unwilling to associate Shizun with romance and love at this point. To cross boundaries and fantasise about Shizun, or to think about

him in a romantic way, the Mo Weiyu at this stage, who doesn't know Shizun's true romantic feelings for him, will only feel that it desecrates Shizun.

Additionally, think about it, Shizun died for him, the truth of their past life is revealed, at this point, what's the greatest shock to this party? It's that he could fucking misunderstand such a good Shizun who treated him with a sincere heart, the main character's mind should rightfully sink into great chaos to the point of a meltdown, where the only things he can think of with any clarity are "how could I have done something like that" "I'm losing my fucking mind" "Shizun treated me with a sincere heart, how could I misunderstand such a good Shizun, it's my fault" "What kind of depraved things did I do in my past life"

He would not, at this point, imagine "Why did Shizun save me? He must like me, be pining after me, love me, that's why he saved me."--No way, if he were thinking like this, then the path his brain takes is really strange, how self-obsessed must he be.

Under the conditions of Shizun having just passed, his shattered worldview, and beating himself up in self-reproach, how could he be so fickle-hearted to think of love, to guess if Shizun loved him, to fantasise, "Shifu died for me, it must be because he had a crush on me"? He will only think, "Shifu died for me, he is the best Shifu, I have let him down."

As for losing interest in Shi Mei, that won't happen too, in this affair Shi Mei has effortlessly stood out of the way of the whirlpool of conflict, no matter how a third person looks at it, Shizun's death in the novel has no direct or indirect link to him. He can be implicated in no way, in other

words, no matter how much Mo Ran reflects and regrets, that is between him and Chu Wan Ning, and no third person is involved.

"Because of Shizun's death, Mo Ran suddenly discovered that the one he loves is Shizun, and waves goodbye to Shi Mei"--this.....this is really something == Hahaha, if it were handled this way, the character would be entirely seen through the third person point-of-view, the character no longer himself, but a puppet putting on a show outside of what's going on.

So I know some friends are very angry, but I can't help it either. Respecting readers and comments is important, but respecting the characters is the first thing the person typing the novel should do. QAQ sorry, sorry.

The current Mo Weiyu has all his other perspectives shattered, but the one on love has yet to suffer a blow.

This is my best effort at writing from Mo Weiyu's point of view, and his resulting actions. This explanation might not satisfy everyone, but...what needs to be explained should be explained, picks nose.

Patience! Patience! Patience!

This novel is full of slaps to the face!

How many of you were shipping Huaizui and Shizun yesterday? Got slapped didn’t you hahahaha. Huaizui is the pitiful character whose true motivations are easiest to guess and whose true face is hinted at most quickly in the whole novel, and in that row in the main and side characters box, everyone has more than one card hidden up their sleeves, waiting to be played hahahahaha okay I’ve nagged enough……thank you for reading Auntie’s nagging, silently sneaking away to continue typing chapters to queue.

Ch.104 Shizun's Wontons

A single lantern wandered through Sisheng Peak, looking for that fragment of returned soul.

Once the Soul-Calling Lantern was lit, Mo Ran became invisible to the living. It was as if he had also turned into half a ghost, as he climbed the bluestone steps and traversed the stoas and balconies, searching.

Red Lotus Pavilion, Frostsky Hall, Three-Lives Platform…

He had looked everywhere, but he couldn't find him.

Mo Ran couldn't help thinking that maybe Shizun had already grown weary in life, and no longer wished to see him in death.

The thought made his blood run cold. His footsteps picked up, the hem of his robes sweeping past the wild grass underfoot when suddenly he noticed a person standing at the end of Naihe Bridge, cold and aloof, woeful and forlorn. The palms of his hands immediately began to sweat, and his heartbeats were loud like a drum in his ears as he ran toward that person.

"Shizun——"

But the face that turned around belonged to a soul he didn't recognize, probably a disciple that had perished during the Heavenly Rift that day. The half of his face that was visible was covered in blood, and the eyes that stared at Mo Ran were dull and confused.

“...Sorry, wrong person,” Mo Ran stammered and hurried past him. That soul had lost its cognition, only stiffly watching Mo Ran pass by in front of him without making a single move. The corpse-pale body stood frozen in place, like a shell that had been shed and left behind in this world.

Mo Ran felt his chest tighten even more.

What should he do if Shizun’s Human Soul was also like that, a walking corpse? Even if he were to find him, would he be able to watch over him until daybreak?

His heart beat like a frenzied stampede as his feet moved faster and faster.

He didn’t know how he ended up here, but he looked up to find himself outside Mengpo Hall.

Mo Ran thought to himself that Shizun didn’t particularly care for food, so his returned soul probably wouldn’t come to this of all places.

He was just about to turn and leave when a soft sigh came from inside Mengpo Hall.

That voice was so, so quiet, but it sounded like an explosion of thunder in Mo Ran’s head.

He practically stumbled through the doors, and his hand shook uncontrollably as he lifted the Soul-Calling Lantern. The light of that lantern was like a newly risen sun, warm yet mild, as it illuminated a white-robed figure.

His joints turned white as his nails dug into his palm.

Mo Ran murmured, “Shizun…”

That fragment of Chu Wanning’s soul stood all alone in the emptiness of the large kitchen. His silhouette looked a little washed out, like ink blanched by the passage of time, but it was definitely him.

He wore the same white robes made of frozen mist silk that he had when he died, its hems stained red with blood; the conspicuous vividness made his skin look even paler, almost see-through like the color of smoke and mist, looking as if he might disappear in a gust of wind.

With lantern in hand, Mo Ran gazed at the mirage before his eyes, like the image of flowers in a mirror, like the reflection of the moon in water.

He wanted to walk faster, afraid that he might leave if he delayed.

He wanted to walk slower, afraid that the dream might shatter if he rushed.

A thousand thoughts twisted together in his mind, regret and guilt flooded his chest, and the rims of his eyes grew faintly red. He felt only that he owed him far too much as his footsteps slowed to a stop in his vicinity, too ashamed to show his face.

The lantern swayed gently.

Now that he was closer, he could see that he was busying about, seeming a little anxious about something, but also rather clumsy.

What was Chu Wanning doing?

He moved to stand behind him, thinking to help the pitiful soul out, but what he saw struck him like lightning, and then, as the shock began to taper off, a burst of agonizing pain opened its bloody maw and tore viciously into his neck.

Mo Ran recoiled backward two steps, slowly shaking his head but unable to speak.

In that moment, even if his chest were to be torn open, and his heart ripped out, veins, flesh, and all, it could not hurt as much as this.

He saw Chu Wanning's hands—raw and bloody from crawling up more than three thousand steps carrying him when he was still alive, he saw those hands slowly feeling along the table.

On that table sat flour, seasoning, and mincemeat filling.

And next to the table was a pot heating up water. The water was already boiling, but Chu Wanning, the dummy, didn't even know to lower the flames a little, and the thick covering of steam made everything look hazy and blurry…

Or perhaps it wasn't the steam blurring Mo Ran's vision at all, but the wetness in his eyes.

Chu Wanning's Human Soul was slowly folding wonton wrappers. His hands were originally nimble and dexterous, countless armaments having been crafted by those slender fingers, immense barriers having been conjured between those palms.

But right now those hands were torn and marred, trembling slightly as they carefully folded one full, plump wonton after another.

“.....”

Mo Ran lifted an arm and wiped his reddened eyes, but still couldn’t force out so much as a single word.

Chu Wanning stood with his back facing him; he seemed to finally remember that the water had been boiling for quite a while already, and, worried that it would all boil off if left alone like that, went to look for the pot.

He felt around with his hands.

Yes, he felt around with his hands.

Mo Ran finally woke up from the anguish he had been drowning in, and went around to Shizun’s side with hasty steps.

He could see clearly now.

When the three souls split, each loses something. Maybe memories, maybe cognition, or maybe parts of its body.

What this soul had lost was a part of its perception.

This portion of Chu Wanning’s soul, returned from the Underworld, could see only blurriness. His hearing seemed to be faulty as well—when he knocked something off the table, he couldn’t even tell where it landed. But even so, he still tried his best to make this bowl of ordinary, unremarkable

wontons, as if this had been his favorite thing to do in life, as if he found comfort in this haze of steam.

Watching this, Mo Ran felt like his heart might burst from the pain, felt like the world was spinning dizzily around him, and for a moment he couldn't even think, only standing there frozen in place, watching the scene before his eyes.

Clang.

Due to the diminished vision, the soul really couldn't see too well, and accidentally knocked over Mengpo Hall's salt jar.

Chu Wanning seemed startled, silently drawing his hand back, an uneasy expression appearing on his bloodstained face.

"What do you need…?"

A hoarse voice spoke from next to him, tight with choked back sobs, shattered with guilt.

"Let me help you, okay?"

Chu Wanning seemed a bit surprised, but maybe because his soul was incomplete and so his emotions couldn't be too turbulent, he soon settled back into an even calmness.

But every word Mo Ran forced past his lips was difficult and full of pleading.

"Shizun, let me help you, okay…?

Water boiled in the pot; in this kitchen, the dead was warm and lively, but the living was distraught and listless.

A long while passed before he finally heard Chu Wanning's familiar voice, low and even like the shattering of jade and the crumbling of mountains.

"You're here?"

"...Yes."

"That's good. Just wait at the side for a bit. Once the wontons are done cooking, bring a bowl to Mo Ran."

"......!"

Mo Ran froze, not understanding what Chu Wanning was saying at all.

He watched as Chu Wanning, feeling around blindly, put the plump, snow-white wontons one by one into the pot, his face losing its usual sternness in the haziness of steam, looking very gentle instead. He said, "I punished him too harshly yesterday, he probably hates me now. I heard Xue Meng say he's not eating anything, so when you go to deliver this to him, don't tell him I made it. He won't eat it if he knows."

Mo Ran's head was a complete mess, as if some secret that had been sleeping for half a lifetime was beginning to stir, was just about to break out of the ground.

"Shizun...."

Chu Wanning forced a smile, “I’m afraid I was too strict with him, but that rashness of his really should be tempered… nevermind, get a bowl for me, a thick one if you can. It’s cold outside, have to keep the food warm.”

Just about to break out of the ground, just about to break out of the ground.

It was as if he could hear the faint sound of something shattering in his mind, and a certain memory finally clawed through its shell, screeching like a ghost as it burst forth and hurtled toward him.

All of a sudden, everything went dark.

Wontons.

Shi Mei.

Shizun.

……

That was the first time he’d had Shi Mei’s wontons. That day, he had mistakenly plucked the precious flower Madam Wang had been growing, and gotten punished by Chu Wanning for it. Tianwen had whipped him bloody, and turned his heart into ash.

He had lain in bed refusing to get up, brooding that he had plucked the flower because he wanted to give it to Shizun, only to get a round of merciless lashing instead. He thought that he must have been blind to have taken to Chu Wanning, that his heart must have been covered in lard to think that Chu Wanning was gentle, that Chu Wanning cared about him.

That was the day when Shi Mei had come to his room holding a bowl of steamy wontons in chili oil. That soft voice, that gentle tone, and that warm bowl of wontons turned all of his disappointment in Shizun into fondness for Shi Mei.

But who could've known…

But who could've known!!!!

That fragment of returned soul stood there next to him. Every deceased person's Human Soul is different when it returns—some are like Luo Xianxian, coming back to see what happened after their death; some are like that person at Naihe Bridge earlier, without any lingering cares or worries, simply wandering around the place where they lived in a stupor.

Chu Wanning's Human Soul lost its vision, couldn't tell voices apart, and didn't even know which day it was.

He came back to the world of the living probably because he felt that he had done something wrong, made a mistake, and felt bad about it.

Wanted to make up for it.

And so, in the end, Chu Wanning made a decision different from that in life.

He scooped the wontons out and put them in the bowl. The chopped scallions were a jade green, the broth was milky white, and the chili oil poured on top, red and spicy.

He went to hand the bowl over to “Shi Mei”, but paused suddenly at the last moment.

“I really was too unkind to him,” Chu Wanning murmured.

A few moments passed in silence.

“Nevermind, you don’t have to deliver it anymore. I’ll go see him myself, and apologize to him.”

Mo Ran stared blankly, his face ghostly pale.

He had always thought that Shizun was too cold, cold like iron, so cold it froze his heart into ice. He never would have guessed that Shizun was actually kind to him…

That his lingering regret in the living world was him .

——And, to apologize to him.

The ice melted. Turned into water. Became an ocean.

Slowly, Mo Ran lifted his hands and buried his face in them.

His shoulders trembled slightly.

A heart like iron? A heart like iron?

That wasn’t it...

Mo Ran's throat felt tight, and a sob escaped as he fell to the ground, kneeling before the soul that couldn't see him. The Soul-Calling Lantern sat on the ground by his feet as he let out a broken wail, screamed himself hoarse as if he might cry blood, and finally, unable to hold it in any longer, he bawled, loudly and miserably.

He knelt before Chu Wanning.

That wasn't it...

He groveled in the dust, clutching at the hems of Chu Wanning's bloodstained robes.

It wasn't that your heart was cold and hard as iron, it wasn't that I was unyielding and immovable as a rock. It was just that I misjudged in the past, misunderstood you too much… it was just that ...

"Shizun, Shizun…" He wept, curling in on himself. "I'm sorry, I was wrong, please… please come back with me…"

"Shizun… please come back with me, I was wrong, it was my fault. I don't blame you, I don't hate you, it was my fault, always making you angry, if you hit me or scold me in the future, I definitely won't fight back, Shizun, if you just come back, I'll listen to everything you say… I'll respect you, I'll cherish you, I'll treat you right…"

But Chu Wanning's robes were gossamer-thin, as if it might shatter at any moment in his hands.

Mo Ran wished he could cut open his own chest and give him his heart, just to hear his heartbeat again. He wished he could drain his own blood to fill his veins, just to see color on his face again.

He would do anything to make up for his mistakes.

"Shizun," his voice broke.

"Let's start over from the beginning, okay…?"

In front of the Heaven-Piercing Tower, under that haitang tree.

The zongshi, gentle as a white cat, lifted his head, phoenix eyes widening slightly. The cicadas on the branches chirped two, three times, and the youth before him grinned brightly.

"Xianjun xianjun, I've been watching you for so long already, why won't you pay attention to me?"

In the blink of an eye, it had been twenty years, two lifetimes.

All in the past already.

It was greedy and shameless, but he said it——

Shizun, let's start over from the beginning.

Okay?

Please, pay attention to me, won't you…

Author’s Notes

Wonton-Jun has used a special method to come online, congratulations to those who guessed it right~

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Translator Notes

The wontons are 红油抄手 spicy wontons/chaoshou in chili oil, a Sichuan dish

Ch.105 Shizun's Human Soul

>>light gore

The lamp cast its bright light on a pair of people.

They weren't at Mengpo Hall anymore, but in Mo Ran's room. Chu Wanning couldn't see the road clearly, so Mo Ran had led him by the hand.

Chu Wanning was short two souls, unable to tell what day it was or even whose hand was holding his, only dazedly allowing the other to lead him along. Mo Ran led him into the room, wiped the tears from his face, and closed the door behind them.

Chu Wanning set down the bowl of wontons he was holding. Then, feeling around, he went to the bed and asked softly:

"Mo Ran is still asleep?"

"....."

There was no response, so Chu Wanning assumed that Mo Ran was indeed still asleep. He sighed, and seemed a little disappointed.

Mo Ran couldn't bear it, and was also afraid he might leave, so he sat on the bed and said, "Shizun, I'm awake."

Hearing him call for himself, Chu Wanning's brows moved slightly and he mn'd, but then seemed hesitant and said nothing else.

Mo Ran knew he had a thin face and would probably try to leave again after just a couple of words if he thought Shi Mei was here, so he picked up a hair clasp from the table and tossed it at the door to make it sound like

Shi Mei had closed the door and left, then asked, “Why is Shizun here? Who brought you here?”

Sure enough, Chu Wanning with only half his soul was much easier to fool than usual. He hesitated for a moment, then said, “Shi Mingjing took me here. Did he leave?”

“He left.”

“Mn…”

A moment passed in silence before Chu Wanning finally said, “The wound on your back…”

“The wound on my back is not Shizun’s fault,” Mo Ran said in a soft voice. “I picked a precious herb without permission, Shizun’s punishment was well-deserved.”

Not having expected him to anything like that, Chu Wanning was slightly taken aback, then his delicate, curtain-like lashes quivered minutely as he sighed, “Does it still hurt?”

“It doesn’t hurt anymore.”

Chu Wanning lifted his hand, those ice-cold fingertips seeking until they touch Mo Ran’s face, and then, a moment later: “Sorry, please don’t hate Shizun.”

He never would have spoken such soft words back then, but in death, thinking back to things as his soul drifted in the Underworld, he found that he didn't regret anything other than how unkind he had been to his disciple. And so, given this second chance, these words that were once impossible to say came out so easily.

Mo Ran felt like a warm spring water was streaming over his heart; the hatred that remained after his rebirth, the old scars that refused to fade year after year, the unwillingness to accept things that was already on its last breath, all of it had already been shattered into pieces, and now they were washed away by these heartfelt words of apology, leaving nothing behind.

In the light of the Soul-Calling Lantern, he gazed at his Shizun's face. He couldn't see the bloodstains anymore, and there seemed to be a whisp of life again in the paleness there. It was as if he was peering across all the time that could never turn back and seeing Chu Wanning's gentle countenance from the first time he saw him.

Unconsciously, Mo Ran raised a hand to cover his ice-cold hand with his own warm one.

"I don't hate you," he said. "Shizun, you're good to me. I don't hate you."

Chu Wanning stared blankly for a moment, then suddenly smiled.

Even though he was dead, even with blood and dirt on his face, his smile was still the first melt of a frozen-over stream, filling the entire room with

the warmth of spring. His eyes were closed, but there seemed to be something glistening between his lashes. It was the bright, brilliant smile of one whose final wish had been granted, proud yet reserved, radiant yet humble, like the blooming of the most luxuriant and steadfast haitang tree, countless blossoms of gentle, faint blushes carefully dotting the dignified branches, beautiful and sweet-scented, covering the leaves like so many stars.

Mo Ran couldn't help losing himself in the sight...

This was the first time in two lifetimes that he had seen Chu Wanning with such an easy and happy expression. Mo Ran wasn't smart; he thought of the saying "a flower-like smile", but deemed it unfitting, then he thought of "a smile of a hundred charms", but that seemed even more absurd.

He racked his brains but just couldn't think of a way to describe this lovely vision before him.

All he could do was sigh with feeling, how beautiful .

Such a beautiful person, how did he...never notice before?

Struck by a sudden, fortuitous inspiration, Mo Ran said in a soft voice, "Shizun, there's something I want to tell you."

"Hm?"

"I really didn't know how valuable Madam Wang's haitang flower was. When I picked it that day, it was because I wanted to give it to you."

Chu Wanning seemed surprised. Mo Ran's voice grew even softer, a little bashful, even a little helpless as he repeated, "It was for… for you."

"But why would you pick that flower for me?"

Mo Ran's face flushed despite himself. "I-I-I don't know either, I just, just thought it was really pretty, I…"

He didn't continue, vaguely surprised to find that he somehow still remembered how he had felt so long ago when picking that flower for Chu Wanning.

Chu Wanning without his other two souls was really so gentle, like a cat without its claws, all soft, docile belly and snowy, rounded paws.

He pat Mo Ran's head and smiled as he said, "Dummy."

"...Mn," Mo Ran's eyes stung as he gazed up at him. He sniffled, "I'm a dummy."

"Don't do it again."

"I won't do it again."

Mo Ran thought about how, when he gave up hope in the past life, he had gone around doing all manners of evil and terrorizing people, angering Chu Wanning until his Shizun finally gave up on him and tossed him that verdict —"deficient by nature, beyond remedy"—that he had resented for an entire lifetime. A hundred emotions welled up in his chest as he said, "Shizun, I promise you, from now on I won't do anything to disappoint you. I'll be good, I won't be bad."

He was hardly well-read and didn't have any powerfully resounding words of promise to say, but he could feel the hot blood boiling in his chest as that pure and simple soul that he once had as a child finally seemed to stir from its slumber.

"Shizun, this disciple is slow-witted, and didn't realize until now how good you have been to me."

His eyes were bright as he got up from the bed and knelt before Chu Wanning, bowing down low.

And when he lifted his head, the young man's expression was solemn and serious.

"So from now on, Mo Ran won't bring you any disgrace ever again."

Sitting side by side, the master and disciple had a long talk, though Mo Ran did most of the talking. He was actually very cute when he set his mind on cherishing someone. Chu Wanning listened quietly, now and again shaking his head with a smile. Before they knew it, the skies outside the window gradually began to brighten, like the rich darkness of Huizhou ink being watered down.

The long night was coming to an end.

Master Huaizui stood by the stone bridge, the hems of his monk robes wet from splashes of the water rushing past, but he seemed not to notice at all as he waited silently.

The sun rose slowly from the east, its light passing through the leaves of trees to strike the turbulent waters of the Yellow Springs, instantly turning the racing currents a dazzling gold, the water sprays sparkling like the

delicate scales of a dragon and light reflecting brilliantly where the flow billowed into waves, glistening and resplendent.

He was currently in the void realm, visible only to the one who finds Chu Wanning's soul. Shi Mei and Xue Meng had both come by already, but neither could see the old monk by the bank. He was calm by all appearances, but his hand thumbing a string of prayer beads unconsciously moved faster and more urgently with each passing moment.

Clatter ——

Abruptly, the coils of prayer beads fell apart, the star-moon Bodhi beads dropping like rain all over the ground.

Huaizui's eyes flew open and he pressed his lips together, color draining from his face.

It was an ill omen. He stroked the broken string of the prayer beads, watching the rolling waves toss stray beads back onto the shore, and beads on the shore rolling into the waters… he stared blankly for a long while, face slowly growing paler.

"Great master!"

Someone suddenly called out to him.

"Great master!!!"

Excitedly, exuberantly.

Huaizui looked immediately toward the source of the sound to see Mo Ran sprinting over from the distance, holding a Soul-Calling Lantern that flowed with both a scarlet light and a golden one.

The first rays of dawn were already dazzling enough, but this young man's eyes were even brighter than the morning sun, gleaming like a pair of crystals. He screeched to a halt in front of Huaizui, cheeks flushed and panting slightly, but uncontrollably excited.

"I found him," Mo Ran brushed aside his disheveled bangs, that lantern holding Chu Wanning's Human Soul tucked snugly against his chest. "He wasn't unwilling to see me, he's… he's in here." He pointed at the lantern in his arm, but then hesitated, wanting to hand it over to Huaizui but also loathe to part with it, his hands extending out only a couple of inches before drawing back in again.

Huaizui let out a subtle sigh of relief and looked him up and down, then said with a laugh, "Since you're the one who found him, you can hold him, no need to give to me."

So, very carefully, Mo Ran continued holding the lantern.

Huaizui picked up the monk staff leaning against the tree, tapped it lightly against the water, and a jade-green bamboo raft with a white cord tied to its curved bow appeared out of nowhere.

"There's no time to lose, please board."

It was common knowledge that Sisheng Peak's river connected to the Ghost Realm, but since there was a barrier in between, going to the Underworld wasn't just a simple matter of flowing along the waters.

Master Huaizui's bamboo raft was enchanted to allow it to pass between the Yin and the Yang, so after half a day and many miles of Mo Ran sitting alone on the raft sailing the currents, he came upon a waterfall.

The waterfall to the Underworld.

This waterfall connected to the infinite cosmos above and the deepest reaches of Hell below, with no defined boundaries and neither beginning nor end. The watery curtain came down in a great cascade, the spray of droplets giving rise to a foggy mist.

Before Mo Ran could even get a closer look, the bamboo raft was already carrying him straight toward that enormous curtain of water the size of prehistoric beasts. He didn't even have time to react when powerful streams of water were already immediate, like countless blades poised to tear right through flesh and bone!

"SHIZUN——!"

In the midst of danger, the only thing Mo Ran cared only was the Soul-Calling Lantern in his arms. He held the lantern tightly against himself to shield it, never once letting go even as he was drawn into a raging whirlpool and everything was dark stormy chaos…

He didn't know how long had passed when the deafening sound of the waterfall abruptly vanished.

And the barrage of knives-like deluge disappeared as well.

Mo Ran opened his eyes slowly, only letting out a breath of relief when he checked that the Soul-Calling Lantern was safe and sound. But then he looked up and was stunned speechless by the sight before him.

That waterfall traversing the realms of Yin and Yan was nowhere to be seen, and the bamboo raft was drifting gently on a vast lake with tranquil waters. The lake was a deep blue that flowed with specks of starlight, and countless whisps of faint souls swam through its waters like shoals of fish. Reeds flourished along both its shores, with faintly-glowing flowers that drifted to and fro in the draft.

From the left side and the right, in the depths of the reeds, came the singing voices of a man and a woman, the notes wafting as if from a dream, sorrowful yet serene.

“My body into the thunderous abyss, limbs ground into paste. My skull into the open world, eyesockets withered into dust. Scarlet ants devour my heart and vultures my innards… only the soul returns… only the soul returns…”

Green waters of the Yellow Springs flow east, past bygone never to return.

Mo Ran continued drifting on the bamboo raft for a long time, and then, suddenly, a great gateway that towered into the black sky appeared in the heavy darkness of night.

Once closer, he could see that the enormous gateway was grand and majestic, with fine details that were splendid and exquisite. It was like a vile beast of gold and jade, covered in honey and decorated with pearls, that had been crouching in the darkness with its bloody, putrid-smelling maw wide open since time immemorial as untold numbers of lonely souls and lost ghosts wandered into its stomach.

Even closer, the sinister turrets looked like fangs that could pierce the sun, and the whole structure seemed like the imposing head of a massive beast lying in wait for all the grievances of the world.

Even closer, and the piece of Chu Wanning's soul in the lantern seemed nervous, its golden glow pulsing in brightness and swaying slightly.

"It's alright," Mo Ran sensed his unease and hugged the lantern closer, leaning in until his lips were nearly touching the paper to whisper soothing words as he channeled in more of his spiritual energy to keep him company.

"Shizun, don't be afraid, I'm here."

The light quivered for a moment, then settled back down.

Lowering his thick lashes, Mo Ran peeked into the lantern and couldn't help the chuckle that escaped. He reached out and caressed the edge of

the lantern, then hugged it even closer.

In the pitch black night, the words “Ghost Gate” were writ large and bold, strikingly vivid as if newly written in the fresh blood of the living.

The bamboo raft reached the shore, and Mo Ran set foot on the road to the Underworld, the very ground saturated with the smell of blood.

As he walked on, there were more and more people around him, men and women, old and young, even wailing infants that had died soon after birth, all of them drifting toward the inner reaches of the Underworld.

No matter if they were emperors, generals, or ministers in life with riches and splendors unbound, or commoners and peasants with not a penny to their names, no matter how much money or things they had been buried with.

In this time, in this place, all must travel this final road alone.

Mo Ran followed the swarming crowd of souls to the entrance of the Ghost Realm.

There was a person sitting there fanning himself with a palm-leaf fan, probably a soldier, judging by his clothes. His stomach had been cut open when he died, and his intestines slid out from time to time.

The gatekeeper used the handle of the fan to shove his intestines back in with an air of impatience, then looked up lazily to interrogate the newly deceased soul.

“What’s your name?”

“Sun Erwu.”

“How’d you die?”

“I, I died of old age.”

So the gatekeeper picked up a big stamp and carelessly stamped an Underworld entry pass with “Died of Old Age” before handing it to Sun Erwu. “Don’t lose it or you’ll have to go to Seventeenth Hall to apply for a replacement. You can go. Next.”

Sun Erwu was extremely nervous; to be fair, every newly dead person, regardless of how valiant or knowledgeable in life, would probably be nervous. “A-am I gon’ be put on trial? I’m a darn good person, ain’t never killed no chicken in me life, jus’ wonderin’ if I kin mebbe get a better lot next life, at least have enough money to get me a wifey…”

The old man prattled nervously, on and on without stop.

The gatekeeper quickly grew sick and tired of his babbling, waving a hand as he said, “Trial? That’s still a ways off. There are so many souls here in the Ghost Realm, it’ll take at least eight years to get through the reincarnation queue, if not ten. Just hang around and wait your turn, it’s not much different here than in the living world. Save all that about chickens and wives for the the lord judge when it gets to your turn. Next.”

Sun Erwu was dumbfounded, stammering in a thick accent, “Eight, ten years?”

Not too far away in the line, Mo Ran was shocked as well, “Wha? It takes that long to get judged for reincarnation?”

“Of course. Though it’s another matter altogether for the truly reprehensible ones or the ones that have something weird going on with their souls,” the gatekeeper snickered maliciously at his comment; the snicker made his intestines slip out again, and he had to stuff them back in. “The ones headed for the Eighteen Hells[114] never have to wait long.”

Mo Ran: “.....”

That dense half-wit Sun Erwu still wanted to ask more, but the gatekeeper’s patience was at an end, waving his hand and saying, “Go on, go on, away with you. Everyone’s waiting to get reincarnated, don’t hold up the line. Next, next.”

So Sun Erwu was driven off by the fanning of his palm-leaf fan.

The next one was a young woman with her pretty face all made-up. She opened her mouth to speak, and the poise and coquetry unique to a certain line of work was evident in her gaze as she said in a soft voice, “My lord, this humble one is called Jin Hua’er,[115] and was beaten to death by a brutish villain…”

The ghosts took their turns; each and every one of them had their own thoughts and manners of death.

All the chaotic portrayals of life were gathered here, and there were few sights more bustling and jumbled than this. But Mo Ran only held the lantern in his arms closer to himself.

He owed his Shizun; he didn’t care about anything else.

All he cared about was finding that last remaining piece of his Shizun's soul.

"Name?"

The gatekeeper yawned, then lifted his eyes to look at Mo Ran.

Mo Ran was just about to answer when the gatekeeper suddenly quivered, as if sensing that there was something off with this person, and abruptly stood up to stare intently at his face.

"....."

Mo Ran cursed in his mind—he had already died once, who knows if there was something odd about his soul from that; even if not, he was currently holding a piece of someone else's soul in his arms, and that was just as questionable. But there the Ghost Realm had just this one entrance, so there was no other way about it.

He could only brace himself and meet the gatekeeper's gaze directly.

The gatekeeper narrowed his eyes.

Mo Ran feigned a calmness he didn't feel as he gave his name, "Mo Ran."

The gatekeeper said nothing.

Mo Ran's heart thundered like a drum as he forced his expression to remain steady. "I had a qi deviation and died just like that. I'd like an entry pass, please."

Ch.106 Shizun, Where Are You[116]

“Died from a qi deviation…?” The gatekeeper repeated his words back slowly, then hmph’d. “You a cultivator?”

“Mn.”

“A cultivator and you’re already down here at that age? How very unfortunate.”

The gatekeeper smirked sardonically. Many ordinary people don’t have the foundational aptitude necessary for a good fate, and so when they make fun of cultivators, it’s like calling grapes sour when they’ve never been able to have any.[117]

“Y’know, your soul looks kinda off to me. Like it’s tainted.”

Master Huaizui had put an enchantment on Mo Ran that covers up his living scent and allows him to make contact with souls, so the gatekeeper couldn’t see right through him, but something just felt off , so he sat himself back down and put one leg over the other, feeling around in a drawer and then extracting a pitch-black ruler.

“Sin-Measuring Ruler,” he said smugly, though it wasn’t clear what he was so smug about, the ruler wasn’t even his, but the less important their position the more they liked to put on airs. The gatekeeper slapped the ruler soundly down on the table and lifted his eyes to stare at Mo Ran. “Stick your hand out, this lordly one is gonna measure your merit in life.”

Mo Ran: “.....”

His merit in life?

If that gets measured, won't he get sent directly over to King Yanluo to get ground into dust?

But with everyone watching and nowhere to run, he could only exhale as he shifted to hold the Soul-Calling Lantern in one hand, extending the other.

The gatekeeper went to place the ruler against the inside of his wrist, but the very moment it made contact, the ruler started screeching shrilly with globs of blood dripping from its pitch-black body alongside the weeping and wailing of untold thousands.

"I will not rest in death…"

"May you never be allowed to reincarnate!! Mo Weiyu!!!!"

"Dad! MOM!!! YOU SON OF A BITCH WHY!!! WHY!!!!!!!"

"Don't kill me… please don't kill me——"

Mo Ran jerked his hand back, face instantly draining of all color.

The gathered ghosts were all staring at him, the gatekeeper's stare the most unreadable of them all. He stared at Mo Ran with a gaze like that of a fierce beast for a while, then lowered his head to look at the ruler.

The red glow had disappeared from the ruler, and the stream of blood was also gone like it was a mere hallucination, the surface of the table perfectly clean. But a line of letters slowly appeared on the ruler.

——

Sins beyond redemption, send to level…

Which level of Hell?

Mo Ran had pulled his hand back before the Sin-Measuring Ruler could finish measuring, so it couldn't write the rest.

The gatekeeper grabbed his arm abruptly and violently, eyes locking onto him viciously like a predator that had had nothing to do for far too long finally catching a rare prey. His nostrils flared, and a strange light flickered in his eyes; half his intestines had leaked out but he didn't bother shoving them back in this time.

"Hold still while I retake the measurement."

His face was impatient and greedy, like he was already imagining himself claiming his commendations from Yanluo.

His ghost claw dug into Mo Ran's wrist as he forcibly yanked him over, practically unhinged as he slapped the Sin-Measuring Ruler none-too-gently against his wrist once again.

Catching a ghost meant for the Eighteen Hells would be a great credit to him; he'd get promoted on the spot by at least three tiers, and he'll never have to sit at this gate recording the comings and goings of all these souls ever again.

"A proper measuring this time!"

The Sin-Measuring Ruler lit up again.

And, just like before, blood streamed forth as screams filled the sky.

It was as if all of the people that Mo Ran had ever killed and all of the sins that he had ever committed were being crammed into the small black ruler, almost making it burst with the sheer overwhelming magnitude of the resentment.

“I hate…”

“Mo Weiyu, I’ll never let you off, even when I’m dead…”

Mo Ran’s expression became more and more distraught, lowering his eyelashes and pressing his lips tightly together, something unreadable in his eyes.

“You have no conscience!!!! You’ve turned this world into hell!”

“I’ll haunt you when I’m dead!”

“AAAAAAAH——!!”

Weeping, wailing, cursing, and hating.

Suddenly, amidst all those voices, he heard a soft sigh.

“I’m sorry, Mo Ran. It was this master’s fault…”

Mo Ran’s eyes flew open, eyes full of grief and sorrow.

He heard Chu Wanning’s voice from when he was on the verge of death in the past life again. It was so gentle, so sad, but it cut into his skull like a knife, almost as if it was going to cleave his soul apart.

The voices slowly faded away. The Sin-Measuring Ruler grew silent.

The line of writing appeared again:

Sins beyond redemption, send to level…

Mo Ran didn't pull away early this time, but the writing still didn't finish!

The gatekeeper blinked, then tapped the black ruler a couple of times. "Is it broken?"

The ruler quivered a little from the taps; then, unexpectedly, the writing disappeared, and a thin layer of celestial haze rose from the surface of the ruler as it glowed with a brilliant radiance.

There was no wailing or weeping from the ruler this time; instead came music like melodious birdsong drifting between the clouds, as if the most elegant chords of the Ninth Heaven had descended into the Underworld. The souls were all entranced by it, and even the gatekeeper couldn't help becoming mesmerized.

Only when the celestial music came to a stop did the gatekeeper finally snap out of it.

And when he checked again, the Sin-Measuring Ruler showed the words ——

Everything normal, allow to pass.

The gatekeeper cried out, "Impossible!"

Wasn't it just "sins beyond redemption" a moment ago? Why was it "everything normal" now?

Refusing to believe it, he used the ruler to check several more times, but it was the same result every time: sounds of screaming at first, followed by beautiful music, and finally, without exception, it would say everything normal, allow to pass.

The gatekeeper was beyond disappointed, but he had no basis for blocking a normal soul from entering the Underworld.

He shoved his intestines spitefully back in his guts as he muttered, "Tch, that's some qi deviation you had, alright."

Mo Ran was just as surprised. He had no idea why this was happening either, but thinking about it, he concluded that Master Huaizui's enchantment must have confused the ruler, and so let out a breath of relief.

"Take your damn entry pass and get lost then, you waste of time. Beat it!"

"....." Mo Ran couldn't be happier to oblige, and was just about to leave with the Soul-Calling Lantern in his arms when the gatekeeper's eyes suddenly lit up and he shouted loudly——

"Hang on!"

Mo Ran kept his expression steady even as his heart raced, feigning an impatient annoyance as he replied, "What is it now ?"

The gatekeeper gestured with his chin, “What’s that you’re holding?”

“Oh, this…” Mo Ran’s hand stroked the lantern as the gears in his head turned rapidly. He turned around with a smile, “It’s my burial item.”[118]

“Burial item?”

“Yeah, it’s a magical relic.”

“Heh, how interesting,” the gatekeeper pointed at the table, eyes flickering. “Put it down over here and redo the measurement. Your magical relic was probably interfering with the ruler.”

“.....”

Mo Ran cursed this asshole in his head, but had no choice other than to set the lantern down and apprehensively stick his wrist back out.

The gatekeeper seemed quite confident this time as he eagerly put the ruler into place once more.

……

But the result was still the same.

Still that same line, clear as day: Everything normal, allow to pass.

Let alone the gatekeeper, even Mo Ran hadn’t the slightest. But with that, the gatekeeper finally gave up for good and lazily waved him in.

Not daring to linger even a moment, Mo Ran picked the Soul-Calling Lantern back up and, hugging it to himself, walked through the lengthy passageway to the end, where the quality of the light changed.

The Ghost Realm unfolded before his eyes.

This was the first level of Hell, stretching into the distance with no end in sight. The sky was scarlet like a sunset on fire, and all kinds of strange flora sprouted from the ground. Rows of uneven roof tiles sprawled the immediate area, while palatial structures lined the horizon. A monolith stood at the entrance, and on it was written “Thy flesh returns to dust, thy soul to Nanke Town.” A red-painted gateway towered next to it, “Nanke Town” carved and gilded with liquid gold upon it, each character the height of a grown man.

So the first level of Hell was called Nanke Town. All of the deceased—assuming there was nothing out of the ordinary with them—would stay here for the eight, ten years until summoned by the judge of the Underworld to the second level to stand trial and receive judgement.

Mo Ran looked around as he walked, holding the Soul-Calling Lantern in his arms.

As far as he could see, the layout wasn’t much different from a regular town in the living world—roads, residences, and shops; eighteen streets in total, nine north-south and nine east-west. The souls of men, women, and

children went their ways, some laughing, others weeping, truly a gathering of ghosts.

He heard a newly deceased woman sobbing from the east side, “What do I do, what do I do, they’re all saying that a remarried woman will be cut in half to be given to the two men, is it true? Can anyone tell me if it’s true?”

Next to her, a girl with disheveled clothes and messy hair wiped at her tears, “I didn’t want to do that line of work, but there was really no other way to make a living. When I was still alive, I went to a local temple to donate a threshold to be stepped on by people coming and going as atonement for my sins, but the village chief said he’ll only allow me to swap out the threshold if I pay him four hundred gold… if I had that kind of money, I wouldn’t have had to sell my body in the first place…”

And over on the west side, a guy was counting, “Four hundred and one days, four hundred and two days, four hundred and three days… we agreed to die together for love, but I’ve been down here for four hundred and four days already and she still hasn’t followed. Sigh , she’s so delicate, maybe she got lost on the way down? What will I do if she really did get lost?”

There was a gathering of newly deceased ghosts at Nanke Town’s gate, crying and muttering, lingering and unresigned.

But further in were the older ghosts that had already been back to the living world and resigned themselves to things.

They were much more calm and collected, and each had some kind of livelihood to pass the time while they await trial.

By the third street, things were as busy and bustling as any market in the living world.

After all, these were all soul not yet severed from their mortal lives, who had not yet drank Mengpo's soup and were still indistinguishable between human and ghost. Those who were entertainers in life were still putting on performances at the sides of the streets; those who were seamstresses in life were still taking the clouds of Hell and weaving clothes from them; butchers dared not kill any more, but they could at least do things like sharpening knives and scissors.

Sounds of peddling and of cheering rose and fell, lively and energetic.

Mo Ran stopped in front of a ghost that was selling calligraphy and painting. The ghost was stick-thin and sickly looking, with jutting cheekbones and a sunken-in stomach—probably didn't manage to sell a single painting in life and literally starved to death.

Seeing someone sit down at his booth, the skinny scholar looked up with bleary eyes, but his expression did not lack for passion, "Gongzi, looking to buy a painting?"

"I want you to draw me a portrait."

The scholar seemed woeful, "Paintings of people can hardly compare to the artistry of landscape sceneries, take a look at this painting of Taishan Mountain draped in misty clouds…"

Mo Ran said, “I don’t care for landscape paintings. I just need you to draw someone for me.”

“Don’t care for landscapes huh?” The scholar shot him two glances, displeased. “It is said that the kind know to appreciate the mountains, and the wise know to cherish the waters; Gongzi is still so young, you really ought to learn some culture, smell some ink. I didn’t even want to part with my Taishan Mountain painting, actually, but since you had the taste to stop at my booth, surely you also have some sense to go with it. How about, just for you, I’ll cut the price to——”

“I want you to draw a person.”

Scholar: “.....”

They had a stare down; of course the scholar was no match for him and fizzled out in no time, but then he got so mad that even that dead ghost face of his seemed to redden some.

“I don’t draw people. It’s ten times the price if you really want it.”

Mo Ran wondered, “Things cost money even in the Ghost Realm?”

“Paper money burned by friends and family, yes,” the scholar replied coldly. “Money makes the world go round; though I am disdainful of riches,

a gentleman earns his money through proper work. We are neither family nor friends, nor do we have a relationship like that of Boya and Ziqi,[119] so why would I do things for you without cause?"

He rambled on and on, and it was all really too much for Mo Ran's very limited book knowledge. He could only frown and say, "I just got here, no one's burned any money for me yet."

The scholar said, "No money, no deal."

Mo Ran thought it over for a moment and came up with something. He pointed at the Taishan Mountain painting and said, "Alright, no deal then. But I'm bored with nothing to do, so could you tell me about landscape paintings?"

The scholar paused, then all of his anger turned into delight instead, "You're interested to know?"

Mo Ran nodded, "Does it cost anything to learn some knowledge from you?"

"Nope," the scholar was quite conceited, his face lighting up in a way that was both laughable and pitiful. "Knowledge is free, money would only dirty it. Scholarly matters mustn't be tainted by such material things."

Mo Ran nodded again as he thought to himself, ah, so that's how the little bookworm starved to death . It was kind of comical, but also a bit pitiful.

Unfortunately, he truly did not have any money right now, or else he really would give him some silver.

The scholar took the painting from its frame all excitedly, put on a pompous posture, cleared his ghost throat that didn't even need clearing, and then, anxiously and snobbishly, said, "I'm going to start."

Watching the little bookworm take the bait, Mo Ran said with a smile, "Please do enlighten me."

Author's Notes:

This chapter has many settings and quotes, I pay my respects to the young, middle-class Mr. Lu Xun, who is a tsundere and loves to complain. The original forms of the female ghost and scholar ghost, as well as some of the quotes, come from Xianglin's Wife and Kong Yiji , stated here to avoid any misunderstandings.

Ch.107 Shizun's Portrait

Once the scholar got going, he went on for four whole hours, prattling incoherently and ceaselessly, all Confucius and Mencius and over Mo Ran's head. It made Mo Ran's head spin and his eyelids grow heavy, but he still had to feign interest—hard work, to be sure.

When it came to faking attentiveness in lessons, Mo Ran was quite skilled.

Start with a "oh?" paired with furrowed brows, as if not quite comprehending or convinced.

Let them talk for a bit, then go "oh…" and relax the brows a bit to give off the impression of slowly beginning to understand.

Then it's important to remember to open your eyes wide and make them sparkle, and go "ohhh~" to let them know that you've gained new insight and understanding thanks to their brilliant guidance.

He had applied these three "oh"s liberally in Chu Wanning's lessons.

But Chu Wanning never fell for it, always only looked at him coldly and told him to shut up.

But the little bookworm had certainly never received such "courteous" treatment before, and his eyes were practically glowing by the end of it. He was so exceedingly delighted that he only wished he had met Mo Ran

earlier, and all of his earlier reservations and haughtiness vanished into thin air.

“I understand now,” Mo Ran said with a smile. “Looking at this landscape painting again after listening to your talk, I can see that it’s truly invaluable, beyond what money can buy.”

If the little bookworm was still alive, he’d definitely be red by now, but other than the flush, he was excited in all the other ways, so delighted that he hardly even knew what to do with his hands and where to put his legs, only beaming like a little kid, skinny face all lit up.

Mo Ran had never seen such a happy ghost before.

That should do, then. He got up and made a gesture of respect as he spoke, “It’s getting late, I’m going to go look around a bit more and find some place to stay. I’ll come again tomorrow, if the professor isn’t too busy.”

Suddenly getting called “professor” out of the blue, the scholar beamed even brighter, half freaked out and half ecstatic as he disclaimed, “Nonono, I’m hardly a professor. I took the exam several times, but didn’t even pass the county level one to qualify as a Xiucai[120] in the end, I… sigh …”

Mo Ran said with a smile, “The depth of one’s knowledge is measured not by titles and ranks, but by what’s in the heart.”

The scholar was shocked, “To… to think you were actually capable of such eloquence.”

“It’s something my Shizun said once, I’m just lending his words.”

Scholar: “... Borrowing his words.”

“Oh, is that how it went? Hahahaha,” Mo Ran laughed and scratched his head. “I remembered it wrong again.”

Seeing as how it was getting rather late and there probably won’t be anyone else coming by for paintings, the scholar started putting away his boxes and pouches, saying, “I’m pretty free myself, and it’s not every day I hit it off so well with someone. Though the saying goes that friendship between gentlemen is light as water,[121] it is also said that when meeting friends over wine, a thousand cups is too few, so I say…”

Mo Ran hurriedly cut him off with a smile before he could spew even more scholarly ink, “Were you gonna say something like, it’s getting late, how about we go for a drink somewhere?”

“Ah, yes, that’s right, some wine to lift the spirits, how about it?”

“Sounds good,” Mo Ran nodded. “Professor’s treat.”

Scholar: “……”

The greasy little table had a small plate of about a dozen-odd scattered peanuts on it and two cups of wine that were barely even half full. There

was only a single dingy candle lit in the entire tavern, and the sly-looking boss of the place was wiping a cracked bowl behind the counter.

“The place is a bit shabby,” the scholar seemed a little uneasy. “But I never really got any paper money, and I’ve only been to a couple of places, this one’s the most passable of the lot…”

“It’s fine,” Mo Ran picked up the cup and looked it over carefully. “Do ghosts still eat?”

“It’s all fake, works like offerings,” the scholar popped a couple of peanuts in his mouth, but none of the peanuts disappeared. He explained, “See, basically like this. Just for a taste.”

Mo Ran calmly put down the cup of wine he was holding; he wasn’t actually dead, he’ll get busted if he eats something.

Three rounds of wine later, the scholar seemed to cheer up a bit from his despondent mood earlier. He chatted with Mo Ran for a while, then asked, “Mo-gongzi wanted me to draw a portrait of someone earlier, is it a lover?”

Mo Ran hurriedly waved a hand, “No no, it’s my Shizun.”

“Ah,” the scholar seemed surprised. “I’ve been doing my business down here for many years already, and people have come to me looking for paintings of beauties, but I’ve never had anyone ask me to draw their shizun. Is your Shizun good to you?”

Weighted with guilt, Mo Ran said, “Yes, he’s very good to me.”

“No wonder, then,” the scholar nodded. “What do you want a drawing of him for?”

“To find him.”

The scholar ah’d, looking surprised, “He’s in the Underworld too?”

“Mn,” Mo Ran replied. “I heard that the deceased stay here at Nanke Village for eight to ten years. I’m worried about him, so I wanted to try looking for him to keep him company.”

The scholar didn’t doubt him in the least, and was even rather moved. He mulled it over for a moment, then finally sighed, “Such devotion is hard to come by… alright! Mo-gongzi, I’ll do you this favor!” He got up and opened his box to take out his drawing tools even as he spoke.

Mo Ran was overjoyed, thanking him over and over and asking for his name, thinking to burn this poor bro lots of money once he gets back to the living world.

The two of them gushed back and forth emotionally while spreading out the paper and grinding the ink.

But then it all screeched to a halt as soon as they set to work.

“My Shizun… he uh…” Mo Ran clenched his hand into a fist and tapped it against his knee several times, but didn’t manage to tap out any inspiration whatsoever. He hesitated for a long while, straining through his pitiful bank of vocabulary, then finally managed to squeeze out, “He’s beautiful. Please draw him.”

The scholar stared at him.

Mo Ran: “Well? Draw.”

“...Beautiful in what way?”

“Isn’t it obvious? Just, beautiful, you know. So draw him beautiful.”

“I know, draw him beautiful, but… you know what, nevermind. What kind of face does he have?”

“What kind of face?” Mo Ran stared blankly. “...A face is a face.”

The scholar was beginning to get irked, “Oval heart square round, at least give me something?”

“I don’t know these things! Anyway, he has a handsome face.”

Scholar: “……”

Mo Ran: “Forget it, if you don’t know then just draw it like my face, our face shapes are pretty similar anyway.”

Scholar: “……”

Next were the eyes.

“What kind of eyes?”

Mo Ran was about to open his mouth, but the scholar stopped him to add.

“Do not say eyes are eyes.”

Mo Ran waved his hand, “I know I know, his eyes look… hm, how to say? Scary but… charming? And cold but gentle.”

The scholar threw his brush and declared in a rage, “I quit! You can go find someone else!”

“No wait!” Mo Ran grabbed him hastily. “No one else draws as well as you do!”

The scholar tried to hold down his anger as he glared at him, but there was only sincerity on Mo Ran’s face, so he relented and said, stiffly, “Then you have to give me proper answers.”

Mo Ran felt a little wronged, he thought his answer just now was perfectly fine? How was it not a proper answer? But beggars can’t be choosers, so he could only nod obediently while hugging the Soul-Calling Lantern closer to himself.

The scholar said, “So, the eyes. Leopard eyes? Round eyes? Almond eyes? Phoenix eyes? Or…”

Mo Ran’s head spun from all the terms being thrown at him. He shook his head, “Slit eyes?[122] No that’s way too small, his eyes are upturned, I don’t know what they’re called, but they uh… they swoop upwards, really prettily…”

“That’s what phoenix eyes are.”

Mo Ran opened his mouth, but seeing the thundercloud on the scholar’s face, closed it again. “Alright, slit eyes then, whatever you say.”

The scholar continued the questioning, “Nose, high or flat?”

“High.”

“Lips, thin or full?”

“Thin.”

“Eyebrows, dense or sparse?”

“Dense.”

“Thick or thin?”

“Average I think… oh, this one I know, he has sword-straight brows.”

“Alright,” the scholar put down a couple of brush strokes, then asked, “Any birthmarks on his face?”

Mo Ran tilted his head as he thought, and then his reddened as he mumbled, “Yeah…”

“Where?”

“On his left ear,” Mo Ran said haltingly. “A tiny, light-colored mole, and…”

And he’s so very sensitive when kissed there.

The scholar quirked a brow, “And?”

“N…” Mo Ran’s head shook like a rattle-drum as his face turned even redder, “nothing.”

The scholar shot him a questioning glance, but luckily the light was dim enough in here that he couldn’t see how red his face was. He dipped his brush in the ink and asked, “Usual attire?”

“He likes to wear white, with his hair done up with a jade crown, or else in a high ponytail,” Mo Ran thought for a moment, then added, “he also wears his hair down sometimes, and when he does, he looks really…”

“Don’t say beautiful again!” The scholar was at the end of his rope.

“Okay, handsome then.”

Scholar: “……”

After that overly arduous ordeal, the drawing was finally done. Mo Ran blew the ink dry and lifted it to examine, deciding that it wasn’t as handsome or beautiful as Chu Wanning, and didn’t really look completely like him, but it was passable for his purposes, so he smiled and said, “Many thanks, professor. It’s great.”

“I’ve just about drawn Pan An, Fan Li, Xi Zi, and Diao Chan.”[123]

“Hahaha,” Mo Ran laughed and said, “after I find Shizun, I’ll be sure to thank you again properly.”

They drank and chatted for a while longer, then parted ways in front of the tavern, and Mo Ran set off with Chu Wanning's portrait in hand. According to the scholar, there was a place on the fifth street called "Tailwind Hall" that specialized in looking into all kinds of information for the new arrivals of Nanke Village.

That's where he was headed.

Outside Tailwind Hall, a banner depicting a black serpent floated lightly. Mo Ran pushed open the door and walked in, and the sight that greeted him was that of an elongated counter stretching across the main hall. About a dozen ghosts dressed in ocher red robes sat behind the counter, each wearing a wooden mask painted with an enraged face concealing their real face from view. In front of each masked ghost was a long meandering line of deceased people with an assortment of expressions and varied requests.

Hundreds of white wax candles floated in the upper part of the building, casting overlapping lights on the overlapping dead. The place was very busy, ghosts coming and going without stop.

"Sir, can you help me look into where my younger brother is? His name is Zhang Bayi, from Gusu, twenty-one years old when he died…"

"You have a portrait?"

"N-no."

"That's fine, but it'll cost you ten times as much."

“Lad——”

The masked ghost cleared her throat, voice clear and crisp.

“Ah, sorry, dinnae know you was a miss. Missy, it’s like this, so, when I died, that wifey of mine said she definitely won’ remarry, but I been seeing her and me lil’ bro makin’ eyes at one another for a while now, n’ I just really can’t accept that, so can you help me check and see if she’s actually bein’ a proper widow up there or if she done ran off with me lil’ bro!”

“Here’s the list of prices for looking into matters in the living world, please take a look.”

“Excuse me—I liked a girl when I was alive, but she was from a wealthy family, so there was no way she’d even look at some poor scholar who couldn’t even pass the imperial exam like me, and I didn’t have the guts to confess to her either. She got married eventually; I was happy for her at first, but it turned out that the guy was already married… sigh , there was an accident, and she… passed on before me. I want to ask about two things; the first is her current whereabouts, and the second is… if we will be fated in our next life…”

“We can certainly look into things in the next life. However, the cost will not be money, but years of your lifespan from your next life. As for the lady’s whereabouts, please provide me her name and portrait.”

“Oh, okay, okay. I have her portrait, here. Her surname is Yao, given name Lan…”

There were ghosts chattering away at every counter; though their bodies had long rotted away, they still could not put down their worldly attachments.

Mo Ran walked around the place, hugging his lantern and looking left and right. He noted that in exchange for answers, the people of Tailwind Hall would take either money or years of lifespan in payment.

He didn't have money, but if he were to let them take from his lifespan, they might find out that he was a living person who had infiltrated the Underworld. His apprehension grew, and he couldn't help but curse Master Huaizui for not thinking ahead and giving him some paper money for a situation just like this.

But taking a look at the price list, the cost of inquiring after someone didn't seem particularly expensive. Mo Ran made up his mind and ran back towards the tavern. It took some searching before he found the scholar again, and all his persuasive power to talk him into lending some meager few silvers, and then Mo Ran returned to Tailwind Hall.

He waited in line for a long while before it was finally his turn.

Mo Ran said urgently, "I'm looking for someone. Here's his portrait."

He handed Chu Wanning's portrait over. He was about to say more when, unexpectedly, the person only took one glance at the portrait before chuckling and folding the painting scroll back up. He said, "Why are you looking for him?"

"Ah?" Mo Ran was taken aback. "You can tell where he is just by looking at the painting?"

"Of course. But first, tell me, why are you looking for him?"

"He's someone I know."

The other person shot him another look and then said, "Wait here a moment." He then leaned over and had a whispered discussion with the colleague next to him. When he turned back to Mo Ran, his tone had warmed up considerably.

"Since you're Sir Chu's acquaintance, payment won't be necessary." The person rose to his feet and waved Mo Ran forward. "Come on then, follow me upstairs."

Author's Notes

The three at the beginning originate from their respective Weibo texts and shorts, and are not original. But because they're used so often, when I wanted to look for the sources, I couldn't find them…..the earliest appears to have appeared on the Spring Night skit? Shocked, does it have such local festiveness? Stated here to avoid misunderstandings QAQ

Ch.108 Shizun's Earth Soul

Mo Ran followed him upstairs without any idea what's going on, the worn-out wooden stairs beneath his feet creaking with every step. He couldn't resist asking, "You call him Sir Chu?"

"That's right, Lord Yanluo himself sent him to manage this place, he's our superior."

"....."

Mo Ran was surprised, but said nothing about it.

"Here we are," the masked person stopped in front of a half-moon shaped door on the second floor, and knocked lightly on the carved vermillion door that wasn't completely closed. "Sir Chu, there's an acquaintance of yours looking for you."

There was a beat of silence, then a voice came from the inside, gentle like warm wine on the stove, soft hair by the pillow.

"An acquaintance? Him again? I've already said that I don't want to see him ever again. You can tell him to leave."

The masked person cleared his throat and said, "No, Sir Chu misunderstood, it's not him this time."

"But who else is there?" A moment of silence, and then. "No matter, come in."

The room was simple and elegant, and the furnishings were so plain that it seemed a little bare, but the floor was covered by a soft, luxurious rug. Mo Ran's foot sunk into the rug when he stepped inside, and there was a whiff of the sharp smell of furs in the air. Completely at odds with the smell was the person currently standing by the window, pruning a flower branch.

His long, inky black hair draped loosely down his white robes and sweeping sleeves, and the vividly-red flower buds quivered lightly where they were held between his delicate fingertips. Maybe it was the rule here at Tailwind Hall, but he also wore a dark blue mask with bared fangs and bulging eyes. Yet, worn on his face, even such a ferocious-looking mask somehow managed to look gentler.

He trimmed off the excess branches, gathered them up and discarded them, before finally turning around.

Mo Ran's throat felt dry. The exchange between the masked person and Chu Wanning just now left him at a complete loss and feeling vaguely uneasy. He didn't know what it was that this soul had lost; if Chu Wanning didn't remember him…

Just as he was fretting, the man put down the pruning shears and walked toward him.

Mo Ran, he who was undaunted by the heavens and the earth, found himself flustered and agitated, sweat covering his back.

"Shizun."

The man stopped walking, coming to a stop close by. Mo Ran heard something like a chuckle from him.

“Shizun?” he said. “Perhaps the little gongzi got the wrong person?”

As he thought…

Just what he was afraid of.

Mo Ran’s heart dropped like an enormous rock into an endless abyss, dragging him all the way down. He stared at the man before him at a complete loss for what to say.

Seeing no response from him, the person placed his pale, slender hand over the boldly painted mask and took it off, revealing an elegant and composed face beneath.

Mo Ran felt that thousand-pound rock disappear in an instant.

He stared at the unmasked man, astonished but without the slightest hint of doubt, and blurted out, “Chu Xun?”

No wonder the person downstairs had mistaken the portrait. Chu Xun and Chu Wanning looked eight-parts alike to start with, except that Chu Xun was gentler and Chu Wanning was colder, but only someone extremely familiar would be able to tell the difference.

Someone like Mo Ran.

The person before him now was indeed the gongzi of Lin’an City that he had seen in that illusion of two hundred years ago, Chu Xun, so he had

blurted out his name without thinking.

But the real Chu Xun had never met him before, and he was surprised as he said with a smile, "...You actually do know me?"

Mo Ran hurriedly waved his hand. "No no, I got the wrong person. But I do also know you…" He peered curiously at the other person as he spoke. Chu Xun had died hundreds of years ago, but had still yet to be reborn, seemingly due to the task assigned to him by Yanluo, allowing him to temporarily exist outside of the cycle of reincarnation.

Meeting Chu Wanning's ancestor was the last thing that Mo Ran had expected; he found the experience quite bizarre.

Chu Xun nodded and said, "I see." Then he continued with a smile, "Whom is the little gongzi looking for? Since fate brought you up these stairs, I will help you search. Else who knows how long it might take you to find this person, with the size of Nanke Town and all the millions of ghosts in it."

Mo Ran was originally going to quickly explain things and then go back downstairs to have the divination re-done, but he hadn't expected Chu Xun, as warm-hearted in death as he was in life, to offer to personally help him. He accepted the offer joyfully. "I'd appreciate that, Sir Chu, thank you!"

He handed the portrait over as he spoke.

Chu Xun unfolded it and took a look, then smiled, "No wonder the people downstairs were mistaken, he really does look quite like me. What's his

name?”

“Chu Wanning,” Mo Ran said. “His name is Chu Wanning.”

“His surname is also Chu? ...What a coincidence.”

Mo Ran’s heart leapt, and he asked, “Could he be related to you?”

“Not sure. You have to go to the Ninth Ghost King to look into things in the living world. I… have a death grudge against the Ninth King, and refuse to beg him any favors, so i know nothing of matters in the living world.”

The Ghost King in question was, of course, the one that broke through the barrier at Lin’an and killed his entire family back then. Bringing up an old scar like this, even someone so composed as him couldn’t help the complicated expression on his face.

Mo Ran thought he could use this opportunity to confirm the relationship between Chu Wanning and Chu Xun, but unexpectedly ran into this, and could only shake his head. “That’s a pity.”

Chu Xun smiled a little and said nothing as he went to fetch a gold-plated yin-yang patterned compass from the shelf, then invited Mo Ran to take a seat.

“This thing can tell us where he is?”

“Eight, nine times out of ten.”

“What about the remaining one or two times?”

“The energy of some people’s souls can be strange sometimes, so there’s a possibility it can’t be located,” Chu Xun explained. “But that’s rare, the little gongzi probably isn’t that unlucky.”

With the divination set up, the little golden needle inside the compass pointed shakily toward the north, but a little while later swiveled to point south, then suddenly east, suddenly west, and in the end settled on spinning round and round.

Chu Xun: “.....”

Mo Ran asked cautiously, “So what does that mean?”

“Ahem,” Chu Xun cleared his throat, looking a little embarrassed. “The little gongzi… is indeed that unlucky.”

Mo Ran: “.....”

Truth be told, Mo Ran’s always had rather bad luck, so he just knew it wouldn’t go this smoothly. He sighed and thanked Chu Xun, then made to go back into the sea of people to keep looking for Chu Wanning.

But just then, the compass suddenly stopped spinning madly, its needle pointing shakily in a certain direction as if it wasn’t too sure, then a moment later, nudged to the side a little bit more.

Chu Xun hurriedly called, “Little gongzi, hang on.”

Mo Ran paused immediately, holding his breath as he stood by the table and stared at the compass. The needle swiveled left and right, refusing to hold still, but more or less pointing out a general direction.

Chu Xun furrowed his brows and said, “What’s going on…”

“Is that weird?”

“Not so much weird, but it is rather strange,” Chu Xun gazed at the compass, his brows furrowing even more. “He seems to be in two directions?”

Mo Ran was startled.

How could that be?

Right now, the Cognizance Soul was in Chu Wanning’s body, the Human Soul was inside the Soul-Calling Lantern, which means there should only be just the one Earth Soul left in the Underworld, so how could Chu Wanning appear in two places simultaneously?

Chu Xun continued, “In any case, there’s one to the southeast and one to the northeast. The little gongzi should go check in both directions. It’s possible that the compass was affected by some kind of magic and couldn’t pinpoint the right location.”

Filled with anxiety, Mo Ran thanked Chu Xun and hurried out of Tailwind Hall, headed eastward.

He ran for a long while, but his footsteps were abruptly halted by a fork in the road.

Southeast or northeast?

He held up the Soul-Calling Lantern anxiously, but a little while later, as he stared at the lantern in his hand that held the Human Soul, he suddenly felt some kind of a strange, vague feeling in his heart.

Following this feeling that seemed to vacillate between drawing closer and retreating, he walked along narrow roads and dark alleys.

The feeling became more distinct the further he went.

He even felt like Chu Wanning's Earth Soul was calling the lantern in his hand, or rather, calling him toward a certain place.

Mo Ran finally came to a stop in front of an old, wooden building that was two-story tall.

"Ailing Souls Sanitarium."

He looked up, gaze sweeping across the large, heavy-looking plaque above the door. The plaque's black paint had peeled off from so long in the sun and wind, and the raised lettering had also lost most of its red paint, revealing the molding, decaying wood underneath.

Mo Ran frowned, heart tremoring in his chest—these three words made him feel uneasy.

Ailing souls… what does that mean?

Is this why Chu Xun's compass didn't work?

He pushed open the door and went in, stepping over a tall threshold.

He found his answers soon enough.

There were hundreds of beds inside, with unconscious souls lying on them. A dozen-odd ghosts wearing white masks were going around channeling spiritual energy to those on the sickbeds.

This so-called Ailing Souls Sanitarium was the Underworld's infirmary.

Mo Ran found the ghost doctor overseeing things in the inner section and cupped his hands respectfully toward him, saying, "Doctor, I…"

The doctor was very busy and said impatiently, "Prescription pickup's on second floor, examination queue is to the left."

"Then where do I go if I'm looking for someone?"

"Looking for someone's over at… huh? Looking for someone?"

Mo Ran showed him the portrait. "Have you seen him?"

The ghost doctor took the painting and looked it over, then looked back up at Mo Ran. Under the holes in the mask, there was pity in his eyes. "Your relative?"

"Mhm, yes."

“His Earth Soul is damaged,” the ghost doctor pointed toward the stairs. “He’s in the innermost partitioned compartment upstairs. This kind of illness is untreatable, we can only delay it for the time being. You should go see him.”

Mo Ran started, “Damaged? Damaged how?”

“Who knows? The cycle of reincarnation is an agonizing thing, it’s possible his soul was damaged during his last couple of reincarnations, or, since he was a cultivator this life, maybe he had a qi deviation that damaged his soul. Either way it’s no longer whole, how am I supposed to know how it happened.”

Mo Ran asked apprehensively, “Then… then would a damaged Earth Soul affect anything?”

“Affect?” the ghost doctor thought for a moment. “It’s not a huge issue, since it’s only one of three souls that’s incomplete, so it won’t affect his ability to reincarnate. If anything… in the next life, he’ll probably have a shorter lifespan, poorer luck, or a weaker constitution.”

“.....” Mo Ran was reluctant to accept that, but there was nothing to be done about it, so he could only thank the ghost doctor and head upstairs.

It was less densely packed upstairs than it had been downstairs, which was so crowded it was hard to breathe.

Maybe because the souls here were those that could not be revived, so there wasn't much of a need to watch over them, but there was only one doctor in the entrance hall, napping leisurely on a rattan chair.

Mo Ran left him alone and headed straight inside.

Such a big space, but there were only ten, twenty sickbeds laid out next to the rosewood windows, partitioned off with white screens in between.

It was dead silent.

The floor creaked beneath his feet. Mo Ran's eyes landed on the innermost compartment. It was next to a half-moon shaped door, outside of which was an open balcony. The moonlight poured in through a thin layer of silk curtain that drifted in the breeze.

There were twenty-odd sick souls here, yet for some reason, Mo Ran had an intense awareness of exactly where to go.

Perhaps it was the Soul-Calling Lantern showing him the way, but he walked directly to the innermost compartment without so much as a sideways glance, coming to a stop in that pure, hazy moonlight.

He lifted the curtain.

The last piece of Chu Wanning's soul lay there. His eyes were closed and his face colorless, looking just like the body resting at Frostsky Hall.

Despite having found him, despite the hope of rebirth now being within reach, Mo Ran still couldn't help the ache in his heart and the stinging in his nose as he gazed at that frail, bloodstained figure.

He walked over and set the Soul-Calling Lantern down by the bedside.

Then he sat down on the bed, wanting to gently hold the other's ice-cold hand.

But this soul was different from the Human Soul from before. Maybe because the damage was too severe, but his body was actually incorporeal; Mo Ran couldn't touch Chu Wanning's Earth Soul, his fingers passing right through him to land on the clean white sheets.

Such incorporeality left Mo Ran feeling unbearably lost and pained.

If something had gone wrong, if Master Huaizui hadn't come, if Chu Wanning's soul had been just slightly more damaged, if Shizun had despaired and refused to see him...

He bent down, and though he knew he wouldn't be able to lay his forehead against Chu Wanning's, he still couldn't help closing his eyes and leaning over the bed like he was embracing that faint, fragile Earth Soul.

"Shizun."

He overlapped with his soul, the moonlight spilling over them, indistinct and indistinguishable.

Mo Ran let out a long exhale in a sigh, but his heart was heavy and bitter.

He had seen Chu Wanning's body, then his Human Soul, and now this sickly Earth Soul, and felt something different upon seeing each. He had knelt before the body, his sins and his guilt nearly tearing him apart. He had repented before the Human Soul, and held his hand as he begged him to return.

But the Earth Soul.

He tried to hold him, yet he couldn't reach him, couldn't touch him. He suddenly felt a bottomless dread, that this was what he deserved.

He was laden with so many sins, his hands were covered in blood. What merit, what right did he have to accompany him at his side again, to stay by his side?

Mo Ran kept his eyes closed. The wetness on his eyelashes soaked into the flimsy pillow.

He once thought that the Heavens were unkind to him, but that seemed to him such an absurd joke now. That wasn't the case at all. It turned out that the Heavens were very kind to him; it was his own heart that was unkind, that made everything seem dark and gloomy.

He was wrong.

He suddenly realized that he had once walked a road of no return. He wanted to turn back, he wanted to use the rest of his life to make up for it, use the rest of his life to pay it back. He didn't know if that would be enough to go back to the start.

Forget Taxian-Jun, forget Emperor of the Human Realm.

He didn't want any of it.

He wanted only to lead a proper life, to be the kind of righteous person that Chu Wanning had always wanted him to be.

People say that recognizing your mistakes and changing for the better was the most important part.

But he had sinned so deeply.

He didn't know how long it would take to make up for it; perhaps he'll never be able to escape this endless remorse, even until the day he dies. After all, a scar cut into the waters could return to evenness, but a wound stabbed into a tree will always be there.

"Shizun." After a long time immersed in the light of the moon, immersed in Chu Wanning's nearly see-through soul, he said in a voice like he was coaxing a child, "Come on, let's go home."

He straightened up and picked up the Soul-Calling Lantern.

He recited the incantation silently, and the Earth Soul went inside, the faint silhouette disappearing into the lantern in no time.

Mo Ran waited.

He waited for a long while, until the Earth Soul and the Human Soul had merged completely into one, and then he waited some more, but still nothing happened.

Mo Ran's face paled.

What happened?!

Wasn't he supposed to be able to bring Chu Wanning back to the living world once the Earth Soul and the Human Soul had merged?

Was Master Huaizui's spell not working?!

Ch.109 Shizun's Second Earth Soul

Head numb and thoughts a jumble of white noise, Mo Ran's hands and feet felt like ice as he hugged Chu Wanning's soul to himself and went back downstairs in a daze.

"Doctor…"

"You again? What is it this time?"

"You're sure that the one upstairs… is my Shizun's Earth Soul, right?"

The ghost doctor was rather annoyed. "Of course it is, I wouldn't get something like that wrong."

Still refusing to give up, Mo Ran tried again, "Could it be the Cognizance Soul, or…"

"Or what," the ghost doctor tsk'd. "A person has three souls: Earth, Cognizance, and Human. I've already practiced here for a hundred fifty years, if I can't even tell the three souls apart, Lord Yanluo would've kicked me back into the Wheel of Reincarnation long ago."

Mo Ran pressed his lips together, then an uncertain thought occurred to him.

"Doctor, in your hundred fifty years here, have you ever seen anyone with… two Earth Souls?"

"What's wrong with you!" the ghost doctor snapped crossly. "Looks to me like your head's not working right, maybe you should let me take your pulse!"

Of course he couldn't let the ghost doctor actually take his pulse; Master Huaizui may have cast an enchantment on him, but if he wasn't careful, he could probably still get found out, so Mo Ran offered a hasty apology and fled out of the Ailing Souls Sanitarium holding the lantern with the Human and Earth Souls inside.

It was always dim in the Ghost Realm. The only way to tell day from night was to look up at the sky: if there was a lukewarm sun behind the layer of murky mist and heavy red clouds, then it was day; if a cold moon hung high above, then it was night.

It was night right now, and the roads were slowly emptying out.

Holding the Soul-Calling Lantern in his arms, Mo Ran walked through the streets by himself with his head lowered. He didn't know what to do, and the more he walked, the more helpless and alone he felt.

Such helplessness and uncertainty had once been a daily part of his childhood; having to face these feelings once again now unsettled him. He remembered the people he used to know back when he was getting by at the pleasure house. The House of Drunken Jade had gone up in flames in the end. Everyone died, but he alone survived...

Counting the years, everyone—aside from his mom—had probably yet to be reincarnated. He didn't know whom he might run into if he just kept walking like this.

Then he thought of Xue Meng.

He thought of Xue Meng's angry bellows as he tried to wrest the Soul-Calling Lantern from his hands, calling him a "god damn scourge!"

——”What right do you have, have you no shame.”

Hugging the lantern to himself, Mo Ran walked slower and slower until he stopped next to a wall, the rims of his eyes red despite his best efforts. He gazed at that gentle, golden flame with his head lowered, and muttered in a tiny voice:

“Shizun, is it that you… that you really don’t want to go back with me?”

The flame didn’t answer, only continued to burn silently.

He stood there for a long time before he managed to calm back down.

The Underworld was so big, and he didn’t know where or whom he could go to. Then he suddenly thought of Chu Xun, and hurriedly ran toward Tailwind Hall like he had grasped a lifeline.

When he got there, Tailwind Hall was just about to close, and a masked ghost was shutting the doors and locking up. Mo Ran hastily stopped him, entreating apprehensively, “Sorry, but please wait!”

“It’s you?”

The masked person was the same one that had led him upstairs earlier. He paused for a moment, then said, “What did you come back for?”

“Sorry to trouble you, but it’s urgent…” Mo Ran had ran too fast; he panted for breath, eyes bright yet anxious. He swallowed and said hoarsely, “I want to see Sir Chu Xun again.”

Chu Xun was staring absently at a branch of haitang blossoms in a slender white porcelain vase, and was startled to suddenly see Mo Ran return.

“Why did the little gongzi come back? Were you unable to find him?”

Mo Ran replied, “I found him, but I… I…”

Chu Xun saw how tense and anxious he was and guessed that whatever trouble he had must be difficult to talk about, so he invited him in and closed the door, saying, “Have a seat.”

Worried that Chu Xun might notice something off if he kept the Soul-Calling Lantern in his hands, Mo Ran put it away in his qiankun pouch.

It wasn’t that he thought Chu Xun was a malicious ghost, but something like a living person sneaking into the Underworld was best secret from the ghosts here if at all possible.

“The little gongzi went to the southeast?”

“Mn.”

“.....” Chu Xun thought for a moment, then said, “It was the Ailing Souls Sanitarium, wasn’t it.”

Mo Ran nodded, and weighed his words before saying, “I saw him at the Ailing Souls Sanitarium, but it’s an incomplete Earth Soul that can’t move or speak. He even looks different from the other ghosts, half-transparent, can be seen but can’t be touched.”

“Damaged Earth Souls are generally like that,” Chu Xun’s expression was somber. “Some souls that have been agitated could even scatter, never to be gathered again.”

Mo Ran chewed on his lip, then said, hesitantly, “The doctor there said that people whose souls are incomplete will have certain impairments in life during their reincarnations. But the person I’m looking for… was just fine in life, so I was wondering if there might have been a mistake somewhere.”

He paused for a while, lifting his head to look towards Chu Xun.

“Sir Chu, is it possible for someone to have two Earth Souls?”

Chu Xun faltered, “Two Earth Souls?”

“Mn.”

Unlike the doctor at the Ailing Souls Sanitarium who had immediately shot down Mo Ran’s hypothesis, Chu Xun mulled it over carefully for a while with his gaze downcast, and then said, “I suppose… it isn’t impossible.”

A tremor ran through Mo Ran’s body and his head snapped up, eyes bright in the dim candle light of the room.

“Really?!”

Chu Xun inclined his head, “Normally, a person only has three ethereal souls and seven corporeal spirits, but I once knew a woman with two Cognizance Souls.”

“Could you tell me more?”

Chu Xun shook his head, his eyelashes dropping lower and trembling slightly. He took a moment to steady himself before saying, “It’s all things long past now, I’d rather not talk about it. That person is suffering in the seventh level of Hell right now. Anyone whose soul is abnormal, once found by Yanluo, is sent to the seventh level to be slowly peeled apart.”

His words made Mo Ran even more anxious, and in the dim light, he didn’t notice the pain in Chu Xun’s eyes when he asked, “Why does that woman have an extra Cognizance Soul? Normal people only need to gather their three souls after the seventh day, so if someone has an extra Earth Soul, then would all four souls need to be gathered?”

“That is probably the case.”

“Then the woman you mentioned…”

“She was used by the Ninth King in death, forced back to the living world…” Chu Xun paused, the slender fingers resting on his knee slowly clenching into a fist, “to the living world, and ate her own child alive.”

“!!” Mo Ran abruptly recalled the past events of Lin’an that he had borne witness to at the Peach Blossom Springs, and only then did he realize that the “woman” of whom Chu Xun spoke was actually his wife, that these were his most painful memories.

Then the reason Chu Xun had stayed at Nanke Village rather than reincarnate into his next life was to wait for his wife to be peeled of that

extra soul and come back from the seventh level to reunite with him, so that they could reincarnate together?

Mo Ran couldn't bear to pry any more than he already had.

Chu Xun said no more of it either. To mention something like this again, in just these few, understated words—"ate her own child alive"—even after two hundred years, even as a ghost, his throat still trembled.

He closed his eyes.

"The woman's soul became scrambled and torn, and fused with the child's Cognizance Soul," a long while passed before he continued. "So her extra soul is actually that child's Cognizance Soul that got stuck between hers, which slowly assimilated into her soul until it became a part of it, completely and inseparably."

This person, in death as in life, always endured his own pain to help others.

Mo Ran felt horrible. He couldn't say it directly, and could only say, "You don't have to say any more, I, I understand now."

"The reason I'm telling you these things is to let you know that, if the Chu-gongzi you're looking for really does have two Earth Souls, then most likely one of them was not originally his."

Mo Ran turned it over in his head for a while, then asked, “Is it not possible that it was one Earth Soul split into two?”

“It’s possible, but not in your case.”

“How come?”

Chu Xun explained, “I’ve seen a soul split in two as well, but that’s another story. Something like that generally only happens when someone has sinned so deeply and killed so wantonly that their souls are unable to bear it and shatter as a result. But even then, the one that shatters is always the Human Soul which is responsible for morality and humanity, and never the Earth Soul or the Cognizance Soul.”

“...I see,” Mo Ran muttered.

He had already concluded that this scenario had nothing to do with Chu Wanning as soon as he heard “sinned so deeply and killed so wantonly.” But as for he himself, on the other hand, he wondered; when he truly meets his end in this life and comes to the Underworld, will his Human Soul shatter into two, will he get his just deserts?

Chu Xun added, “Besides, if it really was one soul split into two, then the other half of the Earth Soul would’ve been unable to walk and gotten sent to the Ailing Souls Sanitarium as well. Since the little gongzi only saw one damaged Earth Soul there, then I think the other one should be a complete, healthy soul.”

Mo Ran lit up immediately at his remark as things clicked into place, and he said in a hurry, “Thank you so much, Sir Chu! Then I… I’ll go back to searching right now!”

“Very good. Aside from pointing toward the Ailing Souls Sanitarium earlier, the compass also pointed in the northeast direction. The little gongzi should try going in that direction. Though, Nanke Village is vast, with so many ghosts coming and going while waiting their turn to reincarnate…”

Chu Xun sighed.

Mo Ran saw those gentle eyes tinged faintly with pity, and already knew what he wanted to say.

The vastness of Nanke Village, the millions of wandering ghosts.

Even knowing the direction, it would be no easy task to find one particular Earth Soul.

If two people were not fated, then even if the streets were so brightly lit it appeared not to be night at all, they would still brush right past one another as they walked, one toward the east and one toward the west, never once noticing the other, never even seeing the other.

And with the Underworld silent as it was now, it was even easier said than done.

But Chu Xun was a gentle soul in the end. He lifted his hand and clapped Mo Ran on the shoulder. “The little gongzi has such heartfelt sincerity, you will surely meet him again.”

He looked so much like Chu Wanning, and as he spoke, a bead of melted wax dripped slowly down and the candle flame flickered, making his face look even more indistinct.

In the dimness, Mo Ran seemed to see Chu Wanning's face in a moment of gentleness, seemed to hear Chu Wanning say to him that they will meet again.

Wetness gathered in Mo Ran's eyes despite himself.

He hurriedly lowered his head and clasped his hands in a gesture of respect, voice hoarse as he said, "Really, thank you so much."

But Chu Xun said nothing in response. Even when Mo Ran had already turned and left, closing the door behind him, he was still standing there staring after him, a hint of bewilderment flickering in his phoenix eyes.

Were those… tears he saw… in that young man's eyes?

Ghosts couldn't cry. Did he see wrong? Or...

He turned to look over his shoulder at that quietly blooming branch of haitang blossoms in the vase. Flowers from the living world couldn't bear the Yin energy of the Underworld; even with careful tending, a petal had still drifted down to land on the aged, wooden table.

Chu Xun walked over and picked up that vibrant petal. It withered and crumbled away in no time, scattering from his fingertips into powder.

"Guard."

“Sir Chu,” a masked person came in immediately, standing respectfully to the side.

Chu Xun didn’t turn around. He gazed at the haitang blossoms as he asked in a soft voice, “Has that person come to Tailwind Hall himself recently?”

“No, he hasn’t. Things have been the same as always, a branch of haitang blossoms every ten days. He dares not come here to Tailwind Hall himself, and always has someone else deliver it for him.”

“.....”

“What is it, Sir? Was there something off about that gongzi just now? If that person dares send people to bother you, you can always ask Lord Yanluo to…”

“No,” Chu Xun broke out of his daze and interrupted him, turning to smile lightly at his subordinate. He exhaled, “It’s nothing, he probably wasn’t sent by that person. And even if he was, that child came only to look for someone, it had nothing to do with me.”

“But if that person did send him here, then why did you still go to the trouble——”

“He had no involvement in that wrong.” Chu Xun stood quietly next to the flowering branch, his robes the color of snow. “Let him be.”

The streets were desolate. Mo Ran left Tailwind Hall and headed northeast, going door to door with Chu Wanning’s portrait, but it was like trying to find a needle at the bottom of the sea.

Those he showed the portrait to waved their hands no; some didn’t even want to look at all before walking past him.

“The person in the drawing? Never seen him before.”

“Haven’t seen him haven’t seen him, don’t disrupt my business.”

“Out of my way! So damn annoying! Do you not see what time it is! Piss off! What portrait? Get it out of my face!”

Although the residents of Nanke Village were all ghosts, these ghosts had yet to severe their emotions and desires. Living together like this, most of them had gradually settled back into how they used to spend their days in the living world. While waiting out their eight to ten long years, they would seek out some friends or relatives, or else adopt a dead cat or a dead dog; simply put, they lived as they had when they were still alive. And so, although they did not need to sleep, they would still lie down in their beds to rest when the moon climbed high up in the sky.

With the night falling, even fewer people were willing to talk to him, and no one had any information or direction for him.

He walked by himself down that long, endless street stretching into the northeast, knocking on every door and visiting every house, keeping his head down while smiling apologetically…

“I already told you!!! I saw wrong! I thought about it more and the person I saw actually wasn’t the one in the drawing, can you just leave me alone already!”

The bearded man was getting ready to retire for the night with his wife and kids of the Underworld, trying to close the door.

Mo Ran had run into him on the street earlier as he’d been coming back, and had asked if he had seen the person in the portrait. He’d thought for a while and then said that he seemed to remember seeing him around the east market a couple days ago, but then his wife had thrown him a look and he’d shut up immediately as if realizing something, and started waving his hands and insisting he didn’t know anything.

But Mo Ran felt like he knew, so he had refused to give up, following him the whole way home and pleading with him the entire time.

The man shoved him brusquely out the door and pulled the wooden door bolt. Mo Ran begged frantically, “Could you please think about it again? Where in the east market? And where did he go after? Please…”

“I don’t know!”

The commotion drew the attention of nearby ghosts, and a crowd had gathered to watch. The man bellowed loudly and angrily as he tried to shut the door, heedless of the fact that Mo Ran’s hand was still on the doorframe.

The door slammed roughly on his fingers. It was excruciating, but he couldn’t care about that right now, swallowing the pain and refusing to pull his hand from the closing gap, using all of his strength to push it open instead——

“I’m begging you, please think about it again, I just want to know where he went after that…”

But the man abruptly wrenched the door open and, taking no notice of the blood welling up on Mo Ran’s fingers, shoved him roughly backwards and yelled, “I already said I don’t know! Fuck off!”

Ch.110 Shizun Doesn't Know About the Little Puppy's Past[124]

Mo Ran wandered the streets by himself. There were still ghosts drifting eerily about the streets as well, and the bluestone steps were covered in lonesome clumps of moss, wet and slippery beneath his feet…

Only now that he'd calmed down after the fierce struggle did he finally notice that his fingers had been scraped raw and bloody. The doorframe was crudely made and covered in splinters that had gotten embedded into his hand and made a mess of it, but luckily it was dark enough that the ghosts didn't notice.

He stared quietly at it for a while with his lashes downcast. Perhaps because the pain in his heart was far greater, but the gruesome wounds on his hand didn't really hurt.

He looked back at that firmly-shut door, and knew well that the man behind it wouldn't speak another word to him.

Mo Ran was no stranger to such rejection. He was already more than used to malevolence, to the point that he could tell whether or not his plea would have any effect from just the look in their eyes and a couple of words.

Truth be told, the moment that man had changed to saying "haven't seen him", Mo Ran already instinctively knew that he wasn't going to get

another truthful word out of him. It was just that he didn't want to give up because it had to do with Chu Wanning's Earth Soul, so he had persisted until he had been shoved outside and the door had slammed in his face.

It's been a long time since he had last been refused so brutally. But sometimes, the passage of time couldn't really resolve anything, and neither could happier circumstances change that which was innate—some things were simply carved into the bones.

Xue Meng had once called him a lowlife scum.

It's funny, but these venomous words from the darling of the heavens didn't even make a dent in his dignity.

That's right, he is what everyone calls a lowlife scum. He'd been called much worse things more times than he could count, he was already used to it.

He glanced over his shoulder at that tightly-closed wooden door one last time, then slowly walked away in the low snickers of the crowd of spectating ghosts.

He stood alone amidst voices of derision and ridicule.

Such a scene of abject helplessness, once again after so many years, overlapped with the distant, faded memories of his childhood. Mo Ran put one foot in front of the other; maybe because the circumstances were really too much alike, but he couldn't help thinking about those days when it had been just him and his mom...

In those days, they weren't at the pleasure house yet, but wandered the streets of Linyi near Rufeng Sect.

In those days, at least he still had his mom.

His mother loved him. He was still small and she didn't want him to go out begging for food, so she always had him stay in an abandoned firewood shed while she went out to sing and perform on the street.

She had a good foundation and could dance on a bamboo pole, so she usually managed to earn a couple of coins each day to buy a piece of flatbread and a bowl of congee[125] to share between mother and son. Mothers always wanted their children to eat more, but Mo Ran would only take a few bites before saying the flatbread was too hard, the congee was too bland, or that he was full, and refused to eat any more.

Little did she know, but every time she sighed and ate the "left over" half of the flatbread and half bowl of congee, the small child curled up to the side pretending to be asleep was always secretly watching her through squinted eyes, only relaxing after making sure she had filled her stomach, feeling at ease despite the rumbling in his own.

Nor did she know that every day after she left to perform on the streets at Linyin's east market, her child would crawl out from the pile of firewood and sneak out to beg for food two streets over from where she performed.

The mother sang a beautiful song as she propped up the ten feet tall pole and danced upon it with her frail body. The ground below her was covered

in shattered rocks and broken ceramics; if she were to fall, all of the sharp pieces would pierce into her body. But the spectators thought it novel and exciting, and so she staked her lowborn life and danced, just to win a smile from the moneyed onlookers.

Two streets away, her child begged on the street, going door by door, grinning with his grubby little face and saying the same greetings for good fortune over and over, hoping for something to eat. But he didn't get anything, not often.

One day, a young madam of a wealthy family, pregnant, bored, and in a foul mood, was strolling around the streets when she saw Mo Ran's mother dancing on the pole.

She went over and watched for a while, intrigued, and then sent an attendant to go speak to the dancer, "These broken rocks and ceramic bits you have on the ground are just for looks, where's the sincerity? Our Madam says that if you replace them with knives, blade-up, and dance over that, then she will reward you with ten taels of gold."

Faced with such a cruel request, practically demanding her life.

But the mother's only response was: "I can't afford to buy any knives."

The wealthy madam laughed and immediately had someone go to the ironware store, purchase a hundred sharp knives, and arrange them upright on the ground.

"Dance."

The richly-adorned woman said gleefully as she caressed her bulging belly.

A crowd of fiends and demons, eager to watch the sport, had already began to gather, all of them decked out in silks and jades that sparkled in the sun. They were like vultures that had scented the stench of blood in the air and gathered to feed on the corpse, with their necks outstretched and their eyes glinting.

“Go on, dance.”

“Dance well and I’ll give you money.”

“There’s tips to be had!”

The areas under Rufeng Sect’s jurisdiction had no shortage of wealthy people. What it lacked was the excitement and liveliness of such life-risking wagers.

Those silks and satins, gold and pearls closed in on the mother with the bamboo pole, surrounded the penniless woman in rags.

And so the woman, her life as cheap as wild grass by the roadside, smiled and curtsied toward the crowd of carrion vultures, thanking them for their patronage, and then began a graceful dance upon the pole, light as a swallow.

Dancing upon the blades, staking her life.

Staking her life to garner their favor.

But although she was skilled, she inadvertently glanced down at the rows upon rows of sharp knives as she went in for the landing. Her bamboo pole tilted a couple of degrees in that moment of panic, and as alarmed cries rang out from the crowd, she fell——

She managed to avoid the area with the most knives, but still skirted the edge, slashing her legs open, the crowd crying out once again as blood spattered.

Ignoring the pain, she hurriedly stood up, offering a smile as she lowered her head in apology.

The spectators commented with a sneer, “Missy’s skills aren’t quite there yet, better practice more.”

“That’s right, you gotta have some skill if you wanna make a living, half-baked foolery won’t get you far.”

A few of the kinder people, their eyes brimming with tears, said sympathetically, “Ay, enough already, look at the poor girl’s injury, hurry to the apothecary and get some medicine for it.”

The woman said hesitantly, “I don’t… I don’t have any money for medicine…”

Those people faltered, some sighing, others lifting their hands to touch their jades and pearls, but none of them spoke. A couple dabbed at the corners of their eyes, as if deeply touched.

“How pitiful.”

“Indeed, indeed.”

“Seeing as how hard your life is, I’ll give you some money,” said an elderly woman with a big belly as she took out her bulging purse, fished out a handful of gold leaflets, held them in her hands, and kept digging until she dug out three copper coins, weighed them in her hand, returned two, then very solemnly placed one copper coin in the mother’s hand.

Having given generously, the elderly woman allowed tracks of well-earned tears roll down her cheeks as she spoke in a tone of benevolence, “Miss, you deserve this, take it.”

The woman clutched the copper coin that she had used her life to exchange for, and murmured blankly, “Thank you…”

Thank you…

And that wealthy madam that had promised her ten gold? She had already walked off, cursing.

The woman staggered after her on bleeding legs, wanting to ask her for the money, but was shoved to the ground by her attendants, who swore so loudly they could be heard a whole street over——

“What bad luck!”

“Our Madam must keep her baby safe, the sight of blood is inauspicious! Master will be so worried if he hears.”

“And you still have the nerve to ask for money, you call that a dance? It’s a good thing your blood didn’t get on our Madam, or else——or else there’d be consequences!”

“Scram!”

The woman was shoved to the ground roughly, but they were from a well-known family of affluence in Linyin, so no one was willing to stand up for her. She twisted in pain on the ground, writhing like a lowly insect.

No one came to help her up…

No one was willing to open their purse for her...

She had danced with her life on the line, but all she got for it was a single, cold copper coin.

The kind woman who gave it to her had said that it was what she deserved.

She didn’t spare a thought for herself, but she had earned only one coin today, what could she buy with that? All that would get her was a single piece of flatbread without any filling, not even a bowl of congee to go with it, and now that her leg was hurt, she wouldn’t be able to dance tomorrow,

but what about her child… he was still so small, so skinny, he'll go hungry again…

She really couldn't take it anymore, thinking about that. She curled up in the mud and wept sorrowfully, her voice raw and shuddering. Unable to bear the sound of it, the onlookers sighed and began to disperse.

Just then, a dirty child with a foul, stinky smell suddenly burst through the crowd.

Mo Ran ran over, yelling like a trapped beast, "Mom! MOM!!!"

He hugged her.

A lowly child hugging his lowly mother.

Like a bug clinging to grass, like a straw dog[126] clutching at duckweed.

Surprise and panic flashed across the woman's eyes when she saw him. She may be weak, but mothers were strong. She stopped crying immediately—life was already hard enough, day after day like going to sleep in hell and waking in the same—she didn't want to look weak and helpless in front of her child.

The tears on her face weren't even dry yet, but she hurriedly arranged her features into a smile, saying, "Aiyah, look at you, what are you doing here? Mom is fine, it's just a scratch… oh, but look…"

She stuffed the sweat-covered copper coin clutched in her hand into his.

Mo Ran shook his head over and over, tears washing tracks down his dirty little face.

“It’s enough for a piece of flatbread, go on… go buy one, mom will wait right here for you, then we can go home.”

Home?

Where is home?

That run-down storage shed?

Or that sheep pen they once slept in before getting chased out two days later...

Mo Ran fought back sobs, fire burning in his eyes as he said, “Mom, just sit here and rest for a while.”

“What’re you going to——don’t do anything foolish——”

Mo Ran ran to the side and picked up a knife, then shouted loud and clear in his still-young voice, drawing back the attention of the dispersing crowd.

“Lords and ladies, please wait! Please wait! We still have a special performance for your lordships and ladyships, please spare a glance——”

He innately had spiritual energy since youth, and was thus much stronger than any ordinary person without aptitude, even without cultivating it.

Mo Ran held the sharp and sturdy blade in his hands, and with a low cry, broke the knife in half and tossed the pieces onto the ground.

The crowd was startled, especially the couple of cultivators among them.

“The kid’s not bad.”

“One more!”

Mo Ran said, picking up two knives this time and snapping both together.

“Nice!!!” Someone in the crowd clapped.

“Three knives!”

The small child added one knife after another, the crowd getting more and more excited as the stack grew thicker and harder to break.

“Gege jiejie, uncles and aunties, please spare some tips and I’ll add more.”

Those people, eager for a show, tossed the cheapest copper coins they could find onto the ground in front of him.

For those coins, Mo Ran added knife after knife until his hands were covered in blood and he really couldn’t break any more. The carrion vultures flapped their pitch-black wings and scattered.

Mo Ran picked up the copper coins, holding them carefully in his dirty little hands, and walked over to his teary, dazed mother.

He smiled, “Mom, we can get you medicine now.”

Her tears fell uncontrollably. “My child… my good boy… let mom see your hand…”

“I’m okay…” His smile was bright and pure. It scorched her heart.

She pulled him into her arms, hugging him tightly as she sobbed, “It’s all mom’s fault for not being able to take care of you… making you suffer so much so young…”

“It’s alright,” Mo Ran said quietly in his mom’s arms. “I don’t mind as long as I’m with you, mom… we’ll get through this together, and when I grow up, I’ll give mom a good life.”

She smiled and wiped the tears from her eyes. “It’s alright even if it’s not a good life, as long as you can grow up healthy and strong, that’ll be good… that’ll be enough.”

Mo Ran nodded vigorously, then suddenly said, quietly, “Mom, if I manage to make something of myself in the future, you’ll never have to put up with any of this anymore. I’ll make all those people just now come and apologize to you, and if they won’t, then I’ll make them dance on knives, I…”

“Silly child, don’t think like that,” the kind, gentle woman stroked his hair as she whispered. “Absolutely don’t think like that, don’t hate anyone. Mom wants to watch you grow into a good kid; promise me you’ll be a good, kind person, okay?”

Mo Ran was so young back then, like a small tender seedling—just a tiny touch of outside influence and he would lean easily into that direction—and his mother, uneducated but pure, was his first lighthouse. And so little Mo Ran thought it over for a bit, rather puzzled, and in the end said with an air of seriousness, “Okay.”

He said, “Mom, I promise you.”

“Then, then in the future, if… if I can make something of myself, I’ll build lots and lots of houses for people without homes, and plant lots and lots of food for people who don’t have enough to eat…” he said to his mother, “mom, that way, no one will ever have to live like us again.”

The woman stared blankly for a while, then said with a sigh, “That would be wonderful.”

The little kid nodded in agreement, saying, “That would be wonderful.”

At that time, neither of them could have anticipated that someone who would say something like that would end up treading through fields of bones with his hands covered in blood, bringing the stench of misery and

ruin as vultures and crows hovered overhead, that he would become Emperor Taxian-Jun, scourge of the common people.

And scourge of the common people Emperor Taxian-Jun rarely, if ever, looked back on this chapter of his past. He didn't honor that promise made in his mother's arms back then, that promise spoken solemnly with clear eyes and a tender voice.

Back then, with his mother's guidance, no matter how hard things got, Mo Ran never hated anyone, though he did feel somewhat unresigned.

Day after day passed by just like this. But streetside performances were lively to the passersby the first time around, boring the second time, and irritating by the third. Eventually, they weren't able to earn even a single copper coin anymore, and could only resort to begging.

Mo Ran remembered a kid from a wealthy merchant family who was around his age and had a big mole by the corner of his lips. He remembered that kid sitting at the gate of his family's big courtyard, holding a bowl in his hand. The kid probably couldn't use chopsticks well yet, so he ate the golden-crispy fried dumplings in the bowl by jabbing them with the bamboo sticks. He was a picky eater, and would only eat the filling, spitting the wrappers out and tossing them to the ground to play with the dogs.

So he walked over cautiously, and stood carefully to the side.

The kid jolted at how dirty and stinky he was, screeching, "Who are you?!"

Mo Ran asked quietly, “Young master, the dumpling wrappers… could… could you give them to me?”

“Give them to you? Why would I give them to you?”

“You… you’re not eating them anyway, so I just wanted to ask…”

“So what if I don’t eat them, our Wangcai will.” The kid pointed at the pair of fat dogs with sleek coats and said in a huff, “It’s already hard enough feeding our dogs, how could I give them to you?!”

Mo Ran forced a smile, saying, “Then, if the dogs can’t finish…”

“As if that would ever happen! They get braised meat every day and even that’s not enough, this is just dumpling wrappers, two bites and it’s all gone. Either way, none for you, shoo, shoo!”

Hearing the words ‘braised meat’, Mo Ran couldn’t help looking at those dogs, all of a sudden thinking, with how fat they were, if cooked, they must be…

He couldn’t help swallowing as he stared at the dogs.

The kid noticed him swallowing. He froze for a second, then yelled in shock, “What are you up to?!”

“I, nothing… I just…”

“You want to eat Wangcai and Wangfu?”[127]

Mo Ran said in a panic, “N-no, I was just really hungry and couldn’t help thinking about it, sorry…”

But the little young master couldn't care less what he had to say; the words "couldn't help thinking about it" already scared the blood out of his face.

How could a wealthy family's kid possibly understand that someone could think of his adorable little watchdogs as food? Frightened by the freak in front of him, he started screaming.

"Somebody come! Hurry and chase him away!!"

The household servants crowded in on Mo Ran and started kicking and punching him before he could say anything. In that rain of blows, he tried to grab as many of the fried dumpling wrappers on the ground as he could, holding them tightly in his hands and not letting go however hard they kicked.

The little young master was terrified, tossing the remaining dumplings alongside the chopsticks to the ground and running away.

Mo Ran crawled arduously over, dragging his small, skinny body that's been beat blue and purple. One of his eyes hurt too much to open—a kick had landed there—but he smiled happily as he reached out and grabbed those leftover dumplings.

There were two dumplings left.

With the filling still in them...

One for himself, one for mother…

Or both for mother, just the wrappers is fine for him...

But before he could leave with the dumplings, one of the servants' feet came down in the chaos and crushed those dumplings skewered on the bamboo chopstick. The crispy wrappers cracked, and the mincemeat filling turned into paste.

He gripped the dirty, broken chopstick in a daze as kicks and punches rained down on him. He couldn't feel the pain, but his tears began to fall because the dumplings couldn't be eaten anymore, squeezing out from between swollen-shut eyelids to stream down a small face so dirty it was hard to see his features.

He only wanted another child's leftover, unwanted food.

Why would they rather waste it, crush it, turn it into paste, than to let him have it?

Later, Mo Ran became a young master of Sisheng Peak, and many within the sect tried to suck up to him, to ingratiate themselves to him. His birthday was filled with gifts and well wishes from people he hardly even spoke to.

The child that once had to crawl on the ground and scramble for discarded dumpling wrappers finally received an abundance of praise and fawning. But standing before that pile of carefully-selected presents, he found himself gripped by a vague sense of dread.

He was afraid that those presents would disappear, that they would get smashed, that something would happen out of the blue and everything in front of him would suddenly become crushed underfoot like those dumplings he once held in his hands but never got to eat. And so, out of that pile of things, he quickly used the useables, and quickly ate the edibles. As for the things that couldn't be used or eaten, he dug a secret little compartment in his room and carefully hid those intricate gifts inside, counting them every day, and then counting again just to be sure.

Xue Meng had made fun of him, pointing and laughing, "Hahaha, it's just a box of pastries from Lin'an's Breeze Bakery, it's no big deal if they go bad or go to waste, but look at you, shoving them all down your throat in one go. Did you starve to death in the last life or something? No one's gonna fight you for them."

He had only just arrived at Sisheng Peak back then, and truthfully still felt extremely uneasy and insecure deep down.

So he only grinned at his cousin's mocking, crumbs still at the corner of his mouth, before lowering his head back down and opening another box of pastries.

Xue Meng was amazed. "What an appetite, aren't you stuffed?"

He only kept eating.

“...Don’t force yourself if you’re full, I get tons of pastries every year for my birthday too, but who can eat that many pastries…”

Mo Ran’s cheeks were stuffed full and bulging; he was actually choking a little from eating too fast. He glanced at Xue Meng, sitting across from him, with teary black eyes.

In that moment, he suddenly thought of that little young master he had met when he was younger, the one who could be picky about his food as much as he wanted, who ate the filling from his fried dumplings and tossed the wrappers to his dogs.

Xue Meng probably grew up like that too. That’s why he could so easily say things like “just toss it if you can’t finish it,” “no one’s gonna fight you for them.”

He really, really, really envied them.

Now that he was a young master of a famed sect leading a life of luxury, he should by all rights be able to feel comfortable and secure, to waste and squander as he felt like.

But he didn’t dare.

In the end, what he did was pick up the cup at the side and chug several mouthfuls of water to wash down the pastries that were stuck in his throat, then continue to force himself to eat more.

Even later, he became Emperor Taxian-Jun.

Everything under the skies belonged to him.

The most gorgeous beauties, the finest of wines, the most exquisite delicacies, golds silvers pearls and jades, and treasured artifacts alike were gifted to him in a never-ending stream from all over the world.

One day, a wealthy ore merchant came from Lin'an with a rare, ten thousand year old black fire jade that had been discovered during mining, saying he wanted to gift it to Emperor Taxian-Jun.

People like him who come bearing gifts of treasures hoping for a title of nobility or official post, or else trying to ingratiate themselves and garner favor were really far too many to count. Mo Ran usually just ignored them.

But Chu Wanning just so happened to have come down with the chills that day. Mo Ran frowned a little; black fire jade was excellent for expelling the cold, and he'd prefer that invalid to get better quick, certainly beats him lying in bed all day being a damn eyesore… and so he agreed to see that wealthy merchant.

The merchant was around his age, a bit chubby, and had a big mole by the corner of his lips with a hair growing from it.

Upon the throne inside Wushan Palace sat Mo Ran, with his slender hands folded and the tips of his fingers resting against his chin, staring silently at him until the greasy merchant's legs went weak and sweat soaked his back.

A long moment passed before the merchant, shaking all over and lips quivering, suddenly fell to his knees and began to kowtow over and over again, stammering, “Your Majesty, this lowly one… this lowly one…”

He stammered for quite a while without managing to say anything, his fat body trembling incessantly under gold-embroidered clothing the whole time.

Mo Ran suddenly smiled.

He could never forget this person, though he had only ever seen him once.

That year, the little kid with the mole by the corner of his lips who had sat in front of the wealthy family’s extravagant residence, with the kind of lavish mannerism that Mo Ran had never thought he himself would ever possess. He’d sat there, jabbing into his bowl of golden dumplings with his bamboo chopsticks, a greasy sheen on his lips to match the greasy sheen on the crispy dumplings.

He said with a smile, “Did you know? The fried dumplings at your place are delicious.”

He never actually got to taste them, but he had obsessed over them for half his life.

Sitting on his throne, Mo Ran watched the person below him go from terrified to astounded to bewildered to sycophantic, muttering obsequiously about having his chef come over to Sisheng Peak right away as a gift to Emperor Taxian-Jun.

In that moment, Mo Ran knew clearer than ever that so many in this world would rather kneel and lick the boots of the strong than look down and show the weak even the tiniest bit of sympathy or kindness.

Mo Ran shook his head, trying to shake off these memories of bygone days.

He rarely ever reminisced about his past; it was his weak spot, he didn't want it.

But the scene of asking door by door and being rejected door by door was so much like the past that the fetters deep within his mind came undone against his will, and for a time, he was caught up in the darkness of his past.

He stared off in a daze for a while.

He thought, so he had once promised his mother, when he was young, that he "wouldn't hold grudges," promised her that he would "build countless houses to shelter all the cold people in this world who didn't have homes, so that everyone could smile"...

But he didn't keep his word.

And in the end, he had even caused the death of the last person who treated him well. He'd caused Chu Wanning's death, caused his own Shizun's death.

Chu Wanning...

Mo Ran's heart ached at the very thought of him. He absently took out that thin piece of paper bearing Chu Wanning's likeness from his robes. The paper had become a bit wrinkled; he pressed his lips together and wordlessly raised his hand, wanting to smooth it out, but blood smeared onto the paper as soon as he touched it.

He jerked his hand back in a panic, afraid to dirty the portrait, and did not dare to touch it any more.

He walked from the fifth street to the third street, still asking door by door, unresigned. But all the ghosts only say they've "never seen the man in the portrait."

He walked alone through the endless night. It was so dark, so long, that it seemed like he'll never reach the dawn no matter how hard he tried and how long he walked. Mo Ran finally felt a little worn out; he hadn't had anything to eat or drink at all, and really was nearing his limits. Luckily, he spotted a stall selling wontons[128] by the side of the street, so he went over and bought a bowl, and sneakily ate when no one was looking.

All the food in the Underworld was cold; there was no steam rising off the wontons.

Mo Ran took out the Soul-Calling Lantern, scooped up a spoonful of wonton, and held it out toward the lantern, "Does Shizun want some?"

Of course Shizun wouldn't answer.

So Mo Ran ate it himself, talking between mouthfuls, "Then again, you never did care for wontons. You only like sweets. Once I find you and we

get back home, I'll make you pastries every day."

In the quiet of night, one person and one lantern sat by the lonely wonton stall as a breeze rustled past, occasionally bringing with it a few withered leaves. In this moment, even the Underworld seemed serene.

"Peach blossom cake, osmanthus sweets, walnut crisp, cloud cake…" he listed to the lantern while counting off on his fingers, as if that would make Chu Wanning respond. He counted for a while, then forced a smile, saying, "Shizun, just where is your other Earth Soul?"

The young man reached out with his slender hand and gently caressed the silk surface of the lantern, just like he had that year when he was thirty, when Chu Wanning died, when he had held the other man's body in his arms and stared off blankly in a daze and muttered, "Chu Wanning, I really hate you so much," but then lowered his head and pressed his lips to his cheek.

"Sonny, you new here?"

Suddenly, a voice like a broken gong spoke up. The old man selling the wontons was terribly nearsighted in his old age, and felt his way over to sit down next to Mo Ran. He had probably died of old age in his own bed, his darkly suntanned face wizened and lined like a poplar tree in the desert. He took out a smoking pipe from his burial clothes and put it in his mouth, then started chatting with Mo Ran with a kindliness and nosiness unique to the elderly.

Mo Ran sniffled and turned to grin at him, “Mn, first day.”

“No wonder I don’t recognize you at all. Don’t mind me asking, but how did you die so young?”

“Qi deviation.”

“Oh…” the old man inhaled smoke from his pipe, though it remained dark and unlit, “a cultivator huh.”

“Mn,” Mo Ran nodded and glanced at him. He didn’t really expect anything to come out of it, but still took out the portrait scroll from his robes, asking, “Grandpa,[129] I’m looking for someone. This is my Shizun, he also only came down here not long ago. Would you happen to have seen him?”

The grandpa took the drawing and hunched over closer to the light, squinting at it for a long, long while through cataract-grown eyes.

Mo Ran let out a sigh and reached over to take the drawing back. “It’s alright, I’ve already asked lots of people, it’s ok if you don’t know either, everyone else also…”

“I’ve seen him.”

“!!” Mo Ran jolted, and even the blood in his veins coursed faster as he clutched hastily at the old man. “Grandpa, you’ve seen him?!? Y-you’re sure?”

“I’m sure.” The old man crossed his legs on the bench and reached over to pick at his foot. “Don’t see people with looks like these every day, it’s definitely your Shizun.”

Mo Ran had already shot up to his feet, but then felt like he was being too curt and lowered his head in a respectful bow to the old man before looking up to ask earnestly, “Grandpa, please point the way.”

“Aiyah, no need to be so polite, sonny. We’re all just ghosts down here about to head on to the next life, with only eight, ten years before these memories of the last life are gone for good. This old man’s son passed on early, so I’ve got a soft spot for all you young’uns.” He wiped the tears from his eyes and blew his nose on his sleeve before finally saying, “Have you seen that grand-looking palace on the first street up there?”

“I have. That’s where Shizun is?”

“Yup, right there.”

“What kind of place is it?”

“It’s the Fourth Ghost King’s away palace,” the old man sighed. “The Fourth Ghost King doesn’t actually live there; it was built specifically to lock up all the beauties he has his underlings snatch from the Underworld. That Fourth Ghost King is a real lecher, comes down here at intervals to pick concubines from the away palace, men and women alike. The ones that get selected are brought with him back to the Fourth Level of Hell, the ones that don’t supposedly get given to his underlings to play with. Sigh , the world these days——”

He wasn’t even done talking yet when the little cultivator next to him tucked the lantern sitting to the side into his arms in an anxious rush and

charged off into the night like a wolfdog.

The old man paused for a second, then muttered slowly with a dash of envy, “Must be nice to be young, to be able to run so fast…”

Ch.111 Shizun Is Like a Blade, You Are Like Water

>>rape, violence

The Fourth Ghost King's away palace had only one entrance, and there were guards stationed outside. Of course Mo Ran wasn't so dumb as to saunter in the front door. He vaulted up onto the roof, tucked the Soul-Calling Lantern into his qiankun pouch so that the light wouldn't draw any unnecessary attention, then flitted across the tiled rooftops, swift as a bolt of black lightning.

The away palace was already grand-looking from the outside, but the inside was even more massive, one courtyard after another full of winding corridors. Mo Ran leapt to the top of a tall building and flattened himself against the dark brown tiles of the roof. Looking down from here, the away palace was like a small town that stretched out beyond where the eye could see.

Mo Ran was exceedingly anxious.

Now he knew why that man from before wouldn't tell him where Shizun had gone—he was probably afraid of ticking off the Ghost King. But even knowing that Chu Wanning was here in this palace now, he still had no idea what to do——

There were at least nine hundred rooms here, if not a thousand. Where could Chu Wanning be?

He was like a person on the cusp of finding a treasure, both his hands and heart alike tremoring even more than before.

Shizun…

Where are you?

He was absorbed in his thoughts when he noticed a row of people holding red lanterns stomp around a corner, all of them decked out in golden armor and battle boots. One by one they walked from the east gate to the main walkway, and then, many convoluted turns and bends later, arrived at an unremarkable side room.

A massive old pagoda tree stood in front of that side room, neatly blocking off Mo Ran's line of sight. He could only see half of the courtyard, the other half hidden behind the lush foliage.

The ghostly soldiers went inside, and there was shouting and the sound of tables and chairs being knocked around, utter chaos. Then a frightened scream pierced abruptly through the sky as a disheveled woman was dragged out and tossed into the courtyard, her half-undone clothes slipping further in the rough manhandling and exposing large expanses of snowy skin.

"Trying to run?! Trying to fucking run?!!"

A whip landed viciously on the woman's body. It was probably a punishment tool of the Underworld, able to inflict searing, unbearable agony even on ghosts.

The woman huddled on the ground, trembling. She looked like she wanted to run, but there were soldiers everywhere and nowhere to run to.

"Fuckin' bitch, you think you can just leave the Fourth King's palace?"

"I lived a virtuous life! I did nothing wrong! Why are you people doing this to me!" The woman shrieked. "Let me go, I want to reincarnate, I don't want to stay here!!!"

She wailed as the lashes came down again.

"Serving the Fourth King frees you from having to suffer the cycle of reincarnation! You sure don't know what's good for you!"

"He didn't even pick me! Why won't you let me leave? I——AH——"

Another lash, this time on her face. The woman started weeping, trembling uncontrollably, but still tried to crawl away.

Her animalistic desperation only seemed to amuse the Fourth Ghost King's soldiers, all of them laughing boisterously. One after another, more "tributes" were dragged out from the side room.

The leader of the soldiers spoke, "Everyone's worked hard, and I know how bored you guys get. These are all the Fourth King's leftovers; go ahead and pick whichever ones you like to play with. And if any strikes your fancy in particular, just come register with me and you can bring them home with you."

Those lecherous ghosts howled and laughed with abandon as they went into the room to pick the prettiest goods. The woman outside wasn't spared either, boxed in by several people right there under the tree. They lunged at her like a pack of starving wolves intent on ripping her soul to pieces.

From inside the room came the sounds of rough breathing and obscene words. There were people crying, screaming, begging.

There were also those who couldn't handle the torment and wanted out, who submitted to everything and did all that they could to earn favor. In the Underworld as in the living world, people all had this same ugliness.

Mo Ran jumped nimbly off the tall building onto the roof of the side chamber, hiding himself there under the cover of night. Based on what the grandpa at the wonton stall had told him, Chu Wanning just got here and shouldn't have gone through the Ghost King's selection process yet, so he

shouldn’t be here. But Mo Ran was still worried, so he lifted a piece of the dark brown roof tiles halfway up and stealthily peeked through the gap.

The room smelled of sex, hot and heavy; and in that mess of debauchery, he saw a face.

Rong Jiu.

The rent boy he had been fond of in the last life, but who had used his fondness to scheme against him and try to steal his cultivation. He was in there as well.

He was a clever thing who knew death as well as he knew life.

Many people in the room were struggling, not wanting to give in. In that hazy chaos, some called out the names of their lovers in life, while others cursed and fought for their dignity. But Rong Jiu was different. Mo Ran knew what this person was like—he loved money and he loved his life; of course, he no longer had a life to love, but he still valued his soul and didn’t want to suffer.

On that wide, messy bed, the other unpicked “tributes” around him were all struggling and begging, only Rong Jiu had his eyes closed, mewling softly like a kitten while letting the soldiers manhandle him without complaint.

Looking at his face flushed with arousal, Mo Ran felt a chill in his heart.

He thought of Chu Wanning.

Rong Jiu was soft and pliant, Chu Wanning was firm as steel.

Cold and hard as black iron at first glance, unbending and unyielding. But in a situation like this, Rong Jiu would flatter and fawn to seek favor, would lie back and use his softness to build himself an invulnerable fortress.

As for Chu Chu Wanning?

Mo Ran didn't even have to think about it to know what that person would do—he'd sooner scatter his soul and fall into the Eighteenth Level of Hell than allow someone to touch him.

Running water never breaks, only steel blades do.

BANG!

The sudden noise startled the people in the room as well as the one on the roof.

Mo Ran raised his head to look toward the courtyard, his face blanching.

That woman from before who was fierce as an inferno had been pierced right through the chest by one of the soldiers. Her soul gradually became transparent as tears welled past her eyes.

Then everything froze for a second.

Before dissolving into countless specks.

Her soul had scattered.

The soldier who had destroyed her soul cursed as he stood up. There was a lash mark on his face—the woman had probably wrested his ghost-suppression whip and struck him with it. The soldier spit, “What a fucking wench! Already a ghost and still so damn prissy, bah! Stupid bitch!”

Mo Ran felt like he had fallen into an icy cave.

It was as if the one he saw just now wasn’t that unfamiliar woman, but the choice that Chu Wanning would have picked.

Rong Jiu was still tumbling in bed with those lecherous ghosts. It was a skill he had honed for survival, attaching himself to someone stronger like climbing vines, engulfing them with his softness like a trap.

One by one, the tributes in the room submitted, the stench of sex nauseatingly heavy.

He didn’t know how long had passed before the curtain finally fell on the lurid spectacle.

Rong Jiu really did know how to charm people. One of the soldiers pulled on his clothing and then immediately went to do the registration with his leader. All that was left now was to have the Fourth King look it over, and he’ll be free to bring him home.

These ghost soldiers were subordinates of the Fourth King, and were exempt from the cycle of reincarnation. Although not quite as good as following the Fourth King himself, following these guys would still get him a fairly comfortable life without humiliation.

Rong Jiu was quite content with that.

The soldier who wanted to bring him home flirted with him for a while longer before he had to leave for guard duty. The group of fiends walked away into the distance, leaving the side room in disarray, dreary and cheerless like the aftermath of a feast, leftover wine and sentiments spilt all over the floor, growing cold.

He sat up lazily, the least bothered of the group despite being a man.

He dressed and groomed himself, and then, looking into the copper mirror, felt that his face looked much too pallid in death, compared to the rosy glow he had in life, and didn't complement his coquettish gazes.

So, ignoring those sobbing, dazed, trembling women, Rong Jiu cheerily straightened out his clothes, put on a pair of silk shoes, and strolled into the courtyard.

Hell had primula flowers as well, of an even deeper red than those found in the world of the living. He picked an umbel of the flowers, dipping the tip of a slim finger into the sap to paint his lips and blush his cheeks.

Everyone had their own priorities. Rong Jiu had led a difficult life since birth; in his eyes, only the well-off, who were high above the rest and

didn’t have to worry about going hungry, had the leisure to chase after things like friendship. He was just some dirty thing in the mud, he couldn’t afford to care about integrity and honor and whatnot. All he had was his life, and now that that was gone, all he had was his soul.

There was a slight rustling sound from behind, like someone had touched the flowers.

He thought the soldier that took a liking to him had doubled back, so he filled his gaze with a generous serving of affection—everything cost money, only affections were free.

He cast a coy glance back, looking exceedingly beautiful and charming, indistinguishable between male and female.

But when he saw who it was standing coldly next to the flowering plant, Rong Jiu recoiled back a step with his eyes wide open and lips slightly parted, like he had been struck by lightning——

“You?!”

“Me,” Mo Ran said.

Rong Jiu’s soft, pretty face flashed through a wild array of expressions; shock, hesitation, gloating, anger, apprehension, feigned nonchalance.

And in the end settled on a cold, detached expression.

He was too used to wearing a smile. Those overly intense and ferocious expressions felt heavy on his face; he didn't feel like carrying them.

"Fancy seeing you here, Mo-gongzi." The two of them had parted on terrible terms the last time they met. Rong Jiu stood up straight and put on an air of indifference.

Mo Ran said, "I'm looking for someone."

Rong Jiu seemed to scoff, "Who would've thought that a philanderer like Mo-gongzi would be so attached to someone even in death."

Mo Ran didn't feel like wasting breath with him. He simply took out the drawing scroll and handed it to Rong Jiu, asking, "Have you seen him?"

Rong Jiu gave the drawing a quick glance and sneered, "Eh, average-looking. Which whorehouse is he from?"

Mo Ran frowned and said, "What do you mean whorehouse, just tell me if you've seen him."

"Nope," Rong Jiu said indifferently. "Wouldn't tell you even if I have."

"....."

"I'm tired now, gonna go get some rest. Please see yourself out and go back wherever you came from."

Mo Ran called out to him, “Rong Jiu!”

The slim figure paused, and the pretty face turned a bit, wearing a smug expression. “Yes?”

“I’m going to rescue him. If you want, I’ll rescue you too. This place is ruthless, surely you don’t mean to actually hang around with those soldiers,” Mo Ran said. “Go reincarnate.”

Turning more, Rong Jiu spoke sweetly, “Such words, Mo-gongzi. Sure, this place may be ruthless, but what place isn’t? Rong Jiu lived a difficult twenty years up there, and honestly it’s not much different down here, only my patrons are now ghosts instead of people. What does it matter if I reincarnate or not?”

“...You’d be living under a knife here.”

Rong Jiu burst out laughing. He pulled himself together, still laughing as he glanced Mo Ran over. “When have I not lived under a knife? People are knives, I’m just the meat on their chopping block. If I’m lucky and get someone nice, maybe they’ll pay me a little more. But if I get someone ‘extra nice’ like Mo-gongzi, not getting paid is the least of it, with the way you stole from me and then turned around and pretended you didn’t even know me. Mo-gongzi, first you stab me, then you tell me to be careful of knives, how very kind of you.”

Author’s Notes:

Today's Weibo has the adorable Inkstone's "Dog teasing the big white cat" illustration~it hits where it's cute, a faceful of blood!

There's also the adorable Shuanghua stabbing Meatbun with a sword (.....)’s “Dog misses his mother" illustration, it made me cry.....fuck, I felt like got stabbed, the content below is not written by me, it's written by Shuanghua stabbing Meatbun with a sword!! I've typed the words on the illustration here~ at the service of those who going to weibo is inconvenient for--

"Mother, mother! Today, A-Ran managed to eat a lot of desserts that he never got to eat before! Super happy!!

I even got a Shizun! He's so pretty! There's also two shixiong s~oh, no, one of them isn't, he's my cousin!

I kind of want to kick his teeth in a little! But A-Ran will get along well with him!

Mother...

A-Ran wants to let you taste the desserts we normally don't get to

Wants to let you see the beautiful Shizun

A-Ran misses you a lot

A-Ran still wants to be with Mother (heart)"

--Shuanghua stabbing Meatbun with a sword

qaq Goddammit, this is god-level knifery, this one has lost.

When Dog was younger, he had once set his heart on being someone who did not bear grudges or hatred, who would build houses for all the homeless of the world. But it was also this person, who became a demon whose hands were permanently stained with bloodsheds and sins that he could not wash away. If Dog's mother had still not reincarnated, and knew of this in the Underworld, she must be very sad.

As for him looking pitiful in yesterday's update, actually, he isn't that pitiful, because those were the best days of his first fifteen years of life.

He'd already said so at the beginning of his recollection: back then, at least, he still had his mother.

Afterwards, he no longer had his mother.

Actually, you don't have to intentionally categorise actions as "right or wrong", or people as "good or evil"; some good people will turn evil, and others will crawl from hell back to humanity. A character will have aspects worthy of liking, aspects worthy of hate, aspects worthy of pity; only then can they be realistic. A world can only be complete if there are mistakes, regrets, injustice, and justice.

If a story only contains good characters of the same mold and a single worldview, without emotional conflict or opposing characters and moralities--where the theme song is "The Spring Winds of Re(cough)volution Come A-Sweepin'", where there is universal joy, where everyone is honest and trustworthy, where I'll stay by the roadside for a whole year waiting for the owner of the fifty-cent coin I found to return and claim it--you might as well turn on the television at seven-thirty to watch the very long-running serial drama "Xinwen Lianbo",[130] your satisfaction guaranteed…

Ch.112 Shizun Is Not To Be Sullied

He was talking about what Mo Ran had done on the first day of his reborn life, when he was full of resentment.

Thinking back to it now, although Rong Jiu had wronged him in the last lifetime, teaming up with Chang-gongzi to scheme against his life, that happened in the past life. The Rong Jiu of this lifetime hadn't yet gone that far with Chang-gongzi, and there really was no way for Mo Ran to explain why he had taken his money and things back then.

"It was my bad." That being the case, Mo Ran didn't want to fight, only saying, "Everything I took from you that day, I'll give back to you in the future."

"How would you do that?" Rong Jiu asked. "Or rather, what good would money and treasures do me now?"

Mo Ran: "....."

"You can give me back the bracelets and pearls, but what about my life?"

"What?" Mo Ran was caught off guard. "Your life?"

"Yes, my life." Rong Jiu's expression clouded over, as if a painful wound in his heart had been touched.

"Do you know how I died?"

"....."

He had probably been holding it in for a long time already, and now that the lid was abruptly lifted, the steam beneath burst out in an

uncontrollable stream. He continued on, wretchedly, before Mo Ran could say anything, his expression suddenly one of rage that slowly grew twisted.

“That Chang guy is ruthless. I had no more value to him once you stopped being into me, so he made up some lies about really truly liking me, but his family objects because I’m just a rent boy in a brothel, not clean, and it’d be best if we stopped seeing each other. I was blind back then, thought his feelings were sincere, that he had no choice, that his parents made him… bah! I can’t believe I actually fell for his rubbish!”

Mo Ran said, “But what are you blaming me for, shouldn’t you blame the Chang dude.”

Rong Jiu snapped angrily, “Why shouldn’t I blame you? I had enough saved up to buy my freedom, and you stole it all. I was too despondent to stay at the brothel any longer, but I couldn’t openly leave without money, so I had to secretly run away. If you hadn’t stolen everything from me, I wouldn’t have ended up like this!”

“...You ran away?”

“That’s right, I ran away. I ran to his place,” Rong Jiu said hatefully. “But that Chang guy wouldn’t open the door for me, even while the people sent by the brothel were closing in. All my struggles were useless in the end. I got dragged back there, beat up and tormented, and locked back up.”

Mo Ran muttered, “But the Chang guy said you went to visit relatives at Butterfly Town and ran into the Ghost Realm barrier breaking, and that’s how you died.”

“HAH!” There was a thread of mockery on Rong Jiu’s androgynous face. “He sure is shameless. Relatives? What relatives could I have at Butterfly

Town!”

“.....”

“Didn’t you say something about living under a knife? Let me tell you what it means to live under a knife!” Rong Jiu got more and more worked up, his features almost twisted, and in this moment, he really did look like a vicious ghost. “Let me tell you just how I died! You and all my other dear patrons! Haha——patrons!”

“I was locked up in the brothel for so long without any food, just being tormented. No one cared if I lived or died. Days passed like that, and I was just about to give up hope when that Chang guy suddenly turned up again, crying and saying that he couldn’t let me in that day because his parents were in a bad mood and he was afraid that they’d have the servants beat me to death if he let me in!”

Mo Ran shook his head; it was so obviously a lie. “Surely you didn’t believe him.”

“No.” There was a spot of light quivering in Rong Jiu’s eyes. “I believed him.”

Mo Ran: “.....”

“I believed him.” Rong Jiu forced out a smile in the midst of all that resentment, the corners of his mouth twisting. “Why wouldn’t I? Doubt is the privilege of those who have a way out. What am I but a flesh peddler? I have to believe whatever people throw out, or else I wouldn’t be able to even survive.”

He paused before continuing.

“The Chang guy said he’ll be true to his word and take me into his home, but that his parents can’t accept me just yet, and asked me to go with him to a nearby town and live there for a while first.”

“Butterfly Town?”

“Yes. Butterfly Town.”

Mo Ran’s expression darkened; he already knew where this was going.

Sure enough, Rong Jiu continued, “So I happily packed my things, well actually, there wasn’t really much to pack, since you stole everything I earned selling my body all these years, just on a whim. But that’s alright, I thought at the time, I have Chang-gongzi now.”

“...Heh,” he was silent for a bit, his lips twitching with a snicker, then hatefully spit out the name again, “Chang-gongzi.”

“Did he trick you into going to Butterfly Town and kill you there?”

“...No.” Rong Jiu wore a savage smile as bitterness flickered in his eyes. “It wasn’t him that killed me, it was all of you that blocked off my paths one by one until I had no choice but to go with him on that shady venture. It was all of you, it all of you that killed me.”

Rong Jiu breathed in and continued, “We got to Butterfly Town and I followed the Chang guy into a large manor. It was quiet and empty inside, and there weren’t any servants. He said he hadn’t had a chance to decorate yet, and told me to stay there and rest for a bit while he goes out to buy some stuff. So I stayed and waited, and then a short while later I saw him come back with some man——”

Hearing that, Mo Ran's expression changed abruptly. "Did you see that man's face?"

"No," Rong Jiu said, "He wore a mask and had a cloak on, I couldn't see his face at all… And then I saw the Chang guy kneel in front of that man, simpering harder than even I do while taking guests. He really should've looked in the mirror just then, disgusting. He told that man I had residual wood elemental spiritual essence or something on me, that I'd been intimate with you before——a good offering. Something like that, who knows, I'm not a cultivator nor do I want to be one, I don't know what they were talking about."

But Mo Ran felt his scalp go numb.

It was true that he had been intimate with Rong Jiu before, and so there would be traces of wood elemental spiritual essence remaining in Rong Jiu's body. That fake Gouchen was looking for a suitable replacement, and although the lingering spiritual energy would've been very faint, it nevertheless would've been pure, indeed suitable for use in spells.

"There's not much to say about what happened after that." There was a bone-chilling coldness in Rong Jiu's usually easygoing expression. "As Mo-gongzi can see, I died."

If it had been the Mo Ran of the past life, or the Mo Ran that had just been reborn, he would've scoffed and mocked, "So what if you died, what's that

got to do with me?”

But the current Mo Ran couldn’t find it in him to laugh.

He did loathe Rong Jiu, and Rong Jiu was unscrupulous, and had even gone so far as to plot against his life in the last lifetime. But although he had been physically intimate with Rong Jiu before, they never once had an open, honest talk. To suddenly hear such plain-spoken admissions from Rong Jiu now, down here in the Underworld, Mo Ran felt a hundred mixed emotions.

He mulled it over and decided that there was no way to sort out all these countless threads of bygone things; might as well just let it go.

He sighed and said, “Rong Jiu, I’m sorry about it all.”

Rong Jiu had gone his whole life without anyone ever saying sorry to him. Caught off guard, he looked Mo Ran over with wide eyes like he didn’t recognize him at all before saying, “Even if you say that, I’m still not going to tell you where the person in the drawing is.”

Mo Ran said, “This has nothing to do with the drawing.”

Rong Jiu was quiet for a while, with his head lowered. Then he suddenly spoke, “Mo-gongzi, did you know, Chang-gongzi was plotting with me to kill you and steal your cultivation?”

“I know.”

“You… you know?”

Mo Ran nodded. “I know.”

Rong Jiu stared blankly for a while, then said resentfully, “That Chang guy must’ve ratted me out!”

Then his head snapped back up, eyes flickering with hatred. “If I’d known things were going to end this way, I should’ve just listened to him and killed you. At least then I might have had a good life, instead of dying miserably like this.”

Mo Ran gazed at him. “Do you always do whatever other people tell you to?”

“So what if I do?” Rong Jiu said. “I just wanted to live a good life. For instance, I sold my body, but what’s wrong with that? How is it any different from selling fish or selling meat? It’s just a way to make a living. I know all the young masters like yourself looked down on me, but that didn’t matter. What’s the point in things like reputation and dignity? I’d rather have good wine and good meat. That’s why, if I could’ve saved myself by killing you back then, why wouldn’t I?”

Mo Ran’s lips moved slightly; he was going to make a retort, but then he remembered what he himself had done in the past life, and found that he couldn’t deny what he had said.

Rong Jiu spit angrily, “People kill animals and eat their flesh in order to live, so what’s wrong with killing people in order to live?”

Mo Ran let out a sigh, asking in a murmur, “Is there any meaning in living like that?”

Seemingly directed at Rong Jiu.

But also seemingly directed at his past self, sitting high up on his throne a lifetime ago.

“I don’t know. I don’t know what meaning is,” Rong Jiu said without any feeling. “I was sixteen when I was sold into the brothel, and my first customer was a fifty-something cultivator. I don’t know what it means for something to have meaning. When I was alive, all I wanted was money, I could buy my freedom if I had money, and then I won’t have to bow and simper to other people anymore. But I never got my freedom, even until death, all thanks to you beasts.”

Mo Ran said nothing. A long moment passed before he asked, “So if you could do it over, you’d work together with that Chang guy to kill me?”

“That’s right.”

Mo Ran said, “Alright, then if I could do it over, I’d still turn around and swipe all your money just to screw you over.”

“YOU——!”

Rong Jiu was so angry that the faint blush on his cheeks from the primula flower seemed even more vivid. His body swayed for a while before slowly calming back down.

A few moments passed. Rong Jiu knew he had lost his composure; he reached up to tuck away a few stray strands of hair, then pulled himself together and schooled his features back into his usual coy smile, but anger flickered still in his gaze.

“You can say what you want. I have my own way of living.”

“Enjoy your time down here in the Underworld then.”

Rong Jiu narrowed his eyes. “I fully intend to. All I have to do is lie back on the bed and I’ll be spared the misery of reincarnation for the rest of eternity. I know what a good deal it is, unlike those idiots in the room, I’m more than willing.”

Mo Ran’s lips tugged in a brief smile. He said, “But Rong Jiu, these people work for the Fourth Ghost King, so whether you get to live, whether you get to stay, it all hinges on his word.”

Rong Jiu flinched, then immediately put on his guard, staring at him with those pretty eyes of his.

“What are you trying to say.”

Mo Ran didn’t really want to keep quarreling with him like this, if not for the situation being what it was. But although Rong Jiu had a docile temper, he was unrelenting once he began to hate someone, so Mo Ran could only maintain his calm as he spoke, “You may think the person in the drawing is only average, but I think he’s great. Everyone has a different eye for beauty, who’s to say the Ghost King won’t take a liking to him?”

“With frigid looks like those, who’d be into him ?”

“You never know,” Mo Ran said. “If the Ghost King liked the soft type, then why didn’t he pick you?”

“.....” Rong Jiu fell silent, but his expression darkened somewhat.

Mo Ran pressed, “He has a fierce temper; if he gets picked, he’ll probably end up flipping the entire Underworld upside down. Then when the time comes to pin the blame, the Fourth Ghost King’s people definitely won’t be let off easy—some of these soldiers getting executed is a sure thing. If you wanna make like a climbing vine, at least make sure the tree you climb is sturdy. If the tree topples over when you’ve only just coiled around it, losing your support would be the least of your concerns, chances are you’ll get uprooted alongside, and that’ll be a soul-scattering kind of end.”

Rong Jiu’s already pale face seemed to blanch some more.

But he still insisted, coy yet vicious, “I doubt any of that will happen.”

Mo Ran: “.....”

“Mo-gongzi, let’s bet on it. I just can’t stand to see you being better off than me.”

A few moments passed in silence, and then Mo Ran suddenly became vicious as well, eyes fixed on Rong Jiu as he said, “I’m not betting with you. Rong Jiu, I will rescue this person. But if that’s how you wanna play, then I’ll put my life on the line.”

Rong Jiu tilted his head back, something flickering in his gaze as his hand shot out abruptly to press against Mo Ran's chest like a serpent strike, the sting of a scorpion. "Who is he to you? How long have you been lovers for? Longer than with me? Is he better than me in bed? Is it that he knows more tricks, or that he cries out prettier?" He paused, eyelashes slowly drooping. "Mo-gongzi, you're not the kind of lovestruck fool who would risk your life for another; you hold no affection in your heart, you can't fool me."

He barely got to finish before Mo Ran pinched his cheek painfully.

Mo Ran pulled him off of himself, inky black brows inclined and fire glinting in his eyes. "I didn't have a heart before. I do now."

Rong Jiu's eyes snapped up, locked onto his face. He suddenly noticed that this person was scorching hot, and even a little unfamiliar.

The person still seemed to be that free and easy Mo Weiyu, but something seemed different about the soul inside.

Rong Jiu flinched like he had been burned by this kind of Mo Ran. He wanted to turn and run, but was firmly held in place.

"And," Mo Ran said, "between him and I… from here on out, there will be no impropriety. I respect and love him without a single impure thought. Don't you dare sully him."

He shoved Rong Jiu away as he spoke. Rong Jiu knocked into a colonnade, staring incredulously at the person in front of him, too much in disbelief to notice how strangely worded "from here on out, there will be no

impropriety" was. If he had his senses then, he would've surely realized the subtle implications behind those words.

No impropriety from here on out meant that there once had been impropriety.

But Rong Jiu didn't catch that.

"He isn't your… isn't your…"

Mo Ran said, "No, he's my Shizun."

Rong Jiu fell silent, but someone like him could always sniff out even the most subtle of sentiments hidden in the words of another, feelings that even Mo Ran himself might not know about, but Rong Jiu could smell it.

He was almost certain that Mo Ran loved the person in the portrait. As someone who never could obtain anyone's affections, he felt bitter jealousy at the thought.

So even the philandering Mo-gongzi would willingly risk life and limb to save a person.

He suddenly wondered, if he had been more sincere toward Mo-gongzi back then, if he had been earnest and wholehearted, then might Mo Ran have also… shown him some real, genuine feelings?

He was still in the midst of wondering when Mo Ran spoke again in a cold, vicious voice without the slightest hint of jest, "Rong Jiu, I will ask you one last time where he is. If you still claim to not know…I'm a cultivator, and

there are plenty of drugs and spells to make someone talk. And besides, do you think I won't take the plunge and go see the Ghost King myself?"

Rong Jiu was completely dumbfounded now. "You…"

"I committed all kinds of transgressions all my life, but now I want to lead a proper life. However, if no one will lend me a hand, then I'm still that same Mo Weiyu," he said softly. "Rong Jiu, think it through before you answer. I'm not afraid to die, nor am I afraid of having my soul scattered. If you insist on being obstinate, then I won't hold back either."

Neither spoke for a while.

They stared each other down, the resolute against the resentful, the unshakeable against the unresigned, the fiery against the frosty.

Then the ice in Rong Jiu's eyes melted, like he had been defeated by the wildfire in Mo Ran's oppressive gaze. His envy and hatred ran deep, but Mo Ran's obsession was no shallow thing either. In a face-off like that, he was no match for Emperor Taxian-Jun.

Rong Jiu's face was so ashen that even the vibrancy of the primula flower couldn't cover its gauntness like ruins and wreckage.

"Why would you go this far for him?"

"He treated me the best, but I tormented him like he was my worst enemy. I owe him."

"....."

“I really haven’t seen this person,” Rong Jiu whispered after a long moment, and then, seeing Mo Ran’s expression, slowly added, “I’m not lying. But I do know that all the newly captured ghosts are kept in the biggest hall on the east side, separately locked in small, cage-like rooms with patrolling guards. You should be able to find him there.”

Mo Ran wasn’t going to wait even a second longer, already turning and rushing off into the night. Rong Jiu stared after him in a daze from where he was rooted in place. Some kind of bitter feeling flooded his chest, and he suddenly yelled toward Mo Ran’s back despite himself, “Mo Weiyu, you ——you want to lead a proper life now? Who gets to do that! You and I are both people covered in mud! Neither of us gets a do-over for a proper life!!”

“Mo Weiyu! Just you watch, I’m going to live a good life, I’m going to do whatever I have to to cling to life, I’ll sell my body and my soul, but I’m going to live lavishly even if my whole body rots away! Just you watch! You think you can just wipe off the smell of blood? You wish! The filth’s already in your bones! You can go ahead and play at being reformed, and I’m going to keep whoring, we’ll see who gets to live a good life! Mo Weiyu!”

He yelled until even the back of Mo Ran’s silhouette was gone from sight. Only then did he drop into a crouch, hands coming up to cover his face as he choked back his sobs.

“How come you get to do things over, how come even someone as rotten as you gets to have someone who treats you well… how come…”

Author’s Notes

I know you miss Shizun, Shizun comes online next chapter2333

And...this is not the first time that the novel's title has been flamed, clutches face. This name sounds naturally cute? And doesn’t seem to fit the style of the novel?

So I’d like to ask for everyone’s opinion, should I change it back to “This Venerable One Has Been Reformed”, or just name it “Reformed”? May you all point the way for this useless one who is bad at naming things, thank you! Lies down...

Ch.113 Shizun, Imprisoned

The largest courtyard on the east side was indeed what Rong Jiu said it would be, with three floors in all, room after room. It was the grandest sector, but also the dirtiest and messiest. An old tree drooped by the entrance to the courtyard, and on it sat countless dead crows, each holding a madly-spinning eyeball between its beak that surveyed the surroundings for anything out of the ordinary.

Two small groups of patrolling ghost soldiers stomped back and forth, guarding the “tributes” that were to be given to the Fourth Ghost King in offering.

Mo Ran hid himself behind a corner, observing the route taken by the ghosts while sizing up the blind spots around the building.

All the lights were on in those small, compartment-like rooms. From time to time, the ghosts inside could be heard weeping or sighing, the sounds mingling and overlapping in the night like an eerie elegy echoed from ancient times, making hairs stand on end.

There were upwards of three hundred rooms in there, and the patrol came around every ten minutes. There was no way he was going to be able to so easily find Chu Wanning in ten minutes, not to mention every floor had a guard by the stairs armed with soul-shattering whips and wearing emergency signal whistles around their necks.

Mo Ran was fretting anxiously when he spotted a lone ghost approaching from the distance. He was dressed in the same uniform as those guards, with a red-on-black token hanging from his waist. Mo Ran scooted a little more into the shadowed area and watched as he walked past right in front of him, coming to a stop at the foot of the stairs.

The ghost exchanged nods with the guard at the stairs. The night was very quiet, so Mo Ran could easily eavesdrop on their conversation.

“Qi-ge, you here to relieve Lao-San?”

“Mhm. You’re almost done your shift too, right?”

“I’m still waiting for next shift’s guy to come, I’m off as soon as he gets here.”

The ghost soldier here to take up his shift went up the stairs. The guard on the first floor yawned in boredom and continued to watch his post in the howling wind.

Seeing this exchange, Mo Ran was suddenly struck by a somewhat risky idea...

From the distance came three sounds of impact: whack slam thud .

“ Caw —— caw ——” screeched the crows on the branch, like they had seen something out of the norm.

The guard at the entrance snapped to alertness. Looking around, he saw in the thin layer of hazy fog, the silhouette of someone slowly approaching.

Once closer, it turned out to be a young man he had never seen before. The guard grew even more wary.

“Who are you?”

“I’m here to relieve you,” the person said.

The red clouds overhead drifted past, the bright moon above peeking out to illuminate his face—and what a handsome ghost soldier he was.

His facial features were straight and even, charming and naturally expressive. This “ghost” that came to change shifts was none other than Mo Ran.

He was decked out in a set of the ghost soldiers’ armored uniform that he had acquired from god-knows-where, complete with a black-red token swaying at his waist and an emergency whistle dangling by his chest, reflecting a cold silvery light.

“I’ve never seen you before.” The guard challenged.

“I’m new.”

The guard put out a hand, unconvinced. “Token?”

Mo Ran untied the token from his waist and handed it over, his expression even and unperturbed despite how tense he actually was inside.

Luckily the guard found nothing strange even after looking the token over several times, front and back, and didn’t feel like pressing the matter

further, so he clapped him on the shoulder and said, “Then we’ll be counting on you for the rest of the night. I’m off.”

“Have a safe trip home, Senior.”

The ghost cackled a bit, quite pleased by the form of address, and waved his hand. “Good lad, I’ll see you around.”

“Ah… Senior, one moment please!”

“What is it?” The guard turned to look over his shoulder.

Mo Ran grinned and very casually asked, “How many of the tributes in this batch have the surname Chu?”

The guard countered cautiously, “Why do you ask?”

“Just asking around for Sir Chu of Tailwind Hall,” Mo Ran said. “He had a distant relative come down here recently, but Tailwind Hall couldn’t find him, so he was wondering if he might be here.”

Chu Xun’s name carried some weight around these parts as expected; the guard hesitated a bit, but then pointed toward the second floor. “There are three people named Chu in the three innermost rooms up there. You can go take a look.”

Mo Ran smiled brightly and said, “Many thanks for the tip, Senior.”

“You’re welcome.” Senior was dumb as fuck. “Matter of course.”

That settled, the guard wandered off leisurely, humming a light little tune as he went. He strolled right past the corner without noticing his actual comrade, the one that was supposed to take the next shift, who had been tied up with a binding spell and tossed into a ditch. That poor ghost had been stripped of all his armor and left in only the thin layer of his inner garments. He glared furiously, but was well and thoroughly gagged so that he couldn’t make so much as a single sound, and could do nothing but fume uselessly.

Mo Ran didn’t trust Rong Jiu to not try and pull something; the unpicked “tributes” were kept collectively in the side palace with only a blocking barrier outside and no guard, but there might still be patrols. With how much Rong Jiu hates him, he’d definitely tell on him if a patrol were to pass by.

There was no time to lose, he had to go fast.

Mo Ran stood there for a while and waited for a group of the walking patrols to pass by, then immediately turned and rushed up to the second floor. The guard on the second floor blocked Mo Ran off with his pike.

“Halt. What are you here for?”

“It’s my first day as a guard here, on the first floor.”

The guard furrowed his brows. “Then go to the first floor, what’re you doing on my floor?”

Mo Ran tried to use Chu Xun as a stepping stone again, but this guard wasn't buying it, and snapped sternly, "So what if it's Tailwind Hall's Sir Chu? Once a person's in this here palace, they belong to the Fourth King. If he wants to rescue his relative, he can go talk to the Fourth King himself, keep me out of it!"

Mo Ran grumbled mentally; this guy seemed to be smarter than the one downstairs. But he could only put on a bold front and say, "It's not like I'm gonna take him away today , but at least let me take a look and make sure I haven't got the wrong person?"

"That's easy. Give me the name and I'll look it up, no need for you to go in."

"....." Mo Ran was indescribably vexed, but pushed down his anger to say, "Chu Wanning. His name is Chu Wanning."

The soldier was going to check in the roster, but he set the roster back down as soon as he heard this name.

Mo Ran grew worried at his reaction, asking, "What is it? What's the problem?"

"What's the problem?" The guard repeated his question with a sneer before continuing. "You sure don't know your place, new guy. The Fourth King came by earlier today to see the beauties, and he's sweet on this Chu-xianjun. If not for the fact that it hadn't yet been seven days for him, so his three souls aren't all here and he can't be taken to the Fourth Level of Hell

just yet, he would've been given to the Ghost King this very night. You want him ? What do you think the problem is."

Mo Ran's face was already blue halfway through, and he didn't speak until quite a while after the guard finished talking, "The Fourth Ghost King fancies him?"

"So?"

"...Nothing. Nevermind then, sorry to bother." Mo Ran turned around sullenly and took two steps down the stairs. Then, before the other could even react, holy weapon Jiangui had appeared in his hand as he spun around and wrapped it tightly around the guard's neck!

Piercing scarlet flashed through the air.

Holy weapons could maim ghosts and gods alike; that guard only had time to see scarlet willow leaves fly past before his eyes and hear the newcomer say angrily, "What makes you think I wouldn't fight the Ghost King for him!" before he lost consciousness and crumpled to the floor.

Mo Ran lifted his hands and cast a spell to tie him up and seal his lips before kicking him to the side, then ran hurriedly toward the end of the hallway.

The three rooms at the end of the hall all held souls with the surname Chu.

Mo Ran wasn't sure how, but he seemed to know in his heart, so much so that even he himself didn't stop to wonder just why he had such a peculiar feeling before he pushed the door open. He stood in front of the second room, slightly out of breath from how fast he ran.

He panted; a strand of inky black hair fell in front of his eyes, but he paid it no mind, eyes fixed inside the room——

Everything was just as Rong Jiu said.

It was a small room the size of an animal cage, with drab, ashen walls the color of death.

But the person inside seemed so very warm, like a flame in the cold, endless white.

Not every “tribute” was tied up, or at least Chu Wanning wasn’t. Maybe because the Fourth King already had his sights set on him and the guards didn’t dare displease him, but there was even a snow-white animal pelt on the floor, thick and soft like a layer of fresh snow in the depth of winter.

Chu Wanning was asleep on the fur rug. He was the kind of person who appeared resolute and undaunted, but was, truthfully, always a little uneasy deep inside. This manifested itself most evidently in his sleep—he always slept curled up, shrinking into himself to be smaller.

As if he was trying to keep himself warm, but also as if he was afraid of taking up someone else’s space. Like this, he looked frail and a little pitiful.

This soul wasn’t like the Human Soul; there were no bloodstains on his handsome face, and the clothes he wore were different too. He was dressed in vibrant red silks the color of sunset, loose-fitting with broad sleeves, and richly patterned with the imagery of coiling dragon and soaring phoenix, of dancing golden butterflies.

Mo Ran practically stumbled forward, dropping to his knees next to Chu Wanning and reaching out with trembling hands to caress his face.

“Wanning…”

The utterance that slipped out wasn’t Shizun, but the name he had called him by during those final days of his past life.

Those twisted days of hatred and entanglement, suffused into his very being.

He lifted Chu Wanning into his arms, but it was a while before the drowsy man awakened.

When Chu Wanning opened his eyes, he found himself lying in Mo Ran's embrace. The look of concern on the young man's face, on those features that had yet to fully mature, was an expression the likes of which he'd never seen before. He furrowed his brows, thinking that perhaps this was some kind of dream, and after a moment, sighed and closed his eyes once more.

“Shizun!”

Someone called by his ear.

It wasn’t “Wanning” this time.

“Shizun! Shizun!”

Chu Wanning’s phoenix eyes shot open, and although his expression didn’t really change, he was betrayed by the minute trembling of his fingertips.

In the next instant, Mo Ran took hold of his hand and pressed it against his own face, laughing and crying at the same time until his handsome features were a sorry-looking mess.

“Shizun,” he choked back a sob as he gazed unblinkingly at him, repeating the word over and over like he had forgotten how to say anything else, “Shizun…”

Chu Wanning finally came back to his senses where he was clutched tightly in Mo Ran’s arms. Subconsciously feeling that it was improper, he struggled free of Mo Ran and sat up to glare at him.

He stared blankly for a long while without a single word.

Then suddenly flew into a rage.

Before Mo Ran could even react, Chu Wanning had already jerked his hand away and turned to land a backhanded slap to his face, scowling furiously.

“You idiot! How did you die too?!”

Mo Ran opened his mouth and was just about to explain when he saw, in the haziness of the moonlight, that beneath all that anger, the eyes under Chu Wanning’s long lashes were subdued and sorrowful, as if unresigned, as if there was a teariness there that might shatter at the slightest touch. He bit down hard on his lower lip when he finished cursing, forcefully holding back the shameful, humiliating tightness in his throat.

There were those who would flaunt the tiniest cut, make sure everyone knew they'd been injured.

And then there were those who were too proud to say, who would rather swallow their grievance and suffering, even if it ripped their throats bloody, than to speak a word of it.

He never said, so Mo Ran never knew before.

But his heart ached terribly now that he knew.

He wanted to hold Chu Wanning.

But Chu Wanning pushed him away, voice hoarse as he said, "Get the hell out."

Chu Wanning turned his face away, hiding a thousand layers of heartbreak under a single layer of stiff coldness.

"You have some nerve, coming to see me after dying so young."

"Shizun…"

"Out." Chu Wanning's face turned away even more. "You're no disciple of mine, I don't take anyone so useless as to end up dead in his prime."

Dead in his prime…

Mo Ran had originally been feeling dejected, but after being reprimanded by him all seriously like this, he suddenly felt warmth flood his heart like the trickling of spring waters. He raised a hand and clapped his forehead

before sliding it down to cover his eyes, and then, unable to help himself, started laughing in a mixture of bitter and sweet and sour.

Chu Wanning grew even angrier at the light sound of his laughter, whipping his head around to chide sternly, “What’re you laughing about, you——” He made to slap Mo Ran again in a fit of rage, but Mo Ran caught his hand.

The young man’s gentle eyes blinked, slowly, and then, without saying anything, he solemnly brought Chu Wanning’s hand to press against his own chest.

Author’s Notes:

The big white cat that is finally released: [thanking jjwxc readers]

The rescue canine that failed the passing criteria: [thanking jjwxc readers]

Ch.114 Shizun, Say You Will

Thump, thump, thump.

A slow, steady heartbeat.

Chu Wanning blinked, surprise, joy, awkwardness, and embarrassment flitting across his eyes in an instant. But Yuheng Elder was Yuheng Elder after all, calm and cool as ever, more adept than anyone else at schooling his features into one of unruffled composure, sweeping those excess emotions under the rug in no time at all like the one that was admonishing Mo Ran in despair just now wasn't him.

"What're you doing down here if you're not dead."

Chu Wanning regretted it as soon as the words left his mouth.

It was obvious that Mo Ran had come to save himself. But Chu Wanning was afraid his heart might beat right out of his chest if Mo Ran were to actually say that to him.

He was so nervous that he completely forgot he was already dead, and had no heart to speak of.

But Mo Ran only gazed at him without saying any such thing.

He probably knew that Chu Wanning would be embarrassed if he were to say “I came here for you”.

So he thought for a bit, then pressed his lips together and asked gently with lowered lashes, “Shizun, take a guess why I’m down here?”

“...You came looking for trouble.”

“Since when did Shizun change his name to trouble?” Mo Ran grinned. “Should’ve told me.”

Chu Wanning jerked his hand back, as if stung by this gentleness that he’s never had before, snapping in embarrassed anger, “What nonsense, how impudent.”

Mo Ran had found out a secret.

He had found out that Chu Wanning’s anger was a mask. He was just so awkward that he’d rather wear that menacing, colorful mask to hide all of the gentleness, happiness, joy, embarrassment, and sadness beneath.

What a dummy.

Chu Wanning was a dummy, wearing that mask all his life like it’s not exhausting.

He was a dummy too, taking two whole lifetimes to figure that out.

The mood was a bit lighter now, after that. And rebirth was finally within reach now that he had found all four of Chu Wanning's souls.

Mo Ran was in high spirits. He grabbed Chu Wanning's hand again, not letting go as he rambled on and on, telling him about why he had come down to the Underworld, about Master Huaizui, and when it came to certain things, he had to stop and wait for the tightness in his throat to go away before continuing with red-rimmed eyes. And as he explained, the words that appeared the most were "I'm sorry".

Chu Wanning didn't know what to say.

He was good to others, but he didn't do it to get anything out of them, and he was also afraid that they'd feel troubled or indebted to receive his goodwill.

In truth, he was afraid that he'd offer up his warm, beating heart to someone, only for that person to casually set him aside to cool.

That was why he would always hide his kind deeds, though he was otherwise an open and straightforward person.

He had worn a mask his whole life.

But one day, the person he liked suddenly reached out and took that vividly drawn anger right off his face, leaving him like a crab without its shell.

He stood there in a daze, at a complete loss for what to do.

Mo Ran knelt down before him while he stared blankly, one hand still holding onto his, as if afraid he might disappear.

For a split second, ridiculous, shameful thoughts raced through his mind.

This disciple of his had always been brazenly audacious with no regard for common sense. For Mo Ran to suddenly take his hand and treat him like this, he couldn't help thinking the other was about to pull something.

"....." Startled by his own thought, his face darkened even more, and, not knowing what kind of expression to wear, he could only fall back on the cool detachment he was so used to.

But Mo Ran didn't pull anything. He only continued to hold his hand, like he was holding a treasure, once lost, now regained.

This person whom he had tossed aside like a worthless piece of junk in his past life.

"Shizun."

Having set down all that hatred, he knelt before him now, earnestly, respectfully, full of warmth.

“I was wrong before. From now on, I’ll go left if you say left, right if you say right; all I want is for you to be happy.” Maybe it was too many emotions all at once, but Mo Ran’s eyes grew watery even as he kept smiling. “So come back with me, okay?”

Chu Wanning said nothing; his face was expressionless like still water, but his heart burned like a beacon of fire.

“Shizun.”

His voice was gentle and soft, with a touch of lingering youthfulness.

When Mo Ran hated someone, it was with unadulterated vehemence.

But if he were to cherish someone, it was with his whole heart.

He had always been extreme like that.

“Come back with me, say you will, okay?”

Chu Wanning was still not responding, only staring blankly at him as if thinking about something or another.

Mo Ran worried that he might be upset, so he forced himself to keep smiling despite the dejection he felt, tried his best to hold it together so as to not make Shizun uncomfortable. He swung their joined hands a little, coaxing, “Or Shizun can just nod.”

“.....”

And then, afraid he might not nod, Mo Ran thought for a bit and added, “I’ll count to three, okay?”

“.....”

“If Shizun doesn’t say anything, I’ll take it as a yes, ‘kay?” Mo Ran said, nervous but still gentle, and paused before slowly counting off.

“One, two, three.”

But Chu Wanning was like a person frozen for too long; to be suddenly put into warm water, what he felt wasn’t warmth, but pain.

He had never been wanted before, so he didn’t feel anything, even frozen. But now that there was someone to treasure him, to surround him with warmth, it was as if he finally had the right to feel pain, and suddenly every inch of his body hurt, and every inch of his skin cracked.

Only now did he feel the pain.

The tips of his fingers trembled faintly in Mo Ran’s palms that were getting more and more sweaty.

Mo Ran grew even more anxious when he didn’t reply, afraid that he had lost heart and did not want to return to the living world.

But he didn’t dare move, afraid that Chu Wanning would disappear and leave him behind if he moved so much as a single muscle. He smiled

warmly and tried again, “I counted too fast, you probably weren’t ready yet. I’ll count again.”

“One, two, three.”

Chu Wanning: “.....”

Mo Ran’s throat moved. He started trembling as he forced himself to keep smiling, saying, practically begging, “Shizun, did you hear me?”

There finally seemed to be some focus in Chu Wanning’s phoenix eyes, but they were still mostly blank, fixed on Mo Ran’s face without any expression.

“I’ll count again, slower this time in case it’s hard to hear,” Mo Ran said. “One, two, three.”

“.....”

“I’m going to count one last time…”

“One, two, three.”

“This time’s really the last.”

“One, two, three…”

Chu Wanning stared, as if emotionless, at that person kneeling in front of him counting one-two-three, one-two-three, again and again like a dummy, as if repeating it over and over like that could make time flow backwards, could make a withered tree bloom again, could bring back the dead.

The disciple before him counted with all that he had, clumsily and stubbornly, like he was counting his own sins, counting all the ways that his Shizun had been good to him.

Counted until his voice trembled and his smile was one of panic.

“Shizun.”

Mo Ran looked up; the rims of his eyes were red, but he had already done Chu Wanning so much wrong that he’d ended up like this, so he didn’t want to cry in front of him when he could see and hear, didn’t want to cause Shizun any more grief.

So he swallowed his tears and kept smiling, talking in a light, easy tone, as if bargaining.

“I’ll count again; pay attention to me, won’t you?”

Chu Wanning felt like his heart was being stabbed by his pleading.

He tried to pull his hand from Mo Ran’s grip, like he was frightened.

But Mo Ran held tightly onto him this time, refusing to let go.

With a dog-like persistence, the young man gazed steadily, unblinkingly at him.

He said, “One, two, …”

Suddenly, there was the sound of rapid footsteps from the outside, along with yelling and cursing. Chu Wanning's head snapped up; he saw a sea of lights swarming in the distance as a vast army of ghost soldiers closed in, headed straight for where they were.

Rong Jiu had found a chance to snitch on them, after all.

"There! Upstairs! Upstairs!'

"Grab that thief!"

"Who does he think he is!"

Everywhere was tumultuous, frenzied chaos, the flickering shadows of ghosts and torches rolling in like a tide from afar to devour them, obliterate them, plunge them into the Infinite Hells for the rest of eternity.

But Mo Ran didn't even turn around; in that moment, holding Chu Wanning's hand, he felt at peace.

Chu Wanning was not his lover, but he was his beloved, respected person, was someone who loved him and was good to him. His heart was calm, looking at him.

Chu Wanning admonished him, "Have you lost your mind?! What're you doing still sitting there!"

He turned his hand to grip Mo Ran's and pull him up as he spoke; his eyes were bright in the light of countless torches, looking just like they had in life. Chu Wanning snapped angrily with a scowl, "Let's go already!"

Mo Ran seemed surprised. "We're going?"

Chu Wanning was getting really mad. "Who else?!"

Trembling, Mo Ran closed his eyes, opened them again, and then suddenly smiled. It was a brilliant smile, eyes brimming with tears like beautiful, dew-laden blossoms.

He finally, finally let out the breath he'd been holding as he clasped their hands tightly together.

Fingers interlocked.

Pressing his forehead against Chu Wanning's, he whispered quietly, earnestly, "Three."

"What do you mean three! Hurry up!"

The countless ghosts outside were drawing close; only then did Mo Ran turn around to look, letting out a somewhat panicked sound when he saw the horde closing in. "Shizun, put up a barrier to hold them off for a bit while I get you into the Soul-Calling Lantern!"

"Can't."

"...Wha?!" Mo Ran was dumbstruck.

Chu Wanning's cool, collected expression was a little flustered, and he snapped to cover the embarrassment with anger, "Did you really think I'd be trapped in this stupid little cage if I still had my powers?!"

"....."

Alright then.

So the thing that was missing from this soul was "cultivation".

He had to recite a spell without interruption in order to draw a soul into the Soul-Calling Lantern. It wouldn't take too long, but it was definitely not happening with the way things were right now, so Mo Ran could only grab Chu Wanning and run for it.

Chu Wanning may have lost his cultivation, but at least he still had his martial arts skills and could easily keep up with Mo Ran. The two of them beat a hasty retreat, pursued by a torrential stream of ghost soldiers. Chu Wanning asked, when they made it to the door of the main hall, "Where are we going?"

Mo Ran: "Dunno."

Chu Wanning: "....."

But Mo Ran only pointed at the towering palace walls, not at all discouraged. "Let's get up there and scope out the place."

Luckily, Chu Wanning had a solid foundation in light footwork, and could vault up walls no problem even without the aid of his cultivation. Landing gracefully on the eaves, he looked down to see the swarm of angry ghosts roaring closer, and quickly instructed Mo Ran, “Summon Jiangui!”

Mo Ran did as told, a strand of piercing scarlet radiance appearing between a swipe of his palms and springing forth like a hissing snake, willow leaves vibrant and rustling as the holy weapon settled into a coil by his feet.

“Channel your spiritual energy past Wuli, through Quchi, and converge on Shangyang,[131] then whip downwards.”

THRASH!

Chu Wanning seemed to suddenly remember something, adding, “Not too much spiritual energy.”

Mo Ran faltered at his words, but it was already too late to pull back the strike.

There was a loud BOOM! as firey explosions shot forth from the hissing snake the very instant it was flung out, like a fire-spitting dragon roaring in fury as it pierced through the torrential dead. The raging inferno blazed through practically the entire corridor, the flames moving the stars themselves, smoke rising beyond the clouds, and the dozens of soldiers in the forefront were scorched into smithereens in a mere instant, along with the walls and trees!

Chu Wanning: “.....”

Mo Ran: “.....”

“Didn’t I say to not use too much spiritual energy!” Chu Wanning scolded with a frown.

“By the time you said that I was already…” Suddenly remembering that he must be respectful and not talk back to Shizun, Mo Ran shut his mouth disgruntledly and said instead, “Shizun is right to scold me.”

“Forget it,” Chu Wanning flicked his sleeve. “I did say it a little late.”

Mo Ran was taken aback——so all he had to do to get Shizun to cave was to take the blame himself first?

He blinked, then couldn’t help bursting into laughter.

Chu Wanning glared at him. “What’s so funny? Get moving already.”

Author’s Notes:

Haha, thank you for your suggestions, friends~ If the urge to change the novel’s title comes someday, I would most likely change it to “This Venerable One Has Been Reformed”. If I change it, don’t exit out of the update and not recognise me2333~

Ch.115 Shizun is Already Married

“Let’s go let’s go,” Mo Ran responded, then suddenly looked worried as he thought of something. “Shizun, I killed so many ghost soldiers, the Underworld’s probably not gonna let us off easy.”

“It’s fine,” Chu Wanning said. “That technique just now doesn’t actually scatter the opponent’s soul, only shatters it. They’ll piece themselves back together in a couple of days.”

Mo Ran took a closer look, and sure enough there were specks of souls floating about the smoldering, charred remains, glowing like fireflies. But before he could investigate further, he was already being pulled along by Chu Wanning with a, “Run.”

Another wave of furious soldiers was rushing in from behind the crumpled walls like a horde of rampaging beasts. Chu Wanning and Mo Ran sped along the tiled rooftops, Mo Ran asking while running, “Shizun, since they don’t even die, we won’t really offend the Underworld that much, so why not just let me pour in more spiritual energy and beat them all back?”

Chu Wanning replied sardonically, “Why don’t you try using it again.”

Mo Ran had no idea what for, but tried it nonetheless. To his surprise, all that came out this time was a tiny wisp of smoke; Jiangui seemed extremely worn out, with none of that impressive sun-swallowing, mountain-crushing might from earlier.

“The more spiritual energy you use, the longer the recovery time,” Chu Wanning instructed. “So refrain from excess, understood?”

“Got it.”

Mo Ran paused before speaking again.

“Shizun. I suddenly remembered something, wanna guess what it is?”

“What?”

“I remembered back at the Peach Blossom Springs, in the illusion, when you taught me how to use the willow vine, just like this. You were really short back then.” Mo Ran grinned toothily and gestured with his hand. “Didn’t even reach my waist.”

Chu Wanning stumbled.

“Careful!”

“Get lost.” Chu Wanning’s ears would’ve turned red by now if he was still alive. He snapped in an anger born of embarrassment, “Comparing heights with Xia Sini? Why don’t you pick on someone your own size, like me?”

Mo Ran grinned and didn’t take the bait. He was taller now, no longer visibly shorter than Shizun like he had been back at Butterfly Town, but he was still only about even with him.

He stole a sidelong glance toward his Shizun and made a mental note to go compare heights with Chu Wanning in a couple more years, once this body of his was done growing.

While Emperor Taxian-Jun schemed away over here, Yuheng of the Night Sky was feeling rather complicated over there.

Although he was already pretty sure that Mo Ran knew that Xia Sini was him at this point, actually hearing him say that was still a humiliating ordeal for his thin face.

After all… he had looked up at Mo Ran and called him “shi-ge”.

The more he thought about it, the more mortified and incensed he felt; Chu Wanning ran faster and faster, leaving Mo Ran to catch up.

Knowing what was going through his head, Mo Ran let him run ahead, keeping a half pace behind. Fleeing from the pursuers with the wind blowing in their face, he looked at the man in front of him, just within reach, red robes fluttering like the drifting leaves of maple and the ember clouds at dusk, with golden embroidered butterflies that look almost alive as they glimmered.

He suddenly felt a bittersweet contentment.

In that moment, he was grateful. Grateful that he could still see Chu Wanning, grateful that he could still receive his guidance as before.

And in a few more years, if everything goes smoothly, he'd be able to lo his head with a smile and tease Chu Wanning, "This disciple has come to compare heights with Shizun—this disciple will stand right here, Shizun can stand on tiptoe if he wants."

His heart felt warm; the Heavens were truly kind to him.

Not everyone had the chance to redo things after committing wrongs, and not everyone could forgive and let go after being hurt.

His Shizun was so warm beneath that cold exterior, but it had taken him so long to see that.

They fended off two more waves of pursuers. The main gate of the palace was within sight now.

Glancing back, he saw the pursuing soldiers far back in the dust with no chance to catch up. Mo Ran exhaled in relief, but he hadn't even finished letting out the breath when there was a sudden clap of thunder in front.

A massive sedan chair appeared from within the fiery lightning, carried evenly upon the shoulders of eight big, brawny men kneeling on the ground. Reclining languidly on the sedan chair was a man, rather on the plump side of things, wrapped in snowy beast furs with his long hair draping loosely and a beauty on each arm, one massaging his shoulder while the other fed him cherries.

This big-bellied man might be a soul, but he had already cultivated a corporeal form, so the fruits were actually being consumed, rather than

just passing through for a taste.

Licking his lips, the man grabbed one of the beauties by the jaw and planted a big sloppy kiss before leisurely glancing up at Chu Wanning and Mo Ran with a sneer.

“Is some hooligan actually trying to steal this king’s little darling? Well now, this simply won’t do.”

He said, leisurely.

“Aren’t you quite the bold little cultivator, hm?”

Chu Wanning’s expression was dark and his face so pale it was blue.

To have gotten called “little darling” by this greasy lecher ghost right in front of Mo Ran… if he still had his powers, Tianwen would’ve already turned this bastard into mince by now.

Mo Ran’s expression didn’t look much better, but he was well aware that he couldn’t protect Chu Wanning while facing off against a ghost king at his current level of cultivation, so he could only try for diplomacy.

He stepped up and cupped his fist respectfully as he said, “My lord, apologies for all the damage to your palace, but I will be taking this person.’

“Oho, is that up to you, now?” The Fourth Ghost King smirked. “What do you think that is that he’s wearing? I’ll tell you, that’s called a ghost marriage gown, so in other words, the ceremonial robes of the Underworld. Now that he’s been clothed in my ceremonial robes, he

belongs to me and won't be able to set so much as a foot outside the gates of this palace. Go on and try it if you don't believe me."

He paused, then added, "And if you try to forcibly bring him out anyway, the spiritual energy on those robes will shatter your souls at the gate. Don't say I didn't warn you."

Mo Ran suddenly realized why Chu Wanning wasn't restrained despite Rong Jiu saying that everyone at the main palace was tied up. So these red robes on him…

Hands clenching into fists, Mo Ran said, "Of course I'll make it up to you for taking him. Whatever my lord wants, I'll do my utmost to provide."

"This king only wants beauties—not the gentle, obedient kind; those have gotten rather boring as of late. This king likes exactly the type standing right there next to you, all icey and standoffish, got more flavor that way."

"....."

Intrigued by the look on Mo Ran and Chu Wanning's faces, the Fourth King sat up leisurely and said, "To be honest with you though, this is the first time in all my years here in the Underworld that someone's busted into my palace to raise havoc like this, so I'm pretty curious—just who are you to him?"

Mo Ran answered, "He's my Shizun."

"Oh, that's it?" The Ghost King laid his hand out with an amused grin. "And here I thought it was some kind of life or death relation."

Mo Ran said, “...What’s the point in forcibly keeping him when he doesn’t like you.”

The ghost king gave a lazy wave of his hand. “Foolish child, liking or not liking is irrelevant. It’s his body that this king is after, not his heart.”

“.....”

“And besides,” the ghost king continued with a sneer, “so what if he doesn’t like me? It’s not like he likes you. If you two were already wedded though, then it’d be a different story. This king fancies beauties, but has no interest in secondhand goods. But too bad for you, he’s only your Shizun.”

Mo Ran was stunned at first, but then suddenly smiled.

“My lord means it?”

“This king is the master of the Fourth Level of Hell, what would be the point in lying to a little no-name ghost like you?”

“Then let me ask this: if my Shizun was indeed already married, then would the ceremonial robes still have any effect?”

“Of course not. This king never cared to play with other people’s husbands and wives.” The Fourth Ghost King furrowed his brows. “Why do you ask? Is your Shizun already married?”

Chu Wanning cared about face. “No.”

Mo Ran didn’t care about face. “Yup.”

Fourth Ghost King: “.....”

Before Chu Wanning could say anything else, Mo Ran had already grabbed his hand, pulling him along toward the gate. He looked over his shoulder toward the Fourth Ghost King as he walked, saying, “Don’t mind him, my lord, Shizun’s memory is bad. Anyway, like you just said, the ceremonial robes won’t do anything if he’s already married, so let’s not waste any breath over it, I’ll just go ahead and take him outside. If we successfully walk out, then please let us go. If I lied, then I’ll get what’s coming.”

Chu Wanning protested, “Mo Ran——have you lost your mind? That was just an act, back at Butterfly Town, it doesn’t count——”

“Why wouldn’t it count,” Mo Ran said confidently without the slightest hint of hesitation. “We drank the wine and did the bows, with ancestors above and the earth below, why wouldn’t it count.”

“Mo Ran…!”

To suddenly bear witness to such a quarrel after thousands of dull, monotonous years here in the Underworld, the ghost king was rather amused, settling into his chair and propping his cheek in one hand to watch with interest. He patted the thigh of the beauty next to him for her to feed him more fruit, chewing as he said, “Sure thing, go ahead. I won’t keep you guys if you make it out fine, and if you die, that’s on you.”

Mo Ran said, “Many thanks.”

There was a barrier over the main gate of the palace that flickered with a faint purple light, clearly for keeping the souls inside. The closer Chu

Wanning got to that barrier, the more unwilling he grew. There was no way some half-baked ghost marriage like that would count…

But Mo Ran leaned in close just then, saying in a quiet voice, “Don’t worry, Shizun, our marriage is definitely valid.”

“Valid how?!”

“Just listen to me this one time, I know what I’m doing here.” He laced their fingers and squeezed, though his own palm was covered in sweat.

“And even if luck is not on our side, I’ll be right here with Shizun.”

Chu Wanning flinched and opened his phoenix eyes wide, staring at him in astonishment like he’d never seen him before.

Mo Ran beamed brightly at him, dimples deep and warm. “I owe Shizun far too much already. This time, I won’t leave Shizun by himself.”

“.....” Chu Wanning was silent for a long moment before softly muttering, “Why do all that.”

“Then what about Shizun? Why did you do all that?”

Chu Wanning’s eyelashes drooped, then he let out a quiet sigh and stopped fighting it. They stood hand in hand before the crackling purple barrier, with a mass of ghosts gathering behind to watch the show.

“Let’s go?”

“Let’s go.”

There was no telling who tightened the grip first, squeezing so firmly, the freezing cold over the scalding warmth, the clammy wrapping around the dry, the pale white against the wheat-colored.

Blazing inferno and roaring thunder surged before them.

The barrier was like an enormous flood, a gigantic waterfall. They stepped in at practically the same time, and the tremendous current of firey lightning surged towards them, crashing down with a might that could swallow mountains and rend rivers, threatening to tear apart this pair of people so bold as to step outside the gate of life and death in the very next second, rip them into shreds, burn them into dust.

The firey lightning flared with a light so blindingly bright it was practically white.

It was but a split second away from striking the two of them. Mo Ran had already made up his mind before to respect and love his Shizun, to never again disobey him, much less sully him with any untoward thoughts.

But in that moment, in the uncertainty of life or death, he suddenly whipped his head around, wanting to get one more look at Chu Wanning's face.

Only to be met with Chu Wanning's gaze on him as well, amidst the deluge of sparks that rained down all around them.

Those phoenix eyes had once been fierce, resolute, pained, resentful, enduring… but in this moment, they held a tranquility before the end.

And—he wasn't sure if he was imagining it—.

And deep affection.

Mo Ran had never seen such a look in Chu Wanning's eyes before; there was a loud rumbling in his head like countless cities collapsing at once, and his chest was suddenly flooded with burning affection, bursting forth to emerge from a thick layer of ashen black earth. He didn't even have the time to contemplate just what kind of feeling this was, overwhelmed as he was by the searing heat in his heart and the boiling of his blood.

Between the flashes of lightning and crashing of thunder, he reached out without thinking and pulled Chu Wanning into a tight embrace.

Frenzied heartbeats against quivering soul.

Chest to chest.

Truth be told, before coming down here to the Underworld, something like dying together with Chu Wanning had never crossed his mind. He had always thought that the one he loved was Shi Mei, so if he were to die together with someone, it would be with Shi Mei.

But, when truly faced with the prospect of dying.

He had instinctively pulled him into his arms, as if trying to merge his flesh into his own, hide his soul within his own.

Chu Wanning.

I'm with you.

I…

“Aiyah, who would’ve thought, you two really are star-crossed lovers.” An amused voice drifted languidly over. “This king actually got the wrong ghost? This xianjun really is already married?”

Mo Ran’s eyes snapped open.

The lightning and thunder that had been hellbent on tearing them into pieces mere moments ago had turned into countless dandelions while he wasn’t looking, dancing and drifting lightly all around them like so many snowflakes.

The Fourth Ghost King stood up with a smile, clapping slow and leisurely where he stood near the palace gate. “It’s been hundreds of humdrum years, and that was a good show.”

Chu Wanning: “.....”

Mo Ran was still in a stupor, feeling dazed as he looked at the Fourth Ghost King then turned to look at the person in his arms, before being hit with a sudden realization about the impropriety of holding his Shizun like this and hurriedly withdrawing his hands. Chu Wanning also seemed to jolt back to reality, turning his face away with an unreadable expression.

A moment passed, then he straightened out his robes and stood silently at the side.

Trying to ease the awkwardness, Mo Ran lifted his head toward the Fourth Ghost King to say, “See, I didn’t lie to my lord, right?”

“You certainly did not.”

The Fourth Ghost King shook his head with something that’s almost a smile but not quite.

“Day after day, it’s been a long time since I’ve been so entertained. Alright, I’ll let you two go, if only for the amusing spectacle you provided. This king has no shortage of beauties anyway, I won’t miss an already-married soul.”

Mo Ran is delighted to hear that, thinking to himself that this Fourth Ghost King was much more magnanimous than the Fifth Ghost King that Chu Xun had encountered. Sure he’s a lecher, but at least he keeps his word, got some of that lordly air.

Thinking thus, he turned to leave with Chu Wanning in tow.

But just then, the clouds above scattered and the light of the moon shone on Mo Ran, silently casting a dark shadow at his feet.

The Fourth Ghost King didn’t react right away, still grinning and quite pleased with the rare diversion he had just been treated to. He turned and gestured to the beauty at his side to feed him a grape.

The beauty peeled the fruit of its dark purple skin and held the succulent, translucent flesh to the Fourth Ghost King’s lips. The Fourth Ghost King was just about to open his mouth when he suddenly realized that something was off, and his head whipped back around with a fierce, “HOLD IT!”

He stared at the shadow on the ground, then his gaze moved up slowly, inch by inch, until it was fixed on Mo Ran’s face.

“...Why don’t you take a look at what that is on the ground?”

Looking down, Mo Ran abruptly discovered that there was actually a blurry shadow at his feet!

The Fourth Ghost King's lax, whimsical expression disappeared at once and his already long and narrow eyes narrowed further, flickering with something like that of a vulture just about to swoop toward its prey.

"How exactly did a living person like yourself get into Hell?"

Ch.116 Shizun Meets Rong Jiu

The moment Chu Wanning saw light gathering in the Ghost King's hand, he immediately shoved Mo Ran and said, "Run!"

There was no need to tell him twice. Mo Ran grabbed Chu Wanning's elbow and they fled towards the palace doors, leaping and bounding through the air.

As they ran, Mo Ran cursed, "Master Huaizui's spell is too careless, how could he have left me with a shadow, letting people see through me!"

For some reason, even though he was hearing his own disciple curse his own master, Chu Wanning barely showed any reaction and only threw Mo Ran a glance. He looked like he wanted to say something, but in the end nothing left his lips.

"Trying to escape?" The Fourth Ghost King snorted. "As if I'd let you off that easy."

They were both experts at qinggong, and seeing the palace doors about to completely close, they stepped onto the wall, leaping off. But at that same moment, the Fourth Ghost King summoned lightning into his palm. With a swing of his hand, thunder roared in the skies and lightning crashed down upon the palace doors. In a split second, the palace walls that were only ten meters high before shot up into the sky, extending so high they looked like they were about to connect to the heavens.

And the palace doors were also rapidly shutting, locking them in from all around.

Mo Ran cursed under his breath, and dragged Chu Wanning along with him as they turned and ran in another direction. If they couldn't exit through the palace doors then they'd leave it for now; the priority was to avoid getting captured by the Fourth Ghost King.

But this just so happened to be the right move. Every king of the Ghost Realm had their own expertise as well as their own shortcomings; while the Fourth Ghost King was powerful in spells, after thousands of years of debauched indulgence, his physical condition really couldn't be compared to the others. Never mind running a mile, just fifty steps and he'd be gasping for breath.

The Fourth Ghost King had lazed about for thousands of years, holding fast to the principle of lying down if he didn't need to sit, and sitting down if he didn't need to stand. After so long, he'd long lazed himself to the point that his qinggong was trash.

His outrage grew as he watched Chu Wanning and Mo Ran run further and further away. However, because he'd often gone to the other kings' domains in hell to gather up beauties, his relationship with the other eight kings was considerably not great. So even when something like this happened, he was reluctant to inform the other kings in order to work together to capture them.

"So what if you can run fast! This king may be full-bellied, but there's still no escaping my grasp!" The Fourth Ghost King rubbed at his belly, angry and aggrieved. He turned, and saw the eight staunch men who had been holding him up on their shoulders standing there, unmoving, and became even more displeased. "What are you all standing around for? This king's

legs are precious, not meant to give chase, but why aren't any of you giving chase?"

"....."

This Fourth Ghost King was said to have been a handsome man when he was skinny, but because he'd been deprived of mortal pleasures for too long, once he cultivated a flesh body he overindulged in food and drink. He ate while sitting, ate while walking, ate while crouching. Even at hell's busiest times, when he had to rush out appeals and didn't even have enough time to write, he still needed attendants at either side, not to flatten papers or grind ink, but to slice fresh fruit and feed him pastries.

Just like that, a perfectly fine and peerless beauty forcibly stuffed himself into a fatty. Although his foundation was excellent and no matter how much he ate his size wouldn't go overboard, his appearance had still changed. After that, the Fourth Ghost King had ordered for all the mirrors of the away palace to be thrown out, and he hated hearing the words "fat" or "obese". Rumour had it that there had once been a pretty attending mistress who had been singing him songs, but the first three lines of the lyrics had been "half-crescent moon, half-crescent moon, half-crescent…"[132]

Before the last 'moon' had even left her lips, the Fourth Ghost King had booted her out with a kick to the chest, yelling, "Fat fat fat! I allowed two fats, but it's not enough, you were still going for a third! Don't think by breaking the word down, this king won't understand you're beating around the bush and disparaging me, the audacity!"

Which was why even though these ghost men were staunch and hardy, they didn't dare go after Chu Wanning and Mo Ran. Each of them bowed

their heads low, letting the Fourth Ghost King complain and vent. In the end one, more clever than the others, spoke up. “My king is so agile, how can we possibly catch up to people my king can’t chase down?”

Only then did the Fourth Ghost King huff out a breath and let the chase go altogether. He turned to his subordinates, saying, “Mn, that’s true… Good that you all are self-aware. Very well, leave it be. Go pass on this king’s command: All the doors of the away palace are to be shut, the palace walls be covered in sealing spells. Not a single fly shall be let out of this place.”

He tsk-ed then finally spat out the grape seed sitting in his mouth, muttering threateningly, “I’d sure like to see where the two of them can run off to.”

Mo Ran and Chu Wanning were both agile, plus the interior of the palace was full of twists and turns, so it didn’t take long before they’d ditched the ghost wards chasing after them. The two hid in a narrow, dark little alley. Chu Wanning was a ghost, so no matter how long they ran, he wouldn’t get tired. Mo Ran however, was of mortal flesh, and he leaned against the wall, panting.

Chu Wanning glanced out, and said somberly, “He’s completely sealed the palace.”

Mo Ran, still catching his breath, waved his hand. “It’s fine, Shizun. Come into the Soul-Calling Lantern, this way we can both return directly to the mortal realm, he won’t be able to stop us for sure.”

Chu Wanning gave a small nod, but for some reason, there was still worry colouring his brows.

Mo Ran didn't notice. He took out the Soul-Calling Lantern and silently recited the spell. However, the golden light only flickered a few times before it completely extinguished. Chu Wanning's Earth Soul still stood before him, perfectly fine, entirely unmoved.

"What's going on?" Mo Ran was shocked. "Why isn't it working?"

The glumness between Chu Wanning's brows were even more evident now, and he sighed. "Just as I thought. The deliverance spell doesn't work here. We'll probably have to leave the palace before we can use the spell to return to the mortal realm."

"……" Hearing this, Mo Ran bit his lip, a stubborn look in his eyes. It took a moment before he said, voice hoarse, "I'll get you out of here no matter what."

Chu Wanning gave him a look before replying, "We'll need to hurry. The palace is massive, and it won't be easy for the ghost pawns to find you, but there's no food or water here. I'll be fine but you won't last for long."

Mo Ran smiled, "Hunger I can endure, I grew up with it so I'm used to it."

After recovering for a while, waiting till their surroundings had quieted down, the two eventually came out of the alleyway. The watery, cool moonlight fell upon their figures, one with a shadow, one without, as they walked side by side down the long, empty bluestone street.

"Shizun." Mo Ran called out.

"....."

"I offended you, earlier at the gate. Sorry."

Chu Wanning seemed caught off guard for a moment, then he cast his eyes down, long lashes lowering over his gaze. “It’s fine.”

“Because of the circumstances, my words were… also offensive. I’m sorry about that too.”

Chu Wanning, “……”

“It was also incredibly improper of me to say that you’re already married, I’m sorry again.”

Chu Wanning suddenly stopped in his tracks and replied, voice frosty, “How long are you going to keep saying I’m sorry for? Don’t you know how to say anything else?”

“Something else?” Mo Ran’s heart started to race. He thought very hard for a moment, then very carefully tried changing his vocabulary, “Then… I apologize?”

“.....”

Chu Wanning shook out his sleeves and left.

This pitiful Mo Ran had absolutely no idea what he’d said to make him unhappy. He was worried he’d further irritated his shizun, but also afraid that if he said more, he would get even more annoyed. So he scratched his head where he stood, and followed after obediently.

“Shizun.”

“Mn?”

Walking halfway, Mo Ran asked in spite of himself, “Have you ever… been through any karmic events?”

Chu Wanning stopped and turned to face him. “What do you mean?”

“I found another Earth Soul of yours in the Underworld, which means you have one extra piece of soul more than everyone else…Earlier, I met Chu Xun at Tailwind Hall and asked him about it. He said that the extra piece of soul shouldn’t have been something that you originally possessed.” Mo Ran continued hesitantly, “But, including the body in the mortal realm, I have definitely seen four of Shizun, so I was thinking… if Shizun’s formed any bonds of fate in the past…”

Chu Wanning was silent for a while. There was a light in the depths of his eyes, like he’d thought of something, but then he closed his eyes and said, “I don’t think I have.”

He paused for a moment, then, hesitant and a little confused, asked, “I really have four souls?”

“Mhm.”

“……”

Chu Wanning didn’t know why that would be either. He thought it over for a while, contemplating, then sighed. “This isn’t something I can answer, and it doesn’t affect anything, so let’s just let it go.”

The two continued to carefully follow along remote little paths while inspecting the spiritual strength of the spell the Fourth Ghost King had used to seal off the entire away palace.

“All barriers have a weakness.”

Chu Wanning said as they came before a watchtower. His fingers brushed over the rough walls, over which blue light flowed intermittently. He closed his eyes, trying to capture the flow of the energy streaming beneath the stones. However, he didn't have any spiritual power at the moment and trying to sense out the feeling drained him. After a moment, Chu Wanning dropped his hand and shook his head dejectedly.

"My soul isn't whole and my powers are impaired, so I don't know how to break through this for the moment."

"Why doesn't Shizun teach me, and I can try?" Mo Ran suggested.

"It won't do. The art of barriers is complex, it's not something one can learn in a day or two."

"Then what are the typical weak points of spiritual barriers?" Mo Ran asked. "Why don't we try them one by one?"

"…Every barrier has its own weakness, there isn't a one size fits all method to breaking them. If we're going to test them one by one, I really don't know how long that would take."

"How would we know if we don't try?" Mo Ran smiled. "Maybe I'll get really lucky?"

Chu Wanning opened his mouth, about to reply, when at the periphery of his vision he spotted a moving white shadow. His brows immediately furrowed, and he extended his hand, moving out of habit to summon Tianwen, but nothing happened. His expression darkened unconsciously, and he yelled sharply, "Who's there?!"

That white shadow immediately tried to flee.

As if Mo Ran would let that happen. He darted over and in a ferocious instant, had the ghost captured in his arms. He smothered the ghost's mouth and nose, preventing it from calling out, then twisted its arms behind its back, pushing it to kneel on the ground. When he focused and saw who it was, he couldn't help but burst out in anger.

"RONG JIU…!"

The young man kneeling on the ground was tender and fair, like willow vines drifting in the breeze, but his eyes brimmed with a trace of unwillingness. He twisted his head back, not uttering a single word.

Mo Ran said angrily, "Are you off to snitch again? You really think I won't kill you?!"

Chu Wanning walked over. He had never met Rong Jiu before, and after glancing him over, asked Mo Ran, "You know him?"

Mo Ran didn't know what to say. He thought to himself about those two crimes of stealing and debauchery he'd committed back then, the ones that Chu Wanning had publicly put him to trial for upon the Platform of Sin and Virtue. At that time, he'd only thought Chu Wanning to be cruel and malicious, and his heart had been steeped in hatred for the man. To have this old history once more thrust in their faces made Mo Ran want to find a hole to crawl into and hide.

Chu Wanning didn't notice anything off however, and only took this person as an acquaintance of Mo Ran's. "Since he's followed you all the way here, then don't leave him behind in this palace. Once we've found a way to get out, let's bring him along with us."

As he spoke, he took a careful look over Rong Jiu, “A perfectly decent person. Reincarnation should be top priority.”

Mo Ran, “……”

Upon hearing these words, Rong Jiu, who had initially been panicking a little, was at first taken aback, but then he suddenly smiled. His eyes softened into a gentle and charming gaze as he glanced over at Mo Ran. “This must be Shizun then?”

“What Shizun, who said you could call him Shizun?!” Mo Ran said angrily. “He’s my Shizun!”

Rong Jiu still harboured some resentment against him, so he replied languidly, purposely trying to infuriate him, “Oh, I see, my Shizun then.”

“YOU——!”

With this back and forth, Chu Wanning finally detected something amiss. He asked, “Mo Ran, are there some hard feelings between the two of you?”

“I…”

Rong Jiu replied, smiling, “Good Shizun, don’t be angry with him. There are no hard feelings between us, just some old relations.”

The way he’d said it was ambiguous, but his tone was extremely affectionate. Chu Wanning didn’t say anything, but his eyes narrowed and his lips slowly thinned. At first glance, his expression was as indifferent as ever, but the gloominess between his brows could not be fully concealed. Rong Jiu had grown up in a whorehouse and was an expert in reading

expressions; how could Chu Wanning, with his pure personality and naivete, hide the emotion flickering in his eyes from Rong Jiu?

Rong Jiu was a bit shocked. He'd originally thought Mo Ran a sleazy philanderer, audaciously in love with his own shizun. Yet, unexpectedly, now that he'd met the shizun in question, it didn't seem one-sided.

…How filthy, this Sisheng Peak.

Even though he was in a dire situation right now, Rong Jiu still couldn't help but sigh, feeling both disgusted and amazed——in the Cultivation Realm, dual cultivation between men wasn't anything unheard of, but it was nonetheless considered unseemly. As the gongzi of Sisheng Peak, if Mo Ran actually got together with his benefacting mentor and word of this got out, sect leader Xue Zhengyong would have nowhere to hide his face.

Rong Jiu blinked his charming and affectionate peach blossom eyes, sizing Chu Wanning up. He was just about to say a few more words, ready to add oil to the flames, but the other man spoke up first.

"You're dead as you can be, what old relations are there to speak of."

"Well wasn't xianjun the one who asked me?" Rong Jiu chuckled. "I was just answering honestly."

"Who asked you," Chu Wanning said coldly. " I've been directing my questions to him from the start."

Of course there wasn't any need to clarify who "him" was. His tone was also laced with sparks; his intent for Rong Jiu to draw clear their relationship could not have been any more obvious. Hearing Chu Wanning siding with him, Mo Ran's heart swelled, warmth blooming in his chest. He

wanted to say something, but before he could get closer to the other man, Chu Wanning had already turned around in anger.

“Deal with this yourself.”

But Mo Ran himself didn’t actually know what to do. If he were to let Rong Jiu go, there was a chance Rong Jiu would turn around and trip them up, rat on them. But keeping Rong Jiu with them would be like carrying around a barrel of gunpowder; if Rong Jiu were to say something he shouldn’t, Chu Wanning just might choke to death. As Mo Ran agonized over this, Chu Wanning went to inspect the Fourth Ghost King’s barrier once more. Taking advantage of this, Mo Ran yanked Rong Jiu by the collar and gritted out, keeping his voice hushed, “Just what do you want?”

“I’m just irked and upset.” Rong Jiu’s thick lashes carefully flickered, a small light shimmering within his gaze. “I just can’t stand that a villain like you gets a do-over.”

But Mo Ran knew just what kind of person Rong Jiu was. He wasn’t the kind of person who would do something that would harm both others and himself, he’d only ever do things that’d harm others and benefit himself. No matter how resentful he was, what mattered most to him was spending his days in comfort. There was no reason for him to risk death in order to follow them.

His eyes swept over the other man, and landed on Rong Jiu’s feet.

There was only one shoe on those delicate and fair feet. The other foot was bare and smeared with mud, obviously the result of having fled in a hurry.

Mo Ran narrowed his eyes. “Tell the truth.”

Rong Jiu: “Didn’t I already tell you? The truth is I can’t stand——”

“If you plan on lying to blackmail me again, I will immediately blind your eyes, block your mouth and throw you down a well. You’re already a ghost, so you won’t die from hunger, nor will you be able to escape. If you’re lucky, the patrol will find you in a couple days. If you’re unlucky, then prepare yourself to be stuck in that well for eight to ten years.” Mo Ran paused, then continued, voice very dark, “Decide for yourself.”

As expected, Rong Jiu’s face changed colours.

A moment later, he said, “I changed my mind. I don’t want to stay here, you have to take me out.”

“What, don’t wanna be a ghost husband anymore?”

“……” Rong Jiu bit his lip down tight, then angrily raised his head. “I want to live a normal life too, I want another start.” He breathed in deeply, then declared, “I want reincarnation.”

“Fine. Then let me ask you another thing. Was it you who snitched to the patrol and told them where I was?”

“……”

“Even if you keep quiet, I have ways to make you confess up.” A red light flickered in Mo Ran’s hand, and he said, voice low and dark, “Speak.”

“Yes, I was the one who told, but so what.” Rong Jiu held his head high, his eyes shining with resentment. “If I didn’t tell them where to look, how would I have escaped?”

Mo Ran flung his collar away from him, laughing through his rage. “Well, you certainly know how to hit someone when they’re down, I’ll give you that.”

“I’m good at slandering too.” Rong Jiu slowly put himself back together, patting his robes back into place. He threw a look at Chu Wanning, standing not too far away. “Mo-xianjun, you really care about that person, don’t you? What do you think he’ll do if I tell him, in full detail and without exaggeration, how you used to fawn over me so indulgently?”

Author’s Notes:

Light a sympathetic candle for the Fourth Ghost King, who had everything ruined for him once he got fat lololll

Ch.117 Shizun Tells Me To Get The Hell Out

What Rong Jiu meant to say, of course, was that Chu Wanning would definitely get upset and jealous, that he wouldn't be able to handle it.

But Mo Ran didn't know that Chu Wanning had actually loved him all along; he mulled over Rong Jiu's words, and only thought that he was threatening to tell Chu Wanning about his past misdeeds. For a master to have to listen to all of his disciple's many outrageous acts recounted one by one, how mortifying would that be? Wouldn't he die of anger?

So he snapped immediately, "You leave him alone!"

Rong Jiu smiled coquettishly, beautifully effeminate despite being a man. He said softly, "I'll behave if you protect me and take me with you, promise I won't say anything or make any trouble."

With no other choice, Mo Ran cursed under his breath and turned to leave. Rong Jiu followed after gleefully, knowing it for the silent acquiescence that it was. But Mo Ran barely went two steps before he whipped his head around and pointed a finger at him, whispering low and threatening, "Rong Jiu, if you so much as put a single toe out of line, I'll make sure to scatter your soul before you can even touch the gate of reincarnation."

Rong Jiu was a picture of affected coyness as he said sweetly, "If you don't mess with me, I won't mess with you. I'll behave as long as you don't mistreat me. Mo-xianjun, shouldn't you of all people know what kind of person I am? You're my old regular, after all."

“.....” Mo Ran was as disgusted by that soft, saccharine tone of his now as he had been fond of it in the past life, but there was absolutely nothing he could do about it as he watched Rong Jiu drift over to Chu Wanning’s side. He really couldn’t understand it——

Had he been blind back then or what?

Song Qiutong, Rong Jiu… how the hell had he managed to fall for people like them?

If he could be reborn into his past life in front of his past self, he’d really like to grab Taxian-jun by the neck and open his head up, check just how much water had gotten in there. Seriously, what the hell was all this?

Luckily Rong Jiu hadn’t said anything outright earlier, and Chu Wanning was basically a blank sheet in matters of the heart, so after some words of explanation smilingly delivered by seasoned veteran Rong Jiu, Chu Wanning’s tightly furrowed brows gradually relaxed.

He even thought that he was the one with the impure thoughts, to have misunderstood what this person meant by “old relations” earlier. He secretly felt rather embarrassed about it, though his expression remained unchanged.

Rong Jiu had to work if he was gonna tag along. Being the one most familiar with the palace, he said, “Not many people frequent this street,

but it's not exactly hidden. Let's go to another place for peace of mind while you two figure out how to break through the barrier."

This other place he mentioned was a storehouse for clothing and fabrics in the Underworld, with bolts upon bolts of white burlap cloth piled high, perfect for hiding out.

The three of them picked a remote location, and Chu Wanning felt along the wall with his fingertips as if taking a patient's pulse, trying his best to feel out the spiritual barrier currently covering the entire away palace.

But a long while passed and he was still getting nowhere, while his soul grew weaker for his efforts. Mo Ran put his hand over Chu Wanning's, tugging it off the wall, and said, "Get some rest."

Angry and helpless, Chu Wanning could only seethe as he stared at his own hand. "Why is this soul of mine missing spiritual powers of all things?"

"What if I give you some of mine?"

"I wouldn't be able to use it." Chu Wanning glanced at Rong Jiu off in the distance, and lowered his voice. "You're a living person, I'm a ghost, yin and yang energies are dissonant."

Chu Wanning was back on it after a short break. If he had his three souls and his spiritual powers, then all it would've taken was to send a burst of spiritual energy into the barrier, and he would've easily been able to pinpoint the weakness in the Fourth Ghost King's spell. But right now he hardly had any spiritual energy at all, and it was truly too difficult to try and

seek out the weakness by forcing what tiny bit of it he had into the barrier, like looking for a single leaf in the vast ocean.

Two hours passed, and Rong Jiu started getting restless.

He ran over and pulled at Mo Ran. “Can we get out or not?”

Mo Ran said, “Knock it off and go sit down.”

“Come on, I’m worried sick already, just tell me if we can get out or not.”

“Worrying won’t do you any good, just wait.”

Rong Jiu complained, “Isn’t your Shizun supposed to be really powerful? It’s been so long already, why isn’t anything happening?”

“He only has one of three souls, and this one’s missing spiritual powers. Can you just be quiet?”

Rong Jiu seemed dejected at his words, eyelashes flickering as he sat back down on the pile of white burlap cloth.

Another two hours and then some passed. Rong Jiu got up and walked over to Chu Wanning. “Xianjun, is there any other way?”

Fingertips still pressed against the wall, Chu Wanning replied without opening his eyes, “No.”

“Th-then is there some way to get at least some amount of your powers back?”

Chu Wanning thought about it for a moment before asking, “Do you have any spiritual energy?”

“No…” Rong Jiu was taken aback. “Why does xianjun ask…”

“If you did, you could’ve passed me some to use.”

Rong Jiu said excitedly, “That easy? Then hurry and have Mo-xianjun…”

Chu Wanning cut him off. “His is useless.”

Of course Rong Jiu didn’t know that Mo Ran wasn’t actually a ghost. His smile froze as soon as he heard that Mo Ran’s couldn’t be used. “How come?”

“Different elements, is all.” Mo Ran knew that Chu Wanning was no good at lying, and it’d be best not to let Rong Jiu know the truth about him not being a ghost, so he cut him off immediately. “Can you please just go keep watch outside and let us know if you see anyone coming this way.”

Rong Jiu shot him an irate glare, but the three of them were stuck in the same boat right now, so he could only begrudgingly go over to the storehouse entrance and reluctantly lean against the door, picking at his nails while glancing about outside with that pair of hazy peach blossom eyes.

Mo Ran glanced over at him before sitting down next to Chu Wanning.

He hesitated for a while, but in the end decided he didn't want to keep anything from Chu Wanning, so he spoke up, "Shizun, I...I want to apologize for some wrongs I've committed."

"What wrongs?"

"Um, do you remember that time when you had me reprimanded at the Platform of Sin and Virtue, for…" Mo Ran paused, too embarrassed to say debauchery. A person's face really was quite the mysterious thing—thick like the great wall when they didn't care, thin like a sheet of paper and just as flimsy as soon as they began to care.

Mo Ran lowered his head bashfully and said in a small voice, "...for breaking the fourth, ninth, and fifteenth commandments."

The fourth commandment, thievery.

The ninth commandment, debauchery.

The fifteenth commandment, deceit.

Of course Chu Wanning wouldn't forget that time. His eyes opened, but he didn't look at Mo Ran as he muttered, "Mn."

Looking at that cool, disciplined expression, Mo Ran felt even more ashamed, dropping his gaze after a moment and quietly whispering, "Shizun, I'm sorry."

Chu Wanning could already guess what he was going to say. Although aggrieved, he had always been able to keep a level head during difficult situations, and besides, it wasn't like he was just now finding out about the sleazy things Mo Ran had done back then, so he replied coolly, "Weren't you already punished for that? And there were no repeat offenses after that either, so why bring it up now?"

"Because that Rong Jiu outside… he's…"

Mo Ran couldn't finish the sentence, and Chu Wanning was also silent for a long while.

Then Mo Ran heard Chu Wanning scoff, "So it's him?"

"Mm."

He didn't dare look up at Chu Wanning at all. Sisheng Peak never forbade its disciples from matters of desire, and young people dual cultivating or having a lover on the outside was perfectly normal and ordinary. But Chu Wanning was different. Chu Wanning's cultivation path focused on purity of heart and mind, and he had always treated such carnal things with contempt.

Not to mention Mo Ran had slept around in the brothels back then instead of properly seeing someone like a normal person would…

Xue Zhengyong might not have cared much, with the way he spoiled his nephew. Mo Ran was already of age anyway, and it wasn't like he cultivated the purity path. Moreover it wouldn't be healthy to suppress those needs, so he would just close one eye and let it go. But Chu Wanning wouldn't be able to tolerate it.

He'd be disgusted. Mo Ran had already seen such a reaction, back when he was being punished at the Platform of Sin and Virtue; in Chu Wanning's eyes back then, he had clearly seen disgust, contempt, and loathing.

It's already been so many years, and he hadn't done those things again since, but now that Chu Wanning had run into Rong Jiu in the Underworld, how could he possibly not be bothered? Mo Ran truly felt the weight of the words "what goes around comes around, it's just a matter of time" now.

He wasn't afraid of being scolded or hit by Chu Wanning—in fact, he'd rather he just take out Tianwen and give him another round of lashing—just as long as nothing went awry, as long as the Earth Soul that he had gone through so much to find didn't run off in a huff over this past affair. If Chu Wanning were to leave in a fit of rage, Mo Ran might really kill himself.

The more he thought about it, the more uneasy he felt. Rather than keeping Rong Jiu around like a barrel of gunpowder on legs, it'd be better to just come clean himself and go apologize to Chu Wanning first.

He had it all planned out, deliberately standing in the direction of the door as he confessed, so that if Chu Wanning tried to leave after hearing what he had to say, he could grab him, tie him up if he had to, whatever offense he had to resort to, to keep him from disappearing and leaving him behind. Chu Wanning could be as mad as he wanted after this was all over.

Mo Ran was practicing how to block off Chu Wanning's escape routes in his head when the fabric of Chu Wanning's robes shifted slightly in the dim lighting, light catching on scarlet silk and golden embroidery.

Even Mo Ran's heart was trembling as he said in a small voice, "Shizun…"

Chu Wanning said, "This is all ancient history, and punishment's already been dealt out, so what're you telling me these bygones for?" He gave him a sidelong glance, expression coolly indifferent as his thin lips parted deliberately, even a touch sardonically. "What do I care?"

Something like "what do I care" was the last thing he had expected him to say…

Mo Ran was dumbstruck.

He didn't taste any of that vinegar[133] dripping from Chu Wanning's words; all he felt was panic, thinking that Shizun had lost all hope in him and didn't want to bother with him anymore, didn't care about him anymore. He said, frantically, "Shizun, everything in the past was all my fault, please don't be mad…"

"Why would I be mad, what is there to be mad about." Despite his words, the more he thought about it the more irritated he felt, until Chu Wanning snapped heatedly, "I just knew things weren't so clean between the two of you. 'Old relations' indeed, are you still trying to fool me? ...Get out."

"....."

" Out! " He was well aware of the sourness in his voice, and he well knew that this was all in the past already, but Chu Wanning just couldn't help muttering under his breath, "Absolutely shameless."

Instead of getting out, Mo Ran only continued to sit there dumbly next to him, staring insistently at him with that pair of bright black eyes.

A moment later, he said, “I’m not leaving.”

Chu Wanning said, incensed, “Leave! I don’t want to see you right now!”

“I’m not leaving,” Mo Ran mumbled, sitting there refusing to budge, like a stupid piece of rock. He was such a despicable person, but as he stared at Chu Wanning and the rims of his eyes grew red, there was somehow also a bit of pitifulness and stubbornness there.

“I’m afraid that if I go, you’ll run off… Shizun, don’t leave me behind.”

“……”

Chu Wanning had no idea that this was what had been on Mo Ran’s mind.

Although he felt revolted every time this thing got brought up, it wasn’t news to him, and he was also aware of the prevailing normal practice in the cultivation world: be it men or women, once they came of age—provided their cultivation path was not that of purity—practically everyone indulged in some amount of dissolution. It was nothing to raise one’s eyebrows at.

Mo Ran was no Xue Meng. Xue Meng had grown up sheltered and coddled, with upstanding parents and a strict education, so he’d always been well-behaved unlike other young masters. But Mo Ran?

A willful personality, always doing whatever he felt like.

Grew up in the pleasure houses.

No father, and a songstress for a mother.

He was a wild, unruly pup that had grown up without guidance, screwing around day in day out all the way until he was fifteen before his uncle plucked him from the mire, fur covered in mud.

Only an idiot would think he was clean and pure like a fine piece of jade. Chu Wanning was no idiot.

It was one thing knowing all that, but seeing Rong Jiu with his own eyes, this beautiful person who had slept around with Mo Ran back then, Chu Wanning was still grossed out.

Unable to make Mo Ran go away, he turned back to the wall, closed his eyes, and went back to checking the barrier.

But as he worked, he just couldn't help thinking about Rong Jiu's pretty little oval-shaped face, that fair, tender-looking skin that was probably soft and smooth to the touch. And those cute little lips, light pink and smooth-talking… that damned Mo Ran had definitely kissed them before. And that little waist, that figure… and, in spite of himself, he even thought about how Mo Ran must have been all tangled up in bed with that effeminate little thing, how repulsive!

When it came to certain things, hearing about it was an altogether different matter than having to see it for oneself. He couldn't help thinking about it now that he had seen, and the more he thought about it the less he could stand for it. Chu Wanning's eyes suddenly snapped open, flames

of anger blazing within. He stood up and shoved Mo Ran away none-too-gently. “Get the hell out.”

“Shizun…”

“Out.”

Left without a choice, Mo Ran could only lower his head and slowly walk outside the storehouse.

Rong Jiu was a little surprised to see him there.

“Oho, Mo-xianjun, did you have a fight with your Shizun?”

Mo Ran didn’t even want to acknowledge him; just the sight of him gave him a headache. He had liked him in the past life because he looked a bit like Shi Mei, and when he had slept with him after his rebirth in this life, it was with a grudge and the intention of screwing him over.

But no matter what, the things he had done in the past were like marks carved into a wooden post, impossible to restore to the way they used to be.

Mo Ran said, “I’ll keep watch by myself, go find somewhere else to sit.”

The door was the least safe place in the storehouse, and Rong Jiu was only too happy to comply.

But he couldn’t resist looking back at Mo Ran after walking only two steps away. He was suddenly a little curious how Mo Ran had died. How did his personality change this much in the few years he hadn’t seen him? It was

as if he'd gone through some kind of harrowing experience, how very curious.

Pretty eyelashes fluttering, he glanced Mo Ran up and down from where he stood behind him. Suddenly feeling like something was a little off , he looked him over again, more carefully this time, and his gaze landed on the faint shadow at Mo Ran's feet…

Rong Jiu froze in shock.

Ch.118 Shizun Sometimes Falls For Tricks Too

Mo Ran had a shadow.

He… wasn't dead?

A medley of details flashed through Rong Jiu's mind. The shock would've sent a chill through him followed by a rush of hot blood to his head to scramble his thoughts into utter disarray, if he wasn't already dead.

Rong Jiu stood there frozen in place for a while. How a person reacted to major happenings often had to do with their usual circumstances—for instance, some people were habitually jumpy from past experiences, and would get scared stiff at the first sign of something unexpected, and then there were people like the darling of the heavens Xue Meng, self-possessed and unruffled, unfazed by just about everything.

As for someone like Rong Jiu, who had lived in the mud all his life and suffered all kinds of hardships, his first thought in the face of an unexpected turn of events was——does it pose a threat to him, and if not, then how to benefit from it.

He quickly realized that Mo Ran was a living person who had snuck into the Underworld, and that he himself stood to gain much from this knowledge.

All he had to do was expose Mo Ran, and he would've done the Underworld a great service. That would surely land him in some kind of official position, and then he'd be able to strut about with his chest puffed

out. So what if he had sold his body in life? If he could just seize this opportunity, he could go up in the world in death, as men ought to.

It was practically handed to him on a silver platter.

Why bother with reincarnation then? This would offer him a comfortable life right away, a complete turn-around, allowing him to erase all past disgrace and start over anew.

Peach blossom eyes narrowed subtly, something flickering within. Rong Jiu could already see himself being bestowed positions of import and titles of nobility, could see himself sitting behind draping silks on a bamboo sedan chair like those officials of the Underworld, a picture of composure as he was carried through a gathering of ghosts..

Rong Jiu felt more relieved the more he thought about it, but there was a problem—he was weak and delicate, there was no way he was going to be able to sneak off from right under Mo Ran's nose to go tell on him. He had to figure out some way to keep Mo Ran occupied...

As the gears in his head turned, his gaze landed on the red-robed Chu Wanning.

"Chu-xianjun."

Rong Jiu greeted as he took a seat next to Chu Wanning with his cheek propped in hand.

But Chu Wanning only continued probing at the barrier without so much as a sound of acknowledgement, so cold there was practically a layer of frost on his closed eyelashes.

“Still nothing?” Rong Jiu tried.

A few moments passed. Chu Wanning still did not reply, but also did not chase him away, so Rong Jiu sat there and chattered absently about this and that, as if to himself, and then muttered in a soft voice, “Chu-xianjun, to tell you the truth, I wasn’t completely honest with you earlier. There’s something… I was afraid that you’d look down on me if you knew, that you wouldn’t pity me and take me with you anymore.”

Chu Wanning’s pitch black brows were tightly furrowed, and though he had yet to speak, there was a flame of anger there, burning between his brows —it was just that he was still holding it down, restraining himself from letting it out.

But how could Rong Jiu possibly miss its flickering light?

Rong Jiu said in his soft, delicate voice, “I was thinking about it just now, while I was outside, and I feel really terrible about lying to xianjun, so I wanted to come say sorry…”

As luck would have it, his opener just so happened to match Mo Ran’s, both of them wanting to say “sorry”.

Chu Wanning wasn’t even that repulsed at first, but when those words left Rong Jiu’s lips, he finally, slowly opened his eyes, and, without looking at

Rong Jiu, asked in a frosty tone, “Which brothel did you work at when you were alive.”

Rong Jiu was caught off guard, “Xianjun… already knew?”

He unconsciously stole a glance toward Mo Ran and swore to himself; that guy actually came clean on his own instead of trying to keep it from Chu Wanning… would it be enough for him to fan the flames like this?

“Mo-xianjun and I…”

Chu Wanning cut him off before he could even finish. “I said, which brothel did you work at when you were alive.”

Rong Jiu bit his lip. “The Immortal Peach Pavilion in Black Bamboo Town.”

“Hm, Immortal Peach Pavilion,” Chu Wanning repeated it back with a wry tug of his lips before falling silent again, a terrifying expression on his face.

Rong Jiu snuck several glances at him, pursed his lips, and tried tentatively, “Chu-xianjun, you wouldn’t look down on me, would you?”

Chu Wanning: “.....”

“I lived a hard life and had a feeble body, and got sold to the brothel at a young age. If only I had a choice, of course I would’ve wanted to be a demon-slaying hero like xianjun too,” Rong Jiu said with a sigh, muttering wistfully. “It’d be wonderful if, in my next life, I could become someone outstanding like xianjun too.”

“Reincarnation won’t change the nature of a soul,” Chu Wanning said impassively. “Condolences, but you and I belong to different walks of life.”

Having been shut down like this, Rong Jiu’s smile didn’t even falter as he said, “I know I could never compare with xianjun, it was only a wishful thought. For people like us, if we don’t give ourselves something to hope for, a dream to cling to, we wouldn’t last a year in the brothels before thinking about how to end it all.”

When Chu Wanning didn’t respond, Rong Jiu glanced toward Mo Ran out of the corner of his eye, checking to make sure that he couldn’t hear their little chat before continuing with a soft sigh, “After all, the guests at the brothel were usually cruel and callous, and hardly even saw us as human. In that place, being visited by a kindly guest like Mo-xianjun was something to be envied.”

Chu Wanning remained silent, but the veins stood out on the back of his hand that was pressed against the wall. If he had his powers right now, there would probably be five holes in that wall already.

A moment passed during which he tried and failed to hold it back. Finally, he uttered in a dark, low voice, “What is there to be envious of.”

A thread of affection appeared on Rong Jiu’s gentle, lovely face—not too much and not too little, just the right amount.

“Because Mo-xianjun is a good person, of course. Although he acted up and stole from me in the end, it was probably because I didn’t serve him well enough in the past. He always used to be such a reasonable, charming person before.”

Chu Wanning’s face was cold and impassive as he listened without a word.

“Everyone who’s ever served him at my place talked about how good and kind he was, and lots of us were always hoping for him to come back.”

“...Did he go often?”

Rong Jiu feigned a dry laugh, “How often is often? I’m not quite sure how to answer xianjun’s question.”

“Then tell me how regularly he went, whom he asked for, and when his last visit was.” Those thin lips were like a pair of knives, and each question glinted with a cold, dangerous light like they were out for Mo Ran’s life.

Rong Jiu pretended not to notice the frosty light in Chu Wanning’s eyes, embellishing and exacerbating as he answered, “I didn’t really keep track of how regularly he went, but I always saw him around for at least ten of the thirty days each month, if not more. As for whom he asked for… it varied. Sigh , Chu-xianjun, it’s all in the past already, so don’t blame him anymore…”

“I asked when his last visit was.” Chu Wanning’s face was practically a thick layer of ice. “Answer the question.”

In actuality, Mo Ran had never gone back to see Rong Jiu again after that day he'd been reborn, nor had he gone to any other brothel after that.

But, looking at Chu Wanning's expression, Rong Jiu knew he couldn't speak the truth, so he feigned uncertainty and fanned the flames some more. "I'm… not sure about that, but I do remember seeing Mo-xianjun in the brothel now and again, up to when I died… so probably around then?"

He had barely finished speaking when Chu Wanning stood up abruptly, hand pulling back from the wall, wide sleeve falling over slender fingers.

In the hazy darkness, sparks blazed in his eyes as his entire body trembled minutely.

Rong Jiu was secretly delighted, thinking this guileless xianjun really was easy to fool. He was a prostitute, a veteran in the arena of love affairs, an expert at reading other people's feelings. Baiting someone all virtuous and upright like Chu Wanning was a piece of cake for him, hook, line, and sinker.

Rong Jiu pulled out the nervous expression he already had prepared as he said in a hurry, "Chu-xianjun, what is it, did I say something wrong? I-it's all misdeeds of a previous lifetime now, so please don't blame Mo-xianjun anymore… he… he's not a bad person…"

"Like I need you to tell me if he's a bad person or not!" Chu Wanning snapped, so angry he was shaking. "And what business of yours is it if I want to teach my own disciple a lesson?!"

“Chu-xianjun…”

Chu Wanning completely ignored him. There was a chill coming off his gaze, even as sparks flew off the rage blazing in his eyes. He shoved Rong Jiu aside from where he was trying to block his way and strode over to the door of the storehouse, grabbed Mo Ran by the back of his collar, and yanked him to his feet.

Mo Ran looked back, startled. “Shizun?”

Chu Wanning pulled his hand back, as if even the collar of his robes was too filthy to touch. He stared Mo Ran down like a cheetah on the hunt, growling lowly and just about to pounce, but he was much too angry to speak, even after a long moment had passed.

What even was there to say anymore?

If Mo Ran hadn’t realized his wrongs even after being reprimanded on the Platform of Sin and Virtue, if he had already apologized and had been acting like a decent human being in front of himself all this time…

But was actually still sneaking around to this Peach-Parting Pavilion and that Cutsleeve Lodge to fool around with prostitutes?!

Mo Ran had no idea he had been slandered; all he saw was the darkness on Chu Wanning’s face, his expression a mixture of anger and revulsion, and—he wasn’t sure if he was seeing things—a layer of stifled sadness.

“Mo Weiyu, just how much of your words in the past were true, and how many were lies?”

Chu Wanning’s voice was hoarse and his eyelashes quivered. A while passed, then he said in a low voice.

“...You...really are deficient by nature, beyond remedy…!”

Those words were like a boulder crashing into the ocean, sweeping up a massive wave in its wake.

Mo Ran jolted violently. He took two steps back, shaking his head as he stared at him at a loss.

It couldn’t be…

It couldn’t be…

Those were the words that Chu Wanning had only spoken to him in the past life when he’d lost all hope in him.

Why would he say it now? Wasn’t everything going fine?

Mo Ran flew into a panic, not knowing what had happened. He was about to speak when Chu Wanning cut him off, the rims of his eyes reddening as anger blazed in his gaze like a wildfire.

He said, voice raw, “Just how much longer are you going to lie to me?!”

Mo Ran’s mind was utter chaos.

What lie? What had Chu Wanning found out?

He had too many dirty, unspeakable secrets. Thus, faced with Chu Wanning's terrifying glare, he didn't even think to suspect that it was because Rong Jiu had done something. Chu Wanning stepped closer, Mo Weiyu backed off. Kept backing off until his back hit the wall.

Chu Wanning came to a stop. A few moments passed in silence as he stared at Mo Ran's face. Mo Ran heard a tightness in his Shizun's voice, like he was choking back a sob.

"What do you even want me to go back for? For you to keep lying to me, angering me, leading me around by the nose? ...I thought you had turned over a new leaf, Mo Ran——I thought you were worth teaching, that you had changed for the better! I thought I could teach you to be good…"

He closed his eyes slowly, and a moment later, spoke in a quiet voice.

"Incorrigible."

"Shizun——"

"Get lost."

"....."

"Which part of get lost do you not understand?!" Chu Wanning's eyes flew open, his gaze frosty. "Mo Weiyu, you disappoint me. How do you expect

me to pretend like I don't know anything, to go back to the world of the living with you?"

Mo Ran's entire heart clenched. Heedless of his anger, he grabbed Chu Wanning's wrist within his billowing sleeve and shook his head, begging with teary, reddening eyes, "Shizun, please don't be angry, tell me what happened, okay? Whatever I did wrong again, I'll change, okay? Just please don't chase me off…"

Change… that's what he had said back then, too, and did he? If not for meeting Rong Jiu here, would Chu Wanning have ever found out about these unseemly things?!

It is said that concern makes a person rash; Chu Wanning was usually calm and collected, but he had a fiery disposition and acted on emotion in matters of the heart. And on top of that, the past relationship between Rong Jiu and Mo Ran had indeed been improper, and Rong Jiu had put on such a convincing performance, so Chu Wanning fell for it completely.

Unable to pull free from Mo Ran's grip, Chu Wanning lifted his other hand to summon Tianwen in a fit of anger, but of course nothing appeared.

He was mad enough to keel over; probably would've spit blood by now if he wasn't already dead.

And then there was suddenly a brilliant scarlet radiance as Mo Ran summoned Jiangui. He put Jiangui into Chu Wanning's hand and then knelt down before his shizun, keeping his other hand wrapped firmly around Chu Wanning's wrist the whole time, deathly scared that he might leave. Mo Ran said, "Shizun, I know I… I've done lots of things that made you angry

and upset in the past… but since coming down to the Underworld, everything I've said to you has been true."

He lifted his head, eyes brimming with tears as he looked up at him. "All of it was true, I didn't lie to you…"

Clenching Jiangui in his hand, Chu Wanning's heart burned with rage, but also felt pained at the same time. Mo Ran's hand was wrapped so tightly around his own, trembling uncontrollably, despairingly, but refusing to let go, his agony so palpable that it nearly seemed to pierce into the depth of Chu Wanning's very soul; how could he possibly not feel it?

Mo Ran continued, "If Shizun is upset, if Shizun doesn't want to forgive me, then please just hit me, yell at me, anything is fine. And if you really don't want to see me again… if you think I… if you think I'm… deficient by nature, beyond remedy…"

His voice broke on that phrase.

Mo Ran lowered his head where he knelt before Chu Wanning.

"If Shizun really… doesn't want me anymore…"

He didn't want Chu Wanning to see him cry, but he couldn't stop the shaking in his shoulders as silent tears soaked a dark patch into the ground.

"Then I'll… I'll leave Sisheng Peak… and never… never show myself in front of Shizun again… but please… please I'm begging you…"

His forehead was nearly touching the muddy ground where he was kneeling, but his hand around Chu Wanning's wrist was still hanging on so tightly, so stubbornly, as if he'd sooner die than let go.

"Please, don't leave."

"....."

"Shizun…"

Chu Wanning closed his eyes.

"You promised me you'd go back with me, so please don't leave…"

There was an aching in his chest; he was only a fragment of a soul, so how could it still feel like his heart was being stabbed by knives, burnt by flames?

Chu Wanning's eyes snapped open in anger and resentment. "I promised you? Then what about what you promised me? Back at the Platform of Sin and Virtue you said you'd realized your wrongs, and then kneeling at Clearsky Hall you said you'd never do it again——so why didn't you keep your word! Mo Weiyu, did you really think I'd never find out, that I wouldn't discipline you again?!"

"......!!" Mo Ran startled, lost and confused like he was stuck in a foggy haze. He raised his head and looked up through teary eyes. "What?"

The word barely had time to leave his lips when Jiangui flashed bright scarlet and lashed out viciously toward the side of his face. Instantly, there was an eruption of crackling sparks, and blood splattered onto the ground and wall in an arc.

Chu Wanning really was furious.

He hadn't held back at all in that strike.

A bloody gash appeared on the side of Mo Ran's face, bleeding profusely.

But he paid it no mind as he clutched at Chu Wanning's hand, asking with wide eyes, "What do you mean Platform of Sin and Virtue? What Clearsky Hall? ...I… what am I keeping from you? What am I lying to you about?"

His string of questions only made Chu Wanning even more incensed. He tried to shake him off again, but couldn't.

Mo Ran suddenly realized that something was off. He whipped his head around to look back toward the inside of the storehouse——

While the two of them were fighting and far too distracted to notice anything else, that Rong Jiu had snuck away and ran off!!!

Mo Ran's expression changed as he immediately realized what was happening. "...Shizun, we fell for his trap! Come on, we have to leave! It's not safe here anymore, hurry!"

He ran for the door, pulling Chu Wanning along, but they barely made it two steps out when Rong Jiu appeared in the distance with a group of ghost soldiers, still tattling, “They’re right this way, that living person and the soul that’s with him… the two of them…”

Mo Ran roared furiously, “I should’ve killed you!”

There was no time to explain; Mo Ran led the way, holding tightly onto Chu Wanning’s hand as they ran through streets and alleys. There were more and more pursuers behind them, and the sounds of sentry whistles and clappers rang throughout the palace grounds. Chu Wanning glanced back to see four, maybe five separate groups of lanterns stream out from the main alleys to gather into one, like a hissing snake formed of fire coming after them.

Rong Jiu’s face was practically glowing with glee as he chased after Mo Ran and Chu Wanning with all that he had in that frail body of his, weak from all the hardships and abuse he had suffered in the past, running like a famished jackal chasing after its prey. Thinking that finding them out first and turning them in had earned him a great credit, and drunk on the feeling of accomplishment, he unexpectedly mustered a commanding aura.

“Catch them——catch that intruding live person——!”

His arm was suddenly grabbed as he was running. Rong Jiu whipped around angrily, faltering when he saw that it was the captain of the soldiers who had caught him before, but still snapped indignantly, “What’re you grabbing me for? Hurry and go catch that person up ahead!”

“Sure they’re escapees, but aren’t you one as well?” The captain narrowed his eyes, looking at him maliciously.

Alarmed, Rong Jiu shot back, “I-I only ran because I wanted to help the Fourth Lord catch them, I was the one who found the live person… I was the one who found out that Mo Weiyu isn’t a ghost, don’t you even think about capturing me just to steal my credit in front of the Fourth Lord!”

The captain was a little taken aback at first, before he put two and two together and burst out laughing instead. “ You found him out first? Credit? Hahaha me stealing your credit?”

The laughter stopped abruptly.

“Are you so desperate for distinction that you’ve gone mad trying?! The Fourth Lord himself was the one who discovered that live person! Did you think he’d seal the entire away palace off with a barrier just to catch some random little ghost? Hah, stealing credit indeed. You must be blind, trying to steal the Fourth Lord’s credit!”

Rong Jiu stumbled in shock and fell to the ground.

He watched as the army of ghost soldiers stomped past him in pursuit of Mo Ran and Chu Wanning. Rong Jiu trembled, lips quivering as he muttered, “Already discovered? The ghost king already… saw through them himself? I… I’m not the first? N-no credit? I…”

Those visions of riches and fame, of being revered and admired by people lining the streets, came crashing down to the ground and was crushed underfoot by the army stampeding past all around him.

Rong Jiu stared blankly for a while before suddenly flying into a crazed frenzy, trying with every fiber of his being to struggle free. His frail body was like that of a mayfly, lowly yet unwilling to bend to fate, a moth flying into a flame.

His life had never been easy. All he ever knew was a bed, men, wealthy madams, guests that came and went.

A windowless little room filled with scented haze from a brass incense burner, where it was impossible to tell day from night. That was his whole life.

It was a dark, never-ending night. He wanted to see daybreak. For the sake of that daybreak, that chance at living, that tiny bit of hope, he was willing to give up his dignity, his body, his honor, his kindness, his conscience… these were all that he had.

Flying into the flame for that tiny bit of light.

“WAIT! WAIT FOR ME! CHU-XIANJUN, SAVE ME——!!”

“Seize this escapee! Once this is squared away, have him sent to the Fourth Lord himself for interrogation!”

“No——NO!!” Rong Jiu’s pale, bloodless fingers clawed at the ground, his hair coming loose into a disheveled mess in the struggle and that charming, lovely face looking eerily terrifying in the cold light of the moon.

His eyes bulged outward as he screamed incoherently, “No! Chu-xianjun, save me!” And after a while, began shrieking hysterically, “I was the one who found him first! I found the live person! Me! You can’t treat me like this! You never would’ve found them if not for me! You all just want to steal my reward, my credit!”

He was dragged away, and his crazed shrieks were soon drowned out by the rumble of footsteps...

Author’s Notes:

They’ll escape the ghost realm tomorrow~

As for Rong Jiu, I won’t be writing him an ending. He didn't have anyone to be his guiding light on his path of desperation, and he lacked the opportunities to do good. So he ended up here; those who feel for him, you can come up with interactions between him and the Fourth Ghost King after he’s been dragged away233333

Why don’t I add a crack mini-theatre today?

Ghost prison Guard A: My king! We caught one trying to run away on his own!!! We've brought him here for you!!!

Fourth Ghost King: Omnomnomnomnom (in the middle of eating, lard and soy sauce rice may be simple but it's really tasty!)

Ghost prison Guard A: My king, stop eating, you'll be a half moon...[134]

Fourth Ghost King: Burp!! (Angrily smashes bowl) Fat!? This king is sturdy! Mighty! Do you understand!

Rong Jiu: (I don't want my soul to be scattered, I want to be promoted and prosper QAQ) ...The way I see it, my king isn't sturdy or mighty enough. How light is my king? If you want to be sturdy and mighty, it's only right if your arm is as thick as a thigh, and your leg as thick as a waist, why not my king eat a little more?

System notification: Player Rong Jiu [has acquired the correct way of licking orange tabby[135] Fourth Ghost King's boots].

Ch.119 Shizun's Four Souls Assembled

Chu Wanning hadn't heard what Rong Jiu was shouting back there, but based on the current situation, he didn't need any explanation to realise that Rong Jiu had been purposely trying to provoke him back at the warehouse, to make him angry so Rong Jiu could catch an opportune moment to escape and snitch.

Chu Wanning was the sort of person who would normally think things through in a rational manner no matter the situation, but when it came to situations involving Mo Ran, all his rationality and calm seemed to have disappeared into thin air. He was somewhat flabbergasted to realise just how easily he'd been hoodwinked by a few words from a sissy like that.

He watched Mo Ran who was running a few paces ahead of him, and asked in spite of himself, "Did you ever… go back to Immortal Peach Pavilion, after?"

Having abruptly heard the name he himself had almost forgotten, Mo Ran staggered and yelled, furious, "Rong Jiu, that dirty bastard! Did he say I went back to Immortal Peach Pavilion after?! Why would I! Shizun are you mad at me for this? Because he said I lied to you?"

"....."

"After the whole thing at the Platform of Sin and Virtue, I never went back to… those kinds of places. I wouldn't lie to Shizun; if Shizun doesn't believe me, then you can use Jiangui to bind me and interrogate me."

"...No need."

Chu Wanning dropped his gaze, seeing that Jiangui was still tightly gripped in his hand. Thinking about how he had just injected spiritual powers into the willow vine to whip Mo Ran into a bloody mess without care or reason, that really had been…

Wait, holy weapon?!

Jiangui's flames illuminated his complexion, bright against the darkness of the night. Chu Wanning stared at it for a moment, his mind tossing and turning frantically. He tried reversing the flow of the spiritual powers injected within Jiangui into the heart of his palm, and instantly felt a powerful and abundant power incessantly rushing in.

Suddenly, Chu Wanning knew where he could draw spiritual power from ——

While spiritual powers could not flow between the living and the dead, the powers of a holy weapon didn't care whether the wielder was a human, ghost, god, or demon; as long as the weapon itself accepted, then it'd all be connected!

Mo Ran ran on for a while before he realised that Chu Wanning had stopped. He immediately turned back, and asked anxiously, "Shizun, what is it?"

The lash wound on his face was still bleeding, and with those bright black eyes, he looked all the more pitiful.

Chu Wanning pursed his lips, feeling somewhat chagrined and a little pained. Although he felt like he really had wronged Mo Ran, his inner pride pointed out that Mo Ran really had entangled himself with the likes of Rong Jiu in the past, so that lash had not been undeserved.

After a moment of contemplation, Chu Wanning didn't know what tone he should take or what expression to face him with either, so he could only go with the simple route of speaking with no emotions and no expression.

"Mo Ran, stop, and retreat back to the palace walls."

"...To do what?"

Chu Wanning replied flatly, "I'll show you a trick."

"....."

Before he could wrap his head around his Shizun's words, Mo Ran saw the red light of Jiangui flowing endlessly into Chu Wanning's remnant soul, enveloping his spirit with a blanket of flames. Mo Ran's eyes widened as he watched Chu Wanning and Jiangui respond to each other. Suddenly, the flames abruptly vanished. The man garbed in golden and red robes raised the willow vine, hissing with threads of flames, and turned his head to address Mo Ran.

"Mo Ran, give Jiangui an order."

Mo Ran could vaguely guess what he planned to do now, though he could hardly believe it. He promptly shouted a command, "Jiangui, heed Shizun's orders as you would mine."

The willow vine in Chu Wanning's hand crackled through, then erupted into strings of crystal red sparks as the leaves on the vine glowed brilliantly.

Chu Wanning raised his other hand and brushed the tips of his fingers inch by inch over Jiangui, the willow vine coursing with even brighter radiance in the wake of his touch. The thousands of ghost soldiers were closing in

now, and behind them the barrier-sealed palace walls stood sky-high. There was nowhere to run to.

But then, Chu Wanning wasn't planning to run.

A flicker of light caught in his eyes and rippled out, and a tempest suddenly roared into life out of nowhere. Chu Wanning's robes danced in the gale as he held the willow vine up high and whipped it ferociously through the air, Jiangui striking out like a soaring dragon, glowing golden, resplendent, illuminating the whole night sky!

With Mo Ran's command, Jiangui no longer rejected Chu Wanning, and instead channeled its abundant spiritual energy ceaselessly into Chu Wanning's Earth Soul.

Chu Wanning's eyes shone with that blinding brilliance, and his voice was deep and steady as he said, "Jiangui, Ten Thousand Coffins!"

" RUMBLE ——" In that split second, countless streaks of interlacing gold and red willow vines erupted from the earth, lacerating the magnificent palace hall into chunks of broken shingles and scraps of bricks. One thick and powerful ancient vine fettered those ghost soldiers together and dragged them to the centre of the willow vine, locking them down tight.

Mo Ran watched in shock as all of this happened before his eyes, seeing the holy weapon and the remnant soul work in concert, merging as one.

Seeing Chu Wanning's robes flutter, his jet black hair like smoke and clouds.

In life and in death, his spirit had always been so earth-shatteringly blazing and unstoppable.

Taking advantage of this good opportunity, Chu Wanning resolutely swept to the back, placing his hand on the palace wall. It only took a second with his eyes closed before he immediately discerned the weak point of the barrier.

“Upward nine feet, four inches to the right, use fire to attack!”

Mo Ran immediately followed his instructions and jumped up, and before any of the ghosts within the Away Palace had time to react, the blazing fire spell was already forming in his palms as he slammed it down right in the spot Chu Wanning pointed out.

In an instant, the earth rumbled and the mountains shook. The sky-high palace walls rapidly disintegrated, returning to the height they used to be, and the barrier seal all around also abruptly shattered, crumbling into dust.

“GO!”

There was no need to say that a second time. Mo Ran hopped onto the top of the wall, then turned around to pull Chu Wanning who was following behind up along with him. The two of them broke out from the Fourth Ghost King’s Away Palace, their figures swift as they rapidly disappeared into the boundless night.

In a small and narrow alleyway, Chu Wanning and Mo Ran each leaned against a side of a wall, both of them staring at each other, neither saying a word. In the end it was Mo Ran who couldn’t hold back and snickered first. “That old ghost will probably be furious to death...hss!” The moment he drew back the corners of his mouth it pulled the injury on his cheeks.

“...Stop laughing,” Chu Wanning said.

And so Mo Ran stopped laughing. In the dim alley, his lashes flickered, his pitch-black and gentle eyes gazing at the other. “Shizun, are you still mad at me?”

If he had said “Shizun, haven’t you wronged me?” Chu Wanning might not have appreciated it, but instead he had asked whether he was still mad. Chu Wanning wavered for a moment, then silently danced past this subject. “...Hurry and cast the spell. We just escaped from the Fourth Ghost King’s Away Palace, he might not have the face to tell it to the other ghost kings for the moment, but the longer this drags on it’ll be harder to say.”

The moment Mo Ran heard those words he knew Chu Wanning wasn’t leaving anymore, that he wasn’t going to disappear. And so the heart that had been strung high all this time was finally able to relax.

Mo Ran couldn’t help but start to grin again. “Mn.” But the more he smiled the more it hurt, and he unconsciously covered his cheek with his hand.

Chu Wanning: “.....”

Mo Ran brought out the Soul-Calling Lantern. He held it up with his hands and bowed his head as he recited the spell in his mind. After three repetitions, a blinding brilliance suddenly flashed from the Soul-Calling Lantern, so bright that neither of them could open their eyes.

He could vaguely hear the voice of Master Huaizui chanting, carried over from across the roaring waters of the land of the dead, carried over unceasingly past the quiet and peaceful river of forgetfulness.

“The time to return… the time to return…”

That voice was very distant, almost difficult to discern, but after a while the chanting of “the time to return” seemed to have come closer, then the voice of Master Huaizui rang in Mo Ran’s ears.

“Why are there two Earth Souls?” There was a trace of concern in Master Huaizui’s obscure voice.

Mo Ran closed his eyes and told Huaizui everything that had transpired.

That faint voice was quiet for a moment, “You’ve met Chu Xun of Tailwind Hall?”

“Mn.”

“.....”

“Master?”

“It’s nothing. Since Chu-gongzi said having two Earth Souls is normal, then it should be thus,” Huaizui said. “Only, this humble monk has never attempted to call back two Earth Souls from the Ghost Realm at the same time before, so this might take a bit longer. I will trouble Mo-shizhu to wait for a moment.”

Mo Ran glanced at the Fourth King’s Away Palace and asked, “How much longer? We just came out from the Fourth Ghost King’s Away Palace, I don’t know when they’ll catch up to us…”

“Not too long. Rest assured, Mo-shizhu.”

The moment Huaizui dropped these words, his voice faded even more, and after a while, it was overtaken completely by the sound of the “the time to return” chanting.

Chu Wanning couldn't hear Huaizui's voice, so his brows were slightly furrowed. "What's going on?"

"Shizun's souls are unique, Master said we'll need to wait for a bit," Mo Ran explained. "It's too close to the Away Palace here, let's go further away."

Chu Wanning nodded and the two walked until they came to a turning corner. By then, the skies were beginning to lighten up, and the old man who had pointed the way before was just preparing to pack up his stall. When he spotted Mo Ran, he "aiyah"-ed, and appeared quite astonished.

"You found him?"

Mo Ran didn't expect to bump into him again and was taken aback for a moment, then he replied, "Yes, yes I did, thanks so much, uncle."

"What's there to thank? It's little xianjun's own good luck. Ay… your face is scratched?"

"Oh, it's… it's a whipping from the ghost soldiers," Mo Ran said, making up a reason.

"No wonder. I was gonna say, nothing average can harm a ghost. Sigh… how painful it must be."

The old uncle pondered for a moment then put down the drawer he had packed away and cooked two bowls of small wontons, handing them to the two. "There's only the leftovers that I couldn't sell today, my treat. Eat some before you leave."

Mo Ran thanked the old man, then watched him off as he left, languidly carrying his stall load.

Chu Wanning didn't like to eat scallions and chives and the old man's wonton soup had been peppered with scallion. Mo Ran picked out all the scallions in his bowl before exchanging it with Chu Wanning's. "Shizun, why don't you eat this one."

"....." Chu Wanning sent him a look but didn't decline, and picked up the spoon to taste the food carefully.

Mo Ran watched him eat, the ice cold soup of the Underworld touching his lightly-coloured lips, neither the wontons nor the soup diminishing, the way actual ghosts ate.

"Is it good?"

"It's alright."

"Not as good as the wontons you make."

" Cough !" Chu Wanning choked, taken by surprise. He looked up abruptly to stare dumbfoundedly at the grinning man sitting before him, cheeks propped up on his hands. Suddenly, he felt like he was a river mussel whose shell had been forcibly pulled open, left exposed under the sun without a single secret left.

"...What wontons?"

Yuheng Elder knitted his brows, his expression stern, attempting to be ignorant to conceal his teacher's dignity that had now been spilled all over the floor.

"There's no need to hide it anymore." But before that dropped dignity could be picked up, it was shattered into pieces by Mo Ran's hand, extending out to caress his hair.

Chu Wanning was both furious and very dismayed over this.

“I know everything now.”

“.....”

Mo Ran took the lantern holding the Human Soul out from the qiankun pouch, and placed it beside the stone bench. “Shizun was awkward when alive, and after coming to the underworld, it’s still only the Human Soul that’s honest.”

“I made them for you, but it was only…”

Mo Ran cocked a brow, and continued gazing at him with a faint smile.

But it was only what?

Only because I felt bad? Because I didn’t want you to starve? Because I regretted?

Those were all words he could never say out loud.

Chu Wanning thought his own heart had an unspeakable affliction. He’d always had a pride much stronger than normal people, taking “being good to someone”, “loving someone”, and “being attached to someone” to be shameful things. Having lived through the storms of years past, he had become used to being alone, had become a stern and solitary tree, reaching up to the sky.

A great tree like this didn’t have branches that quivered like flowers, stirring affection in people’s hearts, nor did it sway with the wind like strings of vines, seductive and enticing.

He only stood there in silence and severity, very steady and dependable, blocking wind and rain for the passersby without a word, allowing those under the tree to hide from the scorching sun.

Perhaps it was because he'd grown too tall, too luxuriant, that people had to intentionally look up before they'd discover——Ah, so this gentle shade had been bestowed by him.

But all those travelers going to and fro, not one of them had looked up, and not one of them had ever noticed him.

After all, people's lines of sight were habitually aimed at places lower than themselves, or at eye level at most. And so Chu Wanning had gradually grown accustomed to this, so accustomed that it had become second nature to him to expect it.

But there was actually no one in the world who was born reliant, or relied upon.

Only, those who always sought the connection of those who were strong would become more and more charming, more and more sweet, limbering their boneless body to curry favour, charm, to use sweet words to win the world.

And the other type of person was someone like Chu Wanning. Ever since he had emerged from the mountain, he'd always been the one depended on. People like him would only become more and more steadfast, more and more strong, until in the end even the face had become iron, the heart steel. People like him were used to seeing others be vulnerable and incompetent; they had seen all there was to see of charm and sweetness, and so they refused to reveal even a morsel of weakness.

They were people who wielded swords, always standing at the ready in full armour.

They couldn't show any weakness, and knew nothing of tenderness.

After so long, it was as if it'd been forgotten that everyone had once been born with emotions and affections, both strong and soft. That every person had, as a child, known how to cry and laugh. Known how to stand up after having fallen, while also desiring for a pair of arms to help them up.

Maybe he had hoped, once upon a time. Hoped that someone would come to help him up. But he'd waited once, and there had been nothing. A second time, and there had still been nothing. After getting disappointed, time and time again, he'd gradually grown accustomed to it. By the time someone finally did come to help him up, he no longer thought it was necessary, and only felt it something shameful.

It was only a trip and fall.

It wasn't like he'd broken his leg, there's no reason to be melodramatic about it.

And what if he had broken his leg? People like this would only think: Oh, it's only a broken leg, it wasn't like he'd died, there's no reason to be melodramatic about it.

And what if he'd died?

Even as a ghost he'd think, well, since I'm dead anyway, there's no reason to be melodramatic about it.

People like him put so much effort into breaking away from the pitfalls of this kind of melodrama, but unbeknownst to them, they would fall into

another type of pitfall, a kind if prideful illness that was incurable.

Mo Ran stared at this incurable person, waiting to see what he would say.

In the end Chu Wanning didn't say anything, only pressing his lips together, drily putting the spoon down.

He was very unhappy.

Thus, half a moment later, he stood up abruptly and said, "Try casting the spell again, I want to enter the Soul-Calling Lantern."

"Huh…?" Mo Ran blinked for a second, then laughed. "Is the Soul-Calling Lantern a conch shell, a place where you can go hide when you get embarrassed?"

Chu Wanning's expression was stern and solemn, and he shook out his sleeves as he said, "Embarrassed? Why don't you tell me what reason I have to be embarrassed?"

"Of course Shizun is embarrassed because…"

"!" Chu Wanning hadn't expected Mo Ran would actually be thick skinned enough to say it, and feeling like he'd been pricked by a needle, he exclaimed angrily, "Shut your mouth."

"Because Shizun is good to me."

"....."

Mo Ran now rose to his feet too. The red clouds of the Ghost Realm drifted past the sky, hiding the dreary crescent moon that was peeking its head

out, splashing the ground with a layer of fresh frost and illuminating Mo Ran's face.

He wasn't laughing anymore; his expression was solemn and sincere.

"Shizun, I know you're good to me. I don't know if you'll still remember the things I say now after your souls have returned, but… no matter what, I still want to tell you. From now on, you're one of the most important people in the world to me. This disciple has done many absurd deeds in the past, and my heart had been filled with grudge and hate even though I clearly had the best shizun in the world. Now when I think back on it, I'm only filled with infinite regret."

Chu Wanning watched him.

"Shizun is the best, best shizun, and this disciple is the worst, worst disciple," Mo Ran said.

Chu Wanning had been feeling a little uneasy at first. But as he listened to Mo Ran using his sad and pathetic vocabulary to try and express himself, doing his utmost but still so clumsy.

Chu Wanning tried to resist, but in the end he couldn't hold back a faint smile.

"Oh." He nodded, and repeated, "Shizun is the best, best shizun, and the disciple is the worst, worst disciple. At least you've finally got some self-awareness."

Chu Wanning wasn't a greedy person; he gave a lot to others but had always asked for very little for himself. Although he wasn't receiving Mo

Ran's love, to become one of the most important people to Mo Ran, to be the best shizun, that wasn't bad either.

He had always been impoverished when it came to feelings anyway, poor, yet refusing to beg for more.

And here was someone, willing to give him a small piece of hot flatbread to munch on.

He felt very happy, munching on the flatbread in small bites, and that was enough for him.

This dummy Mo Ran on the other hand, when he saw dumbfoundedly that he was able to cause this piece of soul to smile as well, his heart swelled with inexplicable joy. "Shizun, you should smile more. You look prettier with a smile than without."

Instead, Chu Wanning ceased to smile.

This prideful disease of his. It made him think "looking pretty" was the praise only wild weeds the likes of Rong Jiu got when they flirted, and he didn't want it.

But Mo Ran with his poor judgment was still trying agonizingly to praise his good shizun, "Shizun, do you know? When you smile… uh… how can I describe it…"

He was working hard trying to think of a phrase that could best describe the beauty of the scene he just witnessed.

Something that was related to smiles.

The watchmen's rattle of the underworld clapped thrice again.

Inspiration struck and he blurted, “That’s right! It’s a smile in the netherworld!”[136]

“.....”

Chu Wanning was genuinely mad now, and he refused to pay Mo Ran any mind, abruptly pulling his own sleeve aside to pick up the Soul-Calling Lantern. He scolded sternly, “Mo Weiyu, all this blabbering and you still can’t cast the spell? If you say one more rubbish word I will go back to that Fourth King’s Palace myself, which would be infinitely better than returning to the mortal realm to listen to your nonsense all day!”

Mo Ran was dumbfounded.

Smile in the netherworld… Had he used it wrongly?

Having an especially pretty smile in the underworld, it, it’s not wrong…

Disputing on the road was somewhat ostentatious after all. Mo Ran had no idea what he’d said wrong, but if shizun had told him to shut it then he’ll just shut his mouth. Thinking this, Mo Ran scratched his head and dragged Chu Wanning to a corner. At this time, that languid chanting in his mind had gradually grown louder and louder. Mo Ran ventured to ask Huaizui, “Master, are you almost ready?”

It was quiet for a moment on the other side, then the knocking sound of a wooden fish came, and Huaizui’s voice seemed to be right next to his ears, becoming eminently clear.

“Almost.”

Huaizui’s voice had only just dropped when dots of golden light started to diffuse out of Chu Wanning’s second Earth Soul, and the soul that was

standing grew fainter and fainter as the golden light scattered until finally it shattered into millions of streaming fireflies, flowing into the soul lamp like the milky way.

Mo Ran could hear the voice of Master Huaizui chanting, carried over from across the roaring waters of the land of the dead, carried over unceasingly past the quiet and peaceful river of forgetfulness.

“The time to return… the time to return…”

All sufferings were gradually washed to a faded white in the sighs of that Buddhist chanting, seemingly distant yet close. Mo Ran hugged that Soul-Calling Lantern, feeling his body becoming lighter and lighter, emptier and emptier.

“ KO! ”

One crisp sound of the wooden fish.

It was like a sharp knife, brutally shattering the trance-like recitation.

Mo Ran snapped open his eyes, looking like he was jolted awake!

Everything from the Ghost Realm had vanished, like he had only just woken from a long dream. He found that he was lying on a bamboo raft, moored by the Naihe Bridge of Sisheng Peak, the waters beneath the bamboo strips lapping ceaselessly, splashing about.

The sky was crab shell blue, but dyed with a touch of pale red. The bamboo leaves along the shores of the great river danced in the air, the thousand whispers of their millions of leaves tender in the air.

It seemed that dawn was about to break.

He blinked dazedly.

Suddenly, he discovered the Soul-Calling Lantern that had been in his arms was gone, and this scared him out of his witsand he jolted upright in a rush.

“SHIZUN——!”

“Don’t yell.”

A voice, impassive.

Mo Ran panted, looking like someone who had just experienced a nightmare. His face was pale as he turned his head and saw Huaizui kneeling in proper pose on the shore, knocking on the wooden fish placed upon a verdant rock, his eyes open.

“Even if you yell, he won’t hear it right now.”

The Soul-Calling Lantern rested next to the wooden fish, radiating with streaming light, glowing and magnificent. The force of Chu Wanning’s soul was indescribably beautiful.

Huaizui picked up the Soul-Calling Lantern and rose to his feet from the boulder, nodding towards Mo Ran. “Young Mo-shizhu, you’ve done very well.”

Mo Ran quickly crawled up to stand, hopping onto land from the bamboo raft. He tugged on Huaizui and questioned anxiously, “Master, let’s go find Shizun’s mortal body in Frostsky Hall ? Let’s go let’s go, I’m scared if we’re late the souls will disperse again.”

Huaizui couldn't hold back a chuckle. "How can the souls disperse so easily?" Then he added, "Don't worry, this humble monk has already sent Xue-shizhu to speak with your esteemed sect leader. Chu Wanning's mortal body should now be on its way to the Red Lotus Pavilion. This humble monk will be going into seclusion there to perform the rite to have the souls of your shizun be transferred once again into the body."

Mo Ran urged, "Then let's go, quickly!" When he saw Huaizui's faint smile, he hastily added, "Master do take your time, no rush, no rush."

But his brows were obviously furrowed, his feet making strides unconsciously, and he almost wanted to reach out to pull on Huaizui's sleeves, looking nothing like there was no rush.

Huaizui shook his head, sighed, then said with a smile, "There's no point in the young shizhu being impatient."

Mo Ran waved his hands, "No rush no rush, steady is best."

"Indeed, steadiness is important. When souls leave the body, they cannot immediately return to the flesh, otherwise it'd be going against the laws of heaven, causing the souls to dissipate. Naturally, this humble monk will go slowly."

"Right right right, good good good, do it slowly." Mo Ran acquiesced incessantly, but still couldn't hold back, and asked very carefully after some hesitation, "Then how long will it take before shizun comes back to life?"

Huaizai was very calm. "Five years."

"I see, five years is g… FIVE YEARS??!!"

Colour drained completely from Mo Ran's face, and he felt like he was choking.

"Five years at the shortest."

Mo Ran, "....."

Author's Notes:

When Shizun officially wakes up, the Mo Ran he'll see is 2.0 Mo Ran~~! Bring it on! Prepare for system upgrade!

Ch.120 Shizun Goes Into Seclusion

The first light of dawn painted red the clouds in the sky. It was still early, but there was already a large gathering of disciples outside the Red Lotus Pavilion, dressed in white mourning robes and lining the sides of the pathway with heads lowered and eyes downcast.

“ Dong——dong——dong—— ”

The sound of the morning bell came from the Heaven-Piercing Tower, and several people could be seen walking slowly in the distance, carrying a coffin. Xue Zhengyong and Tanlang Elder walked in front, followed by Mo Ran and Xue Meng, with Shi Mei and a monk dressed in worn robes walking on either side. They approached slowly through the morning fog, treading along the dew-slick bluestone path.

The monk was holding a lantern. It was already light out, but the lantern’s glow was no less brilliant, its golden radiance dazzling like summer blossoms.

The gathering of disciples lowered their heads solemnly, barely even daring to breathe. They had already heard that Master Huaizui of Wubei Temple had hastened over for the sake of Yuheng Elder, so this unassuming monk was probably him. The reverence that the juniors held toward such a person of legend far outweighed their curiosity, and none dared to take a good look as he made his way up the long mountain path. And so, with the tapping sounds of a monk stick and the glimpse of a pair of hemp-woven

monk shoes from downcast eyes, the great master passed by with lightly billowing robes as the disciples stood reverently in his wake.

The coffin was carried steadily the whole way; it was not a burial, but a revival, and so no one wept. Arriving at the Red Lotus Pavilion, Huaizui looked around before saying, “Next to the lotus pond will do. There’s an abundance of spiritual energy there, suitable for spells.”

“Alrighty, you heard the Great Master!” Xue Zhengyong led the others to go set the black ice coffin down by the lotus pond. “Just let me know if the Great Master needs anything else. Saving Yuheng is the same as saving half my life, I’ll do anything I can to help!”

“Many thanks for Xue-zhangmen’s kindness,” Huaizui said. “This humble monk has no needs at the moment, but will be sure to inform Zhangmen if any should arise in the future.”

“Sure, please do feel free.”

Huaizui put his palms together and bowed respectfully toward Xue Zhengyong with a smile, then turned to address the others present. “This incompetent monk will need five years to return Elder Chu’s soul. In order to prevent disturbances, Red Lotus Pavilion will be closed to visitors from today until Elder Chu’s revival in five years.”

Xue Meng had already been told about that before, but having Huaizui confirm once again that it was going to take five years for Shizun to wake up, the rims of his eyes still grew red as he silently lowered his head.

“If anyone wishes to say any parting words to Elder Chu, then please do so now. After today, it’ll be a thousand-some days until you can meet again.”

So they went, one by one.

Xue Zhengyong and the elders went first, taking turns to stand solemnly before the coffin and say their farewells. Xue Zhengyong said, “Let us meet again soon.”

Tanlang said, “Wake up soon.”

Xuanji said, “Hope everything goes well.”

Lucun said with a sigh, “I kinda envy you, frozen in time for five years like this and not having to look any older.”

The other elders also each said their piece, some longer and some shorter, and it was Xue Meng’s turn before long. Xue Meng had every intention to hold it together, but his emotions had always gotten the better of him, and this too was no exception as he started crying next to Chu Wanning’s coffin.

He choked out between sobs while vigorously wiping away his tears, “Shizun, I’ll work hard to train myself, even if you’re not here. I definitely won’t embarrass you at the upcoming Spiritual Mountain Competition. I’ll tell you all about my high ranking when you wake up. My Shizun doesn’t have losers as his disciples, after all.”

Xue Zhengyong walked over and clapped him on the shoulder. Xue Meng didn’t cling to his father like he usually did, but turned away with a sniffle

instead. He didn't want to look like a useless spoiled child that needed his father for everything in front of his shizun.

Next was Shi Mei. Shi Mei's eyes were wet as well; he didn't say anything, only looked at Chu Wanning for a while with his head lowered, before quietly retreating to the side.

After he left, a light pink haitang blossom was placed gently into the coffin. The hand that placed it, although still somewhat youthful looking, was already long and slender.

Mo Ran stood by the coffin. A breeze danced past the surface of the water, carrying the softly sweet fragrance of the lotus flowers. The breeze tousled his fringe, but when he lifted his hand, it was to brush Chu Wanning's face.

Mo Ran pressed his lips together, looking like he had a lot that he wanted to say, but in the end, all he said was a soft, slightly hoarse, "I'll wait for you."

Wait for you for what?

He didn't say. He felt like he probably wanted to say 'I'll wait for you to wake up,' but those words seemed insufficient somehow. It felt like there was no way to express the feelings that were crowded to bursting in his chest, as if there was a pool of scalding hot lava in his heart, surging about madly and unable to find a way out, the force of the impact making him feel pained and panicked.

It felt like the impact would one day rip right through his heart, and then the lava would spill out uncontrollably, and the raging flow would melt him into ash.

But right now, he still wasn't sure what that burning feeling was.

So he only said "I'll wait for you."

The Red Lotus Pavilion was closed off.

An enormous barrier came down like a gate separating life from death, denying anyone entry.

Henceforth, for the next five years, none would be privy to the fragrance of lotus blossoms in the summer, nor the quiet solitude of snow in the winter within the pavilion.

Bamboo leaves rustled in the wind and haitang blossoms drifted slowly down. From outside the Red Lotus Pavilion all the way to the main gate, disciples knelt down on the ground, with Mo Ran, Xue Meng, and Shi Mei at the head of this vast river.

Xue Zhengyong announced in a booming voice that rang through the skies and forests, "Wishing Yuheng Elder well in his seclusion."

The disciples repeated solemnly with their heads down, "Wishing Yuheng Elder well in his seclusion."

Thousands of voices rose, out of sync, rumbling forth from the cloud-shrouded Sisheng Peak and startling the birds into flight all around, birdcalls filling the skies as they circled the treetops, not daring to land. The mass of voices rose heavensward, rumbling like thunder through streaming clouds.

“Wishing Shizun well in his seclusion,” Mo Ran said in a soft voice.

Then bowed down to the ground for a long time.

Five years of waiting.

After Yuheng went into seclusion, his three disciples, unwilling to even temporarily take other elders as teacher, each worked hard to train and cultivate on their own.

For reasons of aptitude, cultivation path, and other such, Shi Mei and Xue Meng stayed at the peak, while Mo Ran chose to travel.

Mo Ran really did learn better through experience, but the other reason he made this choice was because so many things had turned out differently in this reborn life—aside from what had happened with Chu Wanning, that fake Gouchen worried him a great deal.

He suspected that the person behind everything might also have been reborn. After all, that person could already be said to be quite proficient in Zhenlong Chess Formation, but in the previous lifetime, even up until he took his own life, there had been no one else in the world capable of utilizing this forbidden technique to this extent.

He had no talent for ferreting out hidden identities, but ever since the battle at Butterfly Town, the entire cultivation world had kept its eyes peeled, just waiting for that person to slip up and expose themselves, so he didn't really need to get involved in this matter.

Mo Ran knew he wasn't exactly smart, that his strength lay in his abundance of spiritual energy and natural aptitude for cultivation. Since another confrontation in the future was inevitable, the best thing he could do right now was to get himself back up to his pre-rebirth battle prowess as soon as possible.

Last life, he had been a destroyer.

This life, he wanted to be a protector.

Not long after Chu Wanning had gone into seclusion, Mo Ran stood before the main gate of Sisheng Peak.

Carrying a traveling bag, just about to set off on his journey.

Only a few people came to see him off: Xue Zhengyong, Madam Wang, and Shi Mei.

Xue Zhengyong clapped him on the shoulder and said, a little awkwardly, "Meng-er won't be coming, he said…"

Mo Ran chuckled, "He said he's too busy training in the forest to come see me off, didn't he?"

“.....” Feeling even more awkward, Xue Zhengyong couldn’t help chiding, “That thoughtless brat!”

Mo Ran said with a smile, “He’s got his heart set on first place at the Spiritual Mountain Competition, it’s only natural that he be diligent about training. I’ll leave it to him to earn glory in Shizun’s name.”

Xue Zhengyong looked at Mo Ran hesitantly, then said, “The Spiritual Mountain Competition is the foremost tournament in orthodox cultivation. I’m sure Ran-er will grow and learn much in his travels, but the competition probably won’t allow the kind of assorted, admixed techniques you’re going to end up learning. It’d be a pity if you end up missing out because of that.”

Mo Ran replied, “My cousin’s got it covered.”

“Don’t you want to make a name for yourself?”

Mo Ran actually burst out laughing at that.

Make a name for himself?

He had missed out on the Spiritual Mountain Competition in the last lifetime because he had committed some wrong and had been punished by confinement at the time, and he had always felt resentful about that. But that same thing seemed to him such a non-issue now—what did it even matter? He was someone who had already been through so much death and partings, awash in an endless tidal flood of trials and tribulations, who

had gone from unresigned to expectant, from expectant to resentful, from resentful to relieved, from relieved to remorseful.

Here and now, what Mo Ran wanted was no longer beauties and fine wine, or the worship of the masses, much less things like revenge and the adrenaline rush of killing and razing.

He had already seen for himself the boundless opulence and luxuries at the apex of the world, and he had already grown tired of it all. He didn't want to go back there—it was cold, and there was no one by his side.

After all, he had once been Emperor Taxian-jun, had stood upon the mightiest mountain with the world in the palm of his hand, had seen all that there was to see. Of course he wouldn't care about some trifling thing like the measly applause and couple of cheers at the Spiritual Mountain Competition.

As for the ranking…

Whoever wanted it could have it.

"I'd rather do other things," Mo Ran said with a smile. "Xue Meng is a young master, and young masters have their way of living. But I'm just a hooligan, and hooligans have their own hooligan lives."

Madam Wang couldn't help the pity in her voice as she said, "Silly child, what are you saying? You're the same as Meng-er, what young master and hooligan?"

Mo Ran laughed ‘hehe’, but it was a little pained.

One was born into the lap of luxury while the other was low and petty by birth. Even though he had been immensely fortunate to end up here at Sishing Peak, he had still spent the first over ten years of his life in a murky haze, so how could they possibly be the same?

But seeing the gentle, concerned look on Madam Wang’s face, he couldn’t really say any of that, so he only nodded and said, “Auntie is right, I misspoke.”

Madam Wang shook her head with a smile and handed him a small qiankun pouch with pollia flowers sewn on it. “You’ll have to look after yourself while you travel. Take this, it’s filled with medicines for injuries. I made them myself, so they’re more effective than the kind you can buy in stores. Make sure not to lose it.”

Mo Ran said gratefully, “Thanks a lot, Auntie.”

Shi Mei said, “I don’t really have anything to give you besides this jade pendant. Here, wear it, it keeps your spiritual core warm.”

Taking it in hand, Mo Ran noted that the white jade was creamy smooth and warm to the touch, an exceedingly rare, high grade item. He hurriedly tucked the jade pendant back into Shi Mei’s hand, saying, “I can’t accept this, it’s far too valuable. And besides, my spiritual core is already fire elemental to start with, if it gets warmed any further… I might have a Qi deviation.”

Shi Mei laughed, “Don’t be silly, what Qi deviation?”

“Anyway, I’m not taking it.” Mo Ran maintained. “You have a weak constitution, it’ll do you more good than it would me.”

“But I had someone get it from the Xuanyuan Pavilion auction just for you…”

Mo Ran felt all warm at his words, but more than that, felt his heart ache for him. “Then it must’ve been really expensive… this jade pendant really wouldn’t do much for me, but it’d be great for you. Shi Mei, I appreciate the thought, but please keep it for yourself, and remember to wear it so it can nourish your spiritual energy.”

Shi Mei still wanted to say something, but Mo Ran had already uncoiled the thin cord and put the jade pendant around his neck.

“Looks good,” he said with a smile, then lifted a hand to pat Shi Mei on the shoulder. “Looks much better on you than it would on me. I’m such a rough and tumble kind of person, I’d probably break it in two days time.”

“Ran-er is right, the jade pendant can be worn by anyone, but it’s best for people with water elemental spiritual cores. Mei-er, just keep it.”

Now that even Madam Wang has spoken up, of course Shi Mei would listen to her. He nodded and said to Mo Ran, “Then, take care of yourself.”

“Don’t worry, I’ll write to you often.”

Shi Mei was a bit sad at having to say goodbye soon, but he couldn't help laughing at that. "Only Shizun can read your chicken-scratch handwriting, you know."

Mo Ran wasn't sure what it was that he felt at the mention of Chu Wanning.

The hatred that used to gnaw at his very bones had dissipated, but the remorse was still there, like a wound scabbing over, a dull, itchy ache in his heart.

And so, with this feeling in his chest, Mo Ran set off down the mountain by himself.

"One, two, three…"

He counted in his head as he walked, head lowered.

"One hundred and one, one hundred and two, one hundred and three…"

Arriving at the foot of the mountain, he couldn't help looking back toward Sisheng Peak, high up and shrouded amongst the clouds, with no end to be seen to the long flight of stone steps. He murmured, "Three thousand seven hundred and ninety nine."

He had counted as he walked.

It was the number of steps up to the main gate, the number of steps that Chu Wanning had climbed that day, carrying him on his back.

He was sure that, for as long as he lived, he would never forget what Chu Wanning's hands had been like, cold as ice, chafed raw and bloody.

Truth of the matter was, whether a person did good or committed evil was rarely ever due to their inherent nature. Each person was like a plot of farmland; some were lucky, their fields sprinkled with seeds of grains, bearing an abundant harvest come autumn, paddies wafting with the soft fragrance of rice and fields of wheat dancing in the wind like waves, and everything would be good and praise-worthy.

But some were not so lucky. Their fields were planted with the seeds of poppy flowers, and the spring breeze brought only the sin of intoxicated dissipation and euphoric decadence, filling the skies and covering the lands with that vile, bloody red and gold. The people abhorred it, cursed it, feared it, even as they indulged in its blissful stupor, rotted away in its filthy stench.

And in the end, the righteous and upstanding would gather together, set the field on fire, and as the twisting smoke rose into the sky, they would say he was a breeding ground of sin, that he was a demonic fiend, that he was vicious and ruthless, that he had no conscience, that he deserved it.

He convulsed in the blaze, crying out in pain as the poppy flowers shriveled up and turned into mud, the air choked with the smell of burning.

But he had once been a plot of good farmland too, had once wanted nothing more than water and sunlight too.

Just whom was it, who had planted that first seed of darkness, sowed the disaster that grew out of control?

The plot of land, once temperate and splendid, went up in flames and turned into dust.

Laid fallow.

He was a plot of unwanted, abandoned land.

He never thought that someone would come into his life and plough these fields again, give him another chance.

Chu Wanning.

It would be five years before he could see him again. Today was day one.

He suddenly found himself already missing Chu Wanning's face, his stern, angry, gentle, serious, steadfast face.

Mo Ran slowly closed his eyes.

He thought back to his lives, past and present, so many bygone happenings scattering like snow in the wind. He slowly realized that the heavenly rift incident had in fact been the biggest crossroads of his life.

In his last life, he had loved someone dearly.

Later, that person had given up his life, and he'd ended up in hell.

In this life, there was someone else who loved and protected him.

Later, that person had given up his life, and brought him back to the world of the living.

Ch.121 Shizun is the Real Zongshi[137]

On the eighth day after Mo Ran left, Xue Zhengyong received the first letter from him.

Messy scrawls on lined stationery that tried their best to be neat, but to no avail.

“I hope this letter finds Uncle well. I’m at Blossom Crossing today, and everything is going well. There was an evil spirit here a couple of days ago, but luckily no one was hurt. I’ve already taken care of the pesky water spirit, so the ferries are able to come and go safely again. The boatswain paid me five hundred in silver notes, attached here with the letter. Please send Auntie and Shizun my regards.”

The hundred twentieth day, and the twenty second letter.

“I hope this letter finds Uncle well. I recently chanced across a high-quality spiritual stone that could be embedded into Xue Meng’s Longcheng blade to make it a peerless weapon. It still wouldn’t be a holy weapon, but it should make for a fine weapon regardless. Please send Auntie and Shizun my regards.”

The hundred thirtieth day, and the twenty fourth letter.

“I hope this letter finds Uncle well. Lately I’ve been cultivating at Snow Valley. It’s always cold here, and there are all kinds of unusual flora, of which the Frost Lotus is the rarest. I didn’t have the skills to get past the

thousand year ape monster guarding the flower field at first, but I've made good progress in recent days and managed to pick a dozen or so, which I've attached with the letter. Please send Auntie and Shizun my regards."

……

The letters often came attached with some small playthings, medicinal herbs, or spiritual stones.

Aside from writing to Xue Zhengyong, Mo Ran also wrote privately to Shi Mei. The contents of these letters were mostly just about the places he went and the things he saw, asking how he was and reminding him to dress warmly, and other such trivial things.

The brushstrokes on paper were a mess full of mistakes at first, but as time went on, although the handwriting wasn't exactly good-looking, it did gradually straighten into something neat and mature, with fewer and fewer errors.

A year went by in the blink of an eye.

One day, as Xue Zhengyong was savoring the fresh spring tea, another letter from Mo Ran came.

He read the letter with a smile before passing it to Madam Wang, whose lips curled into a smile as well as she read. "His handwriting has certainly gotten better."

"Doesn't it look just like a certain someone's?"

"Whose?"

Xue Zhengyong blew on his tea leaves, then retrieved a copy of “Variorum of Ancient Barriers” from his desk. “Compare it with Yuheng’s writing. Seven-parts alike, hm?”

Madam Wang looked through the scroll and said with surprise, “It really is.”

“He took Yuheng as teacher when he first came to Sisheng Peak, after all. Yuheng had him read on his own at first, but he barely even knew any of the characters, so then Yuheng spent quite some days teaching him, starting with his name, then simple things, and then more complex things.” Xue Zhengyong shook his head. “He never did take it seriously back then, always putting down some chicken-scratch just to get it over with, but look at him now, finally learning to write decently.”

Madam Wang said with a smile, “Going out to see the world is doing him wonders, he seems much more mature now.”

Xue Zhengyong was smiling as well as he said, “Wonder what he’s gonna be like after the five years of travelling around. How old will he be then? Twenty two?”

“Twenty two.”

Xue Zhengyong sighed with a hint of regret. “I thought Yuheng would be able to watch them grow into their twenties, but the heavens had their own plans.”

The heavens had their own plans, that’s what Mo Ran thought too.

He travelled all over the place, from the misty rains of Jiangnan to the south to the Sanguan Pass of Saibei to the north, sat by the Toulao River and chugged rice wine in the summer, huddled by the campfire and listened to a tune on the Qiang flute in the winter.

Last lifetime, after declaring himself emperor, he had owned all the lands under the skies yet never once took the time to go travel them, to go see the lanterns and fishing boats of the east or the underground aqueducts of the west; never bothered to notice the dark, toughened, and cracked soles of a porter's feet who carried load-laden poles across cobblestone roads; never stopped to listen to the singing of the young trainees in the opera troupe, their voices pitched like ripping silk, rising into the skies:

"Such brilliant splendor, blooms flourishing abound, against a backdrop desolate, of walls ruined and decrepit…"

He wasn't Taxian-jun anymore, wouldn't ever be Taxian-jun again in this life. He was——

"Da-gege." Came the tender voice of a child from the bookstore. "Da-gege, can you save this birdy? Its wing is broken, I, I don't know what to do."

"Little Xianjun." Came the old, raspy voice of Shijiu Village's village head. "Thank you, thank you. All of us here are too old to do anything about evil spirits; if not for you, we would've had to abandon our homes and go elsewhere. This old one… this old one will never forget Xianjun's kindness for as long as he lives."

“Kind person.” Came the trembling voice of a beggar woman on the street. “Kind person, my child and I haven’t had a real meal for days, please, won’t you be so kind…”

Mo Ran closed his eyes.

And opened them again.

Because there was someone calling for him.

“Mo-zongshi.”

Stung by the form of address, he looked up toward the suntanned bloke calling for him and said with helpless resignation, “I’m no zongshi, that’s my Shizun. Please don’t call me that anymore.”

The bloke scratched his head bashfully. “Sorry about that. I know you don’t like it, it’s just a force of habit cause everyone in the village calls you that.”

Mo Ran had been staying in a small village near the border of the lower cultivation realm lately. The village was often troubled by snow ghosts, owing to the snowy mountain that towered some kilometers outside. They were only minor nuisances with little spiritual power, and one of Shizun’s Holy Night Guardians would have more than sufficed to take care of them, but the village was far too remote for the use of Holy Night Guardians to have spread this far. And so, with no other choice, Mo Ran could only try to make one himself, following Shizun’s diagrams.

He’d failed many times before finally managing to make a Holy Night Guardian. It wasn’t as good-looking as Shizun’s, or as nimble, but the creaking wooden golem was serviceable.

The people of the backwater village, delighted with this curious new thing, had started calling him Mo-zongshi. Mo Ran felt nothing but awkwardness at this turn of events.

But the more awkward thing was yet to come.

One particular evening, with half the sky dyed red by the setting sun, he was walking along a busy alleyway by an apricot grove, on his way back from lectures at an academy on Taishan Mountain, when he suddenly heard someone calling.

“Chu-zongshi!”

Mo Ran’s head whipped around at the name immediately and without thinking, and then he almost wanted to laugh at himself as his brain caught up. There were plenty of cultivators out there with the surname Chu; he really was getting ahead of himself, to think that his Shizun had somehow woken up already.

Of course not.

He shook his head with a smile and was just about to turn back around when the call came again: “Chu-zongshi!”

“……”

Holding his pile of books, Mo Ran squinted into the crowd. There was someone waving at him, but the person was too far for him to see his face. He could only vaguely see the clothing and build—it was a young man dressed in blue cultivator garb, with a bow on his back and a wolf by his side.

The person walked over briskly, and the both of them were caught by surprise when they were close enough to see the other's face.

"You're…"

"Mo Ran." He reacted before the other did with a simple nod of his head, since his hands were occupied with the books, and his gaze paused curiously on the young man's face for a moment. "Fancy meeting Nangong-gongzi here."

As it turned out, the one calling him "Chu-zongshi" was none other than the gongzi of Rufeng Sect, Nangong Si.

This guy had died too early in the past life for Mo Ran to have met him back then, but Chu Wanning was different. Chu Wanning used to be a guest instructor at Rufeng Sect, so it was only natural that Nangong Si knew him well. As Mo Ran looked him over, the quiver in Nangong Si's hand caught his eyes.

It was an old quiver made of cloth, so worn that the camellias embroidered on it had faded in color, their once-vibrant petals yellowed by time, as if even embroidered flowers couldn't escape the fate of wilting away.

Nangong Si was neat and well-dressed, save for that threadbare, visibly-patched quiver. Mo Ran could tell that the quiver was precious to him—

after all, didn't everyone have a couple of sentimental objects? Even the most bodacious person was sure to have memories they held dear.

No one was heartless, however they might appear; nothing was that simple.

Nangong Si's brows furrowed. "Mo Ran… ah, I remember now. Chu-zongshi's disciple?"

"Mhm."

That being the case, Nangong Si's attitude grew somewhat milder, saying, "My bad, your clothing and silhouette looked rather like the zongshi's from a distance, so I thought he had come out of seclusion ahead of time without me knowing."

Mo Ran pulled his gaze away from the quiver, tactfully not prying as he replied without missing a beat, "Hearing your yelling earlier, I also thought Shizun had come out of seclusion ahead of time without me knowing."

Nangong Si bursted out laughing. Maybe because he was highborn, but even when guffawing so, his handsome features still managed to retain a measure of arrogance. And this arrogance of his was different from Xue Meng's—Xue Meng's arrogance was a conceited pride born of skill and talent, while Nangong Si's was a touch more belligerent, a headstrong, fiery kind of arrogance.

But he was born in the lap of luxury and so the belligerence only made him seem wild and audacious rather than frightening.

Mo Ran couldn't help thinking to himself that Nangong Si really was a spirited stallion.[138]

He was still musing when he heard Nangong Si say, "I was absolutely wretched when Chu-zongshi lost his life during the Heavenly Rift. Thankfully he was able to be revived under the great master's guidance. I'll definitely go pay a visit to Sisheng Peak once he wakes up."

"We'll be looking forward to it."

Nangong Si waved his hand nonchalantly, and then, noting the books in Mo Ran's hands, asked curiously, "What's Mo-xiong up to?"

"Studying."

Nangong Si thought that surely he'd be studying some complicated, esoteric scrolls, only to find out on second glance that it was only simple classics like "The Untrammeled Traveler" and "Classic of Rites". He was dumbfounded for a second before saying, "These… these are all fundamental readings, books I've learned by heart since I was little, what're you doing reading these ?"

Mo Ran's gaze was even and unashamed as he replied, "When I was little, I didn't even know how to write my own name."

"Ahem…" Nangong Si felt a little awkward. "You studying at an academy?"

"Yeah. I was collecting spiritual stones for cultivational purposes on Taishan Mountain a little while back, and happened to see that classes were

starting at Apricot Grove Academy. I have some free time right now, so I've been going to the lectures."

Nangong Si nodded, and seeing that it was getting late, said, "Say, Mo-xiong hasn't had dinner yet, right? Since you're here in Rufeng Sect's province, and Chu-zongshi's disciple to boot, let me be a proper host. I'm actually on my way to a nearby restaurant to meet up with a companion right now, so how about it? Join us for a drink?"

Mo Ran didn't have any plans anyway, so he said, "I'd be honored"[139]

"We're headed to Wuyu Pavilion then, one of Linyi's most famous restaurants. They make the best braised pork intestine[140] out there. You ever heard of them?" Nangong Si chatted as they walked.

"Of course I have." Mo Ran grinned. "They're one of the upper cultivation realm's top restaurants. You sure know how to pick the place, Nangong-gongzi."

"I didn't pick the place."

"Oh? Who did, then?"

"My companion did," Nangong Si replied.

Having already lived through one lifetime, Mo Ran knew some things about the complicated relations in Rufeng Sect. He thought with surprise, though he didn't say it aloud—was Ye Wangxi here as well?

He followed Nangong Si up the stairs, pushing aside the pearl curtain to step into the private booth of the restaurant, and nearly choked when he saw whom it was waiting inside——

It was Song Qiutong, dressed in light silks and standing by the window, gazing at the peach blossoms outside. She turned around at the sound of them entering, the golden adornments that dangled by her temples swaying gently and catching the light, making her skin seem all the fairer and her lips all the redder, beautiful beyond words.

Mo Ran's foot, mid-step into the room, subconsciously pulled back.

He wondered if it was too late to tell Nangong Si that he didn't like Shandong cuisine, and especially disliked braised pork intestine.

Ch.122 Shizun's Reflection

”Here, Mo-xiong, let me introduce you. This is Song Qiutong, a little shimei from my sect.”

In the end Mo Ran forced himself to sit down at the table and bear with Nangong Si's enthusiastic introductions. Song Qiutong, Song Qiutong, he knew well how many moles there were on her back and just where the birthmarks were on her thighs, as if he needed Nangong Si to introduce.

But he schooled his expression and nodded with much restraint. “Miss Song.”

“This is Chu-zongshi's disciple, Mo Weiyu of Sisheng Peak. You likely saw him back at Butterfly Town, but there were a lot of people there, so you probably don't remember.”

Song Qiutong smiled and stood to offer a deferential obeisance, saying, “Qiutong is pleased to meet Mo-xianjun.”

“.....”

Mo Ran remained sitting, levelling an unfathomable gaze at her for quite a while before finally saying, briskly, “Likewise.”

Truth be told, Mo Ran was beyond disgusted with this wife of his from the past life. And, more than that, this disgust wasn't even something that had emerged only after his rebirth, but had in fact already permeated irreversibly into his very bones in the past life.

The last couple of times he'd seen her, it had always been from a distance, so he'd only had to deal with a bearable amount of repulsion before.

Unlike today.

She was a fragile woman, delicate and soft-spoken in all that she did. She was like an unripe fruit upon the branch in early autumn, hidden behind the luxuriant leaves, with a muted scent less fragrant than that of the surrounding blossoms and an understated color not overly loud, but was very likeable, a slim yet full figure that held endless gentleness and tender young love,[141] ready to yield up its sweetly sour juice to the smallest bite.

Only after biting deep to the core would the worm be discovered, dead and rotting within, pungent and festering, the fruit spotted with mold.

But then again, compared to himself, it wasn't like the Song Qiutong of the last lifetime had really done anything too abhorrent. All she had done was betray Rufeng Sect, which had saved her life. All she had done was offer up Ye Wangxi to save herself when Mo Ran was massacring the city. All she had done was doll herself up even as Linyi was being turned into mountains of corpses and oceans of blood, overjoyed that she had garnered Mo Ran's favor and eager to serve her new master.

All she had done was vilify Ye Wangxi after the massacre was over in order to show her sincerity, weeping pitifully right in front of Ye Wangxi's dead body that could never again speak, about how cruel he had been to her, how he had tormented her every day, how miserable her life would have been if Mo Ran hadn't come.

And?

Mo Ran pondered in silence.

What else had she even done?

Nangong Si was an impatient person. A couple of the dishes were taking a while to come out, so he went to prod them along. And so the husband and wife of a previous lifetime were left alone in the room.

“Mo-gongzi, a toast, if you will.” She filled his cup with a smile, a bit of forearm peeking out from her flowing sleeves in the process, revealing a vibrant dot of cinnabar on her wrist.

Mo Ran lifted his hand and grabbed her wrist for no discernible reason.

She made a surprised sound and lifted her eyes to look at him, fright apparent in those delicate, dew-laden eyes. “Mo-gongzi, what are you…”

Mo Ran stared at her face for a while before dropping his gaze to her fair, slender hands.

“You have nice hands,” he said quietly after a long pause, expression cool and distant. “Does Miss Song know how to play chess?”

“A, a little bit.”

“Hands this nice must be quite adept at chess,” he continued coldly. Outside came the sound of Nangong Si’s footsteps, and his wolf began barking by the door.

“Excuse me.” Mo Ran let go of Song Qiutong’s slender wrist, then carefully wiped his hand off with a handkerchief.

Outside, the rays of the setting sun were a brilliant splash of color upon the dusky sky. Inside, a spread of sumptuous feast for a pleasant spring eve.

Mo Ran wore his usual expression, as if nothing had happened at all. Song Qiutong had been scorned for no apparent reason, but she had always been good at enduring, even getting up during the meal to refill Mo Ran's cup once.

Not wanting to drink the wine she poured, he left the cup untouched for the remainder of the meal.

Nangong Si spoke, "Mo-xiong, the Spiritual Mountain Competition is coming up soon. You're Chu-zongshi's disciple; make sure you don't embarrass him. You ready?"

"I'm not going."

"...Surely you're joking?"

"I'm serious," Mo Ran said with a laugh. "My cousin's got it covered. Every sect's gonna be there, I don't feel like crowding around with everybody."

Nangong Si didn't seem to believe him still, piercing brown eyes narrowing at him like those of an eagle.

But Mo Ran's eyes were open and unreserved as he returned his gaze.

The eagle stared at the rock for a while, until it was satisfied that it really was only a rock, not hiding a cunning rabbit or a sly serpent.

He leaned back into his chair, twirling his chopsticks between his fingers, and suddenly grinned. "Interesting. So I won't be seeing you at the Spiritual Mountain Competition then?"

“You will not.”

Nangong Si put a hand to his forehead and snorted out a laugh. “Chu-zongshi’s disciple must really be something, to snub such a prestigious competition.”

“.....”

Mo Ran thought to himself, bloody hell, how was he supposed to explain this ? It wasn’t like he could tell Nangong Si that, no no, that’s not it, he was actually a thirty-something old ghost that had come back to life; here, let Taxian-jun play with all these little brats that are still wet behind the ears, while a bunch of sect leaders that had either been killed or beaten up by him in the past life sat around in a circle around them on those high platforms, grading his performance with their little scorecards.

...What a joke.

Clearing his throat, he said, “It’s not that I think it’s beneath me or anything, more like I’m no good with orthodox cultivation techniques, and don’t wanna risk embarrassing Shizun with my shallow learnings if I were to go. Someone skilled like Nangong-gongzi is much more suited to the competition, so please spare me your teasing.”

If a guileless little birdy like Xue Meng had heard that, he probably would’ve been overjoyed, like Mo Ran had petted the right spot. But Nangong Si hailed from Rufeng Sect and its complicated internal politics, and had lost his mother since young to boot. His life had been far less simple, and so he only smiled a little at Mo Ran’s praise, and did not let it get to his head.

He took several big gulps of wine, the jut of his throat bobbing, before wiping his mouth with his sleeve and saying, “Since Mo-gongzi won’t be participating, who do you think is going to win this round, from a bystander’s clear perspective?”

“.....” You sure did ask the right fucking person , Mo Ran thought.

Who would know better than him just who was going to win? Other than that fake Gouchen, who was in all likelihood also a reborn person, he was the only one in the world who knew just how the Spiritual Mountain Competition was going to play out.

The winner was…

“Nangong Si.”

The pearl curtain of the private room was abruptly swept to the side; a face could be seen in the swaying light that followed, half hidden in the shadows. Before either of the men in the room could even react, Song Qiutong had already leapt to her feet as if stung, a pitiful-looking panic on her face as she lowered her head and said in an apologetic tone, “Ye, Ye-gongzi.”

The newcomer stood tall and straight, dressed in black robes trimmed with muted gold and with bracers fastened around the wrists, making for a lean, lithe figure. Three-parts elegant and seven-parts handsome, who else could it be but Ye Wangxi?

“I wasn’t calling you.” Ye Wangxi pushed aside the pearl curtain and stepped into the room without so much as sparing her a glance, his eyes

remaining fixed on one person the whole time, seemingly cold, but with a subtle flicker of something else. “Nangong Si, I was calling you. Look up if you can hear me.”

Nangong Si did not look up, instead speaking to Song Qiutong, “What are you doing standing? Sit down.”

“That’s alright, Nangong-gongzi, my status is low, I should stand.”

Nangong Si flew abruptly into a rage, yelling, “SIT DOWN!”

Song Qiutong flinched, holding onto the edge of the table and hesitating.

Ye Wangxi didn’t want to stall on this, and so said in a cold voice, “Listen to him.”

“Thank you, Ye-gongzi…”

Ignoring Song Qiutong, Ye Wangxi said, “Nangong Si, just how long do you plan to drag out this farce for? The Sect Leader is so incensed he’s about to go mad. Get up and go back with me.”

“That suits me just fine. I’ll just take him for a madman, and he can take me for dead! There’s nothing to talk about even if I do go back; I will not set half a foot into Rufeng Sect so long as he doesn’t withdraw the order.” Nangong Si spoke, clearly and with a pause between each letter, “Ye, gong, zi, kindly see yourself out.”

“You——” Ye Wangxi’s hands tightened into fists, his entire body trembling minutely. Watching from the side, Mo Ran felt like he might kick the table over, grab Nangong Si and bodily drag him off at any moment, but Ye Wangxi was a gentleman after all, and managed to forcibly suppress the raging flames of his anger.

“Nangong Si.” When he spoke after a long moment of silence, it was in a hoarse, exhausted voice that was at odds with his tall and straight appearance. “Do you really have to go this far?”

“So what if I do?”

Ye Wangxi closed his eyes and let out an imperceptible sigh before slowly opening them again. Standing in front of the table, he finally turned to shoot a glance toward Mo Ran.

In the same way that a family’s dirty laundry is not to be aired out in public, a sect’s internal matters are likewise kept from outsiders. Tactfully, Mo Ran got up and bowed toward Ye Wangxi, saying, “Actually, I just remembered that I have an appointment to go pick up some clothes at the clothing store, I really shouldn’t keep the shopkeeper waiting, so I’ll head off first.”

Ye Wangxi nodded toward him. “Many thanks, Mo-gongzi.”

“Not at all, take your time chatting.”

Mo Ran happened to glance at Ye Wangxi as he walked past. Ye Wangxi stood tall and straight like a sturdy pine tree, holding himself with poise as

he always did. But up close, Mo Ran could see a faint redness at the corners of his eyes, like he had been crying just before coming here.

Mo Ran suddenly felt like Ye Wangxi's silent forbearance was a bit like Chu Wanning's.

Moved by a sudden impulse, he couldn't help turning to address Nangong Si, "Nangong-gongzi, I may not know what's happening between you and Ye-gongzi, but I do know that he's always been genuinely good to you. So if you're willing, please do have an open chat with him, don't hold back the things you should say."

But Nangong Si had little appreciation for his advice, and in the heat of the moment, even disregarded the finer points of politeness to say in a cold voice, "Mind your own business."

"....." This short-lived punk!

Mo Ran left. He hadn't even gotten down the stairs when he heard Nangong Si's furious bellowing from the room as the wolf-like young man tore into Ye Wangxi's soul with sharp fangs, demanding——

"Ye Wangxi! What sorcery did you use on my father to make him think more highly of you than he does me?!! Go back with you? What the fuck for?! All my life, when have I ever been given a choice in anything? Huh? Tell me, Ye Wangxi, just what… just what exactly do you all take me for!!!!"

There came the crash of tables and chairs toppling over, and the smashing sounds of plates and cups falling to the floor.

The maidservants in the corridor were each and all startled by the noise, and a couple of the other guests peeked out from their own rooms.

“What’s going on?”

“Aiyo, what a temper, hope they don’t smash the place.”

Mo Ran pressed his lips together, turning to look over his shoulder toward the end of the corridor again.

He heard Ye Wangxi’s voice, dry and lifeless like a withered leaf in autumn.

“Nangong, if it’s my presence back home that’s upsetting you, then I’ll leave, and you’ll never have to see me again.”

“.....”

“So go back,” Ye Wangxi said. “I’m begging you.”

If he hadn’t heard it with his own ears, Mo Ran never would have believed that such an upright person as Ye Wangxi would ever say something so weak as “begging”.

His impression of Ye Wangxi was that of an immovable person of integrity, an invincible force on the battlefield; it was far easier for Mo Ran to picture him bleeding than crying, to envision him dying than kneeling.

But on this very day, in this very restaurant, with Song Qiutong there to watch, he said to someone, I'm begging you .

Mo Ran closed his eyes.

In the span of a person's life, just how many things does he never find out?

No one stood naked in front of others. Everyone hid their bodies under clothes, their feelings behind words and expressions. Everyone wrapped themselves up in layers upon layers, with only their heads and necks visible like a flowering branch peeking out, offering the world only a painted face with an unambiguous expression, each playing their own role—for life was but a play, the roles definite and clear-cut: sheng, dan, jing, and chou.[142]

If someone had always played the sheng role, how could they simply accept a change of costume and a repaint of makeup to play the dan role instead?

But in the dead of night when the cymbals ceased and the lute faded, when everyone washed off the thick layer of makeup, and as the colorful wash water carried away the distinctly painted faces they'd worn during the day, revealing the unfamiliar features beneath.

It would turn out that the huadan was actually a gallant young man, and the wusheng had a pair of tender, infatuated eyes.[143]

Mo Ran returned to the small room he was staying in for the time being, deep in thought—he had lived two lifetimes, but just how much did he really understand people? And what of himself?

Just one Chu Wanning was already enough to make his heart grow and then die, only to revive again. Chu Wanning...

His thoughts drifted to the way Nangong Si had mistaken him for Chu Wanning earlier today. He thought it funny—how did such a mix-up even happen?

But as he washed up in front of the copper mirror, he suddenly found that the person reflected therein had his hair done up in a high ponytail and wore a simple white cultivator robe.

He had put his hair up in the ponytail on an offhanded whim this morning; as for the robe, it was because his old clothes had felt a little tight a couple days ago, so he'd gone to the store to pick out a new set, and the white robe had caught his eye while walking through the store, so he bought it and put it on without really thinking about it, without considering why the robe had been pleasing to his eyes.

Only now, looking into the mirror, did he suddenly realize the reason why.

It was because this white robe was so similar to the one that Chu Wanning had once worn.

The mirror was a dull yellow, the past life was like a dream; looking at the person in the mirror, Mo Ran felt like he was looking at a fragment of Chu Wanning, a delirium of him, through this muddy color, muted as if in a dream.

The water that he had washed his face with and not yet wiped dry streamed along the gradually maturing lines of his jaw and dripped down

his chin.

Standing there in front of the mirror, he vaguely realized that, just like how his Holy Night Guardian was clumsily trying to imitate Chu Wanning's Holy Night Guardian, he himself was also clumsily trying to imitate his shizun.

Unconsciously, Mo Ran had been looking for Chu Wanning's shadow in the world; unable to find him, he had instead slowly become him.

——

Time marched on. And I, due to remorse, or perhaps something else—

I couldn't see you, but always I thought about what you would do if you were here; what would make you smile, what would make you mad.

I thought about you before doing anything, tried to make you proud in everything that I did.

I thought, "If you were here, and I did this, would you nod? Would you be willing to praise me a little, say I did okay?"

Day after day I thought about this, until it had permeated into my very bones, become second nature. That's why, later on, I didn't even realize—

—That as the days passed by, I had grown into the you in my heart.

Ch.123 Shizun Visits My Dream, for He Knows I Think of Him Often

“Zhao-daozhang, Li-daozhang, have you both seen the rankings yet? The black horse that came out of the Spiritual Mountain Competition this time is really something!”

Inside Pearl Teahouse, a couple of wandering cultivations were having an excited discussion over a platter of peanuts and a pot of hot tea, the topic of discussion being the current Jianghu news that’s even hotter than the tea.

“Of course I have! No one expected the winner to be Sisheng Peak, that sect from the lower cultivation realm. All the old fogies from the upper cultivation realm have got their knickers in a twist now! Especially Rufeng Sect, aiyo, their ancestors are turning in their graves! What was the winner’s name again, Xue Fenghuang [Phoenix]?”

“Ah? Hahahaha, Xue Fenghuang? Old Zhao please you’re gonna make me burst a lung laughing, Son of the Phoenix is his nickname! His surname is Xue, given name Meng, courtesy name Ziming, and his old man is Xue Zhengyong. Like father, like son, this Xue Ziming is quite impressively skilled!”

There was a tall man in a cape sitting by the fireplace, minding his own business drinking butter tea. Overhearing their conversation, the cup by the man’s lips stilled and remained there as he uttered a quiet “Hm?”

“They seriously weren’t kidding when they called him Son of the Phoenix. Every other little young master in there had a holy weapon, but he shows up with just a curved blade and cuts off all their escape routes, freakin’ incredible.”

“Did you forget whom his master is? It’s only natural that Yuheng of the Night Sky’s disciple doesn’t play games!”

“To be honest though, I think Xue Ziming’s win was a near thing. Surely you’ve heard that Xue Ziming and Nangong Si were evenly matched in the doubles; if not for that girly on his team dragging him down, heh, could’ve gone either way if you ask me.”

At these words, the man who had been listening intently finally set down the cup of tea he had been holding up without drinking.

He turned his head, eyes clear as autumn waters yet intense as lightning—strikingly good looks to be sure. He flashed a smile at the chatting cultivators and joined their conversation. “Excuse me, I’ve been cultivating in the mountains these last couple of days. It’s hard to even tell what day it is up there so I ended up missing the Spiritual Mountain Competition. I happened to overhear from your conversation that Xue Meng won first place… I was wondering if you would mind telling me some more?”

Those cultivators were only too eager to have an audience, promptly and enthusiastically gesturing Mo Ran over and making room for him to sit with them.

And Mo Ran knew his manners too—he was much more mature now than when he had first left to travel. He had the lady boss of the teahouse refill six teapots with Lingshan Rain and ordered candied jujubes, tart kernels, sweet liquor cherries, and snake gall melon seeds to share with everyone before smiling and saying, “Xue Ziming is the Darling of the Heavens, so for him to take first even without a holy weapon isn’t much of a surprise. But I heard mention that Nangong Si of Rufeng Sect had a lady on his team in the doubles…?”

Being a bunch of guys, they were more than happy to talk about ladies, even if the lady wasn’t theirs.

“That he did. Truly a case of the hero’s ambition sunk in the beauty’s bosom, else with Nangong Si’s skills, who knows if Xue Ziming would be able to get the upper hand.”

“I see. Interesting.” That wasn’t what happened in the last lifetime, when Ye Wangxi and Nangong Si had jointly won first place. Mo Ran originally thought that it was due to that little phoenix Xue Meng being spurred by Chu Wanning’s death to really apply himself and soar to success, but it seemed that Xue Meng’s side of things wasn’t the only variable involved here.

“Who might this lady be?”

“The lass was named Song… something Tong, don’t remember exactly, sure was pretty though. She’s got the Rufeng Sect’s little young master wrapped around her pinky, by the looks of it.”

“Pretty’s an understatement, astoundingly beautiful is more like it. If I were Nangong Si, I’d give up first place at Spiritual Mountain just to make the pretty thing happy too.”

Mo Ran: “.....”

As he thought.

The Spiritual Mountain Competition included three events—singles, doubles, and battle royale—with the scores being averaged across the three to determine the ultimate winner.

In the last lifetime, Xue Meng and Shi Mei had faced off against Nangong Si and Ye Wangxi in the doubles event. Ye Wangxi had gone on to become the second strongest person in the world, outdone only by Chu Wanning, so the outcome of that match need not be said. Heaven knows what went wrong in this lifetime, for Nangong Si to bring that hindrance Song Qiutong along instead of teaming up with Ye Wangxi…

Mo Ran set down his cup of tea and rubbed his temple.

What the hell had that guy been thinking?

“Ah, women; even that wild horse Nangong Si got tamed in no time.” One of them lamented thus, and the others broke into hoots of laughter.

Mo Ran couldn’t help asking, “What about Ye Wangxi?”

“Who?”

Mo Ran repeated, “Ye Wangxi.”

The lack of recognition on their faces left a bad taste in Mo Ran’s mouth. This person was a war god who’d given Mo Ran no end of troubles in the last lifetime… how could you lot possibly not know of him!

So he gestured while explaining, “The other gongzi from Rufeng Sect; long legs, tall, good temper, doesn’t talk much, uses a sword and…” Looking at all their blank expressions, Mo Ran sighed and finished the description, despite already having guessed the outcome.

“And a bow.”

“Don’t know ‘em.”

“Never heard of this person.”

“Bro, where’d you hear about this guy from? Rufeng Sect sent sixteen disciples to the Spiritual Mountain Competition, not a single one of them named Ye.”

Sure enough, Ye Wangxi hadn’t participated in this lifetime.

Mo Ran fell silent for a moment. He thought back to that day at the restaurant, when Ye Wangxi had said to Nangong Si, “You come back, I’ll leave,” he suddenly felt a little uneasy, and a little pained.

It couldn’t be, right?

Had Ye Wangxi actually left Rufeng Sect?

In the past life, right before his end, Ye Wangxi had said to the executioner that he wanted to be buried at Rufeng Sect’s Tomb of Heroes, next to Nangong Si’s grave. Mo Ran sighed at the recollection—how had things ended up like this? The slight changes, drop after drop, had built up into growing ripples.

The world had so turned on its head that what should've been ocean had become land.

So it was that the turn of fates could be violent as a raging storm. That a change of heart, a recantation of past hatred, could only be bought with hot blood spilt and bitter tears shed.

As it had with Chu Wanning and himself.

But the turn of fates could also be a breathless silence, as it had with Ye Wangxi and Nangong Si.

Maybe it had been only that one day at the inn, when Nangong Si had allowed Ye Wangxi’s group to stay the night. Maybe Nangong Si had gotten thirsty, late at night, and gone downstairs for some tea, and just so happened to run into a pitiful Song Qiutong.

Maybe Song Qiutong had poured him a cup of water, or maybe she had tripped when going up the stairs due to the injury on her leg; there was no way to know.

It could have even been that he had just been too boorish when drinking the water, and gotten some on the wide collars of his robes, and she had

gingerly offered him a handkerchief.

With nothing between them at the time, Nangong Si had probably just uttered a simple thanks.

But none of them could have known, as the Northern Dipper swept across the night sky and the stars of Shen and Shang rose and sank, never to meet, that their lives had been irreversibly changed because of that handkerchief, that cup of water, that uttered thanks. None of them had heard the rumble of fate:

Nangong Si yawned as he walked up the stairs.

Song Qiutong stood there, watching him go.

And Ye Wangxi, in his room, lit a candle to continue reading an unfinished book.

In the past life, Mo Ran had fancied himself all-powerful and all-knowing, had thought he'd seen through life itself.

Only now did he finally realize that they were, all of them, only duckweeds adrift in this world, scattered about by rain and wind both, little green wisps of souls that could be so easily crushed by a stray tossed pebble.

He had been so very lucky, to have drifted away yet somehow returned to Chu Wanning's side.

To still be able to do his filial duty for his shizun, to still be able to say to Chu Wanning, “Sorry I let you down.”

Finishing his tea, he bid the others farewell.

The wind had picked up outside, with rain soon to follow.

Mo Ran put on his cape and walked into the depths of the thick forest.

His silhouette grew more and more distant, more and more faint, until it was no more than a small dot in the twilight, like a drop of ink spreading out in a pool of water, thinning out and disappearing.

Rrrrumble——!

Lightning flashed in the horizon as thunder cracked through the darkened skies, and the rain came down in a torrential downpour.

“It’s raining.” Someone peeked out from the teahouse to look, only to draw back inside at the intensity of the thunder.

“That sure is a thunderstorm… damn, I laid millet out to dry in the sun, it’s gonna get all soaked now.”

“Oh well, hey boss lady, can we get another pot of tea here? Might as well wait for it to clear up before heading home.”

Mo Ran walked briskly through the rain, ran through the rain, fled through the rain, hid in the rain from the thirty-two nonsensical years of his past life.

He didn't know if the torrential rain could wash away his sins; Chu Wanning had forgiven him, but he had not forgiven himself. His heart felt heavy, so heavy that he might suffocate from it.

He wanted to use the rest of his life to do good, to make amends.

But could the downpour in the rest of his life truly wash away the evil in his bones, the filth in his blood?

He wished only that this rain could fall for five years straight.

He wished only that, when Chu Wanning awakened, he would be able to stand before his shizun a little cleaner, and then cleaner still.

He didn't want to still be this dirty when the time came, dirty like mud, like dust, like the grime on the bottom of a porter's shoes, dirt under a beggar's nails.

He wished only that, before Chu Wanning awakened, he could be a little better, and then better still.

Only then could the worst, worst disciple in the world maybe summon up the feeble courage to call out to the best, best shizun in the world.

That night, Mo Ran fell sick.

He had always been healthy and strong, but someone like this, if they were to get sick, would get terribly, horribly sick.

He lay in bed, sleeping bundled beneath a thick quilt. He dreamt of things from his past life, dreamt of how he had tormented Chu Wanning before, dreamt of Chu Wanning struggling beneath himself, of Chu Wanning dying in his arms. Waking with a start to the howling wind and cold rain outside, he felt around for the flint to light the candle, but no matter how many times he tried, the flint wouldn't spark.

He threw the flint and steel aside in a fit of frustration. He buried his face in his hands, rubbing forcefully; pulled harshly at his own hair, the jut of his throat moving as he let out a grief-stricken howl like that of a pained beast.

He had escaped death, escaped blame, but in the end couldn't escape his own conscience.

It was scary, being unable to even tell dreams from reality sometimes, continuously having to check whether he was asleep or awake.

It hurt, feeling like his very soul had split into two, that of the past lifetime and that of the current lifetime, the two souls tearing into one another, one cursing the other for being a ruthless lunatic with hands covered in blood, the other snapping back just as fiercely, demanding to know why the former was going about like he hadn't done anything wrong, how did he even have the nerve to walk this earth.

The soul of the present bellowed at the soul of the past:

Mo Weiyu, Taxian-jun, you scum of the earth, why did you commit such sins?! How am I supposed to make up for all that you've done?!

I want to start over, but why must you haunt me so, in my dreams, in my drunken stupors, in the dimming light of fading candles, jumping out when I least expect it to curse me with that twisted face of yours!

Cursing me with a thousand deaths, cursing me with retribution and comeuppance.

You say that this is all just a dream that will one day shatter. You sneer that sooner or later I will wake up to find myself back at Wushan Palace. You laugh viciously while reminding me that no one cares about me.

That I had already killed the only person willing to die for me with my own hands.

But was that me?!

No, no, it wasn't me, it was you, Taxian-jun! It was you, Mo Weiyu!!

I'm not you, I'm not you…

There's no blood on my hands, I——

I can start over.

The other half of the soul was shrieking as well, a sharp-fanged mouth wide open on a twisted face:

Weren’t you feeling guilty?

Didn’t you fuck it all up?

Then why don’t you go die?! Why don’t you pay recompense to all those people you hurt in the past life for no gods damned reason with your own blood?!

You beast! You pretender!

How are you any different from me? You are Mo Weiyu, just the same as me! You bear all the memories of the past and all the sins of the past, you’ll never be free of me—I’m your nightmare, your inner demon; I’m that abominable soul of yours that will one day be judged by the heavens!

Start over?

Why the hell should you get to? The nerve of you, what right do you have to start over? You’re just tricking everyone, you’re even tricking the people who love you.

All the good you’re doing is just to ease that tiny, pathetic bit of guilty conscience in your heart, isn’t it! Hah! Mo Weiyu! Do you dare to let them know just what kind of person you were in your past life?

Do you dare to let Chu Wanning know that, in the last lifetime, it was you who cut into his neck and bled him out, made his life a living nightmare! That it was you who blighted the world, made it into a hell on earth overrun with famines and disasters one after another!

It was you .

Hahahaha, you fucking beast, we are one and the same! There's no way out of this one, because I am you, Mo Weiyu! You know it to be true!

Backed into a corner and going out of his mind, Mo Ran felt around the bedside for the flint and steel again, tried to light up the candle to drive back the grisly darkness of night.

But even the candle rejected him, even the candle didn't care to save him.

He was abandoned in the darkness, hands shaking uncontrollably as he tried over and over to strike the flint and steel, over and over again, but there was no spark, there was no spark.

He finally collapsed onto the bed and burst into loud sobs. He apologized over and over again—in the darkness of night, there seemed to be a crowd gathered around his bed, each and every shadowy, wavering figure cursing at him, demanding his life in vengeance, howling at him that he was once evil and would always be evil. Mo Ran didn't know what to do; helplessly, he muttered again and again, "I'm sorry… I'm sorry…" but no one paid him any mind.

No one wanted to forgive him.

His head was scalding hot, and his heart felt like it was on fire.

Suddenly, he seemed to hear a soft sigh.

Opening his eyes, he saw Chu Wanning amidst the phantom shadows, looking just as he had—white robes draping loosely to the floor, wide,

sweeping sleeves, features elegant and defined.

He walked over and came to a stop before the bed.

Mo Ran choked out between sobs, “Shizun...is it that I...have no right to see you again…”

Chu Wanning said nothing, only picked up the flint and steel, and calmly lit up the candle that Mo Ran never managed to.

Where there was Shizun, there was light.

Where there was Chu Wanning, there was a flame.

He looked up evenly at Mo Ran from where he stood by the candle holder with his long eyelashes downcast, and gave him a small, serene smile.

He said, “Go back to sleep, Mo Ran. See, the light is lit now. Don’t be afraid.”

Mo Ran’s heart felt like it had been brutally crushed by something heavy, and his head hurt so bad it felt like it might split open; these words sounded so familiar, as if he had heard them before.

But he couldn’t remember.

Chu Wanning brushed his sleeves aside and sat down at his bedside. The rain outside was bitterly cold, but it was warm inside the room, and the night was no longer dark.

Chu Wanning said, “I’ll stay with you.”

His heart ached at these words, clenched and tried to twist itself into a knot.

“Shizun, don’t leave.” He clutched at Chu Wanning’s hand under his broad sleeve.

“I won’t.”

“It’ll be dark again if you leave.”

Mo Ran was crying. Feeling embarrassed, he lifted his other hand and covered his eyes. “Please don’t leave me behind… I’m begging you… I really… I really don’t want to be the emperor anymore, Shizun… please don’t throw me away…”

“Mo Ran…”

“Please.” Maybe it was the fever making him feel all faint and dazed, or maybe it was because some part of him knew that this was only a dream, that Chu Wanning wouldn’t be here when he wakes up; he muttered over and over again, “Please don’t throw me away.”

That night, the icy raindrops outside pelted against the window like countless vengeful ghosts come knocking, trying to get inside and claim his life in retribution.

But inside Mo Ran's dream, Chu Wanning lit up the light, and that small, faint light drove away the ceaseless chill. Chu Wanning said, "Alright, I won't leave."

"You won't leave?"

"I won't leave."

Mo Ran opened his mouth, wanting to say thanks, but the only sound that came out was a whimper, the kind of pitiful sound a dog makes when gingerly trying to suck up to someone.

"That's what you all say, that you won't leave, won't abandon me." On the verge of drifting off, Mo Ran muttered dazedly with heavy-lidded eyes. "But then you all end up leaving anyway. No one wants me, I've been a stray dog for half my life… every time someone takes me in, they'll just throw me away again in a few days time… I'm so tired… really… Shizun… I'm really so tired, I can't do it anymore, can't keep going anymore…"

Just like a starving stray dog with no home to go back to, with mangled paws and a grimey coat of fur, with no choice but to fight over food with beggars and feral cats just to survive.

There was no trust left after so long being abused; if someone were to crouch down nearby, a domestic dog might expect to be fed food, but a stray dog would only expect to be hit with rocks. Anxious and on edge, he kept walking, walking, snarling at anyone and everyone—this was his fate.

"Shizun, if someday, you don't want me anymore, then please just kill me, don't throw me away."

He muttered quietly between sobs.

“It really hurts too much to be thrown away again and again, I’d rather die…”

The fever burned so high that it turned him into a muddled mess.

Until he couldn’t even tell where he was, and even forgot whom the person in his dream had been.

“Mom.” The last thing he muttered before passing out was, “it’s getting dark, I’m scared… I want to go home…”

Author’s Notes:

The title is taken from Du Fu’s “An old friend visits my dreams, for he knows I think of him often. Now that you are ensnared, how can you sprout wings and wander freely?”[144]

To avoid misunderstandings, I'm specially stating the source here.

Ch.124 Shizun Awakens

The barrier around Red Lotus Pavilion glowed and shimmered, day and night, through the seasons. Those inside remained inside, and those outside were kept out.

Five years passed in a blink, the world turning like a carousel lantern,[145] changing every day, changing every moon.

In teahouses, in history books… those years became pieces of stories told, lines written.

Looking back on the past——

The first year of Chu Wanning's seclusion, his disciple Mo Ran went down the mountain, while Xue Meng and Shi Mei stayed at Sisheng Peak, each cultivating on their own.

That year, Mo Ran's handwriting got a little better, Xue Meng broke through to the ninth level of Quiescence Blade, and Shi Mei went to study at the medicine sect Guyue'ye at the end of the year, learning much.

During that time, Mo Ran paid a visit to the salt merchant Chang family at Yizhou, asking to see Chang-gongzi for personal matters, only to find out that Chang-gongzi had suddenly passed away only a few days ago. After finding out in the Underworld that Chang-gongzi had been in cahoots with

the fake Gouchen, Mo Ran had hoped to pry some information out of him, but his quarry was ahead of him and had already done away with the witness—even the body had been burnt into ashes.

A dead end.

The second year of Chu Wanning's seclusion, the cultivation world held the Spiritual Mountain Competition, in which Xue Meng won first place, Mei Hanxue second place, and Nangong Si third. Shi Mei tended to the sick and injured across the lower cultivation realm, while Mo Ran traveled the land, killing evil fiends and doing good deeds everywhere he went, before retreating into the mountains to cultivate, disappearing without a trace.

The third year of Chu Wanning's seclusion fell on a ghost year, teeming with Yin energy. The barrier where that bloody battle at Butterfly Town had taken place in the past weakened, ghosts and fiends encroaching into the living world, terrorizing the people. The disciples of Sisheng Peak, led by Xue Meng, fought to suppress the menace. Although the situation was not as dire as it had been that time when evil ghosts had swarmed the skies, it was still a disastrous year of misery and destitution.

The upper cultivation realm, being large and populous, opted for self-protection. Each of its nine major sects dispatched hundreds of disciples to guard the border between the upper and lower cultivation realms, and built an evil-repelling wall, preventing both fiends and refugees from moving toward the east.

All of the impoverished fugitives from the lower cultivation realms were refused entry at the wall and left with nowhere to go, the border defense keeping out ghosts and people alike. And so there was peace and calm within the walls, while corpses littered the ground just outside. Xue

Zhengyong tried many times to negotiate with the upper cultivation realm, but to no avail. All of the blood spilt by the disciples of Sisheng Peak at Butterfly Town that year flowed eastward.

At the end of the year, Mo Ran, who had been cultivating in seclusion in the mountains, received a letter from his uncle. Learning that there was trouble in the Shu region, he went back into the world.

The fourth year of Chu Wanning's seclusion.

Mo Ran and Xue Meng fought side by side, the two young masters of Sisheng Peak leading the battle in the lower cultivation realm, driving the demonic fiends from the land. During the final battle, once again at Butterfly Town, Xue Ziming annihilated ghosts and demons by the hundreds and thousands, while Mo Weiyu repaired the Heavenly Rift, single-handedly sealing the evil.

Afterwards, the upper cultivation realm removed the border defense and allowed the people of the lower cultivation realm to enter.

Xue Meng and Mo Ran became famous the world over, the former being the Son of the Phoenix whose prestige was matched by none, the latter becoming known as "Mo-zongshi" for repairing the Heavenly Rift with barrier techniques that were just like Chu Wanning's.

And so time flowed, all things ever-changing.

Though Xue Meng had made a name for himself at the Spiritual Mountain Competition, he did not let it get to his head and neither did he grow complacent like he would have had in his youth. Instead, he diligently went to the bamboo forest to cultivate and train every chance he could, be it winter or summer, or even when sick.

He remembered Shizun's words, that even without a holy weapon, the darling of the heavens was still the darling of the heavens. It was just that his inborn advantages were no longer sufficient to place him ahead of the curve, and he now had to work harder to make up for a disadvantage instead.

Sometimes, after completing a set of blade techniques, when he landed lithely on the ground and turned his head, he almost seemed to catch a glimpse of a small figure, sitting on the rock in the sunlight streaming through the bamboo, whistling with a leaf.

And then he couldn't help thinking back to that day, when the Chu Wanning who had turned tiny had watched him practice his blade in the forest and guided his rhythm with a whistled tune.

Xue Meng could almost hear the melody as he reminisced with his head still turned.

So he closed his eyes, stilling his breath and concentrating, before opening them again just as a piece of withered bamboo leaf came drifting down. Longcheng thrummed as a flash of the blade reflected in his eyes, the shadow of the blade extending and retracting with intent, swift in the

strike like the surging of tide and the flashing of lightning, deliberate in the withdrawal like the flurrying of snow in the endless sky.

By the time Longcheng was withdrawn and he stood straight once more, that piece of withered leaf had already been sliced into a million little pieces, drifting down to land silently by his feet.

With his head lowered, he almost seemed to still be that foolhardy young boy.

But when he looked up, those straight brows and clear, steady eyes were like the meeting of river and sea, the rapid stream surging into the vast openness, melding into unbound tranquility.

It had been five years.

Xue Meng raised his blade and wiped the frosty edge off with a piece of white cloth. He was just about to return the blade to its scabbard when he was interrupted by hurried footsteps from the distance, followed by a disciple rushing in, hollering non-stop, “Young Master! Young Master!”

“What is it?” Xue Meng frowned. “Where’s your composure? Pull yourself together. What happened?”

“The Red Lotus Pavilion——” The disciple was all red in the face and could hardly even catch his breath from how fast he’d run. “Ma, Master Huaizui left! Yu, Yuheng Elder——wo, woke up!!!!”

With a clang , Longcheng, the veteran of a hundred battles, fell to the ground from its owner's hand.

Xue Meng's handsome, fair-skinned face blanched of all color then turned bright red in quick succession, his mouth opening and closing mutely before he dashed off toward the southern summit of Sisheng Peak at a breakneck speed, leaving even his own weapon behind, forgotten on the ground. He nearly tripped over a rock on the way, stumbling and staggering.

"SHIZUN!!! SHIZUN!!!!!!"

Despite having just lectured someone else about composure, Xue Ziming sure wasted no time in flinging his own to the ground.

He got to the Red Lotus Pavilion just as Xue Zhengyong strode out. Grinning broadly, Xue Zhengyong stopped his son from charging in like his life depended on it, before he even got to set a foot inside.

Xue Meng was beside himself. "Dad!"

"Alrighty alrighty, I know you want to see Yuheng," Xue Zhengyong said with a smile. "But he's tired from having just recovered, and only talked with me a little before going back to sleep. Surely you wouldn't wanna interrupt your shizun's rest?"

Xue Meng faltered. “I mean, yeah, but…” But it had really been so hard waiting out the five years, and there was so much he wanted to tell Shizun; he wanted so badly to run over right now to tell Shizun about how he had won first place at the Spiritual Mountain Competition, about all the ghosts and demons he had put down, about his...

“Be sensible now.”

“.....” The phrase “be sensible” was Xue Meng’s weak point, always effective in making him listen. He let out a long sigh and stopped trying to shuffle past, though he stuck his neck out like that would let him peek past his bulky father and the slightly-ajar door to see the person on the bed.

Xue Meng pressed his lips together, still not quite giving up. “Can I just, just go in and take a quick look at Shizun, I won’t say anything.”

“With the way that you are, making a ruckus and a half whenever you’re happy?” Xue Zhengyong shot him a glare. “Don’t think I forgot how you won at the Spiritual Mountain Competition and acted all cool in front of outsiders, but hollered about it for four, five days straight as soon as you got back home, wouldn’t stop telling anyone and everyone about how you kicked Nangong Si off his wolf, told it so much that even Auntie Li at Mengpo Hall can recite your story, word for word. You? Not say a thing? Hah!”

“.....Fine.”

Xue Meng drooped.

“Father is right.”

“Well of course, when has your dad ever been wrong before.”

Xue Meng made a sour face, but he still couldn’t help but want to know. “Dad, how’s Shizun doing?”

“Pretty good, Master Huaizui even got rid of the remaining poison from the Heartpluck Willow.”

“Ah, so Shizun won’t turn into little shidi anymore?”

“Haha, nope.”

Xue Meng scratched his head, a little disappointed that he wouldn’t get to see Xia Sini anymore.

“Then, then what about everything else? Is he feeling okay?”

“Don’t worry, he’s fine. The only thing not fine was the look on his face when he found out that he’d been asleep for five years.” Xue Zhengyong couldn’t help chuckling as he recalled Chu Wanning’s expression. “Good thing he’s still tired, else he’d be grilling me right now. Oh yeah, speaking of ——”

Suddenly thinking of something, he said to Xue Meng, “Meng-er, do me a favor. Your shizun missed quite a bit, being gone from the world for so long; it’ll be too much talking for us to try to catch him up on things ourselves, and tiring for him to listen to it all too. How about this, go ask your mom for some money then go take a trip down the mountain to buy some books from Wuchang Town. Don’t they have those chronicle-type

books, the ones where they write down everything big and small? Get him a couple to read."

Xue Meng could practically smell the ulterior motive—his old fox of a dad just thought he was being noisy, and was trying to kick him off the mountain to run errands.

But then again, the errands were for Shizun, so it was… not unacceptable. Shizun was asleep right now anyway, and it was true that he wasn't too sure if he'd be able to keep his emotions under control if he were to go in the room right now, so there was a chance he'd end up running over and waking him up.

So he sighed and mumbled reluctantly, "Fine, I'll go get the stinkin' books."

"Get a couple different ones, for both the upper and lower cultivation realms, Yuheng likes to read anyway."

"Okay, alright." And so Xue Meng lumbered dejectedly down the mountain by himself.

Xue Meng wasn't much of a reader; he made it to the book-selling stand at Wuchang Town and looked this way and that, but couldn't really tell much of anything from just the titles, so he squatted down to ask the vendor, "Uncle,[146] do you have any books about the recent happenings of the cultivation world in the last few years? Can you get me a couple?"

The vendor, who was quite excited to see someone from Sisheng Peak, even if he didn't recognize that it was the Son of the Phoenix Xue Ziming

himself, said with great enthusiasm, “Books about recent happenings? Of course of course. I’ve got both historical chronicles and fictional adaptations, all kinds of biographies and annals, regional chronicles, demon suppression records, even manuscripts from ten of the most famous storytellers out there. Which would xianjun like?”

All the babbling gave Xue Meng a headache, so he waved his hand and said, “Just, just gimme all of it, money’s no issue.”

A businessman’s favorite phrases to hear are not “I love you”, “I care about you”, or “I want you”, but “buy”, “money’s no issue”, and “one of each”.

The vendor immediately grinned from ear to ear, rubbing his hands together as he answered to Xue Meng’s order and turned to gather the books from the rack. Having nothing better to do, Xue Meng went to flip casually through the books on the stand, and happened across a thin little booklet that seemed rather interesting—the page he’d flipped open read:

Cultivation World Wealth Ranking

First Place: Jiang Xi. Position: Rainbell Isle Guyue’ye Sect Leader

Second Place: Nangong Liu. Position: Linyi Rufeng Sect Leader

Third Place: Ma Yun Position: Westlake Taobao[147] Estate Master

……

So on and so forth, the entire page covered in tiny writing.

Xue Meng got fired up immediately, eager to find out his own rank, so he looked up and down the page four, five times, until his eyes started to cross, but he still couldn't find the name “Xue Meng”.

Crestfallen at first and then a little mad, but all in all unresigned, he flipped the page to keep looking, but saw only a couple more names and the following line:

“Due to time and resource constraints, rankings only go to one hundred, and those after one hundred will not be listed.”

Xue Meng slammed the booklet to the ground in a fit of rage. “Am I that fucking broke????”

The vendor jumped, startled, and then, seeing the book he had been reading, hurriedly comforted him while picking it up, saying, “Ease your anger, xianjun, these ranking booklets are just willy-nilly made up by folks, and on top of that, each region has its own version circulating. For example, if you buy one from Linyi, number one on the gentleman ranking is definitely gonna be Nangong-zhangmen. It’s just something people flip through to pass the time, don’t be mad, don’t be mad.”

His words seemed reasonable enough, and Xue Meng was pretty curious about the remainder of the booklet’s contents, so he hmph’d, took it back from the vendor’s hands, and offhandedly flipped two more pages.

This time, he saw an even more peculiar ranking.

“Young Master Ego Ranking”

Author’s Notes:

Ma Yun, who’s on the Wealth Ranking, as well as Taobao Estate are Easter eggs, hahaha~

Since Shizun is awake, we’ll resume the daily mini-theatres as well~

The reopened mini-theatre~

A hawker’s favourite phrase to hear is “Buy buy buy”, so what’s the phrase each character wishes to hear the most~

Chu Wan Ning wishes to hear: Elder Yuheng is a good shizun.

Mo Ran 2.0 wishes to hear: You are different from your past life.

Mo Ran 1.0 wishes to hear: Everyone likes you.

Mo Ran 0.5 wishes to hear: Stop dreaming and wake up, dog, your saliva’s dripping onto the desk!

Xue Meng wishes to hear: Young Master is No.1, Young Master is the most handsome, Shizun finds Young Master the most lovable!

Shi Mei wishes to hear: Shi Mei is so gentle and cute, how can he be the BOSS?

Ye Wangxi wishes to hear: Nangong-gongzi will not be short-lived.

Nangong Si wishes to hear: Your dad has stepped down and let you take his place, gongzi, you can make your own decisions on matters.

Song Qiutong wishes to hear: This is a heterosexual romance novel.

Mei Hanxue wishes to hear: Mei Hanxue, get ready to make your appearance.

Ch.125 Shizun Doesn't Need to Find a Cultivation Partner

Written in a neat and straight script, the ranking boldly declared:

First Place: Nangong Si

Position: Young Master of Rufeng Sect

Second Place: Xue Meng

Position: Young Master of Sisheng Peak

Xue Meng: "……"

He slammed the booklet shut, every muscle in his face twitching, as if just barely holding back the urge to let loose and set the book ablaze.

"I see how it is," Xue Meng spat from between clenched teeth, expression dark as he tapped the panic-stricken vendor with the booklet.

"Wrap this book separately, I'll have to look it over when I get back."

Shoving the copy of "God-Knows-What Rankings" roughly into his sleeve, Xue Meng carried the huge stack of books and scrolls picked out by the vendor and wobbled his way back up the mountain.

He was mad .

So mad he might die from it.

Second place on the Young Master Ego Ranking?

Bullshit! Which blind-ass dimwit wrote that! If he were to ever find out, he'd definitely have to give the guy a good pummeling to vent this rage—a hundred punches, maybe more! Ego my ass! What dogshit!

The rage tamped down the overwhelming joy somewhat, such that Xue Meng's state of mind was more normal by the time he got back to the Red Lotus Pavilion, no longer so easily explosive. He was still very excited of course, but the bout of anger just now had more or less cleared up his head.

There was a pair of high-level disciples standing guard outside the pavilion, keeping people out to let the elder rest.

But Xue Meng was the young master, who would dare block his way?

And so Xue Meng walked in unimpeded.

Night had already fallen, and a honey-soft light glowed through the half-open windows of the pavilion's main hall. Not knowing if Shizun was awake or not, Xue Meng softened his steps as he pushed the door open and went in with the stack of books in his arms.

It was so quiet that he could hear his own heartbeat, sounding like a bird bouncing at the tip of a branch.

Holding his breath and temporarily tossing "God-Knows-What Rankings" to the back of his mind, he looked toward the bed.

"....."

There was a long silence as Xue Meng stared blankly.

"Eh?"

There was no one on the bed?

He was just about to go closer for a better look when he suddenly felt an ice-cold hand on his shoulder.

Followed by an eerie, chilly voice from behind him. “What intentions do you have in trespassing on the Red Lotus Pavilion?”

“.....” Stiffly, Xue Meng turned his head around, neck practically creaking, to see a deadly pale face in the dim lighting. He was so frightened that he screeched “WAH——” and reflexively raised an arm to cleave down toward the other before his brain even had a chance to process what he had seen.

But the other person was even faster than him, moving with lightning speed to land a strike at Xue Meng’s neck and a solid kick to the guts before forcing him down to his knees and holding him there, sending the books he had been holding scattering all over the floor in a mess.

Xue Meng was only a bit startled at first, but getting forced to the floor like this left him absolutely shocked!

After five years of diligent training, he was no longer the boy he used to be, so much so that even Nangong Si was no match for him. But this person, whose face he hadn’t even seen clearly, had so easily dispatched him in only two moves, leaving him no room to even counter—who could it be?

There was a ringing in his ears as all the blood in his body rushed to his head.

But just then, that person spoke in an icy tone, “I went into seclusion for five years and now all of a sudden everyone just feels free to come into my

residence. Whose disciple are you and where is your master? Didn't he teach you any rules?"

He had barely finished speaking when Xue Meng flipped around and threw himself at him in the tightest hug.

"Shizun! SHIZUN!!!"

Chu Wanning: "....."

Xue Meng lifted his head. He wanted to hold back, but tears fell despite his best efforts as he choked out between sobs, "Shizun, it's me… look… it's me…"

It turned out that Chu Wanning had only just woken up and had gone out for a bath, and that was why his touch was cold and a little damp. He remained standing in the same spot, and though the light was dim, it was enough to see by now that he had calmed down.

The person kneeling before himself was a young man of around twenty.

He had fair skin and thick, dark brows that were lower and closer to the eyes than most people's, making him look pensive and compassionate. As for the lips, they were full and pouty, and quite nicely shaped. A face like that would look spoiled even when angry—truth be told, it was all too easy for people with such looks to be called "coquettish", but not him.

Because the eyes were the most expressive part of the face, and Xue Meng's eyes were like a strong liquor, spicy, fiery, and unfettered in the

light, giving off a domineering air.

The twin pools of liquor were unmistakable, even held within a pot of fine white jade.

It had been five years, after all. Xue Meng had been only sixteen when Chu Wanning had died; he was twenty one now.

Adolescent boys grow the fastest around sixteen to seventeen, a new look every year, a different build every half year. Suddenly seeing him again after having missed five years, Chu Wanning hadn't even recognized him at first.

".....Xue Meng."

Chu Wanning said slowly, after staring at him for a good while.

Like he was calling his name, but also like he was telling himself—

That this was Xue Meng, who was no longer that half-grown youth in his memories; he had grown up, with wide shoulders, and a height that was...

Chu Wanning pulled him up with a face that betrayed nothing.

"What are you kneeling for? Get up."

"....."

And a height that was not much different from his own.

The passage of time was the most visible on the young, carving a child into maturity in a mere few strokes. The first person Chu Wanning had seen when he'd first woken up had been Xue Zhengyong, so it hadn't quite hit him then just how long five years was, but seeing Xue Meng now, he was

struck with the sudden realization that it had been a long time, that many people and things had changed in that time.

“Shizun, at the Spiritual Mountain Competition, I…” Having finally managed to calm down a little, Xue Meng began to talk of this and that, clutching at Chu Wanning the whole time. “I got first place.”

Chu Wanning glanced at him, then a small smile tugged at his lips. “That’s a matter of course.”

Xue Meng continued, red-faced, “I, I fought Nangong Si, he, he had a holy weapon, I didn’t, I…” Feeling a little embarrassed about boasting so openly, he lowered his head and bashfully rubbed at the hem of his clothing.

“I didn’t embarrass Shizun.”

Chu Wanning nodded with a small smile, then suddenly said, “It must’ve been bitterly difficult.”

“Not bitter!” Xue Meng paused, and then said, “It was sweet.”[148]

Chu Wanning reached out, wanting to pat Xue Meng’s head like he used to, but then, remembering that Xue Meng wasn’t a child anymore and thinking that it might not be the most appropriate gesture now, his hand went off-course midway and ended up patting him on the shoulder instead.

The two of them picked up the books scattered across the floor from earlier and put them on the table.

“You bought so many,” Chu Wanning mused. “How am I supposed to read it all?”

“It’s not that many, Shizun can read ten lines at a time, it’ll only take a night.”

“.....”

Xue Meng’s admiration had not waned in the slightest, even after so long, but it was Chu Wanning who found himself somewhat at a loss for words. Not knowing what to say, he lit up the candle and flipped lightly through a couple of the books.

“Jiangdong Hall has a new sect leader now?”

“Yup, the new sect leader is a woman, and rumor says she has quite the temper.”

Chu Wanning kept reading. The page he was on was a long-winded record about Jiangdong Hall, which he read with rapt attention, but as he got to the section titled “Biography of Jiangdong Hall’s New Sect Leader”, he suddenly asked, as if entirely casually, “How has… Mo Ran been, these last couple of years?”

He had made sure to ask in a very mild, carefully controlled tone.

So Xue Meng didn't think much of the sudden question, and just replied, "He's alright."

Looking up, Chu Wanning asked, "What's alright supposed to mean?"

Xue Meng thought about how to say it for a moment. "Means he's more or less a decent person now."

"Was he not a decent person before?"

But then he nodded to himself before Xue Meng could even open his mouth to reply.

"Indeed not. Continue."

"....." Xue Meng's specialty lay in describing his own deeds in lengthy, dramatic narratives while talking about other people's deeds in a simple and brisk manner—especially if that other person happened to be Mo Ran.

"He's been running around everywhere these years. Grew up some," Xue Meng said. "That's about it."

"He didn't attend the Spiritual Mountain Competition?"

"Nope, he was cultivating at Snow Valley then."

Chu Wanning didn't ask anything else.

The two of them chatted some more about this and that, and then, worried he might get tired, Xue Meng reined in all the other countless things he still wanted to say and excused himself.

After he left, Chu Wanning lay down in bed, still dressed.

He still remembered everything that had happened in the Underworld, so he wasn't at all surprised about the way Mo Ran had changed. It was just that time waited for no one; during the past several years that he'd missed, even Xue Meng had grown up so much that he almost didn't recognize him, so he wondered what Mo Ran looked like now.

He thought about what Xue Zhengyong had said to him earlier, before leaving: "Yuheng, let's have a banquet tomorrow at Mengpo Hall to celebrate your coming out of seclusion. No refusing now, I've already sent a letter to Ran-er, surely you wouldn't want him to rush back all this way and not get to have a warm meal and good wine?"

And so Chu Wanning hadn't refused. He didn't like crowds, but Mo Ran had always been his weak spot.

Xue Zhengyong also told him that many villages at the foot of Baitou Mountain had been destroyed during the last Heavenly Rift at Butterfly Town, leaving most of the survivors either injured or crippled. Due to the severity of the damage, the villages were still in ruins even now, and the entire region of snowy plains looked like hell on earth.

And that that was where Mo Ran was these days, helping the villages rebuild.

He continued reading for a while under the candle light, but in the end couldn't resist the urge. Getting up and summoning a messenger haitang with a wave of his sleeve, he thought for a moment before speaking, "Sect Leader, if I may trouble you, please send Mo Ran another letter and tell him to not rush. It would be great if he could make it back in time, but it's also alright if not, I won't blame him. The weather's getting cold lately, and winters in the Baitou Mountain region have always been harsh, so tell him to take care of the villages first, no sloppy rushing allowed."

Only after setting the haitang adrift did Chu Wanning finally let out a sigh and lie back in bed, picking up the half-read copy of cultivation world annals to continue reading.

His reading speed wasn't quite as outrageous as Xue Meng said, to be able to read the whole pile of books in one night, but finishing a couple of them was no problem.

Melted wax pooled into the candle holder as the night grew deeper. Folding the book closed, Chu Wanning shut his eyes, a slight crease between his brows.

He had read through essentially everything that had happened in the cultivation world in the last five years. The contents of the records were rather uneventful at first, but once they got to the second Heavenly Rift at Butterfly Town, Mo Ran's name started cropping up in many and more passages.

Chu Wanning was lying on his side at first, propping up his cheek with one hand while flipping lazily through the pages with the other, but he couldn't

help sitting up at this part, holding up the book and reading closely.

“The people of the lower cultivation realm migrated eastward, but were met with a guarded wall at the border and denied entry. This coincided with several days of overcast skies that allowed fiends to walk freely in the open. The common people died by the thousands in front of the wall, and blood flowed in rivers. September saw the food supply route cut off for seventeen days; murder and cannibalism abounded…”

Here was written the events of when ghosts and fiends had run rampant in the lower cultivation realm, and many of the common people had thought to seek refuge in the upper cultivation realm, only to be turned away at the border, and in the end, desperate and starving, resorted to killing and eating one another to survive.

That the horror and carnage then had been reduced to just a couple of lines on paper left a sour taste in Chu Wanning’s mouth as he read.

“The defense was led by young masters Meng and Ran of Sisheng Peak. Xue Meng’s reputation soared as thousands of fiends were exterminated under the blade Longcheng and many more were driven back. Mo Ran single-handedly repaired the Heavenly Rift, banishing demons back into the Underworld, with barrier arts that were astoundingly similar to those of his master, Chu Wanning.”

Chu Wanning’s eyes opened a touch wider; though he knew that the Heavenly Rift described here was not quite as severe as the one back then, he was still a little surprised. “He can repair a rift all by himself now?”

As he kept reading, there were more passages about Mo Ran deeds, vanquishing evil as he travelled the land.

“...The Hedong region was set upon by a monster, which Bitan Sect refused to deal with for reasons undisclosed. Hearing of this, Mo Ran travelled there and found the Drought Demon of Yellow River, and after a three-day long battle, beheaded the demon and burned its head to eliminate the threat. However, the young master was gravely injured, having been stabbed through the abdomen and ribcage. He was fortunate to meet Jiang Xi, the sect leader of Guyue’ye…”

Even the tips of Chu Wanning’s fingers were ice cold.

He was gravely injured, having been stabbed through the abdomen and ribcage.

Whose abdomen, whose ribcage? Mo Ran’s?

He read it over four, five more times, refusing to believe his eyes despite never having misread anything before. On the sixth time, he even putt his finger on the page to follow along as he read the words one by one.

Hearing of this, Mo Ran travelled there...a three-day long battle...

Chu Wanning could practically see the back of a black-robed figure, long boots stepping through the enormous waves of the Yellow River, one hand held behind his back, the other grasped around a brightly glowing holy weapon in the form of a willow vine.

Beheaded the demon and burned its head to eliminate the threat. However, the young master was gravely injured.

His hand on the page clenched into a fist, so tightly that the joints turned white.

He could see Mo Ran lash out with the vine amongst the thunderous waves, Jiangui snapping across the sky in a fiery arc, severing the drought demon's head clean off and sending blood flying everywhere, but at the very same instant, the drought demon's sharp claws also pierced right through Mo Ran's torso!

The giant beast that had lost its head swung for a moment before crashing to the ground with a deafening sound, its colossal body cutting off the very flow of the Yellow River itself. Mo Ran collapsed by the riverside as well, unable to stand any longer as blood spread on his robes…

Chu Wanning slowly closed his eyes.

And did not open them for a long, long time. But the lightly quivering eyelashes grew damp.

In the end, all of the books, without exception, referred to Mo Ran as "Mo-zongshi".

Reading these words, Chu Wanning felt only an indescribable strangeness and unfamiliarity.

He couldn't reconcile the brightly smiling, somewhat lazy adolescent in his memories with such a term of address as "Mo-zongshi". When it came to Mo Ran, he'd missed so much; Chu Wanning suddenly wondered, if that person were to come back tomorrow, whether he'd still be able to recognize this disciple of his.

A disciple who carried many more scars, a disciple who had become Mo-zongshi.

He couldn't help feeling vaguely uneasy at the thought.

He really wanted to see Mo Ran, but also didn't quite have the courage to.

Troubled by such anxiety, it wasn't until the latter half of the night that Chu Wanning finally dozed off.

Even after already having died once, he still didn't know how to take care of himself, lying there in a pile of books with no blanket. He really was a bit fatigued due to not being quite recovered yet. Add on top of that the fact that barely anyone dared to enter the Red Lotus Pavilion without permission, and no one would come to wake him up. And so Chu Wanning ended up sleeping the whole day away. By the time he woke up, it was already evening the next day.

Opening the window to see a setting sun, Chu Wanning fell into a prolonged silence.

"……"

The surface of the lake reflected the dusk-red clouds as a crane flew leisurely across the horizon, returning to nest at the end of a long day.

It was already evening…

Had he slept through the night and then the entire day too?

Chu Wanning's entire face was ashen. A crack came from where his hand rested on the window frame, where he nearly snapped the wooden beam in half.

How absolutely unacceptable; the banquet that the sect leader was holding just for him was about to start, yet here he was, still drowsy-eyed, clothing in disarray and hair undone… what to do? What to do, what to do, what to do?!

He fretted anxiously to himself.

"Yuheng!" It was just his luck that Xue Zhengyong would choose this exact moment to come up here and invite himself in, only to freeze at the sight of Chu Wanning sitting on the bed with an indecipherable expression on his face.

"Are you still not up yet?"

“I’m up,” Chu Wanning replied, and he would’ve pulled off a dignified look too, if not for that strand of hair sticking up at his temple. “Did Sect Leader need something, to personally come all this way?”

“Oh no, I’m good, was just a bit worried cause I didn’t see you come down from here all day.” Xue Zhengyong rubbed his hands. “Well, since you’re up, go get washed and dressed then come over to Mengpo Hall for dinner later. Before leaving, Master Huaizui said to hold off on food for twenty four hours; you haven’t eaten anything since you woke up yesterday, and it’s now been twenty four hours, perfect timing. I had them make a bunch of your favorite dishes, like stewed crab meatballs, sweet osmanthus lotus root, and all that. C’mon, let’s walk over together.”

“Your trouble is much appreciated.” Hearing that there would be stewed crab meatballs and sweet osmanthus lotus root, Chu Wanning no longer cared to waste time getting ready, planning instead to just throw on a change of clothes and immediately go down the mountain with Xue Zhengyong.

After all, stewed crab meatballs had to be eaten while still hot, since they got all bland once they cooled.

“No trouble, no trouble.” Xue Zhengyong rubbed his hands some more while watching him put on his shoes, and then, suddenly remembering something, said, “Oh yeah, one more thing.”

Chu Wanning was no good at the mundane tasks of daily life to start with, and the five year slumber only made him even more out of it: he tried to

put the left sock on the right foot for a good solid while before realizing it and swapping them around with a perfectly straight face that betrayed absolutely nothing.

Focused on putting on socks, he answered mildly without even lifting his head, “What is it?”

Xue Zhengyong said with a grin, “I got an urgent letter from Ran-er this morning, saying he’ll definitely make it back tonight. And he got you a congratulatory gift too; he’s really getting quite thoughtful the older he gets, I… hey, Yuheng, why are you taking off your socks?”

“No reason, they’re yesterday’s.”

Chu Wanning said, “They’re a little dirty, I’m changing to a fresh pair.”

“...Then why didn’t you do that earlier?”

“I only just remembered.”

Xue Zhengyong was an open and forthright guy, so he didn’t think too deeply about it, only looked around the place for a bit before commenting, “You know, Yuheng, you’re not getting any younger. It’s about time you got a cultivation partner if you ask me. Just look at your place, it was all neat and tidy when Master Huaizui left, but as soon as you woke up, haven’t even really lived in the place yet, and there’s already paper and clothes strewn about everywhere… I’ll keep an eye out for you, how about it?”

“Sect Leader, kindly see yourself out.”

“Eh?”

Chu Wanning's face was all doom and gloom. "I'm changing."

"Haha, sure, I'll get out, but, the cultivation partner thing…?"

Chu Wanning's head snapped up, eyes cold like a pair of frozen lakes as they glared at Xue Zhengyong, tactless man that he was.

Finally catching on somewhat, Xue Zhengyong chuckled awkwardly and said, "...Just asking. I was wondering what kind of things you look for, since I'm sure you won't settle for just anyone."

Chu Wanning dropped his eyelids, but seemed to have shot Xue Zhengyong a glare.

Xue Zhengyong sighed and said helplessly, "What, am I wrong? I know you're picky."

Chu Wanning replied mildly, "I just have better things to do, is all, how is that being picky."

"Alright then, if you're not picky, then tell me what kinda looks you like? No pressure or anything, just so I can keep an eye out for you."

Annoyed and not wanting to waste his breath, Chu Wanning offhandedly made something up, "Alive. Female. Sect Leader can feel free to keep an eye out. Kindly see yourself out."

He pushed Xue Zhengyong toward the door as he spoke, but Xue Zhengyong wasn't about to just give up, especially after the whole dying

thing—he was really, truly, wholeheartedly invested in getting Chu Wanning hitched.

Back when Chu Wanning had died, Xue Zhengyong greatly regretted that he didn't have a child to leave behind like his brother did, that way he'd at least have some way to remember him by, someone to look after and make amends to.

But Chu Wanning had neither children nor siblings, had always kept to himself.

Xue Zhengyong had been disconsolate then, had felt incredibly guilty, and, more than that, had felt that Chu Wanning was really too pitiably lonely.

"That tells me absolutely nothing… Yuheng, really, I'm being serious here ——hey!"

Xue Zhengyong was shoved out and the door slammed in his face even as he struggled.

Followed by a barrier to make sure he stayed out.

Xue Zhengyong: "....."

Author's Notes:

New mini-theatre: "Lead Males' and Side Males' Standards For A Significant Other"

The Sect Leader handed down a little test-scroll, and required everyone to write their standards for a cultivation partner.

Chu Wan Ning: Why is it this again? It is already stated in the novel: female, alive. As long as these criteria are met.

Mo Ran: (sighs)...Actually, I don't know what qualities I want my cultivation partners to have as well, but I feel that with my IQ, I'm not suited for dating.

Xue Meng (taking this seriously, thinking very hard): They can't be below my chin in height, they can't be heavier than me, and their waist can't be thicker than my thigh. Best if they have almond-shaped eyes, I like almond-shaped eyes. They can't lose to Shi Mei in terms of looks (Shi Mei: ……), can't lose to Mo Ran in terms of martial ability (Mo Ran: Submit your scroll, there's no such woman), they must be unsurpassed in loyalty and chastity, priority given to those who can cook. Most importantly: They must be able to eat spicy food, I can't stand half-spicy, half-clear broth hotpot. Even though my family doesn't have a throne for me to inherit, I feel that I'm not yet an old leftover man.[149] I don't care whether I get married or not; after all, a man's career is more important, so as long as one of the criteria above is not fulfilled, you don't have to approach me to talk, let's not waste each other's time.

Shi Mei: I'm fine as long as they're kind. Whether they're pretty or ugly isn't very important.

Nangong Si: First, honest. Second, pretty.

Ye Wangxi: ...Not interested.

Mei Hanxue: Can I find one who can give me a bigger part? Director, do you need me as a body double for the bedroom scenes between those two male leads?

Big White Cat that has come online: [thanking jjwxc readers]

Dog that has gone offline: [thanking jjwxc readers]

Ch.126 Shizun, Wait One More Chapter For Me!

The end of Yuheng Elder's seclusion was naturally a cause for celebration for the entire sect. But Xue Zhengyong knew that Chu Wanning disliked the bustle of gatherings and didn't have much of a way with words, so he planned out what to say and what to do for him ahead of time. Chu Wanning was worried that he might be a bit awkward at the banquet at first, but he soon found out that he really didn't have to worry at all.

Xue Zhengyong may be a big, burly man, but he was keenly perceptive and had a full grasp on the mood in the room. Before the gathering of all the elders and masses of disciples, he spoke some words from the bottom of his heart—not so many as to come off like a deliberate attempt to stir up emotion, but being genuinely moving instead. Only Lucun Elder couldn't read the air, laughing as he shouted:

"Yuheng, why the long face on this happy occasion? You should say a few words too, some of the newer disciples here don't even know what you look like."

Xue Zhengyong tried to save him. "Lucun, I've already said everything there is to say for Yuheng, don't put him on the spot."

"That's different, he's gotta put in at least a couple of words."

"But he——"

"It's fine." Xue Zhengyong was about to say something else when he was interrupted by a deep, cool voice. "Since there are new disciples here, I'll

just say a few words," Chu Wanning stood up as he spoke. His eyes scanned Mengpo Hall, through the bustling crowd of a couple thousand people all looking at him.

But Mo Ran wasn't among them.

Chu Wanning thought for a moment, then said, "The Red Lotus Pavilion on the southern summit has myriad defensive mechanisms and mechanical guardians. In order to prevent accidental injuries, new disciples are advised against visiting without cause."

The crowd fell silent.

Lucun couldn't help asking, "...That's it?""

"That's it."

Chu Wanning responded, then dropped his gaze and swept his sleeves aside to sit back down.

The silence stretched on.

The new disciples were pensive: dying and then coming back to life after five years of seclusion from the world was definitely not something that most people would ever experience. Shouldn't you at least say something heartfelt about your feelings, or express some gratitude to your saviour, things like that?

But he just tossed out that one line like he was reading out the tenets or something and left it at that, where's the sincerity?

But the older disciples couldn't help laughing quietly, several of them whispering to each other, "That's Yuheng Elder, alright."

“Still doesn’t like talking.”

“Pfft, seriously. Bad temper and short fuse. He’s got a good-looking face, but that’s about it.” Someone quipped under the cover of everyone else’s chattering, from where they stood far enough away that Chu Wanning wouldn’t hear. The crowd chuckled amongst themselves as they talked, then turned to look toward that white-robed person sitting next to Xue Zhengyong.

The banquet began. There were spicy and savory Sichuan dishes of course, but also lots of finely-made desserts and beautifully arranged, mild and sweet Jiangnan dishes, covering entire tables in abundance.

Xue Zhengyong also opened a hundred-some jars of top quality pear blossom white wine to share between the tables, and cups were generously filled with the amber-colored wine. Chu Wanning was on his fourth stewed crab meatball when a large bowl was suddenly put down in front of him with a clang .

“Yuheng! Let’s have a cup!”

“...That’s a bowl.”

“Aiyah who cares if it’s a cup or a bowl, just drink it! It’s your favorite, pear blossom white!” Xue Zhengyong’s bold features were practically glowing with joy in the cheerful atmosphere. “I know how much you can drink! A thousand cups won’t even get you tipsy! C’mon, cheers!”

Chu Wanning smiled and picked up the big bowl, clinked it with Xue Zhengyong.

“Since Sect Leader says so, cheers.”

With that, he downed the bowl and flipped it over to show Xue Zhengyong. Xue Zhengyong was overjoyed, but the rims of his eyes turned a little red. “That’s my man! I remember, five years ago, when you asked me for a jar of the top quality pear blossom white from the cellar and I wouldn’t give it to you back then. I couldn’t regret it enough later on, thought I’d never… never get to…” He trailed off, then abruptly lifted his head and huffed out a long exhale before declaring loudly, “Nevermind! No point dwelling on it! If you want it, you can have the whole cellar of pear blossom white! I’ll make sure you have good wine to drink for the rest of your life!”

Chu Wanning said with a smile, “Deal.”

While they chatted, Xue Meng was over in a corner with someone, whispering back and forth for a good while before Xue Meng suddenly grabbed that person and came over with them in tow, both of them bowing together to Chu Wanning in proper, upright form.

“Shizun!” Xue Meng lifted his head, his youthful face handsome and commanding.

“Shizun.” The other person lifted his head as well to reveal a face that was beautiful like a lotus coming into bloom, like whisps of clouds drifting lightly between peaks—who else could it be but Shi Mei?

Shi Mei said bashfully, “This disciple was held up seeing patients at the free clinic in Wuchang Town today, and only just now came to visit Shizun. Pray forgive this disciple’s shameful tardiness.”

“...It’s no matter.”

Chu Wanning looked Shi Mei over carefully through lowered lashes, and though his expression remained neutral, he was caught off guard by a sudden sense of loss deep inside.

Mo Ran’s beloved person had grown up to be way too incomparably beautiful.

If the Shi Mei of five years ago was still a fledgeling beauty, then the grown up Shi Mei standing before him now was like a queen of the night[150] in full bloom, its tender green sepals no longer able to hide the glistening white within, snowy petals quivering as they unfurl, its loveliness eclipsing everything else around it. He had a pair of sweet peach blossom eyes that were clear and dewy. The curve of his nose was gentle and perfect; a little more would’ve seemed too harsh, and a little less would’ve look too weak. And his lips were red and full, like a dew-laden cherry, and every word spoken was sweet and soft.

“Shizun, this disciple missed you so much.”

He rarely ever expressed his feelings so openly. Chu Wanning didn’t know what to say for a moment, caught by surprise as he was.

Shi Mei's eyes were red-rimmed with emotion, and Chu Wanning couldn't help feeling a little ashamed of himself.

What was he being jealous of Shi Mingjing for? He was so much older than them, and their superior to boot, why should he be jealous of Shi Mingjing?

Thinking thus, Chu Wanning nodded and said mildly, "You can both get up."

His two disciples stood up by his leave.

……

Chu Wanning had only just gotten his feelings under control, but then he glanced at Shi Mei and froze.

"....."

Shi Mei was taller than Xue Meng?

Chu Wanning choked a little, cleared his throat twice, and couldn't resist stealing a couple more glances.

Not just a little taller, either.

But Shi Mei's figure was even better like this, with broad shoulders, a slim waist, and long legs, looking gentle and demure but with a suggestion of subtle assertiveness, an air of grace and elegance that defies words. This

grown up Shi Mei was nothing like the fragile-looking adolescent he used to be.

Chu Wanning's face fell again despite himself.

He felt like he had lost a little too pathetically.

But...forget it.

He had kept his feelings for Mo Ran to himself even until death, so there was no way he'd ever say it in the future. As for Mo Ran, that guy had chased him all the way to the Underworld and still couldn't tell that he liked him, so there was no way he'd ever notice in the future either.

The two of them can just be master and disciple for the rest of this life. That's a strong bond too, it's fine.

As for anything beyond that... no point forcing something that wasn't meant to be.

Xue Meng, red-faced, suddenly nudged Shi Mei with his elbow and shot him a meaningful look.

Helplessly, Shi Mei said in a soft voice, "You really want me to do it?"

"Yeah, it'd be better if you do it."

"But you're the one who got these things over the five years…"

"Yeah that's why it'd be awkward for me to! You do it. Besides, you brought back some stuff with you today, right?"

"...Alright." Shi Mei sighed and gave in, taking a huge rosewood box that Xue Meng had been hiding behind his back and holding it in both hands as

he walked over to Chu Wanning, who had already sat back down to continue eating his stewed crab meatball.

“Shizun, the young master and I...prepared some gifts over the past five years, just some… small gestures, please accept them.”

As he spoke, Xue Meng’s face grew redder and redder behind him. In an attempt to cover up how flustered he was, he crossed his arms and turned his head away in feigned nonchalance, as if suddenly fascinated by the decoratively carved pillars of Mengpo Hall.

Generally speaking, opening a gift in front of the giver was impolite, but as their shizun, Chu Wanning didn’t want to accept anything too valuable, so he thought for a moment and then asked, “What is it?”

“It’s...just some little things we got here and there.” Smart and perceptive as he was, Shi Mei immediately figured out Chu Wanning’s concern and said, “Nothing expensive. Just take it back and open it for a look then if that’s what Shizun is worried about.”

But Chu Wanning countered, “There’s no difference between opening it now or when I get back. I’ll just go ahead and open it.”

“No no no!!!! Don’t open it!” Xue Meng froze for a second, then immediately rushed over in a panic and tried to grab the box.

But Chu Wanning had already opened it, and even threw him an impassive look.

“What are you running for, don’t trip and fall.”

Xue Meng: “.....”

Sure enough, the box was stuffed full with all kinds of interesting-looking little things, including a few delicately embroidered hair ribbons, finely crafted hair clasps, and intricate belt buckles made of jade. Chu Wanning casually picked up a bottle of sedatives, and saw on it the seal of Hanlin the Sage glistening under the candle light.

The contents of the box were quite costly indeed.

Chu Wanning really didn’t know what to say, opting instead to look up and shoot Xue Meng a glare. Xue Meng’s face grew even redder.

Xue Zhengyong watched on from the side, amused. He said, “Yuheng, just accept it as a token of Meng-er’s thoughtfulness. The other elders all got you fairly pricey gifts too anyway, what’s one more?”

Chu Wanning said, “Xue Meng is my disciple.”

The implication being that he didn’t want to accept this many things from his own disciple.

“But it’s just some things I picked up over the last five years that I thought would suit Shizun!” Hearing him say that, Xue Meng panicked. “And I only used money I earned myself, not a cent of dad’s money. Shizun, if you don’t take it, I… I…”

“He’ll be upset, won’t be able to sleep,” Xue Zhengyong filled in for his son, “might even go on a hunger strike.”

Chu Wanning: “.....”

He really didn’t know how to deal with this father-son pair, so he looked back down at the box, and noticed another, even smaller wooden box lying inside the pile of stuff.

“What’s this…” He took it out and opened it to reveal four little clay figurines.

Confused, he looked up at Xue Meng, only to see that Xue Meng’s face was currently the color of a ripe tomato. Seeing Chu Wanning look his way, Xue Meng hurriedly lowered his head, the handsome young man acting like a bashful little boy under his shizun’s stare, unable to make eye contact.

Chu Wanning asked, “What is this?”

Xue Zhengyong was curious as well. “Let’s take it out and have a look.”

“No...don’t…” Hand on his forehead, Xue Meng mumbled helplessly. But his old man had already cheerfully taken out the four little clay dolls and arranged them in a row. The little figurines were crudely made, ugly and crooked, and all looked basically the same except for one being slightly taller and the other three being slightly shorter. Xue Meng’s work, to be sure.

Xue Meng had originally wanted to learn the mechanical arts from Chu Wanning, but it only took a day before Chu Wanning had him switch to the blade instead, for no other reason than the fact that the boy had managed to make absolutely nothing after an entire afternoon spent at the Red Lotus Pavilion, but had nearly managed to tear down the machine room with just a file.

It must've been hard work to make these clay dolls with nothing but the power of his pure heart.

Xue Zhengyong grabbed one of the dolls and looked it over, turning it this way and that, but still couldn't figure it out. So he asked his son, "This thing that you made, what is it?"

Xue Meng said stubbornly, "N-nothing, I was just messing around."

"This black one is really ugly, that taller white one looks much better," Xue Zhengyong mumbled as he thumbed at the little clay doll's head.

Xue Meng yelled, "Don't touch it!!!!"

But it was too late. The little doll spoke.

"Hands off, Uncle."

Xue Zhengyong: "....."

Chu Wanning: "....."

Xue Meng gave himself a sound slap, then covered his eyes with his arms, not wanting to even look any longer.

It took Xue Zhengyong quite a while to put two and two together, laughing out loud when he finally figured it out, “Oho, Meng-er, is this supposed to be Ran-er? Didn’t you make him a bit too ugly? Hahahahaha!”

Xue Meng shot back angrily, “That’s cause he is ugly! Look at the Shizun I made instead! Pretty, right?!” His face was bright red as he spoke, pointing at the white-painted clay doll.

But the tip of his finger inadvertently brushed against the little white doll’s head. It hmph’d coldly and said, “Don’t be impudent.”

Chu Wanning: “.....”

“HAHAHAHAHAHA!!!!!!” Xue Zhengyong laughed so hard he nearly cried. “That’s pretty good, pretty good! You put a voice charm in them didn’t you? The little one’s actually doing a pretty good impression of Yuheng’s tone, hahahaha!”

Chu Wanning said with a flick of his sleeves, “Ridiculous.”

But then carefully picked up the four little clay dolls, tucked them back into the box, and put the box next to himself. His face betrayed nothing the entire time, looking calm as ever, but there was a hint of lingering gentleness in his eyes when he looked back up.

“I’ll take this one, you can keep the rest. It’s all things you can use too, and this master isn’t wanting for any of them.”

“But…”

“Young master, just do as Shizun says.” Shi Mei smiled and consoled him quietly, then lowered his voice to say, “What the young master wanted to give the most was the box of little clay dolls anyway, right?”

Xue Meng was so mad there was practically smoke rising from his head. He shot Shi Mei an angry glare, stomped his feet, then bit his lip and refused to talk any more.

Xue Meng had always been flattered and fawned upon while growing up, never had words he couldn’t say or things he couldn’t do, so if he liked something or disliked something, he’d always express it loudly and frankly.

Chu Wanning felt like he was extraordinary for that reason, because this kind of candor was something that he himself never had, and one of Xue Meng’s most remarkable qualities. He envied that about him, that openness that was so unlike the way that he himself could never be honest, claiming to not care about something even as it occupied his thoughts.

He had gotten a little better about it since coming back to life, but it was what it was, and the changes weren’t really too noticeable. It would take more than one cold day for a river to freeze three feet deep; he felt like he probably wouldn’t really change all that much, even if he were to try for the rest of his life. And besides, he wouldn’t really be him anymore if he changed too much.

The banquet was nearly over, but Mo Ran had still not come back.

Chu Wanning’s chest felt all stuffy, but he said nothing about it, even though he really wanted to ask Xue Zhengyong what exactly Mo Ran had

written in that letter from earlier today, wanted to ask if he knew where exactly Mo Ran was right now.

But instead he only gripped the wine cup and downed one drink after another, his joints white with the force of his grip. The wine burned all the way down, but it did not burn enough to warm his heart, not enough for him to summon the courage to turn around and ask when he would be back.

Author's Notes:

There are perks on Weibo today~

Thankieww "Xu Liang" for your picture of Shizuwun walking in the snow looking for plum blossoms~~ A very very handsome Shizuwun with his thick cloak, I can't help but want to bury my face into the fur of his hood hehe~ It's suwuper great I want to lick it~~ thanks~

Thankieww "Salted Fish in Flying Snow" for little cutie Xia Sini~ while we're on this topic, Xia Sini will not be coming online ever again, although he's Shizun's child form, I feel kind of sad for some reason QAQ Cradling osmanthus cake and asking Dog -gege for lotus flower crisp and stuff, is he really not afraid of repeating the Fourth Ghost King's mistakes hahaha thanks~

Thankieww "Shuanghua stabbing Meatbun" for Nangong Si...hahaha I really need to have a good laugh at this, mermaid Nangong Si hahahahaha,

Ye Wangsi is probably laughing himself awake from this dream, he went again the ship dynamics hahaha. Is this cold and heartless mermaid Nangong- gege x passionate prince loyal dog Ye, hahaha~ but little koi Nangong- gege is really cute, I want to tease him~ thanks~

Mini-theatre “The Reason Behind The Team's Tardiness”

Chu Wan Ning: Late is late, I don’t want to explain, just punish me.

Mo Ran 0.5: There was an old woman walking too slowly on the way here, and she got in my way. I came here right after killing her, arriving a little late. Hand this venerable one a clean handkerchief, some blood splattered onto my face.

Mo Ran 1.0: Hahaha~ An old granny was crossing the road, the way she was leaning on her cane was sooo funny. I snatched the cane she was using to cross the road because I wanted to see something comedic happen. But I returned it to her afterwards, don’t worry, don’t worry~

Mo Ran 2.0: On the way here, I saw an elderly person who had difficulty walking, so I helped her cross the road and delayed my journey, my apologies.

Shi Mei: I ran into a patient kicking up a fuss so that he could attain some benefits he wasn’t entitled to and really couldn’t leave...sorry...

Xue Meng: None of your shitty business.

Nangong Si: The one above is really uncouth, I'll be more polite--what does that have to do with you?

Ye Wangxi: I am never late. Look again, it should be your hourglass that's malfunctioning.

Mei Hanxue: For every step I take, there'll be female cultivators coming up to pester me. Even if I leave the house four hours earlier, I'll still end up late. I've given up on fighting it.

Ch.127 Shizun, Careful, the Ground's Slippery

But Chu Wanning didn't ask, and Xue Zhengyong didn't bring it up.

In fact, the sect leader of Sisheng Peak was getting kind of plastered, feeling light-headed and slurring his words.

He suddenly leaned over, stared at Chu Wanning, and said, "Yuheng, you're upset."

"I am not."

"You're mad."

"I am not," Chu Wanning repeated.

"Who upset you?"

Chu Wanning: "....."

Should he ask?

He'd feel a lot better if he just asked. Maybe Mo Ran didn't actually say that he'd definitely be back tonight, maybe he only said that he'll try his best to make it back, and Xue Zhengyong just said it wrong, or remembered it wrong...

Chu Wanning glanced toward the door, at the darkness of night outside.

The banquet was coming to a close, and the seats would soon be cold.

His first day out of seclusion, and Mo Ran hadn't made it back in time.

Every single disciple of Sisheng Peak was here, including the ones whose names he didn't know and the ones he'd never even met before. Only he wasn't here.

Without him here, the banquet was incomplete.

All the stewed crab meatballs, sweet osmanthus lotus root, and fragrant pear blossom white wine in the world wouldn't make it complete.

Chu Wanning closed his eyes, but there was suddenly a ruckus from the direction of Mengpo Hall's front entrance, with a bunch of disciples yelling excitedly in the distance.

"Aiyah——! Look! What's that outside?"

"There's something in the sky!"

More and more people gathered over there, and even those in the hall could hear the lively crackling sounds and thunderous booms coming from the outside, one after another.

They walked out to the verdant lawn just outside Mengpo Hall, looking up at the sky all lit up by fireworks, explosions of millions of little glittering specks blooming and scattering against the backdrop of the starry night sky.

"Fireworks!" The younger disciples beamed with joy, youthful faces illuminated by the flickering lights above, the sky full of stars reflected in their eyes.

"It's so pretty, I've never seen fireworks this big, not even at New Year's!'

Chu Wanning walked slowly out from the hall as well. He wasn't in the greatest mood; though he was grateful that Xue Zhengyong had gone to the trouble of preparing such a brilliant fireworks show, the heaviness in his chest continued to weigh on him.

Fweeee ——

A sharp whistling sound pierced through the night sky.

He lifted his head listlessly to see a streak of golden-red light shoot into the open sky like an arrow loosened from its bow.

How beautiful.

If only that person were here too…

Bang!

That brilliant flare flew up to a height about level with the Big Dipper's handle before bursting in explosion to fill the night sky with countless shimmering sparkles, eclipsing all the stars of the Milky Way and stealing the light from the moon itself.

The fireworks scattered like so many petals of haitang blossoms set adrift by a passing breeze, floating and dancing like wintry snow, glimmering and rippling like open waters. Amidst the splendid display and lively bustling of the crowd, Chu Wanning slowly closed his eyes.

"Disciple Mo Ran Welcomes Shizun Back From Seclusion."

Someone said from behind him all of a sudden, every word clear and needle-like.

Chu Wanning began to tremble lightly, feeling like there were thorns in his back, fire in his throat. With his heart beating all out of rhythm, blood racing through his veins, and unable to breathe, he whipped his head around——

Standing behind him were a couple of disciples who had just come out from Mengpo Hall, all of them looking up at the sky in amazement, and one of them had read aloud thus.

Gradually, it wasn't just the one person reading aloud anymore.

Everyone found it novel and interesting; everyone, including the youngest disciples, the men and the women, the ones standing alone and those in groups, all of them were looking up at the glittering, resplendent night sky and reading out loud:

Disciple Mo Ran.

Welcomes Shizun Back From Seclusion.

The utterances carried a tenderness like the tide, gentle as sleepy whispers; the words bore a determination like a boulderstone, firm as mighty mountains. Chu Wanning's head snapped skyward, where the brilliant fireworks, guided by spiritual energy, had spelled out the sentence in huge, shimmering letters across the night sky.

The fireworks flowed into a magnificent river that could probably be seen from even hundreds of miles away, and in that moment, in that night, the colorful, glimmering specks felt like they were converging in on him from across hills and mountains, across time and bygones, bringing with them that person's joys and sorrows, longings and regrets.

He suddenly felt like a piece of driftwood afloat in the ocean, and the ocean was Mo Ran's eyes, the way they had looked when he had suddenly pulled him into his arms in front of the ghost king's palace in the Underworld, full of warm tenderness, fiery passion, and unwavering determination.

There was nowhere to run.

He was surrounded by that person's murmurs, that person's laughter, that person's affection.

Chu Wanning didn't want to think about what kind of affection it was, that of a master and disciple, or something else.

Just having the affection was enough.

Mo Ran didn't manage to make it back before the end of the banquet.

Even pushing on through the night without stop, it was simply too far away.

Luckily he still had the signal fireworks made by Xuanji Elder in his bag that had been given to him for use in an emergency, should he meet with some mishap while away from the peak. It was an ingenious creation; by writing a message on paper with spiritual energy, putting it into the tube, and setting off the firework, the message would be writ boldly across the sky in letters so large that it would be visible from Sisheng Peak from however far away.

The signal fireworks were costly and exceedingly difficult to make, but Mo Ran didn't care about that; all he wanted was to make sure that his shizun wouldn't be upset.

Even from across mountains and rivers, even separated by time and circumstances.

He had to make sure that Chu Wanning could hear these words.

“Disciple Mo Ran Welcomes Shizun Back From Seclusion.”

The banquet came to a close four hours later, and it was late at night by the time he got back to the Red Lotus Pavilion.

Chu Wanning smelled like wine. He wanted to take a bath, wash the smell off, but the weather had gotten cooler lately and the water in the pavilion’s lotus pond was too cold for bathing in—he’d nearly caught a cold bathing there yesterday. He thought for a moment, then went inside to fetch a change of clothes and a wooden washbin, and headed toward Miaoyin Springs.[151]

Miaoyin Springs was the sect’s communal bath. He’d only ever bathed there in his first few months here at Sisheng Peak.

This late at night, there would be hardly anyone bathing there. Lifting the thin layer of hemp curtain with one hand, Chu Wanning walked in. Many parts of Sisheng Peak had been renovated, but Miaoyin Springs was the same as before, with tall, black-tiled walls on all sides, and sheer veils drifting lightly in the breeze along a winding corridor that led from the front gate to a set of six narrow wooden steps lacquered with a clear varnish.

The bathers would all take off their shoes and socks before going down these steps, so just one look here would reveal just how many people were currently soaking in the baths.

Chu Wanning took a look while taking off his shoes and socks, and saw that there was only one lone pair of boots here, of a fairly large size and a little dirty, but placed neatly in the corner, rather than carelessly tossed to the ground just because it was empty here.

Chu Wanning wondered whom it was, to come here for a bath this late at night...

But it was only a fleeting thought. Holding his small washbin, he walked down the steps barefooted, brushed aside the last set of curtains at the end of the footpath, and walked into the courtyard.

The courtyard was hazy with steam from the massive hot spring pond inside that rose and fell with the ground, the water cascading down in a broad, rumbling waterfall. The thick, cloudy steam unfurled gently outwards from the pond, drifting slowly into the air, spreading into every corner and crevice.

The thick steam made everything here blurry, and a person had to get very close to another to see their face.

Walking across the little footpath of smooth, colorful pebbles under the luxuriant canopy of flowering peach blossoms, Chu Wanning arrived at the nearest entrance to the baths. There was a low shelf carved from bluestone there specifically for holding clothes. He put his wooden washbin and robe on the shelf, then took off his clothes and walked slowly into the pond.

It was nice and warm.

He sighed softly in contentment despite himself.

If not for the fact that he didn't want to crowd in here with everyone else while bathing, nor did he fancy coming here late at night every day, he'd really rather bathe here than in the cold waters of the Red Lotus Pavilion's simple pond.

Xue Zhengyong really was fastidious and thorough. He had personally overseen the construction of Miaoyin Springs; flowers bloomed along the edge of the pond year-round, there was a waterfall at the end of the pond for rinsing off, and there was even a small wooden pavilion on the side to lie down and rest in after soaking, provided with heated stones to be placed along the meridians to help relieve the pressure.

Way more indulgent than that rushed bath he had to make do with yesterday at the Red Lotus Pavilion's pond.

Delighted and seeing as how there was no one else around, Chu Wanning let loose for a moment, spreading out his slender body and swimming all the way to the waterfall.

Splash!

He had only just risen out of the water and wiped his face, a faint smile still lingering at his lips, when he abruptly noticed a man very close to him, showering in the surging waterfall with his back to him. The waterfall was so loud that Chu Wanning couldn't hear the other person at all, even this close.

If he had come out of the water a little later, swam a little further, the tips of his fingers probably would've touched the man's legs.

Good thing he had gotten up when he did and hadn't ended up touching the other person, but this was still a bit inappropriately close—he was

practically standing right behind the man. He was very tall, quite a bit taller than Chu Wanning, and his sun-kissed skin was the color of honey, making him seem wild and unrestrained. His shoulders were strong and broad, shoulder blades flexing beneath golden skin with concealed strength as his arms moved.

He wasn't overly muscular, but sculpted and evenly toned. The water cascaded over his body, rivulets of it flowing down the wide expanse of his strong, masculine back to gather into streams. Some of the water splashed off, but some seemed infatuated with this body of his, clinging to him in a light sheen, loathe to part.

As someone who was used to being ascetic, Chu Wanning had never seen such a carnal sight before, and his ears burned red as he hurriedly turned to leave.

Heaven only knew if the bottom of the pond was too slippery or if he had taken a false step, but he stumbled and fell face first into the pond, sending a big spray of water splashing into the air!

" Cough cough!!!! "

Chu Wanning's face was bright red with embarrassment and, flustered as he was, he'd even inadvertently swallowed some mouthfuls of water. Remembering that the water was technically used bathwater from that guy behind him, he was so indignant and disgusted that he threw all appearances of calm and composure aside, scrambling and flailing frantically as he tried to get back up.

He was the Yuheng Elder, how could——

In his panicked fluster, with no dignity left to speak of, there was suddenly a strong, shapely hand on him, pulling him up from the streaming waters. The man had obviously been startled by the happening behind him.

“Are you okay?”

With one hand around his arm, the man spoke in a deep, calming voice. The difference in their heights was such that his breath puffed out against Chu Wanning’s ear as he lowered his head to speak, “Careful, it’s slippery here.”

Chu Wanning’s ears burned even hotter; he could practically feel that person’s chest behind him, mere inches from his back, rising and falling, rising and falling, a merciful relief in each fall like it was sparing his life, a menacing precarity in each rise as it threatened to brush against his back.

Chu Wanning was both indignant and mortified at once—never had he been touched by someone like this before!

Shaking the man’s hand off of him, Chu Wanning’s face was all surly, even as he avoided eye contact. “I’m fine.”

The deafening sound of the waterfall’s rushing waters all but covered up Chu Wanning’s voice.

But the man jolted at his voice for some reason, going entirely still for a second before slowly lifting his hand like he wanted to say something, but didn’t quite have the courage to...

In that moment of hesitation, Chu Wanning had already walked a ways into the distance and stepped into, or rather, went to hide inside the rushing, roaring curtain of water.

Author’s Notes:

This mini-theatre originates from an old joke *scratches head*

Mo Ran: Um...the title has already reminded Shizun that the ground is slippery, why did Shizun still slip? (LOL)

Chu Wan Ning: ...Isn’t it pronounced “slip carefully”?[152]

Ch.128 Shizun, You Can't Just Wear Whatever Clothes You Feel Like

Chu Wanning's heart beat fast, and he was so mad his face was a bit flushed.

He could see, out of the corner of his eyes, that the man was still standing there in the same spot, seemingly frozen. Chu Wanning did not look directly at him, but he could feel the man's stare on himself, open and blatant, like a sword just raised from the forging pool, hissing still with an overwhelming heat and vaporizing the curtain of water as it pierced right through the waterfall straight for him.

Chu Wanning felt absolutely scandalised for some reason. Expression growing even more sour, he bit down on his lip and moved to hide even deeper into the waterfall.

But the guy was an idiot , as it turned out. Chu Wanning scooted in to hide, and like a puppet on strings, he took a step forward too.

"……"

Chu Wanning was furious. There were always a couple of perverts at Sisheng Peak; there had even once been a woman who, instead of going to sleep at night like a normal person, had gone crawling up the roof at Red Lotus Pavilion to peek at him bathing. Just thinking about it made his scalp go numb, and goosebumps rose all along the arm that had gotten grabbed by that guy.

Luckily, after a while of him hiding in the waterfall as deep as he could go—inadvertently swallowing more than a few droplets of the water in the process—the guy finally decided to let him be, going back to the streaming water to continue rinsing, though he kept looking back as he walked away.

Holding down his anger the best he could, Chu Wanning was in no mood to soak in the baths anymore, thinking only to finish up and get out of there as soon as possible.

He reached for the towel draped over his shoulder, only to find that the towel, together with the soapberry[153] and fragrance bar wrapped inside, had fallen into the water during his great tumble earlier.

They were probably dissolved by now…

Should he get out of the water to fetch another one?

But he was naked, and that would involve walking past that guy.

Chu Wanning's face had gone from red to blue. He pressed his thin lips tightly together, mortified.

He was not going.

So he remained standing there with his arms crossed over his chest and his back against the rock like an idiot, letting the water wash over him in the deepest part of the streaming waterfall.

Chu Wanning: "……"

The man: "……"

Suddenly, in the distance, that guy raised his voice and asked hesitantly, “Do you want a soapberry?”

“……”

“And fragrance bars?”

“……”

“Surely you’re not going to just wash like that?”

Closing his eyes and staying right where he was, Chu Wanning replied coldly, “Toss it over.”

But the guy didn’t toss it over, as if thinking that it would be rude to do that with a stranger. After waiting a while under the waterfall, Chu Wanning saw a peach leaf enchanted with spiritual power drift slowly toward him, bearing a soapberry and two fragrance bars.

Chu Wanning picked up the items, but then paused upon taking a closer look.

The soapberry was whatever, since everyone used basically the same thing, but that person had picked out a plum blossom scented fragrance bar and a haitang scented one, his favorite scents.

He glanced over at the tall figure in the distance through the sparkling, translucent curtain of water despite himself.

The man asked, “Those two scents okay?”

Chu Wanning replied, “Fine.”

The man said no more, and the two of them continued washing in silence from where they stood far apart, each occupied with his own thoughts. Chu Wanning felt a little more at ease as he washed, and so cautiously stepped back out from the depths of the waterfall, since the water stream where he was standing was actually a bit too strong for comfort.

But the man looked over again as soon as he came back out. It would’ve been one thing if he was just looking over, but there was always something weird in his stare, and Chu Wanning got the distinct impression that he wanted to say something to him but kept stopping himself, and kept wavering between coming closer or not, making Chu Wanning’s skin prickle all over.

Chu Wanning washed for a bit, but then couldn’t take it anymore and decided to leave first.

But he had left his clothes at the entrance, and he’d have to go back that way to get dressed. Having no other option, Chu Wanning could only brace himself and, with his face sullen and his teeth gritted, walked toward where the man was standing.

But unexpectedly, as he was walking past in front of the man, not all that close from him but also not far enough, that guy suddenly started moving too, putting his long hair up and shaking the water from his fringe to follow Chu Wanning out of the bath.

The vein at Chu Wanning's temple throbbed. He started walking faster, but that guy was astoundingly shameless, and started walking faster as well.

Chu Wanning: "……"

The tips of his fingers had already begun to glow with the golden light of Tianwen, but he held back from summoning his weapon for the time being, not out of any concern about injuring someone, but solely because he felt that he should get dressed before beating anyone up.

So he picked up his speed even more.

This time, the man stopped instead of continuing to tail him.

Chu Wanning sighed in relief, but only managed to let out half his breath before he heard the man say from behind him, "There are… soap bubbles on your hair still."

"……"

"Aren't you gonna wash it off?"

The man approached slowly just as Chu Wanning was burning with anger, not stopping until he was very close, standing right behind him where his voice could be clearly heard.

If Chu Wanning hadn't been so furious right now, he would've been able to tell that the voice was somewhat familiar, despite the way it had changed. Unfortunately, he was currently engulfed by the flames of rage.

"You…" The man seemed to still have something else to say.

But Chu Wanning had reached the limits of his forbearance. He whipped around, golden light flashing to life in his hand as he lashed out toward the other with an audible whoosh , a dangerous glint in his eyes. Chu Wanning was so enraged that he almost wanted to just kill the guy and be done with it. "What the hell is wrong with you?!"

Tianwen cleaved through the hazy steam, snapping directly toward that person's chest.

For an instant, the golden glow lit up the man's face.

Chu Wanning saw a pair of eyes—clear, gentle, sheepish eyes that seemed to hold flowing rivers of stars within, like so many glimmering fireflies on the wind, yet were also tranquil as still waters running deep, veiling things bygone beneath.

…Mo Ran?!

He tried to pull back, but it was already too late, and the willow vine hissed as it struck Mo Ran's firm, smooth chest. Mo Ran let out only a stifled grunt, then lowered his head for a bit, and when he looked back up, there wasn't the slightest trace of anger or resentment in his eyes, but those eyes were a little wet, as if from the first rains of Lin'an.

Chu Wanning quickly recalled Tianwen and then stood there frozen in place.

A long while went by before he managed to say in a hoarse voice, "…Why didn't you dodge?"

Mo Ran replied, "Sh-Shizun…"

Chu Wanning was stunned. He had thought so many times about how the two of them might meet again, but never did he think it would be at Miaoyin Springs, in the hot spring pond. "What're you doing here? When did you get back?!"

"Just now," Mo Ran replied softly. "I got too dirty and unpresentable from rushing to get back, so I came here to take a bath before going to see Shizun, I didn't expect…"

"……" Chu Wanning was speechless.

Neither of them had expected something like this to happen.

They had both wanted their reunion to be proper and dignified.

Mo Ran had probably wanted to appear before Chu Wanning clean and well-dressed.

But in the end?

Not only was it not proper, it was straight-up laughable.

Not only was it not dignified, it was absolutely ridiculous.

Not only were they not well-dressed, they were completely naked.

They were clean though.

So clean they didn't even have a single thread of clothing on.

"Shizun, it's really…it's really you…" Mo Ran, for his part, didn't care much about these things. For five years, Chu Wanning had slept, and he had been awake; what was only the span of a dream to Chu Wanning had been more than a thousand torturous days to him.

His frame of mind was far more complicated than Chu Wanning's. Forcing down his overwhelming emotions, the rims of his eyes were a little red as he said, "It's been so long that I, just now…I didn't dare believe my eyes. I thought I might've had the wrong person, I thought…"

"……" Head ringing, Chu Wanning was at a loss for words. It was a long moment before he said, "...Why didn't you just ask me if you weren't sure? Instead of creeping after me silently like that."

“I did want to ask,” Mo Ran said softly, “but it’s been five years…and then to suddenly…see Shizun right in front of me, I thought…I thought I was dreaming…”

The more nervous as I get closer to home, I dare not ask even the passersby.[154]

What he felt, when he first saw his silhouette, was probably something like that.

He had already had such dreams too many times in the past five years; he was afraid that it was more of the same madness again, that he would wake up with tear stains on his pillow to find that the reunion was just another joyous delusion.

Chu Wanning forced a calm exterior, but his insides were a frantic mess. It was hard work, really, to speak with such stiff dryness though his heart felt all soft and gooey. “…What kind of dream would be this absurd.”

Mo Ran paused for a beat at Chu Wanning’s response, as if remembering something. He pressed his lips together as a light flickered in his eyes. He wasn’t originally going to bring this up as soon as they met again, but after a bit of hesitation, he decided that if he didn’t say it now, while Chu Wanning hadn’t yet had a chance to build up his walls, he probably wouldn’t get another chance later on.

So he spoke after a pause, “…Does Shizun not remember?”

“Remember what?”

Mo Ran’s eyes were deep and dark. “What you said to me before, that the most wonderful dreams are rarely ever real.”

“That was because…” Chu Wanning caught himself mid-sentence, suddenly realizing that those were the words he had spoken to Mo Ran at Jincheng Lake as he was saving him. He had said something so melancholic because of how miserable he’d felt back then, and he was a little surprised that Mo Ran could still remember it so easily even after this long.

But how did Mo Ran know that it had actually been him at Jincheng Lake? Had Shi Mei told him?

Chu Wanning lifted his eyes to look at him, only to see Mo Ran looking back at himself. Only then did he realize that Mo Ran didn’t actually know the truth, and was only saying that to see his reaction.

Mo Ran said softly, “So it really was Shizun, then.”

Chu Wanning: “……”

Mo Ran lifted his hand. His chest had been slashed open, and blood seeped from the wound. He smiled wryly. “I did a lot of thinking about the past during these last couple of years. I wanted to know just what Shizun had done for me. I thought about a lot of things that happened, including the illusion at Jincheng Lake——Shi Mei never calls me by name.”

He paused before continuing. “Those memories tormented me the more I thought about them; there were a lot of things I wanted to ask Shizun about once you’re awake.”

“……”

“But the thing I wanted to ask about the most was…Shizun, the one who saved me at the bottom of the lake back then, it was you, wasn’t it?”

Mo Ran walked closer as he spoke. Chu Wanning wanted to back away.

Because he suddenly noticed just how tall Mo Ran was, tall like a mountain, a powerful strength latent in every inch of his body. He suddenly noticed just how bright Mo Ran’s eyes were, like the very sun had fallen into those twin pools, all the colors of the sunrise splashing across those gleaming waters.

Chu Wanning found himself flustered for no reason whatsoever. He said, “It wasn’t me.”

Mo Ran didn’t buy it at all.

Chu Wanning scrambled to change the subject in a panic, grasping desperately at straws; but he was so startled, so nervous, and so discomfited, that he completely forgot that he had already asked the question just now, and Mo Ran had already answered it as well.

Looking at this person whose chest bore a gash inflicted by he himself, he said once more, “Why didn’t you dodge when I hurt you earlier?”

Mo Ran stilled for a second, then dropped his thick curtain of lashes with a smile.

“You said that dreams that were too good to be true probably weren’t.” And so he answered once more as well, pausing before continuing in a murmur, “I wanted to see if it would hurt. If it hurts, then it’s not a dream.”

He had walked over and now stood right in front of Chu Wanning.

Maybe it was because of how sudden the reunion had been, but the joy and fondness in his heart, the tenderness and the heartbreak overtook all else, but Mo Ran thought of nothing else, no flights of fancy. He even forgot to maintain a proper distance from Chu Wanning, a distance of propriety between a disciple and his master.

But he didn’t.

Whenever his emotions ran deep, he’d always think of the person before him as Wanning rather than Shizun.

Mo Ran’s eyes grew even more red and watery. He lifted an arm with a grin —“I think some water got in my eyes just now”—and wiped his face, along with his eyes.

Chu Wanning stared up at him in a daze. He’d been waiting for Mo Ran to come back this whole time, so he was a little more clear headed than Mo Ran right now, but the bit of clarity also afforded him enough presence of mind to notice the condition that the two of them were currently in—— talking face to face while standing there buck-naked. And not only that, but Mo Ran was so close to him that, if he were to come just a little bit closer,

he'd be able to wrap his arms around him the way he had back in the Underworld.

He didn't want to continue looking up at Mo Ran's unfairly handsome face, but when he dropped his gaze a couple inches lower, the sight that greeted him was that of broad shoulders and firm chest, the blood from Tianwen's strikes spreading slowly, and droplets of water that trembled minutely with every breath that Mo Ran drew. Chu Wanning couldn't even tell which was hotter, this sculpted chest or the heated water of the hot springs.

All he knew was that he was surrounded by Mo Ran's scent, and that it was going to steal his soul away.

"Shizun, I…"

I what?

But before Mo Ran could even really say anything yet, Chu Wanning abruptly turned around and took off running.

"……"

Mo Ran was flabbergasted.

He was quite literally running .

It was the first time he'd ever seen Chu Wanning flee in such a hurry, running away like there was something behind him that was gonna eat him alive and chew up his soul.

“I’ve really missed you so much.”

Mo Ran finished lamely where he stood, then pursed his lips.

What had he run away for…

Mo Ran felt a little wronged.

When he got out of the pond and saw Chu Wanning, whose face was alternating between red and blue as he scrambled frantically to get dressed, he felt even more wronged.

“Shizun,” he mumbled.

Chu Wanning ignored him.

“Shizun…”

Chu Wanning continued to ignore him while wrapping the belt sash around his waist.

“Shizunnnn…”

“ WHAT! ” Dressed at long last, Chu Wanning could finally let out a breath, feeling his dignity and composure return to his body now that it was covered.

His sword-straight brows slanted in anger, and his stern phoenix eyes glared fiercely at that traitorous disciple of his who dared to be taller than him.

“What’s so important that you can’t wait til we’re outside to say it!? Talking to me naked like that, have you no shame!”

A little chagrined, Mo Ran raised a fist to his lips and cleared his throat. "… It's not like I want to be naked."

"Then why aren't you getting dressed!"

"…" Mo Ran paused, looking away to stare at a peach tree on the side as he began, "…So, it's like this…"

He took a deep breath, and finally steeled himself to say:

"Shizun, those are my clothes you're wearing."

Done with that, a faint blush spread across Mo Ran's cheeks as he stared fixedly at a branch of peach blossoms swaying gently in the breeze.

Author's Notes:

Mini-theatre:

Many anonymous comments appeared on the Sisheng Peak chat forum today.

Anonymous user: Accidentally wore my disciple's clothes, what should I do? Urgent, I don't want to strip in front of him. Staying online to await replies.

Anonymous user A: Sent a pile of gifts, but they were all rejected by my male god, though he did accept my handicrafts. I want to know if it's because he treats me as an outsider, or if it's because he can't bear to see me spend money. I'm actually not poor, although my name isn't in the rankings, I can still afford the limited edition jujube pills produced by Hanlin Shengshou...why? Why does he not accept my gifts? I'm so troubled.

Anonymous user B: Ai, my emotions are somewhat complicated, he's returned.

Anonymous user C: Did the top stop spinning in the end? Is this real life or is this just a dream, which level of my dream is this? Don't mind me, I just wanted somewhere secure to vent.

Ch.129 Shizun, Do You Like What You See?

For a split second, chaos ensued in Chu Wanning's head like the churning of the seas, the lashing of torrential rains, the booming of thunder, the flashing of lightning, the darkening of clouds.

To take it off or to keep it on.

A most pivotal question.

Keeping it on seemed inappropriate, now that he knew he had put on the wrong clothes, and it wasn't like he could just pretend he hadn't heard what Mo Ran had said just now.

Taking it off…?

He couldn't possibly handle the embarrassment of it, to take off the clothes he'd finally put on, piece by piece, with Mo Ran right there .

A few moments passed in an awkward silence.

Mo Ran spoke up, "But I've washed those clothes very thoroughly, they're very clean, so if Shizun doesn't mind, then…please feel free to wear them."

Chu Wanning: "Mn."

Mo Ran let out a breath of relief. He'd always been a bit slow, and hadn't even realized when he'd spoken earlier that saying that when Chu Wanning was already mostly dressed would be nothing short of forcing Shizun to strip in front of him.

He was singed by just the tiny spark of that mental image.

Mo Ran's face burned even redder, but luckily he'd been out and about these last couple of years, and was no longer as tender-skinned as he used to be, so it wasn't too noticeable on his tanned skin the color of wheat. But his heartbeats felt too loud by half, and his conscience was terribly guilty and terribly afraid that Chu Wanning would hear it, so he hurriedly lowered his head to go pick up Chu Wanning's robes and clothe himself.

They looked at each other after both getting dressed, only to fall into a different kind of awkward silence.

It didn't fit.

Chu Wanning's robes were clearly too small for Mo Ran, not even folding over in the front, leaving it wide open to reveal a large expanse of firm, honey-colored chest. And too short, too; the way half his legs weren't even covered like he was flat broke was a sorry look, to be sure.

Chu Wanning's situation was no better, either; Mo Ran's robes draped over him, covering him to the toe and pooling on the ground, dragging behind him like a wisp of white mist. It looked fine and proper and all, but it also meant that he was now so much shorter than Mo Ran.

Chu Wanning was a bit affronted.

Expression sullen, he said, "Leaving."

As in, "I'm leaving."

But Mo Ran misunderstood and thought he was inviting him to go together, so he nodded and took the initiative to pick up his shizun's wooden washbin and change of clothes, and earnestly followed behind him.

Chu Wanning: “……”

The two of them got to the entrance of the baths and lifted the curtains. It was cooler outside, away from the hot springs, and Chu Wanning shivered at the autumn chill despite himself. Noticing, Mo Ran asked, “Are you cold?”

“No.”

But how could Mo Ran not know by now that it was just prideful words? So he said with a smile, “I’m a little cold,” and lifted a hand, gesturing in the air. With a flourish of his hand, a scarlet glow sprang from his palm to form a cold-warding barrier around the two of them. The barrier was beautiful, its radiance shimmering and flowing, with a scattering of flower motifs at the top.

Chu Wanning glanced up at it, expression unreadable. “Not bad, you’ve improved.”

“I’m still nowhere near Shizun’s level.”

“You’re not far off. My own cold-warding barriers are probably no better than this.” Chu Wanning gazed at the barrier for a while, and then, noticing the faint flowers, commented, “The peach blossoms are a nice touch.”

“They’re haitang blossoms.”

Chu Wanning’s heart tremored, sending ripples reflecting through the depths of his eyes.

Mo Ran continued, “Five petals.”

"……" Chu Wanning couldn't help the puff of laughter that escaped as he instinctively tried to hide the quivering in his eyes with feigned nonchalance. He said with a slightly mocking tone, "Copying me now, are we?"

But to his surprise, Mo Ran only looked at him with a pair of open, guileless eyes before nodding in response. "It's a poor imitation, I'm afraid."

Chu Wanning was left rather speechless.

They walked side by side in silence for a while, then Chu Wanning picked up his pace, not wanting to be right next to him like this. Behind him, Mo Ran suddenly asked, "Shizun, are you…mad that I didn't make it back in time for the banquet?"

"No."

"Really?"

"Why would I bother lying?"

"Then why are you walking so fast?"

Of course Chu Wanning wasn't going to say "Because you're too tall." He was silent for a moment, before he looked up at the sky and bluffed, "Because it looks like it's going to rain soon."

As if he'd jinxed it, drops of rain really did start falling from the overcast sky not long after, pitter-pattering into a curtain.

Mo Ran smiled.

His smile was every bit as lovely as it had been five years ago, but even more dazzling now for the newfound sincerity in it.

Chu Wanning glared at him. “What’s that stupid grin for.”

“Nothing.” Mo Ran’s dimples were deep and sweet.

The young man, tall and well-built, returned his gaze with downcast lashes and a docile, obedient demeanor completely free of overbearance.

He was even a little bashful as he said, “I’m just really happy to see Shizun again after so long.”

“……”

Chu Wanning stared at him, stared at the dimples in his cheek. He had once thought that those twin pools of sweetness would always belong to Shi Mingjing alone, but that turned out not to be the case—all he had to do to be allowed a jar of the sweetness for himself was to give up his life.

Chu Wanning scolded him, “Dummy.”

Mo Ran let his long, soft eyelashes droop, and grinned big and wide like a dummy.

Getting a little carried away in the moment, Mo Ran accidentally stepped on the hem he’d been so careful not to step on this whole time. With a stern expression, Chu Wanning looked at the ground and then at him, but said nothing.

Mo Ran was very straightforward. “The clothes are a little big on Shizun.”

“……” He sure did know exactly what not to say.

Mo Ran walked Chu Wanning all the way back to Red Lotus Pavilion. Truth be told, Chu Wanning found it to be a rather strange experience, since he'd always come and gone alone, and rarely ever had the occasion to share an umbrella with someone else, be it an oilpaper umbrella or a barrier one.

So, halfway there, he stopped walking and said, "I can do it myself, it's just a barrier."

Mo Ran was a little taken aback. "Wasn't everything going just fine? So why…"

"What kind of master makes their disciple hold the umbrella."

"But Shizun has done so much for me." Mo Ran said after a moment of silence, his voice low and quiet. "These last five years, I spent every single day hoping to be just a little bit better. Because Shizun is so capable and can do everything by himself, I wanted to be able to do just a little more than Shizun, so that I could be of use to Shizun, to repay Shizun. But even after all the training and studying I did, I still feel no closer. I'm afraid that I might never be able to repay Shizun's kindness, so that's why…"

He lowered his head, hand subconsciously clenching into a fist at his side.

The rainwater gathered into streaming rivulets on the ground, droplets splashing and rippling out like blooming flowers.

"That's why, from now on, just let me take care of the little things like holding the umbrella."

Chu Wanning said nothing, only watching him quietly.

"I want to hold an umbrella over Shizun for as long as I live."

“……” Chu Wanning felt a burning in his chest. It was such a heart-warming thing to hear, but he suddenly found himself wanting to cry instead.

He was someone who had gone through so much suffering and braved it all.

He was like a traveller who had walked for far too long, who had finally found shelter and could lie down for a rest.

Even his bones felt like they might fall apart as he collapsed.

This lifetime.

Mo Ran was twenty two this year. The saying went that time passed differently once someone was past twenty. Before twenty, a mere three or five years felt so long it could be called a lifetime.

But once past twenty, time would suddenly feel like a racing current, everything surging past in a rush with no return.

He said he would pause from the racing current to hold an umbrella over him.

Chu Wanning had so rarely received any kindness that, to have his chest suddenly flooded by tenderness like this, all he felt was pain instead. He stared at Mo Ran, stared at that person standing there with his head lowered, and suddenly said, “Mo Ran, look at me.”

He lifted his head.

Chu Wanning said, “Say that again.”

Mo Ran gazed at him. His face was still a bit unfamiliar-looking to Chu Wanning; it was different from the one in his memories, and different from the one in those absurd dreams he once had.

He was gentle, composed, and steadfast, with the warmth of fire and the firmness of iron as he met Chu Wanning's eyes with neither hesitation nor avoidance.

When Chu Wanning had looked at him for the last time, five years ago, he had still been just a growing boy.

In a blink, he had already grown into this handsome, confident man before him.

This man, who was dropping to one knee in front of him, looking up at him, and saying, "Shizun, I want to hold an umbrella over you for as long as I live."

Chu Wanning stared at him in a daze, stared at those dark eyebrows and that shapely jawline, stared at those bright eyes and that straight nose.

He had already grown into an impressive pine tree, had grown to his own height, and then overtaken him. One day, this tree that had stood in the wind and rain for so long, this tree that was Chu Wanning, suddenly woke up, blinked, and found that the rain had stopped, the clouds had dispersed, and in the soft light of the sun, there was another tree standing next to him that was even taller and steadier than he was, and when the wind rustled through the leaves, the sunlight filtering through sparkled like gold dust.

This tree said he wanted to stay by his side for a lifetime.

Until they both fell over, branches bare and withered. But until then, every season from now on, he would never be alone again.

As he stared at him, Chu Wanning was struck with the sudden realization that Mo Ran was no longer the bloodied, unconscious disciple he had carried back from Butterfly Town five years ago.

Standing there in the rain, under the haitang blossoms dancing atop the barrier, he looked at Mo Ran for the first time, thoroughly and carefully, looked at this man who was promising him a lifetime.

Chu Wanning's heartbeat abruptly began to race.

He suddenly noticed just how alluring Mo Ran looked now, everything from the arc of his nose to the shape of his lips, from the line of his jaw to the jut of his throat.

What he felt for Mo Ran before was only love, something that could be kept hidden. But after meeting him again today, this man felt like nothing short of a fire to him, a fire that could so easily set him ablaze like he was mere kindling, sending flames soaring up and scorching the very skies.

He felt the magma that had been lying dormant all this time stirring awake and stretching its limbs in the abyss deep within himself, ready to burst out in a violent eruption at any time.

The magma threatened to burn through the reservations, dignity, and self-control he had always prided himself on…

Threatened to burn it all to ash.

Until there was nothing left.

Author's Notes:

There are perks on Weibo today~

Thank you "Yuan Zi'er" for Shizun and Feeding Fish, the Shizun he first met under the flowering tree is especially gentle, and is probably Dog's first impression of this immortal- gege . The Shizun leaving under an umbrella is also so entrancing, I can stare at this picture for five minutes!!! Dog's bright smile makes my heart melt, really thankuwu so much~

Thank you "Firewood" for 0.5 Dog. I've just come to the flashbacks of right before 0.5 Dog's blackening in my saved drafts today, where he's already at the grey stage, and then I saw this picture and felt that it really had that feeling, like a good teenager heading down the path towards Taxian-Jun! There's still youth lingering on his brow and in his eyes, but there's already some danger and wickedness to his smile, ahahah , so dreamy[155] ~ thanks~

Thankieww Mr Chen for drawing "Bugui", Dog's weapon. Bugui is a Mo sabre (Mo Dao), I'll drop some information here, the Mo sabre is a type of Tang dynasty sabre, and actually looks a lot like a sword: long, and narrow. It's not a dagger, aihehe ~ It's also not a machete~~

Revamping the character info card

Mo Ran 2.0

Name: Feeding fish Weiyu

Posthumous title: ...I'm not dead!!!

Occupation: Emperor (reborn)...Oh, that's incorrect, I'm no longer an emperor in this lifetime, I'm an unemployed vagrant (the kind that specialises in doing good deeds)

Appearance in society: (strikethrough) Lei Feng[156] (strikethrough) Mo-zongshi

Currently likes: To see everyone living well without troubles

Favourite food: Wontons

Hates: The people by his side leaving him

Height: 189cm

Mo Ran 0.5 has something to say: What right does he have to be 3cm taller than me?

Meatbun: Oh, because he went through puberty differently. You spent your days researching the Zhenlong Chess Formation in a dark room, but he ran around under the sun to many places. So while you two are the same person, due to different environments later on in life, you're 3cm shorter. Sorry, Your Majesty, but you're no longer the tallest person in the novel now. *smiles*

Ch.130 Shizun, I've Crossed Five Years To Come See You

>>self harm

Chu Wanning's breathing was a little heavy, and his throat a little dry.

He refused to give in just like that, and opted instead for being difficult. Holding down the fire raging in his chest, he asked, mild as ever, "For as long as you live?"

"For as long as I live."

"…I might walk very fast, with no regard for you."

"That's alright, I'll chase after you."

"I might not want to walk anymore and just stand there."

"I'll stand with Shizun."

Agitated by his unhesitating answer, Chu Wanning swept his sleeves and said, "Then what if I just can't walk anymore?"

"Then I'll carry# you."

Chu Wanning: "……"

Mo Ran paused, realizing that that might have been a little disrespectful, rude even. Eyes widening, he hurriedly waved his hand and amended, "I'll carry you on my back."

Chu Wanning's heart beat faster and faster, and it took everything he had to hold back the urge to help this man up, to touch him. He furrowed his brows at this urge, looking anxious and a bit cross. "Who wants to be carried by you."

Mo Ran opened his mouth, but didn't know what to say.

His shizun was just difficult like that—didn't wanna be carried on his back or in his arms; it wasn't like he could carry him lifted up over his head, and he certainly couldn't drag him on the ground. He felt like he was too dumb to figure out how to make Chu Wanning happy.

At a loss, his head drooped, like an abandoned stray dog.

He muttered in a small voice, "Then I'll stop walking too."

"……"

"If you want to get rained on, then I'll keep you company through that too."

Chu Wanning was at his wit's end from this relentless onslaught. He was so used to doing everything by himself that he blurted out without thinking, "I don't want your company."

Mo Ran finally stopped talking. From where he was standing, Chu Wanning could only see his wide forehead, dark eyebrows, and a pair of long

eyelashes that were downcast and quivering slightly, like curtains rising and falling in the wind.

“Shizun…” Mo Ran had misunderstood the feelings behind Chu Wanning’s agitated refusal. He asked, “Are you still mad at me…?”

Drowning helplessly in the pounding of his own heart, Chu Wanning didn’t quite catch what he said, and so only replied, “What?”

“Back in the Underworld, I already apologized to Shizun, many, many times, but I know it’s not enough. I spent every moment of these past five years feeling guilty, I know I owe you.”

Chu Wanning: “……”

“I want to do better too, so that I won’t feel too dirty to stand before you, so that I’ll at least be able to lift my head in front of you. But I...I can’t catch up to you...every day when I wake up I worry if I was dreaming, that you’ll be gone if I were to wake up from the dream. I keep hearing the words you’d said at Jincheng Lake when you were saving me, that the most wonderful dreams are rarely ever real, and then I just…I just get so sad…”

Mo Ran’s voice grew a little hoarse.

He still had some things to say, but he didn’t want to say them. He didn’t feel like he had any right to keep talking about these things in front of Chu Wanning, didn’t have the heart to let Chu Wanning know what had happened in these last five years.

Sometimes...all alone in the Snow Valley, he couldn't tell what day it was, or even where he was. He'd prick himself with a needle then, again and again between the joints of his fingers. It hurt, but that was how he could tell that he was still conscious, still alive.

That was how he could tell that he wasn't still in his previous life, dreaming all of this up. That when he woke up it wouldn't be to a Sisheng Peak stripped of all familiarity, a Xue Meng with eyes full of hate, and a Rufeng Sect that had been demolished to the ground. That if he were to go to the Red Lotus Pavilion, he wouldn't see Chu Wanning lying there, looking as if he were still alive.

As if he were still alive, as if he were still alive.

Which words could hurt more than these.

It was strange, now that he thought about it—when he'd found out that Chu Wanning had died to save him, and when he'd gone down to the Underworld on that rescue mission, his heart had ached then, but not with the kind of irrepressible despair that he felt now.

But as time went by, day after day.

As it came closer and closer to the time for Chu Wanning's awakening, Mo Ran only felt the pain growing worse, like there was a knife cutting into his heart.

Maybe it was because he had too much time to think in those days he spent alone, or maybe it was because, during that time without Chu Wanning, he had tried so desperately, even hysterically, to imitate that person, to the extent that he wanted to tear himself apart entirely to reassemble into Chu Wanning's form.

Whatever the reason, many things that he had never really paid attention to or thought about, things that he had gradually forgotten, all of it resurfaced in his mind. Those things of the bygone past were like waterlogged shoals exposed in the wake of the retreating tide, and he stood all alone at the shore, but the waves were already gone.

He could see it all so clearly now.

He thought about the past life, surrounded by the beacons of war on all sides, at the end of his road.

Xue Meng had come to Sisheng Peak, and in a Wushan Palace changed beyond recognition, Xue Meng had interrogated him with tears in his eyes.

Demanded to know, why had he done this to his own shizun.

Xue Meng had tried to force him then, force him to turn back before death ——

He had said, Mo Ran.

T hink back properly. Let go of your vicious hatred. Look back.

He once trained you in cultivation and martial arts, and made sure to protect you.

He once taught you how to read and write, taught you poetry and painting.

He once learned how to cook just for you, even though he was so clumsy and got cuts all over his hands.

He once… He once waited every day for you to come home, all alone by himself, from nightfall...til the break of dawn...

Mo Ran hadn't listened back then, had refused to look.

Now he stood at the coast of fate, where the tide had receded, and when he looked down, there was a lost heart under his foot, a heart that had once been so good to him, so genuine to him that it had nearly driven itself to death.

But he had been so set in his ways that he had seen none of that as he'd trod it underfoot.

He had trod Chu Wanning's very heart underfoot just like that!

A chill ran through Mo Ran's body whenever he thought about it. What had he done…just what had he done ? Two lifetimes, sixteen years, had he ever repaid Chu Wanning's kindness? Had he ever, even just for one day, put Chu Wanning first in his heart?!

Damn beast!!!

Was his heart made of stone before? How else could it have not hurt?!

These past five years, how many times had he dreamt of Chu Wanning's return, in robes white as snow, looking just the way he'd used to.

When he woke, the pillow would be wet. And every single day he would say, Chu Wanning, Shizun, I'm sorry, I was wrong, I was wrong.

Every day he would say it, but it never lessened the guilt any.

Later on, when he'd seen the blooming flowers of spring, he would think of him, and when he'd seen the falling snows of winter, he would think of him as well.

Later on, every daybreak was golden like Chu Wanning's soul. Every nightfall was dark like Chu Wanning's eyes. Later on, every beam of white moonlight was like the snow on his sleeves, every rising sun was like the warmth in his eyes. Later on, he'd seen Chu Wanning's silhouette in the vermillion clouds by the horizon, in the cerulean light of dawn, in the surging, billowing clouds.

He was everywhere.

Because of this anguish and yearning that he'd felt, he'd gradually grown less resentful about being low-born, gradually felt less strongly about his nearly fanatical adoration of Shi Mei.

One day, outside Snow Valley, he had seen a snow-covered winter jasmine growing out of a crack in the wall.

He had gazed at it quietly for a while, thinking the same thing he always did. He had thought, ah, what a pretty flower, Shizun would definitely like it if he could see.

It had been such a cursory thought, about the simplest, most casual and unimportant little thing.

But between one breath and the next, all the sorrows that hadn't managed to drive him out of his mind and force him to his knees back when Chu Wanning had died suddenly rushed toward him all at once. The saying went that a thousand-mile long levee would be destroyed by mere ant tunnels—he broke down all of a sudden.

He bawled miserably, startling geese into flight from the depths of the valley. His cries were hoarse and ugly, a disgrace to the golden blossom that was blooming despite the snow.

It had been five years.

But he had never once forgiven himself.

"Shizun…sorry…I really tried my best to make it back in time today, and even had a present for you so that I wouldn't be empty-handed when I saw you…" The forced composure finally faded, the feigned ease finally collapsed.

Kneeling in front of Chu Wanning, Mo Ran finally fell apart; truth be told, it was only in front of Chu Wanning that the Mo Ran of today would let himself fall apart like this.

“I’m…still really stupid. I couldn’t even manage the first thing I promised you after your revival. It’s my fault.”

Chu Wanning could hardly bear to see him like this. He had always adored Mo Ran, and now that they had finally been reunited after such a long time apart, of course he didn’t have the heart to watch him be so miserable.

But hearing his words, Chu Wanning hesitated before asking, “Why didn’t you get back in time today?”

“There actually…was enough time to make it back. But I ran into some fiends making trouble at Butterfly Town, so I…”

“Got held up clearing them out?”

“Sorry.” Mo Ran kept his head down. “Not only did I get held up, but even the present I had prepared for Shizun got destroyed…and I also got blood splattered all over myself, so I rushed here to wash it off, only to…”

Chu Wanning could feel his heart going soft.

Mo-zongshi.

This Mo Ran was indeed nothing like how he used to be five years ago.

The Mo Ran of five years ago had been a selfish brat, but now he knew the weight of things. Chu Wanning wasn’t one to obsess over things like festivities and indulgences; in fact, if Mo Ran had seen the demon problem at Butterfly Town and had chosen to ignore it, Chu Wanning would’ve been furious with him. But looking at this man kneeling before himself now, all honesty and clumsiness as he asked for forgiveness, Chu Wanning instead found him to be so dumb it was kind of cute.

Chu Wanning stepped forward slowly, a warm feeling flowing in his heart. He reached out and was just about to help Mo Ran up when he heard him mutter, “Shizun, please don’t kick me out from the sect.”

Now it was Chu Wanning’s turn to be taken aback. He didn’t know the depth of Mo Ran’s guilt and remorse, so he hadn’t expected Mo Ran to say something like that. Hesitatingly, he said, “What…”

“Even if you don’t want me to stay with you or chase after you when it rains, even if you don’t want me to carry you, even if you don’t want any of that, even still, please don’t kick me out.”

Mo Ran finally lifted his head. Chu Wanning’s heart tremored.

He saw the faint redness in the rims of his eyes, and the way his eyes were a little watery.

Chu Wanning was usually firm and decisive, but now he found himself at a complete loss. “You… you’re twenty-two already, why are you still…”

He paused and let out a long sigh, then said, “Get up first.”

Lifting an arm to rub forcefully at his eyes, Mo Ran said stubbornly, “I’m not getting up if Shizun doesn’t want me.”

…Still a scoundrel, alright!

Chu Wanning could feel a headache coming on. Lips pressed into a thin line, he grabbed Mo Ran by the wrist and hauled him up.

But the moment the tips of his fingers made contact, all he could feel was the strength in those muscles and the heat of his skin. The firm body of this young man was also nothing like how it had been when he was younger.

Just one touch made Chu Wanning's heart pound right out of his chest, and he let go abruptly, caught off guard.

Luckily Mo Ran was currently too distraught to notice Chu Wanning's strange behavior. But Chu Wanning stared at his own hand in disbelief for a moment while bewilderment raged within.

Just what…was wrong with him?

Had the five years of slumber undone all the asceticism and reservations he had?

But then, looking up at Mo Ran with astonishment…

Or was it because this person in front of him had really changed too much, so much so that it made it hard for him to control himself?

Mo Ran worried his lip for a bit, then seemed to make up his mind to be obstinate about it, to be so obstinate that he couldn't even be kicked out. "Please don't kick me out, Shizun."

He made to kneel back down as he spoke.

How could Chu Wanning possibly risk having to help him up a second time? He hurriedly stopped him with a stern, "Don't you kneel again! I'll really toss you out if you do!"

"……" Mo Ran paused and blinked, and then suddenly figured it out. Eyes lighting up, he said, "Shizun, you aren't blaming me…you're not mad cause

I didn’t make it back for the banquet? You…”

Chu Wanning snapped, “Have I ever been that petty?”

Mo Ran excitedly tried to hug him. Chu Wanning was spooked to say the least, hastily taking a step back and scolding with a frown, “What do you think you’re doing? Where’s your propriety?”

“Ah.” Realizing his mistake, Mo Ran apologized in a hurry, “Sorry sorry, I forgot myself for a minute.”

The tips of Chu Wanning’s ears were bright red even as he tried to play it cool. “Already in your twenties and still don’t know your manners.”

The tips of Mo Ran’s ears turned red as well as he mumbled, “It was my bad.”

“It was my bad” was practically his catchphrase at this point. Hearing him say it, Chu Wanning felt a little mad, a little amused, a little pitying, and a little warm.

Eyelashes flickering upward, he secretly stole another glance at Mo Ran from the corners of his eyes.

He saw a tall, handsome man with sun-kissed skin; perhaps it was because of the lingering steam from the hot spring, or perhaps it was due to something else altogether, but his cheeks were a little flushed and a little warm, and he seemed to practically glow with the vibrancy of youth, so

bright as to vaporize the steam in the air, making that pair of dark, shining eyes seem all the brighter.

Ba-dump.

Chu Wanning felt his own heart thud against his ribcage, and the tips of his fingers felt as if they were on fire again, like earlier when he had touched Mo Ran. His throat was suddenly incredibly dry, and he dared not look at Mo Ran again as he muttered, “Idiot,” and turned to leave.

But the barrier above him didn’t even shift—Mo Ran really did chase after him, just like he had promised.

Chu Wanning dropped his eyelids and didn’t dare look back, well aware that he could no longer hide the love and desire in his eyes, just as it was impossible to cover up the burning at his fingertips.

He had finally ruined him.

This man had done everything that the Mo Ran of five years ago couldn’t, had taken his heart and drowned him in the ocean of lust#.

Henceforth Chu Wanning would be a mere mortal, with a body of flesh and a soul defenseless against desire, trapped in the web, unable to escape.

Author’s Notes:

Mini Theatre “Shizun’s Back-to-School Quiz”

Chu Wan Ning: Come, let’s play a round of Trivial Pursuit. Don’t worry, these are all easy questions you can score on.

Dog: Okokok!

Chu Wan Ning: How many petals does haitang have?

Dog: Five!

Chu Wan Ning: What species of haitang are the ones in Red Lotus Pavilion?

Dog: Midget crabapple!

Chu Wan Ning: Shi Mei’s height?

Dog: 183cm!

Chu Wan Ning: Xue Meng’s height?

Dog: Hahaha, 178cm.

Xue Meng: ...ffs, what’s so funny?

Chu Wan Ning: Your height?

Dog: Hahahahahahaha 189cm!

Xu Meng: Oh.

Chu Wan Ning: My height?

Mo Ran: 1…*cough*, 8.1m

Chu Wan Ning: Adequate, you passed the test, I won’t kick you out from under my tutelage.

Ch.131 Shizun Does Some Reading

That night, Chu Wanning lay in his bed in the Red Lotus Pavillion, tossing and turning, unable to fall asleep.

He was contemplating how Mo Ran had ended up growing into the man that he was now. Mo-zongshi, Mo Weiyu; all he could see when he closed his eyes were that man's handsome features, and those bright, steady eyes that held determination and tenderness both.

Chu Wanning cursed under his breath and vehemently kicked the quilt off the bed, then proceeded to starfish in bed while staring up at the roof beams with a tormented gaze.

He tried all that he could to get out from the ocean of lust, to cut off the threads of desire, tried until he was exhausted.

"Mo Weiyu, you bastard," he mumbled.

He turned his head away, but couldn't escape the thoughts. It was almost as if that hot, firm body from Miaoyin Springs was right in front of him still —he could see the broad shoulders, the defined contours of his back, and the way the water had slid slowly down along his v-cut abs when he'd turned around…

He jolted up from the bed, face ashen, and dared not finish that thought.

He grabbed the first book his hand came into contact with like it was a lifeline.

How unfortunate for Chu Wanning, to have led such a respectable life only to now be reduced to having to resort to books to distract from his inner

demons. He didn't even know which book he had grabbed out of all the ones that Xue Meng had bought, but the pages were covered in densely-packed rows of tiny writing. Chu Wanning's eyes glazed over the words without really taking anything in at first, and it wasn't until a while later that he suddenly realized just what it was he was reading.

On that thin paper was written a very neat line of words:

"Size Ranking of the Cultivation World's Young Heroes"

Chu Wanning knew the words individually, but they didn't make very much sense together.

Young Heroes…Size…Ranking?

What size?

Height?

Reading further, there was a side note in small writing: This observational ranking is not a comprehensive listing due to the fact that some of the young heroes never bathe outside or visit the pleasure districts. The following individuals are missing from the ranking: Nangong Si and Xu Shuanglin of Rufeng Sect, Jiang Xi of Guyue'ye, Xue Meng, Xie Fengya, and Chu Wanning of Sisheng Peak…

"……?"

Chu Wanning blinked.

What was that supposed to mean? Surely their heights were pretty obvious even without bathing outside or going to the pleasure districts?

And there was even a passing mention of himself...

He furrowed his brows and put his finger on the list to keep track as he read on, only to choke at the very first name on the list.

Mo Weiyu.

Status: Gongzi of Sisheng Peak, Mo-zongshi

Chu Wanning thought briefly about Mo Ran's figure. To be fair, he had gotten quite tall, but surely not so tall as to rank number one?

Reading on, it said: "Seen when bathing at Deyu Hall; an absolute unit, truly awe-inspiring."

"……"

Bathing at Deyu Hall…

Absolute unit…?

Something felt vaguely off to Chu Wanning, but he was really just too pure of mind, and couldn't figure out why exactly it felt off even after dwelling on it for quite a while, so he could only keep reading.

The person ranked second was a wandering cultivator he'd never heard of before, and written to the side was: "Seen when bathing in the forest; mighty."

“What even is this gibberish.” Chu Wanning was a little put-off. “It’s true that shoes and hairpieces could add to a person’s height, but it wouldn’t really be much of a difference, why go so far as to peek at people bathing? Why would this kind of trashy book would be so popular…”

Then he saw the third name——

Mei Hanxue

Status: Direct disciple of the Kunlun Taxue Palace sect leader

The text to the side was different this time; instead of “seen when bathing”, it was: “Measured by one of Chunying Pavilion’s girls and corroborated by a number of women from the cultivation world; Mei-gongzi’s endowment could leave a lady so pliant that her body would be as water and her bones as mud, and could also readily do ten people a night.”

Chu Wanning: “……”

A long moment passed in dead silence, then Yuheng Elder’s head exploded into a droning buzz. Face red-hot and gaze flickering, he flung the booklet across the room with great vigor like it was a hot potato, beyond incensed.

What did he just read?

What size?! Even if he was dense, he wasn’t that dense. What other size could it even be ?! Filthy! Shameless! Indecent! Disgraceful!!!!!!!

Still mad even after sitting in bed stiffly for a long while, Chu Wanning got out of bed and picked up the booklet just to explode it into a million tiny pieces with a pulse of spiritual energy from his fingertips…

But, like a glowing-hot branding iron, the words “absolute unit, truly awe-inspiring” had already been seared into his heart with a hiss, leaving his face flushed and his heart thundering.

He was a very proper, very upright person. Earlier at the Miaoyin Springs, he had very consciously kept his gaze up, without so much as a glance in the general direction of any place he wasn’t supposed to look at, and besides, all that steam made everything so fuzzy that he wouldn’t really have been able to see anything even if he had looked, anyway. But now this filthy book had managed to, in just a few words, paint the very image right in front of his eyes. And more than that, words often lent themselves even better to the vivid imaginations of the mind than pictures did.

Absolute unit…

Chu Wanning dragged his hands down his face, and then, after a long pause, grabbed the quilt and pulled it over his head.

It was only his first day out of seclusion, and he had already had the misfortune of suffering all that …Chu Wanning thought bitterly——the times sure had changed, he’d almost rather lie back down and go back to being dead!

But still, Yuheng Elder had always held himself to high standards, and so even though he barely got any sleep all night, and despite how aghast and unsettled he felt inside, he still got up on time the next day, got washed

and neatly dressed, and then drifted gracefully down from the southern summit of Sisheng Peak with an expression that was nothing short of dignified and restrained.

Today was the day for the sect's monthly assessment. The Platform of Sin and Virtue glinted with flickering light reflected off the light armor worn by the thousands of disciples going through their martial arts drills under the appraising gaze of the elders sitting at the high platforms above.

Though he had been gone for five whole years, Chu Wanning's seat was still right where it used to be, next to Xue Zhengyong, to the left.

He walked up the bluestone steps wearing white robes that dragged on the ground and a weary expression, took the empty seat with a sweep of those broad sleeves and then leisurely poured himself a cup of tea to sip on while watching.

Noting his sullen expression, Xue Zhengyong thought that Chu Wanning was mad over Mo Ran missing the banquet last night, so he leaned over and coaxed in a low voice, "Yuheng, Ran-er's back."

But contrary to expectation, all that earned him was a scowl twitching between Chu Wanning's brows and an even more sullen expression. "I know, I already saw him."

"Ah? Already saw him?" Xue Zhengyong nodded after a pause. "Great! So what do you think? He's changed quite a lot, eh?"

"Mn…"

Chu Wanning didn't exactly want to talk about Mo Ran, considering the fact that he had been cursed with the words "absolute unit, truly awe-inspiring" being repeated over and over and over in his head since yesterday, nor did he plan to look for Mo Ran in the sea of people below, so he looked down at the table.

"That's a lot of fruits and pastries."

Xue Zhengyong grinned. "You haven't had breakfast yet have you? Go ahead and eat up."

Not even bothering to hold back for decorum's sake, Chu Wanning picked up a lotus crisp# to eat with his warm tea. The lotus crisp had a nice pink gradient from the base of the petals to the tips, with a filling of red bean paste inside the crisp, flaky layers that carried the refreshing sweetness of osmanthus flowers.

"These taste like the work of Lin'an's Breeze Bakery…" Chu Wanning murmured, then turned to Xue Zhengyong to ask, "They weren't made by Mengpo Hall?"

"Nope, Ran-er brought these back just for you," Xue Zhengyong replied with a grin. "See, the other elders didn't get any."

"……" Only then did Chu Wanning finally realize that the wooden table in front of himself was the only one that was laden with all sorts of fruits and snacks, from pastries to sugared desserts. There was even a small porcelain

bowl the color of jade that, when he lifted the lid, turned out to be holding exactly three sweet tangyuan#.

Rather than the usual kind made with white glutinous rice, these tangyuan skins were mixed with the lotus root powder, a Lin'an specialty, so that they were clear and translucent, and the color of jade.

"Oh yeah, Ran-er borrowed the kitchen at Mengpo Hall this morning to make those. The red one's filling is rose and red bean paste, the yellow one is peanut sesame, and the green one's apparently got some fancy tea-based skin made with powdered Longjing tea. Interesting new things, these, too bad there isn't more…" Xue Zhengyong mumbled, "They're real fancy and all, but he spent all morning and only made the three."

Chu Wanning: "……"

"Yuheng, is that enough for you to eat?"

"Mn." Chu Wanning was quiet for a moment before nodding.

Actually, every time he ate tangyuan, he only ever ate three. The first was sweet, the second had a nice aftertaste, the third was enough, and a fourth would be too much.

It was a lucky coincidence that Mo Ran had just so happened to make exactly three, no more and no less, just the way he liked it.

Scooping up one of the adorably round lotus powder tangyuan in the porcelain spoon and holding it by his lips, Chu Wanning felt like it was just

the right size too, perfect for eating in one bite, unlike the ones Mengpo Hall made for the Lantern Festival, which were so big that they stuck to his mouth and took quite some effort to chew.

The person who had made the tangyuan seemed to know exactly how much his mouth could hold, the exact size the food needed to be in order to fit comfortably in his mouth, and even the gooey filling seemed to be mixed with untold intimacy.

The thought made Chu Wanning's heart flutter for some reason, right before it got squashed by shame and swept under a semblance of cool composure.

"He's a pretty good chef."

"Too bad he only made them for you, no one else gets any, not even this uncle of his." Xue Zhengyong sighed ruefully.

Chu Wanning said nothing, only pressed his lips lightly together as he listened, stirring idly at the soup in the bowl with the spoon. The tangyuan were all gone by now, the perfect amount of sweetness spreading out slowly in his heart.

Once done with the food, Chu Wanning paid no mind to the spirited drills down below, opting instead to pick up a book from the table to read about

the recent happenings at Sisheng Peak over the last five years.

These things were all managed by Xue Zhengyong, so they were simple and straight to the point, and Chu Wanning finished reading through it all in no time. He went to close the book, but then noticed another book under that one.

“What’s this…” He picked up the thread-bound book; it was very, very thick. Xue Zhengyong glanced over and said with a grin, “Another present from Ran-er. He was too embarrassed to give it to you personally ‘cause he accidentally got some blood on it while taking care of some fiends last night on his way home, and some pages got ripped too, so he asked me to put it on your table this morning.”

Chu Wanning nodded and flipped open the book, slender fingers trailing along the cover. On it was written, in a neat, straight script:

Dear Shizun .

His eyes opened fractionally wider in surprise.

Letters written to himself?

His heart suddenly felt like it had been singed by fire, hot and painful. He lifted his eyes to look for Mo Ran in the sea of people below, but saw only endless rows of glistening armor like light reflected off the scales of leaping fish.

Unable to find him, Chu Wanning could only turn back to the letters.

Mo Ran had missed his shizun for every single day of his seclusion. He had lots of things he wanted to say and worried that he wouldn't be able to remember it all, so he had a sturdy book made, a thick one with one thousand eight hundred and twenty five pages in total. For each day of the five years, he would write Shizun a letter about whatever happened, big or small, from the particularly gross-tasting leaf-wrapped sticky rice cake he had the misfortune of eating, to the insights he had gained from cultivation training that day, he wrote it all down.

He had originally planned it to have exactly one thousand eight hundred and twenty five pages, no more and no less, so that the day he finished writing the last page would be the day Shizun came out of seclusion.

But sometimes he couldn't stop writing, the words pouring out ardently in tiny handwriting squeezed onto the page, like it wanted nothing more than to show Chu Wanning the sea-buckthorn flowers of Outer Mongolia and the hazy fog surrounding Changbai Mountain as well, like it wanted nothing more than to tuck the delicious sweets tasted that day between the pages to share with Chu Wanning when he woke up.

The pages were lined with rows upon rows of the tiny writing. There was nothing too sentimental, nor did he include anything sad or upsetting, putting in writing only the happy, brilliant moments of the five years, setting down only the good to share with him.

And so the originally planned one page per day ran out, and he had to attach a thick stack of letters to the back of the book...

Chu Wanning flipped slowly through the book, his eyes a little wet.

He watched Mo Ran's handwriting go from childish to neat to elegant.

The ink on the most recent letter had not yet dried, while the earliest page had already turned yellow.

And on every letter, the words "Dear Shizun" were a little different. Slowly, gradually...from light and brisk to sure and steadfast.

Until, toward the end, it flowed like a painting yet could cut through metal, each confident stroke an art unto itself.

Flipping to the last page, Chu Wanning touched the words on the cover again.

Dear Shizun, Dear Shizun.

Looking at that neat handwriting, it was almost as if he could see the tip of Mo Ran's writing brush lifting from the paper, could see him setting it down before lifting his head, no longer the youth of the past.

From the first letter to the last, it was almost as if he could see Mo Ran growing up, from sixteen to twenty two, his figure becoming taller, his features growing defined.

And, every day without fail, he would sit down at the table and write a letter addressed to him.

“Shizun!!!”

Without him realizing, the drills had ended and there was someone calling for him. Chu Wanning looked up to see Xue Meng waving excitedly at him from the very front of the Platform of Sin and Virtue.

And next to Xue Meng, a tall man with broad shoulders, a narrow waist, and a pair of long legs stood quietly, his face flushed from the drills and a sheen of sweat covering his forehead, sleek as a panther’s coat under the sun.

Seeing that Chu Wanning was staring at him, Mo Ran paused and then broke into a smile. In the golden light of morning, his smile was bright and mesmerizing, like the gentle swaying of sun-bathed cypress. His eyes were filled with warmth, his lashes were dipped in gentleness, and that strong, spirited face seemed a little bashful, so vibrant and fiery as to steal one’s breath away.

How very handsome he was.

Keeping his expression carefully neutral, Chu Wanning crossed his arms where he was sitting on the high platform as he looked loftily down toward him. To anyone looking, he would appear cool and collected as usual, but little did they know that in truth, his thoughts were actually in utter chaos, his insides tied into a million knots of flustered panic.

Grinning amidst the crowd, Mo Ran suddenly lifted a hand and pointed at his own clothes, then at Chu Wanning.

“……” Not understanding, Chu Wanning narrowed his phoenix eyes and looked back at him in confusion.

Mo Ran grinned even wider, before cupping his hands around his lips and wordlessly mouthing something at him.

Chu Wanning: “?”

The morning breeze danced through gently rustling leaves. Mo Ran stifled an exasperated smile and shook his head, then tapped at the front of his own robes with a finger.

Chu Wanning looked down. A beat later, his ears suddenly turned red.

“……”

Under the guidance of his disciple, the esteemed and dignified Yuheng Elder finally realized that, this morning, in his hurry to get ready, and due to the mess of clothing heaped together at the Red Lotus Pavilion, he had unwittingly put on the robes he had accidentally “borrowed” from Mo Ran last night.

...No wonder it felt like there was something dragging on the ground behind him as he walked today! It was the hem of the robe!!!

Mo Weiyu, the nerve of you . Chu Wanning turned his face away in a huff. You tactless bastard, why do you only ever say exactly what you shouldn’t!

Author's Notes:

Mini-theatre: The Contents of Dog's Letter

If we speak of the ancients composing letters, "Letter to Yuanwei" alone is considered very grossly sentimental. I can't help but applaud Sir Bai Juyi and Sir Yuan Zhen's friendship, hahahaha.

Dog's letter isn't as sophisticated, and he won't know how to be as eloquent as Bai Juyi upon opening a scroll, like the sappy "Weizhi, Weizhi", or "our hearts as intimate as if they were bound together by glue". So what did Dog write?

"Selections from Dog's Letter"

The almond candy of Linyi is yummy but a little pricey half a kilogram costs forty copper coins but it is yummy yummy.

Pork stew with potatoes is very filling after one meal I won't get hungry during the night it is yummy yummy.

Accidentally mistook the honey in my qiankun pouch for oil and brushed it onto roasted chicken wings it is yummy yummy.

The fish grown in Quanzhou is really yummy, it is yummy yummy.

When Shizun wakes, let's eat these together!

Ch.132 Shizun and Shi Mei

>>dub/non-con flashback

In the evening, as the birds were returning to roost, so too did the disciples of Sisheng Peak make haste to Mengpo Hall after finishing their tasks for the day. Only Mo Ran stood still by the practice dummies, as if waiting for someone.

His relationship with Xue Meng had been much improved in recent years; there was much less animosity between them now, especially after Mo Ran had given him that top grade spiritual stone to be inset into his Longcheng blade. So Xue Meng turned to look toward him as he asked, “Aren’t you coming to dinner?”

“Not yet.”

Standing in the dusky light of the setting sun, Shi Mei was devastatingly beautiful, the afterglow making his skin look even fairer. Brushing back a strand of loose hair, he asked, “Is A-Ran waiting for Shizun?”

“Mhm.” Mo Ran had already seen him at morning practice earlier, and when he had worked together with Xue Meng to repair the Heavenly Rift that year, he had noticed that Shi Mei was just about to outgrow Xue Meng back then too.

But still, in this moment, with the sun setting in the west, the sight of him standing in front of Xue Meng still felt strange to Mo Ran. Of course he didn’t think that Shi Mei was bad-looking, it was just that…

He couldn't really put his finger on it. Mo Ran didn't know what kind of feeling it was, exactly; maybe he was just too used to the way Shi Mei's delicate figure had always been covered up behind Xue Meng before, so he'd never expected this kind of role reversal.

Mo Ran smiled at Shi Mei and said, "Since I missed the banquet yesterday, I wanted to invite Shizun for a meal down the mountain as an apology, so I won't be going to Mengpo Hall today. You guys are welcome to come too if you want."

Xue Meng and Shi Mei weren't used to eating together with Chu Wanning, so they looked at each other then left. Mo Ran had nothing else to do, so he crouched down on a large rock and plucked a foxtail grass to play with while waiting for Chu Wanning to come down the mountain.

The setting sun was already a dark crimson and the crescent moon was beginning to peek out from behind purple-red clouds when a person finally appeared on the bamboo footpath from the southern peak, walking slowly. That person had changed into a set of light robes in white, and was carrying a cloth bundle in hand. He paused for a beat upon seeing Mo Ran, and unease flashed briefly across his features.

"I was just about to go look for you for something…what are you doing here?"

"Waiting for Shizun to have dinner together." Mo Ran jumped off the rock as he replied, still holding the foxtail grass and beaming brightly. "There's a new restaurant at Wuchang Town, and I heard they have a famous chef

from the upper cultivation realm who makes really good pastries, so I wanted to invite Shizun to go try the place."

Chu Wanning looked him up and down mildly. "Not bad, got money to throw around now I see."

Mo Ran grinned and said nothing.

Chu Wanning hmph'd and tossed the cloth bundle at him. Catching it, Mo Ran asked, "What's this?"

"Your clothes," Chu Wanning replied as he walked past. Hurriedly catching up to walk side by side with him, Mo Ran said with a smile, "This robe's made of a pretty good fabric, light but warm. If Shizun likes it, I can have it altered down to be smaller and…"

"I don't wear secondhand clothes."

Mo Ran faltered before the embarrassment hit him. "That's not what I meant. I just...I saw Shizun wearing it this morning, so I thought Shizun liked it…that was thoughtless of me, I'll send someone to the store to have a new robe tailored."

Chu Wanning asked, "Do you even know what size I wear?"

Mo Ran thought to himself, how could he possibly not know Chu Wanning's size?

He could approximate the size of Chu Wanning's waist just by circling his arms, and he knew that if Chu Wanning stood on tiptoes, his chin would be at the height of his own shoulders. In the past, Chu Wanning couldn't help

but bite him in the throes of passion sometimes, leaving two rows of teeth marks by his collarbone that wouldn't fade for days.

Of course he knew the length of Chu Wanning's legs as well, legs that were so powerful as they wrestled, but so helpless when wrapped around his waist, slim calf muscles quivering slightly, smoothly rounded toes tightly curled…

And how could he possibly not know the exact width of Chu Wanning's shoulders, the full, plump curvature of his buttocks.

Chu Wanning, for his part, was pure as untainted snow and had no idea what he had just asked, thinking only that he had stumped his good disciple Mo Weiyu with this brilliant query of his.

Chu Wanning said with a sweep of his sleeves, "And how are you going to tailor anything without knowing the size?"

"……"

Mo Ran had nothing to say for himself.

It's not like he could say that he did know, that his mind had kept drifting off to the way Chu Wanning's figure had looked yesterday while he was making tangyuan earlier, strong and toned and well proportioned even in the steamy air of the Miaoyin Springs, looking just as amazing as he remembered.

And that his mind had wandered to Chu Wanning's thin, lightly-colored lips, had thought about the way those lips had looked, stretched painfully around his own girth in the past as he'd been forced to swallow him, the spasming of his throat as he'd gagged.

Mo Ran had closed his eyes, the jut of his throat bobbing as he'd mentally condemned himself a beast.

Respect him, cherish him, don't have any more improper thoughts toward him.

Respect him…respect him…

Two deep breaths later, he'd managed to suppress the burning arousal, but the tangyuan had ended up a bit too big, Shizun would probably find them sticky when eating, so he'd thrown them out and remade them, three dainty little ones this time. Mo Ran held them between his fingers contemplatively for a while, thought about those thin lips of Chu Wanning's parting slightly to take the sweet, sticky tangyuan into the soft warmth of his mouth…

And the curl of that tongue was like a searing flame, igniting all of Mo Ran's passions and desires, just about taking his life.

He even knew the exact size a sweet should be in order to fit into Chu Wanning's mouth, but Chu Wanning had actually asked him——asked if he knew what size clothing he wore.

The question lapped kittenishly at the inside of his chest.

Not daring to think any further, Mo Ran lowered his head and said, "Of course I'd ask Shizun for his size beforehand."

Finding it a little odd, Chu Wanning shot him a glance. "Did you catch a cold?"

"Nope."

“Then why is your voice so hoarse?”

“…Inflammation.#”

After a moment of blank staring, something seemed to occur to Chu Wanning, because he suddenly turned his face away, lips pressed into a thin line and gloom congregating between his brows, but the back of his ears were flushed pink.

The faint pinkness persisted all the way until they got to Wuchang Town and sat down in a room with a view inside the newly opened Zhongqiu Restaurant before finally fading away.

This was the first time Mo Ran had earnestly invited Chu Wanning out for a meal; although he’d done it before, those times had always been out of either necessity or exasperation, so the frame of mind was completely different.

The waiter steeped a pot of Lushan Mist and delivered some melon seeds and nuts before very respectfully taking out two menus written on bamboo scrolls to hand to the pair of cultivators from Sisheng Peak. Mo Ran flashed the waiter a smile as he took the scroll and said, “Thanks.”

Chu Wanning lifted his eyes slightly to glance at Mo Ran.

This person never used to have a habit of saying thanks before.

“Shizun can feel free to order whatever he likes, but I recommend their sweet and sour mandarin fish with pine nuts, which I heard is both tasty and well-presented.”

Chu Wanning nodded. “Then we’ll get that. You pick the rest.”

Mo Ran grinned. “I’ll order according to Shizun’s tastes then.”

Chu Wanning said mildly, “You know what kind of food I like?”

“…Mhm, I do.”

He’d always known, he’d just never bothered to remember before.

But from now on, he intended to never forget.

He was still looking at the bamboo scroll when the sound of footsteps came from the stairs, along with the tinkling of the bead curtain. Then he heard the waiter’s voice saying, “Ah, right this way sir, the sirs you’re looking for are in this room…yes yes yes, they haven’t ordered wine yet.”

The curtain of blue silk and agate beads was gently lifted by a smooth, fair-skinned hand.

A extraordinarily beautiful man with soft, inky black hair and a smile in his eyes that could chase the clouds from the sky appeared at the doorway carrying a pot of wine. Mo Ran turned around and was visibly caught off guard before saying, “Shi Mei? What are you doing here?”

“I ran into the Sect Leader at Mengpo Hall. He heard that the two of you were eating out here and was concerned that this restaurant wouldn’t have aged wine since they’ve just opened, and so sent me to deliver a pot of pear blossom white to go with your meal.” Shi Mei swung the wine pot dangling from his hand as he spoke; the cutely stocky pot was made of red clay and held in twined bamboo rattan, and the wine could be heard swishing inside with the movement, its sweet fragrance just about noticeable even through the sealing clay.

Shi Mei said with a smile, “Good thing I made it in time; it would’ve been a wasted trip if you’d already ordered drinks.”

Chu Wanning asked, “What about you? Have you eaten yet?”

“I’ll eat when I get back, Mengpo Hall will be open for a while yet, I have time.”

“You’re already here, so just stay.” Chu Wanning was a courteous person. “Have a seat and eat with us.”

“Uh…I shouldn’t put A-Ran to the expense.”

Mo Ran smiled and said, “What expense, it’s just a matter of adding a chair.” He had the waiter bring out another set of bowls and chopsticks as he spoke. This Zhongqiu Restaurant really was quite fancy—even the chopsticks used in the private rooms had threads of gold and silver inlaid into the tips, glittering and sparkling in the candle light.

Shi Mei took a seat and poured wine in luminous cups# for each of them, the rich aroma of the pear blossom white immediately permeating the air. It was a familiar scent; in the past life, Mo Ran had drunk it when Shi Mei had died, and again, all night on the rooftop, when Chu Wanning had died.

But they were both still alive now, and the calamity had already passed.

Mo Ran suddenly felt like all those things in the past, be it the possession or the affection, none of it really mattered anymore. What did matter was that the two best people in his life were still alive, and he could treat them to good food and good wine with the money he’d earned. This was enough.

These drinks shared were worth more than all the lands he'd owned in the past.

"Excuse me waiter, can we get an order each of mandarin fish with pine nuts, stewed crab meatball, pork trotter aspic, cherry ham, three delicacies soup, and steamed pork in bamboo leaf, all mild, and then poached fish in hot chili oil, mapo tofu, beef tripe in chili sauce, and kung pao chicken, as spicy as you make them. For dimsum we'll have shrimp dumplings, steamed spareribs and taro with soy sauce, golden tripe with scallop, and chicken feet in soy sauce.# And for dessert…" Mo Ran glanced at Chu Wanning and closed the menu. "We'll have one of each."

Without even looking up, Chu Wanning said, "We can't finish all that."

Mo Ran insisted, "We'll just take the rest back."

"It'll get cold."

"…We can have Mengpo Hall heat it up."

Chu Wanning didn't feel like wasting any more breath on him—Mo Ran was acting like one of those merchants that struck gold and got rich overnight, way too extravagant—so he opened his own menu, looked it over, and said, "Just one order of kidney bean rolls, one order of leaf-wrapped sticky rice cake, and three bowls of tangyuan with sweet red bean paste filling, thank you."

The dishes were quickly brought out one after the other. Shi Mei liked spicy food, Chu Wanning couldn't take even a hint of spice, so Mo Ran arranged the dishes separately, with half the table being light and refreshing, the other half bright red and scrumptious, the colors complementing one another in a surprisingly appealing way.

“Here comes the last one, our signature dish, mandarin fish with pine nuts ——”

With the waiter’s announcement, a plate of vibrantly colored and delicious-smelling mandarin fish in a thick stew was carried over by a pair of attendants. The fish looked like it weighed at least five catties, fried to a golden crisp and plated in an enormous, sky-blue porcelain dish. The fish was cut into flower-like slices of even thickness, with a thick, richly red sweet and sour sauce poured on top, and topped with a sprinkling of emerald peas, pieces of Yunnan ham, and translucent shrimp. Just the sight of the dish could make one’s eyes twinkle and mouth water.

Chu Wanning liked sweet things, especially sweet and sour things. Although his expression remained neutral as ever when the fish was brought out, even he couldn’t keep the twinkle from his eyes.

Mo Ran caught the twinkle.

The waiter glanced at the table, and seeing that there was some space in front of Shi Mei, went to rearrange the plates so as to make room for the fish there.

But a pair of hands faster than his beat him to rearranging the table. Standing up, Mo Ran moved a couple of the meat dishes that Chu Wanning wasn’t eating much from to his own side of the table, then put a few of the tasty and spicy dishes in front of Shi Mei, leaving an empty space in front of Chu Wanning. Mo Ran grinned at the waiter and said, “Go ahead and put the fish there.”

“Alrighty then!”

The waiter was all smiles, more than happy to have customers that would help make room on the table themselves, and immediately took the plate from the attendants to set down in the open spot before leaving with a bow.

The rearrangement had been done so naturally that anybody looking would only think that Mo Ran was just helping the waiter out, but Shi Mei had noticed the hidden bias. Somewhat surprised by the gesture, lights flickered across Shi Mei's eyes for a long moment before he lowered them, looking a little upset.

Shi Mei felt that Mo Ran, having returned after being away for five years, not only looked completely different, but even the special attention that he once gave him seemed to have faded away a great deal.

He liked mandarin fish with pine nuts too, so why did Mo Ran put it so far away from him? Did he not know? Or…

Or did he no longer feel the way he used to.

Shi Mei well knew his own worth. His looks and his temper were both better than Chu Wanning's; in fact, very few people in the entire cultivation world were even in his league in terms of looks.

But right now, he suddenly felt a little uncertain.

He knew that, despite Mo Ran's fickle and flirtatious behavior in his youth, acting as if he cared only about pretty looks, in truth it was all an act, and that, to Mo Ran, the most precious thing was in fact the genuine sentiments beneath.

If someone were to give him a tael of copper, he would repay them with one thousand gold.

Now that the bitterness born of past misunderstandings between him and Shizun had been dispelled, Chu Wanning's kindness to Mo Ran was not something he could compare to. The thought brought a sudden chill to Shi Mei's heart, and he snapped his head up to look at the other two's faces under the candle light.

One was drinking wine with his head lowered and his expression mild, phoenix eyes molten as water, lashes soft as mist.

And the other was smiling as he watched the former, cheek propped up in one hand and eyes reflecting the candle light. The reflection of that light held the snow of early spring layered upon an open balcony, pear blossoms blooming under clear moonlight. And the fluttering of those eyelashes was as ripples spreading across the mirror surface of a lake, sweeping across glittering stars untold with feelings that were probably unknown to even the owner of the eyes himself.

In his moment of distraction, Shi Mei accidentally touched his chopsticks with his elbow, sending them clattering to the floor. He snapped out of it and bent down to pick them up with a muttered apology.

But then paused when he'd leaned over.

The chopsticks had landed right next to Mo Ran's boots, faintly reflective as they laid there quietly, waiting to be picked up.

He could've just asked the waiter for another pair, but Shi Mei never liked bothering others; or perhaps, faced with such a downfall, even the most mild-tempered and laid back person would feel a little bit unresigned, a little bit at a loss. Or maybe it was nothing so complicated—after all, a person's actions really were just a matter of a passing thought sometimes.

In this moment, the opportunity just so happened to present itself, and Shi Mei really did want to know just how much Mo Ran still even cared for him now...and so, after a few moments of hesitation, he made up his mind and lowered his head, reaching out with a fair, slender hand to go pick up the chopsticks by Mo Ran's feet.

The chopsticks had fallen too close, and it was completely natural and unavoidable that the back of Shi Mei's hand would brush against Mo Ran's lower leg as he retrieved them.

Author's Notes:

《When I'm Rich》

Mo Ran: Look at the main novel.

Chu Wan Ning: Impossible, I spend a lot on buying various materials for machines and mechanisms, I cannot possibly have much money.

Ye Wangxi: It is merely an external possession. As long as one has enough to use, it is adequate. Donate the rest.

Mei Hanxue: Buy accessories, woo chicks.

Nangong Si: Do you think that being wealthy makes you happy? None of you understand the pain of a rich person like me at all.

Xue Meng: When I’m rich, the first person I want to destroy is this dumb fool above. I am very willing to experience your pain, come, give me your vaults.

Ch.133 Shizun Has the Purest Mind

>>sex of the dubcon variety

Mo Ran was just taking a sip of the pear blossom white when he suddenly felt something brush against his leg. He instinctively tried to move his leg away, but the contact became even more evident before he could, practically pressing against him as it grazed past.

Caught off guard, for a moment he couldn't even process what had just happened, until Shi Mei sat back up, and he saw the light pink flush on that beautiful face, the way he had his lips pressed into a thin line and his brows lowered as if there was something on his mind. Only then did Mo Ran suddenly realize——

Just now, was that…?

Mo Ran choked and burst into a violent coughing fit.

In his mind, Shi Mei had always been as the untrodden snow in the spring, the new moon atop the branch, to be gazed upon appreciatively from a distance and not to be frivolously touched in any way. But although he loved Shi Mei to death, and in fact would happily die for him, he'd rarely ever had any dirty thoughts about him, much less did anything of the sort in real life.

Had this pure, untainted person just...felt him up?

The thought shocked Mo Ran to the core, and he shook like a rattle drum#, horrified. Chu Wanning noticed and asked with a frown, "What's wrong with you?"

“Nothing!”

And right in front of Shizun too! ...Surely not?!

Th-that didn’t seem like something Shi Mei would do…

Mo Ran’s expression grew more complicated by the second; but rather than it being an awed surprise, it was more like an awful surprise.

After a long moment spent calming his nerves, he heard Shi Mei call out lightly, “Waiter, excuse me, these chopsticks got dirty, can I trouble you for a new pair?”

The waiter came as called and left to fetch a replacement. Mo Ran turned his head nervously, only to come face to face with Shi Mei’s gentle, mild expression and the same calm gaze as always, as if he had imagined the bashful blush earlier. Sensing the eyes on him, Shi Mei lifted his own peach blossom eyes to look back at Mo Ran with a subtle, barely-there smile.

“What is it?”

“Nothing, nothing.”

Shi Mei said, “The chopsticks landed at an inconvenient place, right by your foot.”

“Ohh…” Mo Ran let out a breath of relief as he felt his heart settle back into place. He was overthinking things after all. He was going to chitchat with Shi Mei some more to ease the atmosphere, but Shi Mei had already turned away and stood up to ladle out soup.

Still feeling rather bad about the misgivings he had just now, Mo Ran said, “Here, let me help.”

“That’s alright, I got it.”

Shi Mei pulled back his sleeve as he spoke and calmly started ladling out the three delicacies soup for himself.

Mo Ran had put the soup there, close to Chu Wanning, far from Shi Mei. It had seemed okay enough at first while sitting, but now that he had to stand up to reach, it really became apparent just how far away the soup was from him—he practically had to stretch his arm all the way out just to reach it from the other side of the table.

One ladle, two ladles, slow and leisurely.

Mo Ran: “……”

Shi Mei said nothing when he met Mo Ran’s uneasy gaze, only smiled slightly before looking back down to continue ladling out his soup.

Feeling a bit awkward, Mo Ran waited for Shi Mei to finish ladling, then asked Chu Wanning if he wanted the soup. Chu Wanning said no, so he moved it to the middle of the table, not too close or too far from anyone, just right.

His esteemed teacher and his favorite person.

There shouldn’t have been any bias in the first place.

Partway through the meal, Shi Mei suddenly said, “A-Ran, you’ve really grown up a lot, and you’re no longer that disciple who used to make Shizun angry all the time. So since we’re all here today, there’s something I want to tell you, and an apology I want to make to Shizun.”

Seeing how serious Shi Mei was being, Mo Ran gave him his full attention. “What is it?”

“Do you remember the first time I brought you wontons?” Shi Mei said. “That bowl of wontons wasn’t made by me, I never was any good at making those, it was…”

Mo Ran smiled. “Oh, that. And here I was worried it was something serious. I already knew, a long time ago.”

“Ah, you already…?” Shi Mei’s pretty eyes opened wide in surprise, then he turned to look at Chu Wanning, who was minding his own business drinking his wine. “Did Shizun tell you?”

“Nope, saw it for myself right before going to the Underworld.” Mo Ran was just about to say more when Chu Wanning suddenly put down his wine cup, cleared his throat, and shot him a glance with a cool, stern expression.

Mo Ran knew that he had a thin face and didn’t want others to know about his soft underbelly, so he said to Shi Mei, “Anyway, I found out about the whole thing five years ago already. It’s kind of a long story, so let’s not go into it.”

Shi Mei nodded. “That’s just as well.” Then he turned to Chu Wanning to say, “Shizun, back then, when you didn’t want to take the wontons to A-Ran yourself and had me do it instead, I didn’t think much of it at first. But then, watching the misunderstanding between you two deepen over time, I felt terrible about it and was going to find an opportunity to clear it up with A-Ran, but every time I tried, the words never came out…I was being selfish, to be honest, because aside from the young master, A-Ran is my

only close friend at Sisheng Peak, and I was afraid that he'd be unhappy if he found out, so…"

"It's fine, I did say not to tell him. You did nothing wrong."

"Still, I feel really bad about it, because it's like I took credit for Shizun's kindness. Shizun, I'm sorry." Shi Mei dropped his gaze as he spoke, and then a moment later, added, "A-Ran, I'm sorry as well."

Mo Ran had never blamed Shi Mei for that; even though his initial fondness for him was due to the mix-up with Chu Wanning's wontons, Shi Mei had also been genuinely good to him afterwards. Not to mention the fact that Shi Mei had only been doing what Chu Wanning had asked of him, not intentionally trying to take credit.

Mo Ran said in a hurry, "Nonono, don't worry about it, it's all in the past already anyway…"

He stared at Shi Mei in the light of the candle. It was a face he'd never seen before in the past life, because Shi Mei had already died by then, his life cut short, wilted before it could bloom, and became the sorrow of his lifetime.

He didn't even get the chance to find out that, ah, so this is what Shi Mei would've looked like if he'd lived to be twenty four.

Tall and slender, with a face that was fair as jade and a pair of warm peach blossom eyes that were clear and glistening, he looked so gentle that even his anger would probably be soft and mellow.

His tightly clenched heart relaxed by degrees and he secretly let out a sigh of relief, suddenly feeling very giddy, his heart feeling warm and settled.

Compared to Shi Mei when he was nineteen, this twenty four year old Shi Mei felt a little like a stranger, no longer so intimate and familiar as they used to be. Maybe this unfamiliarity was the very reason that a thought so ridiculous as “Shi Mei was feeling up his leg” would even pass his mind, but Mo Ran was sure that he’d get used to it in time…and, as for the matter of romantic sentiments, he didn’t want to force it anymore—whatever happened would happen.

He had wandered about for five years, hardly leaving a trail the whole time, and still had a couple of close calls. He didn’t know if the fake Gouchen had a hand in any of those incidents, but the fact was that the person behind it all had neither revealed themselves nor been caught. Mo Ran was sure that there would be trouble down the line, and he knew better than to let his guard down.

He was going to keep the two people beside him safe and sound, even if it cost him his life.

And so Mo Ran set his heart at ease for now, but little did he know that the inner demon never rests, turning to another as soon as it relented its grasp on him.

Maybe it was because of how much he had eaten at dinner, but Chu Wanning got sleepy soon after getting back. He had originally planned to work through the night to finish the blueprint for the new mechanism he was designing, but he only managed to get halfway through it before the yawns hit him. He tried to keep going for a while longer, but eventually gave in and, blinking sleepily, plonked into bed and passed out without even changing out of his clothes.

It was a hazy sleep, and he dreamed of all kinds of nonsense.

First it was that “Size Ranking of the Cultivation World’s Young Heroes”, then it was that firm, toned body he’d seen at the Miaoyin Springs.

In the dim light of the candle, Chu Wanning’s brows twitched into a frown, as if trying to free himself from this shameless dream, only to inadvertently sink deeper into it instead...

And then, he had that dream again, the same one from before.

A Sisheng Peak that looked nothing like the one he knew, a Loyalty Hall that was and yet wasn’t.

And a grown-up Mo Weiyu who was grasping him by the jaw, looking at him with venomous, mocking eyes as he said obscene things to him.

He said, “Let me fuck you and I’ll agree to your terms.”

This Mo Weiyu was a bit different from the Mo Ran he knew—his expression was too crazed, his handsome face was too pale, and his skin wasn’t tanned the color of wheat.

“Get down on your knees… and suck me off…”

The disjointed words came in fragments from the depths of the nightmare, and it felt like there was something in his head that was just about to break apart, just about to break free of its chains and charge toward him.

He felt a chill run down his back, yet also for some reason felt inexplicably flustered.

In his dream, he watched as Mo Ran closed in on him and tore at his clothing, the sound of the fabric ripping clearer than it ever had been before. Then it all went black, like he was sinking into morasses.

The dream cut off there, the same way it had countless times before.

Except that, before, once the dream ended, he was able to sleep peacefully the rest of the night with no further disturbances. But today, for some reason, his vision gradually lit up again after that dream had ended.

Chu Wanning tried to see, but the new dream was so hazy it was like looking through a layer of mist. He couldn't quite see his surroundings, only that it was scarlet everywhere.

He couldn't see clearly, but his sense of smell and sense of touch gradually came back as the dream went on, became more acute than usual, even. He was suddenly assailed by an indescribably heated arousal, and he saw a toned body moving above himself, pressing down against him and rocking. Startled, Chu Wanning instinctively tried to struggle, but it was as if his body didn't belong to him at all, but to the him of the dream.

He could feel himself trembling, and he could hear the man's rough breathing, the hot puffs of breath against his ear, lips that kept brushing against the lobe of his ear time and again but did not kiss him there nor take his earlobe in to suck.

He turned his head; he was lying on a large, soft bed that creaked and rocked with their movements, and he could smell the musky scent of a beast pelt that seemed to be spread across the bed. He tried to reach out with a hand and grasp the bedcover amidst the vague fuzziness of it all, but didn't have the strength to move.

The man was so vicious, holding nothing back like he wanted to tear him apart. He heard a moan ripped from his own throat, hoarse and strangled.

He shook his head desperately, trying to struggle free, but that person had so much strength, as if he could crush him in his hand. Chu Wanning felt numbness spread across his scalp as his entire body shook uncontrollably…

Maybe it was because the dream had been too realistic and too draining, but Chu Wanning slept all the way until noon the next day before waking up, and then spent a long while just lying there in bed staring off into space. And when he turned his head, it was almost as if he could still smell the scent of the beast pelt from that dream, musky and sweet.

But then he blinked, and he was back in his black sandalwood bed in the Red Lotus Pavilion, and everything was perfectly fine, with nothing out of the ordinary.

Except…

Chu Wanning froze, then slowly looked down at himself.

"……"

Yuheng Elder, who rarely ever had any physical reactions after the years spent practicing asceticism due to his cultivation method, discovered that he actually… shamefully… had… morning… wood……

Did all his years of ascetic training get eaten by a dog or something?!

And those dreams last night——what the hell was that? Why did he dream of such absurd things! How…how did it even happen?

Surely not from just seeing Mo Ran's body that one time at the Miaoyin Springs and then accidentally reading that trashy book with the "truly awe-inspiring" garbage?

Chu Wanning's entire face darkened. He buried his face in his hands and rubbed vigorously at it, but it was still just as dark when he looked back up.

……

Just what was wrong with him?

Chu Wanning pressed his lips together and was just about to go have a soak in the cold lotus pond to cool himself off, but his toes hadn't even touched the ground when he felt a ripple in the barrier of the Red Lotus Pavilion.

He had a visitor.

Chu Wanning immediately paled and yanked the quilt over to cover up his lower half. That person walked fast too, probably using light footwork. He heard two knocks at the door.

"Shizun, are you up yet?"

The voice sounded just like the one in his dream, except the one in his dream had been deeper and throatier, steeped in a fervent, bottomless lust.

But the voice outside the door now was gentle and respectful, even a little worried, probably because of how late Chu Wanning had slept in.

The sound of that voice seemed to smash through the wall between dream and reality as Chu Wanning leaned against the bed, clutching the quilt to himself. The voice of that person outside brought back the entanglement in the dream and the intense motions one by one, rousing passions into turbulent tides, making it even harder for him to calm himself.

He was just about to lie back down and pretend to be sleeping when he heard Mo Ran say from the outside, “Shizun, are you in there? I’m coming in if you don’t mind.”

I’m coming in...

It was such a simple, normal phrase, but it made Chu Wanning think of the way that man had lain atop himself in the dream, lips closing and parting, the way that masculine body had felt so hot he was sure he was going to get burnt.

That person had said between pants, “Relax, I’m coming in.”

Chu Wanning’s face burned red-hot; he sat in bed in a daze with his clothes in a disheveled mess and a fire burning him up from the inside. There was ferocity and denial in his eyes, but they were like the gravel at the shoal, with sharp points that could ward people off in the bitter cold of winter, but once the snow melted in the spring and the tide rose, washing over the jagged edges with flowing, glimmering water, they no longer seemed half so threatening.

He’d rarely ever been so mortified and helpless, and had practically never felt such intense desire before.

Chu Wanning sat there in a dazed stupor, only snapping out of it when Mo Ran pushed the door open to come inside, but by then it was already far too late to feign sleep.

And so the sight that greeted Mo Ran when he walked in the door was that of Chu Wanning sitting in bed, the inky black hair draped loosely about him a sharp contrast against his face like the radiant surface of a frozen lake under the sun. His eyes and brows looked even more stern than usual, and

when he lifted his eyes, the look that he directed his way was like the cold light reflected off the frosty edge of a blade drawn just a bit.

But there was a touch of red at the corners of his eyes, and so the cold light was tinged with allure and the ferocity was weaved with chagrin, as if he'd just suffered at someone's hands, had unspeakable things done to him, his eyes filled with indignation and a glassy hint of wetness.

Mo Ran's breathing abruptly slowed down as he stared wordlessly at Chu Wanning, this man who was like a tender bud growing out of a thorny thicket. He felt like a heavy rock had been dropped into his chest, sending waves splashing high…

Author's Notes:

Yesterday, an adorable cutie said that Shi- meimei picking up the chopstick was like Ximen Qing flirting with Pan Jinlian#, so the question is: is Shizun Granny Wang, or is he Wu Dalang?

Mini Theatre "How Atrocious Can The Title Of This Novel Get":

"Jinlian And His Dalang Shizun"

"I Fell In Love With My Little Wolfdog - Granny Chu's Autobiography"

"The Plum in The Golden Vase and Those Things That Happened Between Dalang and Jinlian"

"The reformed slutty wife Jin Buhuan"#

“The Handsome and Charismatic Chu Dalang”

Ch.134 Shizun Sure Can Eat

Mo Ran said nothing for a long moment; only the jut at his throat bobbed slightly.

It was as if he was drowning in torrential desire, clinging desperately to a piece of driftwood to keep himself afloat as he thought in a stutter:

R-respect and cherish him.

Respect as in respect and cherish, cherish as in respect and cherish. Do not defile, do not harm, do not have any unnecessary feelings, and definitely do not do anything like those outrageous things he had done in the past life to humiliate Shizun.

The inside of his chest burning like hot lava, Mo Ran had to repeat the sentence in his head four, five times before finally gathering enough of his wits to walk into the room with feigned composure and greet Chu Wanning with a smile.

“Shizun, so you were in after all...why didn’t you say something?”

“Just woke up,” Chu Wanning replied dryly.

The dryness was no joke—his throat was dry, and his desire too, so much so that a single stray spark just might set off an uncontrollable blaze.

Mo Ran was holding a five-layered, heavy-looking bamboo meal box in his hands. He thought about putting it on the table, but one glance and he could see the mess of files, drills, mortise-tenon joint parts, nails, and all manners of blueprints scattered all over the tabletop. With no other option, he could only carry the box over to Chu Wanning’s bed.

Chu Wanning seemed even more irritable than usual this morning, looking visibly agitated as he glanced at Mo Ran and snapped with a frown, “What do you want?”

“Shizun woke up pretty late. There’s not much food left at Mengpo Hall now, and I had nothing else to do, so I made breakfast to share with Shizun.”

He opened the box as he spoke and began to take out its contents one by one. The topmost level held a plate of sauteed mushrooms, next was a plate of tender, stir-fried celtuce stem, then silk thread rolls and honey glazed sweet lotus root, and on the very bottom was two bowls of rice, each grain full and translucent, as well as a bowl of bamboo shoot and ham soup.

Two bowls of rice…

Chu Wanning was a little speechless—did Mo Ran really think that he was this much of a glutton?

“The table is a bit messy…does Shizun want to eat in bed, or should I clean the table up and move the food over?”

Of course Chu Wanning didn’t like eating in bed, but the quilt was the only thing hiding his yet-to-subside arousal from view. He wavered between poise and dignity for a moment, then firmly chose the latter.

“There’s too many things on the table, it’ll take too long to clean up. Here is fine.”

Mo Ran nodded with a smile. “Okay.”

He really had to admit that Mo Ran was very skilled at cooking. He was already quite the good cook five years ago, and now, five years later, he was easily better than most ordinary chefs. Not only that, but Mo Ran also somehow knew his tastes very well—he knew that he didn't really like to eat congee in the morning, made sure to pick straw mushrooms for the mushroom dish, stuffed the silk thread rolls with sweet potato rather than bean paste, used only the tenderest tip portions of the bamboo shoots, and chose a cut of ham with a nice amount of fat, red and white interspersed like dusky clouds by the horizon…

Mo Ran had never asked him what he liked to eat, yet he had made everything just right, as if they'd already lived together for many years.

Chu Wanning was quite delighted with the food—he maintained his collected composure, but his chopsticks never stopped moving for even a moment. When he finished the last bit of the soup and looked up, he saw Mo Ran sitting at the edge of the bed with one foot on the cross bar of a chair next to the bed, cheek propped up in one hand as he watched him with a faint smile.

"What is it?" Chu Wanning subconsciously took out a handkerchief to wipe his mouth. "Is there something on my face…"

"Nope," Mo Ran said, "I'm just happy that Shizun liked the food."

"....." Feeling a little uneasy, Chu Wanning said in a mild tone, "It was good, but there was too much rice. One bowl will do, next time."

Mo Ran seemed like he was about to say something, but in the end decided not to, opting instead to grin at him, revealing a row of neat, pearly teeth.

“Got it.”

What a dummy, so careful and meticulous about serious things, but ridiculously careless when it came to the normal day-to-day things, completely not noticing that there were two pairs of chopsticks at the bottom of the box.

He ate two people’s worth of food all by himself, then turned around to tell him that there was too much food, that he’s a bit stuffed...

The more Mo Ran thought about it the funnier it became, until he couldn’t help putting his hand to his brow and letting his eyelashes droop down as they quivered with laughter.

“What’s so funny?”

“Nothing nothing.” Mo Ran didn’t want to embarrass him—his shizun valued his image above all else, after all—so he changed the subject to offer him an out. “Shizun, I just remembered something that I forgot to talk to you about yesterday.”

“What is it?”

“On my way back, I heard that Great Master Huaizui left the day before you came out of seclusion.”

“Mn, correct.”

“So you didn’t even see him after waking up, right?”

“I did not.”

Mo Ran let out a sigh and said, “Then it’s not a matter of Shizun being discourteous at all. I overheard people on the outside saying that Shizun didn’t have any manners, that Great Master Huaizui had spent the last five years to bring Shizun back to life and didn’t even get a thanks for his trouble. But the Great Master himself left first, and it’d be totally unreasonable to expect Shizun to run over to Wubei Temple as soon as he wakes up to kneel outside shedding tears of gratitude or something. Those mouthy people are really annoying, so now that we’ve cleared that up, I’ll have Uncle address it at tomorrow’s morning assembly——”

Chu Wanning suddenly interjected, “No need.”

“Why not?”

“...The Great Master and I have long since burned our bridges,” Chu Wanning said. “I wouldn’t have thanked him even if he was still here when I woke up.”

Mo Ran was taken aback for a moment. “How come? I know that Shizun chose to leave the temple of his own volition and had already severed his master-disciple relation with Great Master Huaizui then, but he still came to Shizun’s rescue at his time of need, and…”

But Chu Wanning interrupted before he could finish. “Things between him and I are hard to explain, nor do I care to talk about them. If people want to call me a cold-blooded, ungrateful person with no conscience, then let them. It’s only the truth.”

Mo Ran fretted, “How is that the truth? You’re clearly——you’re clearly not that kind of person!”

Chu Wanning's head snapped up and his expression abruptly iced over, blood pouring like a dragon touched on its inverse scale#.

"Mo Ran," He said suddenly, "Just what do you even know about me?"

"I——"

He looked at Chu Wanning's bright eyes, at the frosty cold inside; here was a man who never let his guard down, who always kept his distance.

For a moment, he wanted nothing more than to disregard all consequences and say, I know, I know a lot of things about you, I understand, and even if there are some things from your past that I don't know about, I'm willing to listen, to share the burden with you. Don't just keep everything to yourself, under all those locks, behind all those walls. Aren't you tired? Isn't it hard for you?

But what right did he have to say any of that?

He was his disciple. Be not impetuous. Be not irreverent.

In the end, Mo Ran said nothing.

A moment passed in silence, and Chu Wanning's tense frame, taunt like a bowstring, finally began to relax by degrees. He sighed, as if drained, and said, "People are not saints, and little can be done against fate. There are certain things that can't be changed even if you want to. Never mind, don't bring up Master Huaizui to me anymore. You can leave, I'm going to change."

"...Yes." Mo Ran drooped his head and quietly collected the meal box. But just when he got to the door, he suddenly spoke up, "Shizun, you're not mad at me, are you?"

Chu Wanning shot him a glare. “Why would I be mad at you?”

Mo Ran beamed brightly. “That’s good, that’s good. Then can I come again tomorrow?”

“Suit yourself.”

He paused before suddenly remembering something and adding, “In the future, there’s no need to say things like ‘I’m coming in’ to me.”

Mo Ran blinked. “Why not?”

“You’re going to come in anyway! So what’s the point in saying something like that?!” Chu Wanning was getting all worked up again, but whether it was at Mo Ran’s untimely bout of purity or at his own uselessly reddened face was anyone’s guess.

Chu Wanning didn’t get out of bed until after Mo Ran had left, all confused. Not even bothering with shoes, he walked barefoot to the bookcase and took out a bamboo scroll, unrolled it, and stared at the words written there with an unreadable expression for a long, silent moment.

Huaizui had left the bamboo scroll at his pillow side before leaving. A spell on the scroll prevented anyone other than Chu Wanning from opening it. The writing on it was neat and straight, and read, “Confidential. For Chu-gongzi only”.

His own teacher calling hm Chu-gongzi.

Ridiculous.

The letter was neither too long nor too short. It went over some things that Chu Wanning should be mindful of after waking up, before going into great

length “entreating” him for one thing.

Great Master Huaizui asked that he absolutely go to meet him at Longxue# Mountain near Wubei Temple after he has recovered. He had written, in earnest terms, that he was getting on in years and would not be long for the world, that he felt immense guilt over certain things of the past.

“This old monk hopes to speak with you before his passing. You still carry that old injury, and hearing that the adverse effects of the injury cause you to have to go into seclusion for ten days every seven years, this old monk feels truly remorseful. If you would be willing to come to Longxue Mountain, it can be healed. However, the healing spell is quite risky, so you must also bring along a disciple of dual wood and fire elemental to stabilize the array.”

Old injury… Longxue Mountain...

Brows furrowed deep, Chu Wanning’s fingers nearly dug into his palm.

Healed? How? How could something that has been destroyed, been lost, and those one hundred sixty four days spent at Longxue Mountain, how could any of that ever be recovered?

Just how masterly did Huaizui think he was, that he could level out a scar this deep?!

His eyes snapped open as golden light cracked in his palm, the letter written on sturdy Xiangfei bamboo shattering instantly into powder in his hand and scattering away into the air.

Never again would he set so much as a single foot into Wubei Temple for as long as he lived.

Nor would he refer to Huaizui as Shizun ever again.

In the blink of an eye, it was already the fourth day since Chu Wanning came out of seclusion. Xue Zhengyong had called him to Loyalty Hall on this day and handed him a letter of commission. He shook open the letter and read the few simple lines written on it.

Chu Wanning lifted his gaze and said, “I think you gave me the wrong one.”

“Huh?” Xue Zhengyong took the letter and read over it again himself, then replied, “Nope, this is the one.”

“.....” Chu Wanning narrowed his eyes. “It says to help with the farming at Yuliang# Village.”

“Do you not know how?”

“.....”

Xue Zhengyong’s eyes went wide. “Wait, you seriously don’t know how?!”

Backed into a corner by the string of questions, Chu Wanning seethed. “Isn’t there anything more normal, putting down demons and whatnot?”

Xue Zhengyong said, “Y’know, things have been pretty peaceful lately, so there actually aren’t any places being troubled by demons right now. Aiyah it’ll be fine, Ran-er’s going with you anyway, you can just sit to the side and take it easy while he does all the hard work if you want, harvesting some rice and threshing some millet’s no big deal to the young and spry anyway.”

Chu Wanning’s inky black brows were furrowed so deep. “Since when did Sisheng Peak start taking odd jobs like these?”

“...Since always? Like when Granny Wang’s cat gets stuck in a tree at Wuchang Town and Shi Mei goes to get it down. It’s just that there were usually more hard-to-handle issues before, so I never bothered you with any of the simpler ones,” Xue Zhengyong said. “Besides, didn’t you only just wake up? I was actually gonna send someone else, but I thought you’d be bored just sitting around.”

“But even then I don’t...want to harvest rice.” Chu Wanning narrowly avoided blurting out that he “didn’t know how to harvest rice”.

Xue Zhengyong insisted, “Like I said, Ran-er will be there to help you out, so just take it as a leisure trip to relax and stroll around a bit.”

“Can I not relax and stroll around just fine without taking an assignment?”

“I mean, I guess.” Xue Zhengyong scratched his head. “But Yuliang Village is pretty close to Butterfly Town, with that Heavenly Rift that Ran-er patched up last time. He’s not you, after all, so why don’t you check on it while you’re there and see if there’s any parts that need reinforcing?”

Only then did Chu Wanning finally see a need for him to go, so he took the letter without another word and turned to leave Loyalty Hall.

Author’s Notes:

Congratulations, players, you have entered the new instance dungeon “If I Can’t Blueball You To Death, Consider It My Defeat”.

Dog and Shizun are about to embark on an instance dungeon of unprecedented low difficulty, and the wingwoman# is about to come online to deal this dumb dog the final blow, so that he can accelerate his revelation of what love is, ah, fuck!! Die of stupidity, I don’t care!!!

I will maintain my principle of “If I can’t blueball you little vixens to death, I’ll perform ‘swallowing a bite of durian’ on the spot”. In this raid, there’s no actual smut, but I’m driving fake cars all around; hope everyone’s happy reading the fake smut~ hahaha~

Ch.135 Shizun Learns Sneakily

Yuliang Village was a tiny village, and most of its villagers were on the older side, with very few young people, so every year when it got to be the busy season in farming, they would ask the cultivators at Sisheng Peak for help.

Some request like this, that has absolutely nothing to do with cultivation, would've gone totally ignored at any other sect, but Xue Zhengyong and his older brother had started Sisheng Peak from scratch, and had gone through their share of hardships when they were young—rumor had it that, growing up, they had to rely on charity to fill their stomach#. Thus, not only did he not have it in himself to refuse such requests from the old tenant farmers, he would take them very seriously, sending disciples to properly fulfill the requests each and every time.

The village wasn't exactly far from Sisheng Peak, but neither was it close, a middling distance that would be too inconvenient to walk and too pretentious to ride a carriage for.

So Xue Zhengyong had two good horses prepared for them. It was late autumn, the foliage were turning their fall colors, and when Chu Wanning came down the stairs to the main gate, the sight that greeted him was that of Mo Ran standing beneath a tall maple tree, its bright red, frost-adorned leaves rustling in the wind like the sheen of fine brocade, like the splashing of red carps.

Mo Ran had the reins of a black horse in hand while a white horse nuzzled his cheek, and was in the middle of teasing them with a tuft of alfalfa flowers when he heard the sound of footsteps approaching. A few pieces

of red leaves fluttered down just as he turned to look over his shoulder, beaming brightly up from between dancing leaves.

“Shizun.”

Chu Wanning’s footsteps slowed, then came to a stop on the last couple of steps.

Sunlight filtered through the luxuriant leaves to fall on the moss-covered stone steps. He stared at the man standing there, not far away; maybe because they were setting off to do farm work, but Mo Ran wasn’t wearing Sisheng Peak’s disciple uniform today, nor was he wearing those white robes from when he first got back.

Instead, he had on a set of black raiments with wrapped wristguards, a simple getup that accentuated his slim waist, long legs, and broad shoulders. It was a good figure, especially around the torso area, where the open collar revealed a firm, toned chest the color of honey, rising and falling with each breath.

If Xue Meng’s getup with the sparkling silver armor was showy like a peacock fanning its tail feathers, then this look of Mo Ran’s was sultry, an innocent kind of sultry, an unmeaning kind of sultry—that was to say, it gave off an air of “I’m a decent, honest person, I’ve never teased or provoked in my life, and the only thing I know is honest hard work.”

“.....” Chu Wanning looked him up and down several times before opening his mouth to say, “Mo Ran.”

“Hm? What is it, Shizun?” The strapping young man replied with a smile.

Chu Wanning's face was deadpan. "Aren't you cold, with your collars open that wide?"

After the initial surprise had passed, Mo Ran came to the conclusion that Shizun was expressing concern for himself and felt all giddy about it. He put the alfalfa back into the hay basket for the horses, dusted his hands off, and bounded up the bluestone steps to stand charmingly in front of Chu Wanning, and then to proceeded to grab Chu Wanning by the wrist before he could even react.

"Not cold at all, I'm actually kinda hot right now from rushing about all morning." He grinned guilelessly as he pressed Chu Wanning's hand against his own chest. "See, Shizun?"

It felt scalding.

The young man's chest was hot to the touch, and together with that strong heartbeat and that pair of star-bright eyes, Chu Wanning could feel his entire back going numb. He hurriedly ripped his hand away as his face sank.

"Indecent."

"Ah...is it sweaty?" But Mo Ran misunderstood. As things stood, he thought that Chu Wanning wasn't into men—their entanglement in the past life had all been due to his own unreasonable coercion, after all—so he didn't think that Chu Wanning would have any interest in himself, thus Shizun must be annoyed at his sweatiness.

Remembering Chu Wanning's love of cleanliness and dislike of touching people, Mo Ran felt embarrassed, scratching his head as he said, "That was thoughtless of me…"

If he had looked closely, he would've seen the blush at the base of Chu Wanning's elegant neck, and the glimmer of affection beneath those coolly drooped lashes.

But he had missed that singular instant of opening, and Chu Wanning wasn't going to give him another. His snow white shoes walked down the slippery bluestone steps, headed directly for the black horse, mounting it in a single graceful motion that was smooth as flowing waters.

With the sunlight illuminating the land and red autumn leaves as far as the eye could see, the white-robed man sitting atop the large black horse glanced down over his shoulder at the disciple of his standing on the ground, his face like cool jade giving off an air of loftiness, ever the sharp and handsome Yuheng Elder.

"I'm off. Keep up."

And with that, those long legs clamped about the horse and it set off in a gallop.

Mo Ran stood rooted to the ground in a daze for a while, then picked up the bamboo basket, still half-full with the alfalfa flowers he was in the middle of feeding the horses with, and tied it to the white horse's saddle before leaping up himself, caught between laughter and tears. "But Shizun, the black horse is mine, don't just… Shizun! Wait for me!"

Galloping on swift horses, they arrived at Yuliang Village within the hour.

A few hectares of rice paddies# stretched out along the outside of the village, waves rolling through the fields of golden grain in the breeze. Some thirty-odd farmers were toiling away in the paddies. Due to the shortage of hands, everybody, young and old alike, were working the fields, backs bent

low and trouser legs rolled up as they swung their sickles, large beads of sweat dripping off their faces with the exertion.

Mo Ran immediately went to find the village chief and hand him the letter, then changed into a pair of hemp shoes and headed for the fields without further ado. He had plenty of strength and stamina both, and was a cultivator to boot, so something like reaping crops was nothing to him, and it only took him less than half the day to harvest two whole rows of rice.

With the golden ears of rice piling up on the side of the paddy fields, soaking up the sunlight, the sweet scent of grains wafted through the air. The rustling sound of the farmers' sickles could be heard throughout the plateaus, and sitting at the ridge between the paddy fields, a maiden leisurely sang a farming song as she gathered the grains.

"The sun setting behind a mountain shines like a red flower, painting all four mountains red oh~ red like peonies. A red fan to sing my love song, a hydrangea to ask my loverboy, I tug at loverboy's belt, just when are you coming? Today I have no time, tomorrow I have to chop firewood, the day after I can come over."

The farmer girl casually sang these coy lyrics in that soft little tune, the words drifting in the air, landing in the listeners' hearts.

"Today—I have no time, tomorrow I have to chop firewood, the day after—I can come over."

Chu Wanning did not go to work in the fields, sitting under a tree drinking from a jar of hot water instead. His eyes followed that black-clothed, hard-working silhouette in the distance as he listened to the song, his thoughts

all over the place, so much so that the water he swallowed seemed to flow into his chest rather than his stomach, making it feel all hot.

“What an obscene song,” he commented coldly when he finished the water, then went to return the ceramic jar to the village chief.

The village chief stared at him with hesitation.

Chu Wanning asked irritably, “What is it?”

“...Is xianjun...not going to work the fields?” The old village chief was a straightforward kind of person, and answered the question he was asked in a shaky, wizened voice, white beard trembling and white brows creased. “Is xianjun...just here to oversee things?”

“.....”

Chu Wanning had never felt this put on the spot before in his life.

Work the fields...

Didn’t Xue Zhengyong say he could just sit on the side and watch Mo Ran do all the work? Does he actually have to work too?

...But he didn’t know how!!!

But the old village chief was staring at him like he still had more to say, and even the couple of little kids and old women nearby heard the exchange and looked up to stare at this immaculately dressed man.

Children hold nothing back, and a little kid with his hair in buns asked crisply, “Granny granny, this daozhang-gege is wearing all white, how is he going to do any work in the fields?”

“His sleeves are so wide…” Another kid murmured.

“And his shoes are so clean…”

Chu Wanning was on pins and needles with how awkward he felt. He stood there for a bit, but his thin face really couldn’t keep lounging around after that, so he grabbed a sickle and waded into the paddy field without even taking his shoes off, the slippery, muddy swamp clinging to his feet immediately and the sitting water coming up past his ankles. Chu Wanning gingerly took two steps, frowning at the slippery feeling, then tried swinging the sickle a couple of times, but it was fumbling at best, as he knew nothing of the technique.

“...Pfft, this daozhang-gege sure is clumsy.” A pair of little kids had seen his attempts from under the mulberry tree, laughing at him with their cheeks propped up in their hands.

Chu Wanning: “.....”

Face darkening and not wanting to be near these people for even a moment longer, Chu Wanning summoned all the poise he had in him to keep his handsome face straight and his pace calm and steady as he waded through the mud in great big strides toward the figure that was busily cutting rice in the distance.

He was going to go sneakily observe how Mo Ran was doing it.

The saying went that one could always learn from others; he was going to learn it sneakily.

When it came to farming, Mo Ran was clearly more skilled than Chu Wanning. He was bent over under the blazing sun, each swing of his sickle

reaping clumps of golden rice that fell softly and obediently into his waiting embrace, which he held with one arm until he'd gathered a large armful before tossing into the bamboo basket behind him.

He was so absorbed in the task that he didn't even notice Chu Wanning's approach, eyelashes drooped gently down as he continued to work diligently, a vague shadow cast by his straight nose as a bead of sweat trickled down the side of his cheek. There was a feral kind of scent coming from his body, scorching yet wild, muted yet fervent. Under the sunlight, his skin was like red-hot steel, as if having just come out of the casting pool, still crackling with sparks and hissing with steam with how blindingly bright it seemed, how beautifully brilliant.

Standing a distance away but not too close, Chu Wanning appreciated the view for a while before abruptly realizing just what it was he was doing. He furrowed his brows, shook his head, and mumbled something, then continued wading forward with a straight face.

He was going to learn, sneakily!

He was here to see just how Mo Ran was holding the sickle and just what kind of angle he was swinging it at, to find out why the rice that was stiff as iron wires in his own hands were pliant as boneless maidens in Mo Ran's, falling so willingly and eagerly into his arms.

Chu Wanning was so focused on staring that he didn't even notice the frog by his foot until it leaped up with a loud "Ribbit!" and hopped off toward the ridge.

Caught by surprise, Chu Wanning hurriedly pulled his leg back, but the paddy field was too slippery and he was too unprepared, and so it was that

the great Yuheng Elder tipped forward, on track for a direct faceplant into the muddy paddy field, all because of a single brazen frog!

Woosh!

With his face just about to meet the mud, Chu Wanning had no time to cast anything, and could only reflexively reach out to grab at the hard-working person in front.

The village maiden's singing sounded even more coy. " I tug at loverboy's belt —— just when are you coming ——"

As his luck would have it, Chu Wanning ended up grabbing onto Mo Ran's belt and stumbling forward a few steps, before falling against a broad chest that was hot to the touch and smelled of masculine musk and finding himself wrapped in a pair of strong, solid arms.

Author's Notes:

Wingwoman: I've already come online in this chapter, really.

Mo Ran: ...Erm...are you that frog?

Wingwoman: Goodbye.

T/N meatbun? Hewwo? Is this an abo? Be straight with us Is This An A/B/O,,,,,,

Ch.136 Shizun, Relax

>>noncon mention

Mo Ran was minding his own business reaping rice when he suddenly felt a hand from behind pulling his belt down. Quite the shocking feeling, really.

Turning around to see that it was Chu Wanning, who was about to fall over, was even more shocking.

Mo Ran hurriedly threw the sickle aside to support him, but it was such a bad fall that Chu Wanning was practically already halfway on the ground, and a hand in support wouldn't help any, so he had no choice but to hold him up with both arms. That person dressed in floating white robes and smelling faintly of the fragrance of haitang blossoms landed solidly against his chest, and Mo Ran reflexively closed his arms around him in an embrace, the ears of rice previously occupying his arms scattering all over the ground.

"Shizun, what are you doing here?" He asked, not yet recovered from the shock. "You scared me."

Chu Wanning: "....."

"The paddy field is slippery to walk in, be careful."

The person in his arms didn't look up or say anything, feeling so awkward that he couldn't even form any words. But the village maiden continued warbling mercilessly, " I tug at~ loverboy's belt~ hey~ just when are you coming ~"

As if struck by lightning, Chu Wanning abruptly let go of Mo Ran's belt and stood back up on his own feet. He took a breath before suddenly shoving Mo Ran away, and although his expression might pass for calm, his eyes were frightfully bright, like rolling waves catching the sunlight, obviously flustered but still forcefully faking composure.

"....." Mo Ran suddenly noticed that his earlobes were red.

It was a pretty color, a light pinkness in the skin like tender peaches at the tips of branches. He suddenly thought of the way those earlobes had tasted in his mouth as he sucked on them in the previous lifetime, the way Chu Wanning had trembled slightly every time he had done that, the way that, despite the utmost unwillingness, his steel-boned body had gone soft and pliant in his arms.

Mo Ran swallowed, his gaze unconsciously growing deep and dark…

But Chu Wanning was absolutely livid—though it was uncertain whom at—snarling between gritted teeth, "What are you staring for! What is there to look at!!"

Jolting back to reality, Mo Ran's blood ran cold.

Beast!

Just what despicable things had he done to Shizun out of his own selfish desire in the past? Shizun was so proud, how could he possibly accept being taken like that? Not only that, but such a dispassionate person as him probably didn't even feel any desire whatsoever to start with, so how dare he even think about these deplorable things again!

Mo Ran shook his head over and over again like a rattle drum.

Chu Wanning snapped, “What are you shaking your head for! Having fun?!”

“.....” Mo Ran immediately stopped shaking his head, but secretly snuck a glance.

Chu Wanning was clearly embarrassed, but trying to cover it up with this mask called anger as he was wont to do. Now that he was looking closely, it really wasn’t difficult to tell from his eyes.

He was probably just embarrassed that he had tripped over in front of his own disciple, and due to a ribbiting frog at that.

How cute.

Mo Ran couldn’t help chuckling at the thought.

But the chuckling only made Chu Wanning even angrier, his brows slanting in fury as he flew into a rage. “What are you laughing at?! So what if I don’t know how to do farming things, what’s so funny about that!!”

“Nothing, nothing funny, nope.” Mo Ran coaxed as he tucked his smile away and straightened his face into a serious expression, though he couldn’t hide the smile in his eyes, bright and shining with amusement.

After a few moments of holding in his laughter, and just as it seemed like this matter was about to be dismissed, the frog that had hopped over to the ridge between the paddy fields puffed out its cheeks and croaked out two more self-righteous ribbits, as if in a show of force.

Mo Ran fumbled his self-control, tried to turn his face away and cough into his fist to cover it up.

But he fumbled that too, and let out a “pfft” of laughter.

“……” Chu Wanning was really going to lose it, dragging his muddied robes behind him as he made for the ridge in a rage, but then he heard Mo Ran call out for him.

There was hardly any distance between the two of them; normally, Mo Ran would’ve just reached out and grabbed him—but he didn’t, because he could still feel Chu Wanning’s warmth against his chest, could still smell the scent of haitang from Chu Wanning’s robes.

His heart felt all mushy like it was about to melt.

But he didn’t dare allow his heart to melt. This person in front of him was so good, he wanted to treasure him, to cherish him, to revere him as he would a god. He didn’t want to hurt him any more with his own vulgarity.

So he only called out to him, “Shizun.”

“What, not done laughing yet?” Chu Wanning glared at him out of the corners of his eyes.

Mo Ran’s dimples were filled not with mocking, but gentleness. “Do you want to try learning? I’ll teach you, it’s actually quite simple, and Shizun is so smart, you’ll definitely pick it right up.”

As Mo Ran personally taught him how to reap the rice, Chu Wanning couldn’t help wondering just how things managed to turn out this way—he had come over with the intention of learning by covert observation, so how had he ended up in an official apprenticeship instead?

What a mess.

But Mo Ran was taking it so seriously and attentively, and didn't even laugh at his clumsy attempts.

His brows were inky-black, and his features were sharper and more defined than when he was younger. These looks would usually seem handsome yet arrogant, but his gaze was gentle and patient, as if hiding a great many things that weighed on him, or perhaps hiding nothing at all, only conveying the depth of tenderness, the weight of the years.

"Just like this, it's all in the wrist, get it?"

"...Mn."

Chu Wanning tried doing it the way he instructed, but still didn't quite get it right. He was used to working with stiff blocks of wood and whatnot in his work, but these soft ears of grain were somehow harder to deal with.

Mo Ran watched from the side for a while, then reached out with a toned, muscular arm, and adjusted his grip on the sickle.

Skin contacted skin for only an instant; Mo Ran didn't dare touch him more than that, nor did Chu Wanning dare allow him to touch himself more than that.

One was clearly a torrential stream that had nowhere to pour, and the other clearly a pond that was all but dried up. They were clearly a perfect match—if only he would go into him, he would no longer churn restlessly with no outlet, and he could be filled and watered, parched cracks all mended.

But they just wouldn't, each hiding from the other.

He instructed from behind him, “Put your finger a little lower, careful not to cut yourself.”

“I know.” Came the stiff response.

“Relax a little, don’t be so tense.”

“.....”

“Relax.”

But the more Mo Ran said that, the more Chu Wanning’s back tensed and his grip stiffened.

Relax relax relax, it’s not like he didn’t want to! Easy for him to say! But Mo Ran was hovering right next to him as he spoke, his breath practically caressing the back of his ear, hot and heavy, carrying this man’s unique scent of wildness— how was he supposed to relax like this?!

For some unknown reason, his brain chose this exact moment to remember that shameful dream.

They had been in more or less the same position in that dream, with Mo Ran’s lips by his ear, touching yet not, ghosting along his earlobe.

He had said between panting breaths, “Relax a little...don’t clench around me so tight…”

Chu Wanning’s entire face turned red.

He tried his best to get away from these weird thoughts, but a second wave rolled in right on the heels of the first, and he struggled free of these

thoughts only to recall that “Size Ranking of the Cultivation World’s Young Heroes” booklet instead…

“.....”

Chu Wanning was afraid that there might be smoke rising from his head.

But Mo Ran was none the wiser. “Why are you so tense? Re——”

“I am quite relaxed!” Chu Wanning whipped his head around, eyes a little watery yet also filled with flames of anger as he glared at him, so close that it was practically like a sword piercing directly through Mo Ran’s heart.

Both their hearts were clearly drumming fast in their chests, but however loud the drumming, the other still could not hear, not unless he were to step closer, not unless he were to press his chest against his back, not unless he were to grab his hand, bite his ear, suck on his earlobe, murmur to him between heavy breaths, “Relax, don’t be so nervous.” Only in this way would they understand each other.

But Mo Ran would never, and neither would Chu Wanning.

So Mo Ran awkwardly drew his hand back and straightened back up sheepishly, saying, “...Then, does Shizun want to try again like this?”

“Mn.”

Mo Ran flashed him another smile before picking up his own sickle and getting back to work not far away. Two slices later, he seemed to suddenly remember something, turning to say over his shoulder, “Shizun.”

“What?” Chu Wanning’s expression was sullen.

Mo Ran pointed at his shoes. “You should take off your boots.”

“I will not.”

“You might slip wearing them,” Mo Ran said earnestly. “Those boots have smooth soles, I won’t always be there to catch you every time you slip.”

“.....” Chu Wanning mulled it over gloomily, then walked over to the ridge and took off his shoes and socks, tossing them next to a haystack before walking barefooted back into the paddy field to slog away at the rice.

High noon, and Chu Wanning had finally become more or less proficient with the sickle, his motions growing more fluent. The rice that he and Mo Ran reaped piled into quite a mighty little golden-colored mountain.

After harvesting another batch of crops in one go, Chu Wanning finally felt a little tired, straightening up to take a deep breath and wipe his sweat with the corner of a sleeve. A light breeze swept past golden waves of grain, bringing with it a refreshing autumn chill. He sneezed, and Mo Ran turned around immediately in concern.

“Is it cold?”

“I’m fine.” Chu Wanning shook his head. “Some dust got in my nose just now.”

Mo Ran smiled and was just about to say something when the clear voice of a village maiden rang out from beneath the mulberry tree in the distance, hands cupped around her mouth as she shouted “Lunchtime——it’s lunchtime——!”

“It’s the lady who was singing earlier,” Chu Wanning commented without even turning to look.

Mo Ran turned to the side and lifted a hand to his brow to squint into the distance. “It really is her. Shizun can tell by voice?”

“Mn, all that warbling just to announce mealtime, who else could it be.” Chu Wanning brought the last basket of rice over to the pile as he spoke, then headed off toward the mulberry tree, not even bothering with shoes since his feet were already dirty anyway. Mo Ran shook his head with a smile, picking up his abandoned boots before running to catch up.

Food was cooked in large pots for the entire village, and four or five women of the village carried out three wooden barrels and opening them to reveal a barrelful of steaming rice, another of braised pork with cabbage, and the last one filled with tofu and vegetable soup.

Honestly speaking, life for the common folk in the lower cultivation realm wasn’t exactly the greatest, and meat was considered a luxury to most people. But Sisheng Peak’s cultivators were here, and what kind of host would the village chief be if he fed them nothing but vegetables? And so there was a hearty portion of cured marbled meat in the pork and cabbage dish.

The moment the lids came off, all the big burly villagers, smelling the meat, had to swallow their drool.

“It’s not much, xianjun please make do.” The village chief’s wife was a stocky woman, fifty-something years old with a loud voice and a wide, unreserved grin. “We cured the meat and picked the vegetables ourselves, hope ya don’t mind.”

Mo Ran waved his hand in a hurry. “Of course not.” He scooped two full bowls of rice and handed them to Shizun before getting a third bowl

himself.

Peeking into the barrel, Chu Wanning saw that the braised pork with cabbage was covered in a whole layer of chili peppers. He was rather apprehensive at the sight, but the auntie waved him over with such enthusiasm before scooping a big ladle-full of hot, spicy broth and putting many pieces of bright red meat in his bowl.

“.....” It would’ve been a delicious treat to the people of Shu who loved spicy foods. But to Chu Wanning, this bowl just might be the end of him.

But it wasn’t like he could decline the hospitality of the villagers, either. Chu Wanning was frozen in uncertainly when a hand reached over and offered him another bowl.

The bowl was filled with tofu and vegetable soup. It was kind of plain, but Chu Wanning liked it.

“Here, swap with me,” said Mo Ran.

“...It’s fine, eat your own.” Chu Wanning did not take the proffered bowl.

The auntie was puzzled for a while by this exchange before she put two and two together and smacked her head, hollering, “Aiyah, can this xianjun not eat spicy food?”

Seeing the guilt on her face, Chu Wanning replied, “No, I can eat it a little.” Then he picked up some of the broth-soaked rice with his chopsticks and put it in his mouth.

“.....”

A few moments passed in silence, Chu Wanning's face growing redder by the second as everyone watched, and then even the tightly-pursed line of lips began to quiver, until——

"...Cough cough cough cough!!!!"

An earthshaking coughing fit.

Who was it that said the only unbearable things in this world were love, destitution, and sneezes.

They clearly forgot about chili peppers.

Chu Wanning had woefully overestimated himself and sorely underestimated the chili peppers, choking so bad on the spice that his entire face was beet-red and he couldn't speak at all. The onlooking villagers were all aghast, while the kids, being kids, giggled from behind the adults, only to earn themselves swats on the head.

Mo Ran hurriedly put down the bowl and chopsticks he was holding and scooped another bowl of soup for him. The soup seemed to help somewhat, but his tongue felt like it was on fire from the hot soup on top of all that spice. His face was flushed and his eyes were watery when he looked up at Mo Ran, saying in a hoarse voice, "More."

More.

Chu Wanning clearly meant more soup, but Mo Ran felt his whole body burning up at the sight of those teary eyes, that face the color of haitang flowers in early spring, and his mind drifted off course of its own volition.

For a brief moment, his mind conjured up an image from the past life, of that man lying beneath himself, panting from need and the effect of the

aphrodisiac both, eyes open but glazed over and unfocused, body trembling ever so slightly, voice hoarse as those moist lips parted in soft moans, “Please...more…”

Author’s Notes:

Mini Theatre: “Examples of some things these people can’t stand most”

Chu Wanning: Eating spicy food

Mo Ran: Watching Chu Wanning eat spicy food

Shi Mei: Participating in a triathlon with his muscles on display

Xue Meng: Forced to be gay

Mei Hanxue: The authorities closing down the brothel

Ye Wangxi: Marrying Song Qiutong

Nangong Si: His dog dying

Meatbun: Working overtime

Ch.137 Shizun and I Get Put Up As Guests

>> noncon flashback

The tips of Mo Ran's fingers were a little shaky, and his heart felt like it was going to beat right out of his chest.

The worst thing about men was that the head between their legs never listened to the head on their shoulders. Regardless of how much he really, truly, whole-heartedly did not want to, it still grew hot and hard, making him feel numb and prickly all over.

Cursing himself under his breath, he adjusted his sitting position so that no one would see before leaning over to ladle out another bowl of soup for Chu Wanning.

But then his fingertip brushed against Chu Wanning's as he reached over to hand him the bowl. The contact sent a jolt through his spine that made his hand quiver, spilling a bit of the soup.

Chu Wanning frowned a little but had rather more pressing concerns to care all that much. He took the soup and downed it to ease the spicy numbness in his mouth. Next to him, Mo Ran stared speechlessly at his lips, lips that were a vivid shade of red from the spice, like a ripe fruit hidden between leaves, or a vibrant blossom upon a branch.

Lips that, if kissed, would be soft, warm, moist…

Pa!

Mo Ran slapped himself none-too-gently.

Caught by surprise, everyone stared at him wordlessly.

Finally coming back down to earth, Mo Ran cleared his throat awkwardly and said in a hoarse voice, “There was a mosquito on my face.”

“Aiyo.” A clear, female voice made itself known and began to raise a fuss. “Autumn mosquitos are the worst, just looking to suck enough blood to get through the winter. Did xianjun bring any medicinal salve?”

“Huh?” Mo Ran looked toward the source of the voice, a bit caught off guard. The speaker was a fetching young woman, her comely figure dressed in a blue coat and her shiny black hair brushed into a braid. She had a pretty face and fair skin, but when they made eye contact, her gaze was anything but shy as she made eyes at him.

Mo Ran didn’t even get the drift, only thinking, oh, it’s the lady who was singing earlier.

He might be slow, but the auntie sitting next to the lass wasn’t. As someone who’d already had seven kids, she could read these little missies like open books, and so she followed through without missing a beat, “They’re only here for a little while to help with the harvest, of course they didn’t bother to bring any medicinal salve. Ling-er, go bring him a jar of it later.”

The lass called Ling’er beamed happily. “Of course, I’ll come by tonight with it.”

“……” Mo Ran hadn’t even gotten a word in yet and this enthusiastic pair of women had already decided for him between themselves, leaving him a little speechless. He turned to look towards Chu Wanning, just in time to

see him taking out a handkerchief and slowly wiping the spilled soup from his hand, a touch of distaste in his expression.

Mo Ran was no good at dealing with women, so he said to Chu Wanning in a small voice, “Some of the soup got on my hand too, let me borrow the handkerchief when you’re done?”

So Chu Wanning handed him the handkerchief, the same haitang-embroidered one that he had before.

Mo Ran remembered him carrying it around back at the Peach Blossom Springs too. Chu Wanning looked cold and distant, but was actually a sentimental person, something that Mo Ran had already noticed in the past life in the way that the type of clothing he wore and the decor in his room stayed more or less the same throughout the years. He just hadn’t expected it to extend to even this handkerchief.

The handkerchief was so old that the color of the embroidery had already gone dull, but this nostalgic person still hadn’t tossed it.

Mo Ran wiped his hand, then took another look at the handkerchief. Upon closer inspection, he was surprised to find that although the flower was carefully embroidered, the needlework was rather poor, clearly the work of a beginner.

Thinking that Shizun must have done it himself when he was bored once, and mentally visualizing the way he must have looked, all serious and deadpan while stitching the haitang flower with a tiny little needle, Mo Ran couldn’t help wanting to laugh…

He wanted to look some more, but Chu Wanning took the handkerchief back.

Mo Ran said, “What are you taking it away for, I’ll wash it.”

“I can wash it myself,” Chu Wanning replied as he picked his bowl up once again. Mo Ran was not about to watch him tempt fate again, and so he hastily swapped their bowls, saying, “Here, eat this bowl instead, I haven’t touched it.”

The village chief’s wife hurriedly agreed, “It’s alright if xianjun can’t handle spicy foods, no worries, no worries.”

Chu Wanning pressed his lips into a line, then after a moment, lowered his eyes and said, “Sorry about that,” before exchanging bowls with Mo Ran. With Chu Wanning’s bowl and chopsticks in hand, Mo Ran was just about to dig in when it struck him that Chu Wanning had already eaten from it, and his heart, suddenly all soft and warm, started pounding for some reason.

He picked up a piece of marbled meat and put it in his mouth, the chopsticks just barely scraping past his teeth, sliding past his lip…

What improper, preposterous thing hadn’t he done with Chu Wanning in the past life? But in this life, just the touch of chopsticks he’d used against his own tongue, the bowl he’d eaten from held against his own lips.

Just this, and he could already hardly contain the flame within.

Regardless of how harshly he admonished himself, how many times he told himself not to think indecent thoughts about his pure, virtuous shizun, it was like his heart wasn’t even his—he could make himself not touch him, but he couldn’t make himself not think about him.

He had long since stopped hating Chu Wanning, but he had thought that, after peeling away the hatred, what remained of his feelings toward Shizun would only be respect and the desire to cherish.

But it seemed he was wrong. What was revealed when the black feil of hatred fell had actually been tender affection and scalding desire… he drifted in the ocean of desire, wanted to cling to the driftwood called rationality until he could climb ashore, but just one glance from Chu Wanning, one lightly spoken word, was enough to pull him back into the abyss of yearning.

He felt like he had truly gone mad.

Chu Wanning wasn't into men, so Mo Ran would sooner die than he would touch him, bully him.

And so the desire in him burned until it was a blazing inferno, swelled until it was a vast ocean, and he, drowning and burning, had little care to spare for anything other than the person in front of him, this pure person who filled his impure thoughts.

The autumn breeze picked up, bringing with it the fragrance of the harvest and a chorus of frogsong, and in this moment, sitting next to him, Mo Ran suddenly thought—absurdly, ridiculously—that it wouldn't be bad to spend the rest of their lives like this. He used to feel like he had nothing, and so fought for everything like his life depended on it, but now he felt like he had everything, and dared not ask for more.

The busy season for farmers lasted a little over half a month, during which Chu Wanning and Mo Ran stayed at Yuliang Village.

The little village could spare two rooms for them, though it wasn't exactly well-off so the place was rather barren. The village chief's wife gritted her teeth and fished out two thick mattresses# for them, only to have her offer declined in unison.

Chu Wanning said, "We can just sleep on the straw, it's warm enough. Please keep the mattresses for yourselves."

Mo Ran agreed with a smile, "We're cultivators, after all, can't just take your bedding like that."

The village chief was guilt-ridden as he said, over and over, "We're really sorry about this, we had more mattresses before, but the village caught on fire last year when we were beset by an evil spirit, and a lot of things…"

Chu Wanning said, "It's alright."

The village chief and his wife finally left tremulously after some more consoling. Mo Ran set about adjusting Chu Wanning's bed, packing more straw under the padding in hopes of making it softer, looking rather like a dog busily dragging cushions and pillows to its nest.

Chu Wanning looked on mildly from where he was leaning against the side of the table, and said, "That's good enough already, any more and I'll be sleeping in a haystack instead of a bed."

A little embarrassed, Mo Ran scratched his head and said, "There wasn't any time today, but tomorrow I'll go to the nearby market and buy Shizun a proper mattress."

"And am I supposed to do all the farmwork while you go to the market?" Chu Wanning shot him a glare. "Just leave it, it's fine." He walked over and

took in the scent as he spoke. “It has that nice grain smell.”

Mo Ran protested, “No way, Shizun is no good with the cold, you can’t just…”

“It’s not even winter yet.” Chu Wanning frowned. “What is all this fuss. Go back to your room already, it’s been a long day, I can’t even feel my feet anymore, I’m going to bed.”

Mo Ran left obediently.

Chu Wanning took his shoes off, haphazardly rinsed his feet with water from the large clay jar, and was just about to climb into his straw bed when he heard knocking at the door. Mo Ran had come back, and was yelling from the outside, “Shizun, I’m coming in!’

“……” Chu Wanning was furious. “Didn’t I tell you not to say that to me anymore!”

But Mo Ran only grinned and bumped the door open with his head as Chu Wanning fumed. He couldn’t push the door open otherwise, because both his hands—with sleeves rolled up to the elbows to reveal firm, sexy arms the color of honey—were busy holding a bucket full of clear water with steam rising from it.

The young man’s eyes seemed especially bright behind the steam, practically sparkling.

Chu Wanning’s heart raced under his gaze, and he found himself at a sudden loss for words.

Mo Ran carried the heavy bucket of water over and set it down next to his bed, and then he said, face glowing and dimples warm, “Shizun, you

worked too hard today, soak your feet first, then let me give you a foot rub before you go to sleep."

"N…"

"I know I know, Shizun's gonna say no need," Mo Ran said with a smile. "There is a need. It's your first time doing farmwork, you're going to be achy all over. If you can't get a good night's rest because of that and then can't get up tomorrow, the little kids in the village are going to make fun of you again."

The water in the wooden bucket was hot, just a little bit too hot, but not unbearably so.

Chu Wanning's bare feet sat in the water, the toes smooth and delicate, the lines of his ankles flowing and defined. His feet never saw the sun, and so the skin there was fair, pale, even.

Mo Ran mused about how nice Chu Wanning's skin was as he took it all in, even fairer and smoother than that of delicate ladies.

Thinking about it now, even that woman Song Qiutong whom he'd married in the past life hadn't felt as nice as Chu Wanning did... bah , what was he thinking about.

So while Chu Wanning soaked his feet, Mo Ran sat down at the table across the room and took out a book to read.

He'd brought the book along himself, some dry tome about healing spells. It was so quiet in the room that they both subconsciously slowed down their breathing so that the other wouldn't hear. In the room lit by a single

candle, the only sound was that of Chu Wanning's feet occasionally moving in the water.

"I'm done soaking, it doesn't ache anymore, you can go now."

But Mo Ran was persistent—he knew better now than to take Chu Wanning at his word when he said things like "it doesn't hurt" and "I'm fine"—and had already put down his book and come over to Chu Wanning's bed to kneel down on one leg, grabbing the foot that Chu Wanning tried to pull back and looking up at him with eyes that were not going to take no for an answer.

"I'll go after I give Shizun a foot rub."

"……" Chu Wanning really wanted to kick him, so that he would get the hell out and stop saying whatever the fuck he wanted in front of himself.#

But the hand gripping him was so strong, the skin a little rough, and the calluses at the pads of the fingers and between the thumb and forefinger rubbed against his foot, where the skin was extra sensitive from soaking in the hot water, so much so that it felt a little ticklish, and he was so busy trying not to laugh that he missed his last opportunity to pick up his dignity and kick Mo Ran out.

Half-kneeling on the floor, Mo Ran had already put his foot on his knee and began to massage it, gently and carefully, his eyes lowered in concentration.

"Shizun, was it cold in the paddy field?" He asked while massaging.

"It was alright."

“There’s tons of dead branches and stuff in there, look, you got scratched on the side here.”

“……” Chu Wanning looked over at the side of his right foot, and sure enough there was a small cut there. “It’s just a scratch, doesn’t even feel like anything.”

Mo Ran insisted, “I packed some herbal ointment for such things, wait here a moment, Shizun, I’ll go grab it and put it on for you, Auntie made it so it’s really good, it’ll be all healed up by morning.” He walked out the door as he talked, toward his room that was right across from Chu Wanning’s, separated by a small courtyard that was only a dozen or so steps wide, and came back in no time with a small jar of sweet smelling ointment.

“Isn’t this a bit of an overreaction?”

“Of course not, what if it gets infected? C’mere, Shizun, gimme your foot.”

Chu Wanning felt a little awkward about it; in all the years he’d lived, his feet had always been a private part, since he’d always been fully dressed and never gone anywhere barefoot as a matter of course. This was a part of him that barely anyone had ever seen, and no one had ever touched.

It is said that the unknowing are fearless; he’d let Mo Ran give him a foot rub earlier because he hadn’t known what it would feel like, not having expected the tender, aching feeling, like getting gnawed at by ants, so now he was a little hesitant about giving him his foot again.

So Mo Ran stared at that pair of feet hiding hesitantly under the robes, pale white feet with a bloom of rosiness from their soak in the hot water. Chu Wanning’s toes were fine and delicate, with nails that were translucent like the thin layer of ice upon the surface of a lake in the depth

of winter, and a light pink blush of color at the tips of the toes from the soak.

Like budding haitang blossoms frozen beneath the ice.

Mo Ran knelt back down, his expression gentle and respectful as he took the warm haitang flower in hand.

He could feel the haitang trembling minutely in his hand, petals quivering, and he was struck by the sudden urge to lower his head and press a kiss to it, so that it wouldn't hesitate or be afraid, so that it might blossom and unfold.

"Shizun…"

"What is it?"

There seemed to be a raw quality to Chu Wanning's voice, like the branches of a flowering tree laden with the weight of desire, the blossoms on the verge of giving way, droplets of dew just about to fall upon parched soil.

Mo Ran's head snapped up, the candle flame choosing that exact moment to crackle, setting free a burst of sparks as a small stream of candle wax dripped slowly down. His gaze met Chu Wanning's by chance, both their eyes bright in the light of the candle, with desire, with hunger.

"You…"

Chu Wanning dropped his gaze and said, mildly, "Get on with it, my feet are ticklish."

Mo Ran's entire face went red, but luckily it wasn't too visible through his tan. He mumbled an acknowledgement and lowered his head back down to apply the ointment, the blush burning all the way to his ears.

But he couldn't help hearing "get on with it" repeated over and over in his head.

He swallowed, eyes fixed on the soft skin.

Images from the past surfaced in his mind, becoming clear, coming into focus. He remembered the disheveled bedding in Wushan Palace, and the way Chu Wanning had looked all the fairer against those scarlet sheets, the way they had entangled like caged beasts, neck against neck, heavy breaths and low groans filling the hall with a ferocious, savage kind of tension.

He thought about Chu Wanning's muted moans, that icy voice melted into softly flowing water by the flames of desire, heated into a boil.

"Stop this nonsense… ah …" He could almost hear Chu Wanning's voice by his ear.

Mo Ran squeezed his eyes shut, furrowed his brows deep.

In this moment, he finally realized something: it wasn't going to be easy for him to be good to Chu Wanning.

If he were to keep his distance, he wouldn't be able to take good care of him, keep him warm.

But if he were to stay close, he might not be able to control the flame of desire within; he was afraid that his rationality might catch on fire in a moment of carelessness, that he might do something outrageous.

He wanted him, wanted to bed him. Even in this very moment, he suddenly thought that what he wanted to do wasn't to be kneeling here, giving Chu Wanning foot rubs and applying ointment to his cuts. This person was sitting right here in front of him, on the bed, and his own strength now was already no different from what it had been in the past. Chu Wanning wouldn't be able to push him off.

He wanted to take him, wanted to push him down onto the bed, wanted it so bad his throat felt parched, wanted it so bad it burned and ached, he wanted to kiss the breath out of Chu Wanning, he wanted…

"All done, Shizun!" He practically yelled out, startling Chu Wanning.

Only Mo Ran himself knew of the cold sweat drenching his back.

He suddenly felt so miserable——why couldn't he just be good to Shizun in a clean, genuine way? Why couldn't he just be rid of this burning desire?

Chu Wanning, Chu Wanning…

His Shizun was the loftiest person in the world, if he were to find out that his own disciple felt thus toward him, how disdainful would he be, how scornful?

It had been two lifetimes, already.

He didn't want to be looked at with scorn by him anymore.

Chu Wanning put his shoes back on. The whole time, Mo Ran sat to the side with his head lowered wordlessly, looking rather like an obedient, docile dog; only he himself knew of the insatiable wolf locked up inside.

A long moment passed before Mo Ran managed to suppress the burning in his chest. He said, “Shizun, rest well. If you feel unwell at all tomorrow, then please just rest, I can do both our shares of work.”

Before Chu Wanning could reply, a delicate sounding voice rang out from the outside, “Mo-xianjun, Mo-xianjun, are you there?”

Author’s Notes:

Mini-theatre: If the main cast transmigrated to the modern day, what occupations might they have based on their skills?

Shizun: First, he’ll be valedictorian of Lanxiang Vocational School, then become a mechanic who operates excavators and operators. Oh, right, speaking of which, I swear if I write a modern BL in the future, I will write a CEO who drives a tractor. I’ve had enough of CEOs who drive Lamborghinis and Ferraris--if they don’t drive a Lamborghini or Ferrari, is it not a BL about CEOs? I’m so angry, I want the CEO to drive a tractor! I want to write about him driving a tractor! Chu Wanning, you are the protagonist in a BL about CEOs! Drive your tractor! Bump into someone’s Ferrari! Go!

Dog: Chef, valedictorian of New East Cuisine Education. A chef who drives a Porsche, happens to be a couple with the CEO who drives a tractor, not bad not bad.

Xue Meng: Doesn’t know anything, will probably die.

Shi Mei: Selling counterfeit medication. It’s easier to earn money, but he has a good conscience and might not bear to do so, he’ll probably go

bankrupt in the end.

Ye Wangxi: Cop.

Mei Hanxue ： ……Gigolo.

Nangong Si: Pet shop owner. If this really doesn’t work out, the superintendent at a pig farm is fine too.

Ch.138 Shizun Just Might Blueball Me To Death

Chu Wanning directed a mild glance Mo Ran's way and said, "Someone's looking for you."

"...Ah? Who'd be looking for me this late in the day?" Mo Ran had nothing but Chu Wanning on the mind right now, long since having forgotten all about whatever had happened during the day with the villagers.

"It's the person who was singing earlier," Chu Wanning said in a pointedly understated manner. "You know, the prettiest girl in the village."

"Eh, really…? All the girls in the village looked more or less the same to me…"

Hearing that, Chu Wanning was silent for a moment before saying, "I was only gone for five years, when did you go blind?"

"……"

Chu Wanning's tone was mild, but in the instant that he looked up, Mo Ran caught a hint of what seemed to be a smile in his eyes, as if teasing him with some good-humored bantering. Happily surprised, Mo Ran felt his mood instantly lifting as well.

The farmer girl named Ling-er was holding something wrapped in a blue cloth with white floral patterns on it and yelling as loud as she could toward Mo Ran's room, "Mo-xianjun, Mo——"

"I'm over here." Hearing the deep voice of a man from behind her, Ling-er turned around to see Mo Ran lifting up one side of the curtain and leaning by the door to smile at her, "It's already so late, did you need something?"

Ling-er was startled for a moment before it melted into delight and she went happily over. “Good thing xianjun hasn’t gone to bed yet! Here, this is for you, I got it from my auntie, like I mentioned during lunch earlier. P… please use it.” She handed him the cloth bag in her arms as she spoke.

Opening the bag, Mo Ran found three little clay jars.

“What are these?”

“Medicinal salve,” Ling-er explained enthusiastically while pointing at her cheek with a smile, “for your mosquito bite, from the field earlier…”

“Ah.” Finally remembering what this was all about, Mo Ran was a little embarrassed that his offhanded excuse had been so naively believed that the girl had actually come all this way to give him the salve.

The villagers here were rather too gullible…

“You probably didn’t get bit too badly though.” Ling-er suddenly stood up on tiptoes and gave Mo Ran’s face a careful once-over, smiling even more brightly. “I don’t even see a mosquito bump.”

Mo Ran cleared his throat. “I am a cultivator, after all…”

Ling-er clapped her hands together with a laugh. “You cultivators are so interesting! If I had the talent for it, I’d want to become one too, too bad it’s not in the stars for me.”

They chatted a bit, then Mo Ran thanked her and went back inside with the salve. Chu Wanning had moved to sit at the table and was flipping idly through the book that Mo Ran had left there; hearing the movement, Chu Wanning looked up at him.

“Medicinal salve,” Mo Ran explained bashfully.

Chu Wanning said, “Did you really get bitten? Come here, let me see.”

Under the candlelight, Mo Ran’s skin was the deep color of honey candy, making his feature look all the more dashing. Chu Wanning stared for a while before asking, “...Where’s the bump?”

Mo Ran scratched his head, embarrassed. “It went down already, my skin’s thick.” He put all three jars of the refreshing medicinal salve on Chu Wanning’s table as he spoke. “I don’t need these, Shizun should hang onto them instead, since you’re more likely to get bug bites.”

Chu Wanning said, without accepting or declining, “First the herbal ointment and now this medicinal salve, I’ll have to open an apothecary at this rate.”

Mo Ran only rubbed his nose and beamed a sincere, reserved grin. Chu Wanning reached out and poked his forehead, saying, “It’s getting late, go back to your room and go to sleep.”

“Mn, sleep well, Shizun.”

“Sleep well.”

But that night, in the two run-down straw huts separated by the small courtyard that could be crossed in ten steps, neither of the two could sleep despite the exchanged wishes, both of them tossing and turning restlessly.

It was needless to say that, for Chu Wanning’s part, he could still feel the tingling in his feet, could practically still feel Mo Ran’s callused fingers rubbing against his skin.

But Mo Ran's thoughts were rather more complicated as he turned this way and that, head pillowed on his arm while tapping restlessly at the seam between the bed boards, repeating over and over in his head: Shizun is a god, an immortal, an otherworldly being; no matter what happened in the past life, he definitely won't do anything stupid in this life, definitely won't bully him, definitely won't mess things up again…

And besides, there was still Shi Mei.

Yes, he should think more about Shi Mei instead——Shi Mei…

He suddenly felt even more uneasy.

Truth be told, ever since returning to Sisheng Peak and seeing Shi Mei again, he had found himself feeling rather lukewarm toward him.

To him, liking Shi Mei and protecting Shi Mei had already settled into a kind of habit, things that he was constantly doing, but then what?

He still felt fond of the Shi Mei of five years ago, but that beautiful man of five years since felt like a stranger to him.

The unfamiliarity left him at a loss; he didn't know what was wrong with him, or what to do about it.

Chu Wanning woke up early the next day.

Stepping outside, he came face-to-face with Mo Ran, who was just lifting the curtain and coming out of his own room.

Mo Ran greeted, "Good morning Shizun."

"Morning." Chu Wanning glanced at him. "…Didn't sleep well?"

Mo Ran forced a smile. “I’m not really used to the bed. It’s alright, I’ll just take a nap later.”

They set off for the fields together, the early morning breeze bringing with it the refreshing fragrance of grass and trees. It was empty and quiet all around, with the only sound being the occasional singing of frogs and chirping of cicadas.

Chu Wanning yawned languidly, then caught something out of the corner of his eye that made him smile.

“Mo Ran.”

“Mm?”

Chu Wanning reached over with a hand to brush through Mo Ran’s fringe, plucking a piece of straw from his hair and saying with a small smile, “What were you doing, rolling around in bed? You’ve got straw in your hair.”

Mo Ran was just about to defend himself when he spotted a small piece of straw on the side of Chu Wanning’s head as well, so he also smiled and said instead, “Then Shizun must’ve been rolling around too.”

And helped pick the golden straw off Chu Wanning’s hair as well.

As the sun rose from the east, the master and disciple gazed at each other against a backdrop of resplendent gold, one with his head slightly lowered, the other with his head slightly tipped up, just the way they’d used to.

Except that, five years ago, the one with his head lowered had been Chu Wanning, and the one with his head tipped up had been Mo Ran. But years had flown past and Mo Weiyu was no longer a youth; in this moment, it was as if time was finally willing to slow down, and in the gentle dawn, Mo

Ran suddenly jumped into the paddy field on an impulse, opening his arms and smiling toward the person standing on the raised ridge, “Shizun, jump, I’ll catch you.”

“……” Chu Wanning glared at the ridge that was only half a person tall. “Is something wrong with your head?”

“Hahaha.”

He took off his shoes and hopped gracefully into the paddy field himself, sending a ripple through the water and a chill through the bottom of his feet. With a grand sweep of one broad sleeve and an air of imposing dignity, Chu Wanning marked off a large stretch of the field for himself. “This whole area is mine. I didn’t cut as much as you yesterday, but I fully intend to beat you today.”

Mo Ran’s outstretched arms went up and scratched his head, then the corners of his lips quirked up and an especially charming smile spread across his face.

“Okay, if I lose, I’ll make Shizun lots and lots of lotus crisps and stewed crab meatballs.”

Chu Wanning said, “And lots of honey glazed sweet lotus root too.”

“Sure! But what if Shizun loses?” Mo Ran’s eyes were clear and bright, like they held the entire starry sky. “Then what?”

Chu Wanning glanced at him coldly out of the corners of his eyes. “What do you want?”

Mo Ran mulled it over for a long while, chewing on his bottom lip, then said, “If Shizun loses, Shizun will have to eat all the lotus crisps and stewed

crab meatballs I make."

A pause, and then, in an even gentler voice spoken into the refreshing breeze:

"And all the honey glazed sweet lotus root too."

Win or lose, I just want to find some way to treat you well.

Chu Wanning had gotten quite adept at harvesting rice in no time, and he did not like to lose. It was enough that he had gotten made fun of yesterday, he was not going to be the butt of jokes today too. Thinking huffily thus, he worked with singular diligence, slicing away at the rice, and by midday he'd cut down way more than Mo Ran had.

He was rather proud of himself as they ate lunch under the mulberry tree. He didn't say it, nor did it show on his face, but his eyes kept wandering over to the side of the paddy field, where the rice he'd harvested was stacked into a formidable little mountain of gold.

"Ling-er, go get xianjun another helping of rice."

Everyone sat together, eating their lunch. Mo Ran ate fast, and his bowl was cleared out in no time. Noticing his empty bowl, the auntie spoke up in a hurry.

But Mo Ran put down his bowl and chopsticks like he was in a hurry, flashed a smile and said, "That's alright, I'm done eating. I have something to take care of so I'm gonna run out for a bit, it might take a while, go ahead and eat without me."

Ling-er was surprised at first, before it turned into unease. "Does xianjun really only eat so little? Is the food not to your taste? If you don't like it… I

could… go make something else for you…?”

“No no, that’s not it, the food’s great.” Of course Mo Ran was completely oblivious to the overtones of the offer, only waving her off with a forthright grin and heading off toward the stable with large strides.

Chu Wanning asked, “Where are you going?”

Mo Ran replied over his shoulder with a smile, “Just buying some things, I’ll be right back.”

“Xianjun——”

“It’s fine, let him be,” Chu Wanning said mildly as he picked up a piece of fried tofu with his chopsticks.

Although the two cultivators had arrived together, anyone with eyes could tell who had the higher status, who had the lower status, and whose word counted. On top of that, Chu Wanning looked cold and severe to start with, and now that he’d spoken, the villagers couldn’t exactly press the issue, so they could only let Mo Ran go.

After lunch, everyone split off into small groups, some whiling the time away chewing tobacco, some napping under the sun; the women sat together knitting winter clothes, while the children played amongst themselves, riding on bamboo stick pretend-horses. A stick-thin cat sniffed hopefully at the ground, little pink nose twitching and ears sticking straight up, looking for leftovers to eat.

Chu Wanning was resting against a pile of grain with a cup of warm tea in hand when he saw the pitifully skinny cat and tried to wave it over, thinking

to find it something to eat. But the cat was wary of strangers, thought Chu Wanning was raising his hand to hit it, and hightailed it out of there.

Chu Wanning: "……"

Did he really look that scary? Even cats didn't like him?

In the middle of sulking with cheek in hand, he heard the sound of copper pieces jingling. Ling-er came over cheerfully, also holding a cup of tea, and sat down next to Chu Wanning.

Chu Wanning turned to look at her without much of an expression.

She was very pretty, and more than that, she wasn't skinny and frail, but a full-figured woman rarely found in such remote and desolate places. And she knew how to dress herself, too—she didn't have the money to buy accessories, so she had gathered some bits and pieces of copper and iron, washed them clean and ground them into smooth rings to string along the hem of her clothing so that she jingled as she walked and fairly gleamed under the sun.

"Xianjun," she called to him with a voice that was crisp as a ripened berry.

Chu Wanning replied, "What is it?" His voice was cool and clear like drifting mist.

Ling-er was a little taken aback at his standoffishness, but quickly put on a smile as if things were perfectly amicable and said, "Nothing, I just saw you sitting by yourself and thought I'd come over and keep you company."

"……"

Chu Wanning knew he didn't have a friendly-looking face, as evidenced by the cat just now. But people and cats were different, after all—cats never had any schemes, but people might have ulterior motives.

Sure enough, after a while of chattering about empty pleasantries and trifling nonsense, Ling-er threw out a casual, "Xianjun, what does it take to be…a disciple at Sisheng Peak? Do you think…I have a chance?"

Chu Wanning said, "Give me your hand."

"Ah…" She opened her eyes wide and excitedly did as told. Chu Wanning pressed the tips of his fingers lightly against the inside of her wrist, then drew back after a moment and said, "You do not."

Ling-er's face flushed red instantly. "D-do I not have the aptitude?"

"You knew I was going to check your core as soon as I asked for your hand, so you must've already had someone else check for you in the past," Chu Wanning said. "Cultivation is not in your fate, and you will likely not be able to build even just the foundation for it, even if you spend your whole life trying. It would only be a waste of time if you were to go to the peak, so it'd be best to forget about it."

Ling-er fell silent and her head drooped, crestfallen. A long while passed before she bit her lip and said in a small voice, "Thank you for the advice."

"Welcome."

She left quietly. Watching her back, Chu Wanning felt a little mixed. The common folk of the lower cultivation realm hoped even more fervently than those of the upper cultivation realm to be able to join a cultivation sect. Because to the people of the upper cultivation realm, cultivation was

just a means of bringing honor to one's ancestors and making a name for oneself.

But to people of the lower cultivation realm, it was sometimes a means of survival.

Leaning against the pile of grain, Chu Wanning took another sip of the tea. The weather really was getting colder; the tea had gone cold in the few short moments he didn't drink it. He gulped down the rest and closed his eyes, thinking to rest for a bit, but with how late he had slept last night, together with all that physical labor this morning, he ended up sleeping through most of the day.

When he woke up again, the sky was already a deep red color, the crows were cawing at the branches, and all that was left between the paddy fields were stems of rice, neatly arranged, and scattered pieces of grain.

Chu Wanning's eyes snapped wide open in startlement.

To think that he had slept all the way to sundown, leaning against the pile of grain like this. The farmers probably hadn't had the guts to wake him up due to his status—not only did they just let him sleep the day away, someone had even covered him with a piece of clothing so that he wouldn't catch cold.

"……"

The clothing…

Chu Wanning was about to sit up when he smelled a familiar scent. Breaking out of his daze, he looked down at the clothing covering him. The

fabric was coarse, but it was very clean, with the refreshing scent of the soap beans used for laundering still clinging to its seams.

It was Mo Ran's clothing.

Upon realizing thus, Chu Wanning stopped in the middle of getting up and lay back down for some unknown reason, the muscles in his back relaxing as he hid half his face under the clothing, leaving only a pair of bright eyes above, slightly narrowed, holding some kind of indescribable and indecipherable emotion within.

He really must have lost his mind.

Eyes narrowed, he looked for that person in the paddy fields. It didn't take long—after all, Mo Ran had grown so handsomely tall that he stood out easily wherever he went.

He was currently helping the villagers load the cut grains onto the ox cart, and Chu Wanning could only see his back from here. He was probably hot from having worked all day, and so had stripped out of his outer robe and shirt like the other villagers, leaving his muscular, honey-toned back in full view.

In the burning heat of the setting sun, sweat slid slowly down the lines of his broad back with every flex of those muscles, trickled to the dimples of his back, snaked beneath the toned line of his waist…

He was like red-hot iron, like the coal in the furnace, taking every tender sentiment and turning it into burning carnal desire. Watching him from a distance, Chu Wanning gradually stopped seeing everything else around him, leaving only that person's gorgeous body, muscles flexing and sleek like a panther's, and the side of his face whenever he turned to chat with

the village chief, with a soft dimple and a kind gaze, full of handsome charm.

As if sensing the eyes on his back, Mo Ran turned to look over his shoulder. Chu Wanning hurriedly closed his eyes and pretended to be asleep.

But his heart beat so fast it sounded like a rainstorm, the blood racing through his veins a low rumble in his ears.

A long moment passed before he sneakily cracked open one eyelid and peeked out from under his eyelashes. Mo Ran had already turned back around, and Ling-er was walking up to him with a bashful gaze and holding out a handkerchief to him.

“Xianjun, here, wipe your sweat.”

Hearing that, Mo Ran, whose arms were full with a pile of rice straws that he was moving onto the cart, smiled and said, “Later, I’m busy right now.”

Ling-er seemed very happy to watch on from the side, reaching out now and again to help straighten things from falling. A bit surprised by her eagerness to help, Mo Ran said, “Thank you.”

She grew even more delighted, standing there next to this tall, well-built man who was practically radiating masculine allure. Listening to his breathing and looking at his muscular shoulders, she couldn’t help the blush that spread across her face, and for a moment forgot all about things like distance and propriety between men and women, clutching her handkerchief and saying in a soft voice, “Xianjun, it’s gonna drip into your eyes if you don’t wipe your sweat~”

Mo Ran bustled busily. “I don’t have any hands right now.”

“Then I can wipe it for you…” She felt a chill at her back before she’d even finished speaking.

Chu Wanning had come over to stand behind them without either of them noticing, still wearing Mo Ran’s thick black outer robe draped over his shoulders, looking a little listless and irritable, like he had just woken up. He said, “Mo Ran.”

“Yes?” The person who’d been so busy that he’d absolutely no time just now immediately put down the grain in his arms, and rubbed the tip of his nose as he turned around, beaming brightly the moment he saw Chu Wanning. “Shizun, you’re awake.”

Chu Wanning looked him up and down. “Aren’t you cold?”

Mo Ran smiled and said, “I’m kind of hot, actually.”

Right when he said that, the droplet of sweat that had been gathering at his dark brow dripped down and into his eye, and he squeezed it shut with an “aiyah” while the other eye stayed stubbornly open to gaze at Chu Wanning. Of course he couldn’t just ask a lady for her handkerchief, so he said pleadingly toward Chu Wanning instead, “Shizun, my eye…”

“My handkerchief’s hanging out to dry right now.”

“……”

Ling-er hurriedly offered, “You can use mine——”

Paying her no heed, Chu Wanning walked up, expression impassive even as he leaned forward and tipped his head back slightly to look up, holding the cuff of his snowy white sleeve closed as he lifted his arm and used his sleeve to carefully wipe the sweat from Mo Ran’s eye.

Author’s Notes:

Mini-theatre “What is the meaning of love”

Shizun: ...I don’t know.

Xue Meng: Praise me, praise me as hard as you can, that’s love.

Shi Mei: sigh It’s love if you don’t think that I’m a black-hearted lotus.

Mei Hanxue: It’s love if you can help me get the role of the lead male.

Nangong Si: I’m only accepting Naobaijin as gifts#, loving my dog is loving me.

Ye Wangxi: ...Someone who likes me more than they like dogs?

Dog 1.0: (biting his pencil) ... sigh Who has the answers? Lend them to this venerable one so he can copy them.

Dog 2.0: I feel that I am about to find the answer to this question very soon.

Dog 0.5: ....(annoyed) What kind of question is this? -- “What is the meaning of ‘ shou ’?” I don’t understand, what is this shit, take it away, get lost get lost get lost.

Liu-Gonggong: (whispering) Your Majesty, this is read ‘love’, not ‘ shou ’#

Ch. 139 Shizun, Sleep Well

Mo Ran froze in an instant.

The fragrance of the haitang blossoms was familiar to him. Although Chu Wanning did not have much of an expression on his face, the cuffs that landed on his eyelids were very gentle.

He wiped it very carefully. The most important thing was that the man in white was standing so close to him, he could even see the fine lines on his lips. He just needed to lower his head to kiss them.

Hold the soft, tender stamen between your lips and teeth.

“You won, but you didn’t wake me up.”

Chu Wanning finished wiping the sweat off his forehead and suddenly said this.

“I didn’t win. The one who won was Shizun.”

“You didn’t cut any rice this afternoon?”

“No, I don’t have much left. I went to the market and spent some money to buy items for winter. I went from house to house and took some time off. That’s why Shizun cut more than me.”

Chu Wanning hummed in a light and satisfied voice.

After a while he asked, “What did you buy at the market? A mattress?”

Before Mo Ran could speak, Ling’er, who was standing beside him, interrupted with a smile, “The Immortal has bought a lot of things, but he

has exhausted himself to the point of killing that camel horse."

"Not much. Just charcoal. I bought some meat and some candy."

"More than that." Ling'er said. "The immortal also bought a mattress for everyone, and the old lady who played cotton balls followed him directly into the village. They loaded it up to the brim."

Chu Wanning was surprised, "Where did you get so much money from?"

"Usually saved. Actually, those mattresses are not expensive, they are much cheaper than the ones in the cultivation world."

"What about the meat?"

"I bought it casually. I told the village chief to bring it back to cook tomorrow for everyone to eat."

Chu Wanning's expression did not change as he asked, "What about the sugar?"

Ling'er clapped her hands and smiled. "Of course, we should buy it for the children at the head of the village. Immortal Mo has been giving them the malt candy and osmanthus cakes the moment we got back. Many of the girls in our village have never eaten these sweets before, so we can't say how happy they are."

She paused, then said with a hint of sweetness, "I got one too."

This girl was one of those who would get into trouble, and she was naturally familiar with him. Previously, she had interrupted him a few times, but Chu Wanning didn't mind.

“Is it delicious?”

Ling’er said without holding back, “It’s very delicious. It’s so sweet.”

Chu Wanning seemed to sneer, “Then eat more.” With that, he flicked his sleeves and left. Mo Ran had made him unhappy again. Just as he was about to give chase, he was met with a burst of darkness. Chu Wanning threw the robe he was wearing over his face, and Mo Ran caught it, pulling it down to look at him anxiously.

“Shizun?”

“Naked as hell! Even if you weren’t cold, I would still feel cold!” Chu Wanning snapped, “Put it on!”

“…”

Although Mo Ran was very hot, he did not say a word since Chu Wanning had already said so. He immediately put on the clothes, sweat sticking to the fabric and feeling a little uncomfortable. He lifted his head and looked at him blankly.

Chu Wanning frowned and said, “Pull down your sleeves!” Who was he showing it to! “No rules!”

“…” Mo Ran immediately straightened his clothes. He folded his collar very high and it was very tight. There was not even half an inch of skin and flesh exposed, but there was a kind of restrained beauty to it. When Chu Wanning saw this, he became even more furious. He cursed under his breath and left, leaving Mo Ran standing there like a silly dog.

The couple and Ling’er, who were watching from the side, were completely confused. Ling’er said with concern, “Immortal… So fierce… I’ve never seen

anyone with such a weird temper…” She whispered, somewhat piteously, even ingratiatingly.

“Your Shizun really doesn’t treat you well. Only with your gentle nature can you endure –”

She muttered as she turned her head back, but suddenly met Mo Ran’s gaze. Half of her words were instantly cut off from her lips. This was because she saw that Immortal Mo, who had always been smiling and amiable, suddenly had a sullen look on his face.

She stopped talking abruptly, but Mo Ran turned his face away. The light changed, and the color of his eyes was no longer easily discernible. Ling’er’s heart was pounding. She didn’t know if it was her imagination, or the mountain of a man in front of her, but another face appeared.

Mo Ran said in a muffled voice, “I’m sorry, you guys stay busy. I’m worried about him. I’ll go take a look.” As he spoke, he took a big step away.

Chu Wanning stood by the riverbank, the sky was full of reeds and flowers, the setting sun was half soaked in the sparkling water, and the river seemed to be burning with fire.

Mo Ran panicked and ran away. When he stopped behind Chu Wanning, he panted, “Shizun.”

“…”

“What did I do wrong?”

“Nothing.”

“Then why are you unhappy?”

“I’m happy.”

Mo Ran was stunned. “What?”

Chu Wanning turned around and said gloomily, “I’m not happy.”

Mo Ran: “…”

He didn’t intend to talk with Chu Wanning like a tongue twister. He took a closer look at his face and suddenly thought of something. He couldn’t help but laugh, “I know why Shizun is unhappy.”

Chu Wanning’s hands were tightly clenched in his sleeves, his shoulders were slightly moved, but his face was still calm. “I said that I’m not…”

On the other hand, Mo Ran walked over and stood under a tree with his hands behind his back. The old banyan tree by the side of the river had some thick meridians that were exposed on the ground.

He was standing on a protruding vein, appearing even taller.

Chu Wanning was alarmed, but at the same time, he felt displeased and said, “Get down here.”

“Oh.”

Mo Ran jumped lightly and the tip of his foot left the boil in the tree, landing in front of Chu Wanning. This tree was made of only a few thick roots, so Mo Ran could only stand very close to him in order to avoid the high ground.

He lowered his head, and his breath could almost touch the lashes of Chu Wanning. Chu Wanning then said with a dark face, “You go up.”

“…Go up and come down. Is Shizun joking with me?”

Chu Wanning also knew that he was making a ruckus in a fit of rage. Once he was exposed, he simply kept silent and said nothing gloomily.

Mo Ran stretched out his hand from behind his back. A handful of candy appeared out of nowhere. It was wrapped in rice paper and held in the palm of his hand in all sorts of colors, forming a sweet little mountain.

“Don’t be angry, I left it for you.”

“…” Chu Wanning was angered to the point that he wanted to vomit blood. He raised his eyebrows and shouted, “Mo Weiyu!”

“Here!” Mo Ran hurriedly stood up straight.

“Who wants to eat sugar? Do you think I’m a three-year-old kid? Or do you think I’m a girl? I don’t even— mmph?!”

A candy was pressed to his lips and placed in his mouth.

Chu Wanning was stunned.

In a split-second, his ears turned red and he didn’t say anything. His face also turned red. It was unknown if it was because of shame or anger, but his phoenix eyes widened as he stared at the smiling man in front of him in both surprise and anger.

“It’s made of cow’s milk. You like it the most.”

Chu Wanning was suddenly at a loss for words. He felt powerless, like a cat whose claws had been cut off. The threat of baring its fangs and brandishing its claws became completely useless.

He had a candy with the smell of cow's milk. Because he had just left in a hurry, a small amount of hair on his forehead had been blown up by the wind, causing it to quiver softly like a blade of grass. When Mo Ran saw this, he felt very itchy in his heart. He wanted to reach out and touch that strand of hair.

He was a man who liked to do things.

As he thought of this, he stretched out his hand.

"…" Chu Wanning was speechless.

Mo Ran laughed, "I bought some sweets and snacks for everyone in the village, but I bought the most delicious ones for Shizun. I hid them in my sleeves. The pastries are in your room, so when you go back in the evening and stealthily eat them, don't let those little fellows see it. It's a Lotus Blossom Sesame, and it's very beautiful.

Chu Wanning did not say anything. After a long time, he used the tip of his tongue to roll up the melted milk candy. He raised his eyes and looked at the man in front of him in the reeds beneath the old banyan tree.

After a long while, he threw out two words without any warning, "Sweet osmanthus root."

Mo Ran smiled. "Bought it."

"Crab powder and lion's head."

"I bought it too."

"…"

Chu Wanning tilted his head. He felt that he had lost a lot of his dignity today. He wanted to pick up his dignity from the dust, so he straightened his posture and raised his chin, “Too bad I missed Pear Blossom Bai.”

He probably thought that the way he lifted his chin was very serious and very oppressive.

However, that was in the past, when Mo Ran was only a teenager.

Chu Wanning didn’t know that if he continued to do so, it would only show Mo Ran the soft lines of his lower jaw, the Adam’s apple that was exposed after raising his chin, and his neck that was as white as porcelain.

He was like a cat with a high opinion of itself, putting its weakest spot under the lips of a wolfhound, but he was unaware of his pride. He thought that he had intimidated the wolf, but he did not know that the wolf just wanted to suck his throat into its mouth, lick, kiss, and swallow it.

Idiot.

It took Mo Ran a lot of willpower to move his gaze away from Chu Wanning’s chin. When he looked at the person in front of him, his eyes turned dark and his voice was low.

He forced a smile and said, “Yes.”

Chu Wanning did not react and frowned, “What?”

“Pear Blossom Wine.”

Mo Ran heaved a sigh of relief, suppressing the desire in his heart as he said hoarsely.

“Pear blossoms wine, there is some too.”

Chu Wanning: “…”

“Walking on the road, I thought Shizun might want to drink it. Fortunately, I bought it.”

Chu Wanning stared at the disciple in front of him who was trying his best to curry favor with him. Suddenly, he was speechless. He suddenly felt that his actions of making things difficult were too boring, and so he pretended to be cold.

Finally, he slowly relaxed his tense body and leaned against the old Banyan tree with his back against it. He sized up Mo Ran and then said, “Mo Ran.”

“Yes.”

“You’ve changed a lot.”

After he finished speaking, for some reason, he felt a trace of unease in the depths of Mo Ran’s eyes. He then said with his long and thick eyelashes fluttering, “Then does Shizun like it?”

“…” Chu Wanning said, “I don’t dislike it.”

Then, as if he suddenly remembered something, he stood up straight and lifted his finger. He hesitated in midair for a moment before landing it on Mo Ran’s waist.

Mo Ran trembled violently. He did not know what was going on, but he still looked at Chu Wanning uneasily.

“I read in the book that you fought with the emperor of the Yellow River. The wound is here, right?”

“… Right.”

Chu Wanning let out an almost imperceptible sigh and patted Mo Ran’s shoulder, “You’re doing very well now. You can be a Mo-zongshi now.”

“This disciple wouldn’t dare.”

Chu Wanning smiled, his finger poked between Mo Ran’s eyebrows, then he lowered his head, “That’s true. All day long, you have been running around in disarray. Indeed, you don’t look like a Shizun. Let’s go. The sun has set. Let’s go back and rest early. What are we going to do tomorrow?”

Mo Ran thought about it and said, “I think he said steaming the rice and wanted to make a New Year’s cake.”

Chu Wanning nodded and suddenly said, “Don’t take off your clothes.”

Mo Ran blushed. “Yes.”

“Since it’s hot, let’s rest.”

“Alright.”

Chu Wanning thought about it for a while and said, “Remember to bring a handkerchief with you. Don’t always hang out with an unmarried lady. Do you have a handkerchief?”

“… No.” Mo Ran felt embarrassed.

“… Then what do you usually use to wipe your face?…”

“…Sleeves.” Mo Ran felt even more embarrassed for his roughness.

Chu Wanning was speechless. After a while, he said, “I’ll help you make a handkerchief then.”

Mo Ran’s eyes immediately lit up. “For me?”

“Yes.”

Mo Ran was overjoyed. “That’s great! When is Shizun going to make it?”

Chu Wanning frowned, “…We’ll have to wait until we’re done with this.”

“Then I… I also want one that has haitang blossoms, is that possible?”

“… I’ll try my best.”

The promise made Mo Ran elated all night. He was immersed in the joy of exchanging a handful of sweets from handkerchief. He covered himself with a newly changed quilt and rolled around happily, unable to sleep.

For the past five years, he had been in the throes of intoxication.

This was the first time he was unable to sleep due to joy.

His heart was beating fast and he could not calm down for a long time. Finally, he sat up in his bed and looked at the window in Chu Wanning’s room. He was lying on his stomach on the edge of the bed. Through the gap that was slightly opened up, his nose revealed the sweetness of the night in the countryside. In front of him was a small courtyard.

Chu Wanning was still awake.

What was he doing?

Was he trying to figure out how to cut a handkerchief, or was he eating the Lotus Blossom Sesame that he had brought with him?

Mo Ran looked at the warm yellow light coming from the opposite window for a long time. When the lights went out and Chu Wanning fell asleep, he reluctantly whispered:

“Shizun, sweet dreams.”

There was another sentence that was buried deep in his heart. Even if no one heard it, he wouldn’t dare to say it out loud.

Chu Wanning.

Good dream.

Ch. 140 Shizun, Turn Over

That night, Chu Wanning had a dream, but unfortunately it was not a good dream.

In his dream, he had returned to the year of the Heavenly Rift in Butterfly Town, only the person person who repaired the Rift with him was Shi Mei.

It was snowing heavily in the leaden sky. Shi Mei could not hold on any longer, and his heart was pierced by a ghost. He fell from the coiling dragon pillar into the endless snow. Mo Ran ran over and carried the bleeding Shi Mei. He knelt at his feet and begged him to help him.

Save his disciple.

He wanted to save him as well, but under the effects of the Twin Seals, his wounds were as severe as Shi Mei's.

His face was pale and he did not say a word. He was afraid that if he spoke, he would choke out blood and the ghosts around him would rush over and tear them to shreds.

"Shizun… Please… I beg you…"

Mo Ran was crying and kowtowing to him.

Chu Wanning closed his eyes and fled in the end…

Shi Mei died.

Mo Ran never forgave him again.

He dreamt of the Naihe Bridge at the Sisheng Peak. It was during the cold spring, when the rain fell, and the tender sprouts of the spring trees were moistened by the rain. The bluestone path beneath his feet seemed endless. He walked alone with an umbrella.

Suddenly, he saw another person walking over from the other side of the bridge. He was dressed in black and did not hold an umbrella. He was holding a stack of books wrapped in a piece of parchment and was walking towards him. Chu Wanning slowed down his pace.

The man obviously saw him too, but his pace did not slow. He only lifted his wet eyelashes and glanced at him without feeling.

Chu Wanning wanted to call out to him, to say: Mo Ran…

Mo Ran did not give him any chance to speak. He carried his book and walked the far left side of the Naihe Bridge. Another inch and he would be in the river — just to stay away from Shizun, who was walking on the right, just a little further.

They were halfway across the bridge.

A person who used to hold umbrellas, walking in the rain, a person who was not used to holding umbrellas, also walking in the rain.

Then they passed each other.

The head of the person in the rain walked away, and the person holding the umbrella stopped and stood in place.

The rain pattered on the umbrella. Chu Wanning stood there for a long time, his legs numb from the rain. It was as if the cold moisture in his body had seeped into his bones.

He suddenly felt very tired and couldn't walk anymore.

Dreamscape darkened.

It was heavy and cold.

It was as cold as rain, as heavy as legs that could no longer move.

In his sleep, Chu Wanning turned his body over, shrinking down to a small size. Something trickled down from the corner of his eye and moistened the pillow. He vaguely knew that this was only a dream, but why was it so real? The truth was so clear that he could feel the hatred, disappointment, and derisiveness of Mo Ran.

However… Is that all?

Is this the end?

He was unwilling. It was as if his unwillingness caused the surrounding light to shine again.

It was still a dream. It had been many months since Shi Mei's death.

Mo Ran's personality became more and more gloomy as he talked less and less. However, he still came to all the cultivation classes, but he just listened to them and didn't say anything to Chu Wanning.

Chu Wanning did not explain why he did not save Shi Mei. He had seen Mo Ran's attitude, and he knew it was useless to say anything about it now that things had come to this.

Today's cultivation class, Mo Ran followed the instructions and stood at the top of a pine tree to train his spirit energy.

However, for some reason, he suddenly lost his stamina and fell straight down. Chu Wanning didn't have time to think, he quickly rushed over to help him, but in a hurry he had not time to cast spells, the two of them heavily fell from the treetops and landed on the ground.

Fortunately, the soil was soft and there was a thick layer of pine needles on the ground. Neither of them were injured from the fall, but Chu Wanning's wrist was cut by a sharp branch. There was a hideous cut on it, and blood flowed out.

Mo Ran looked at his wound, then for the first time in months, he raised his eyes and looked at Chu Wanning's face.

Finally he said, "Shizun, you're bleeding."

His tone was somewhat numb, but what he said was a sentence that eased the tension.

"I have some ointment and bandages in my pocket, let's deal with them."

They sat in the dense coniferous forest. The air was filled with the fragrance of pine and cypress. Chu Wanning did not say anything. He looked at Mo Ran lowering his head and silently bandaged himself one after another.

The young man's eyelashes trembled, but Chu Wanning could not see the expression on his face. For a moment, he wanted to gather enough courage and ask:

Mo Ran, do you really hate me that much?

But at that time, the wind was too slow, the sun was too warm, and there were birds chirping and insects chirping in the leaves. His injured hand was

quietly held by Mo Ran, and he was taking care of the bandages.

In the end, he did not ask about it, nor did he try to break this painting.

He suddenly felt that the answer wasn't that important. What was important was that in this dream, after Shi Mei had died, his blood and wounds could be exchanged for an inch of gentleness from Mo Ran.

The next day, when Chu Wanning woke up, he was still in a trance for a moment.

As he lay on the bed, he could even feel the pain in his arms, as if they were warm. After a while, he rubbed his face tiredly and found it funny.

What kind of nonsense was he dreaming about?

People always say your thoughts in the day are dreams at night. Could it be that when you see the handsome appearance of Shi Mei, you become depressed? To think that you could dream about Shi Mei dying…

How ridiculous.

He got dressed and got out of bed. After washing his face and rinsing his mouth, he quickly forgot about last night's dream.

Today, the village chief and the others were going to make a New Year's cake.

The New Year's cake is a must on New Year's Eve in order to win the prize. The japonica rice noodles and the glutinous rice noodles were grind on the night before, and then the women and old people had to heat the stove and cook the powder. This process took quite a bit of effort, but it didn't require the hands of the young and strong men, so it didn't matter if Chu

Wanning got up a bit later and slowly walked to the end of the line. (TL: Chinese rice noodle.)

When he arrived, he saw a big pot on the large sunning ground. The half-a-man tall wooden bucket was steaming hot and was constantly emitting steam. The Village Head's wife was standing on a short stool, occasionally filling the pot with rice powder. A few children were running and playing around the stove. From time to time, they would take out a string of roasted peanuts and a corn cob from the fire pit.

What surprised Chu Wanning was that Mo Ran was working very early, helping the village chief's wife to watch the fire. A child ran happily, fell to the ground, choked and cried loudly.

"How did you fall?" Mo Ran helped her up, dusting off the mud on her body and said, "Is there any injury?"

"Hand—" The little girl wailed as she raised her dark hands for Mo Ran to see.

Mo Ran picked her up, took her to the well and washed her hands with a bucket of clear water. The distance between them was too far, so Chu Wanning didn't hear what he said to the child, but the little girl was sobbing and crying. After a while, she burst into laughter, looked up at Mo Ran with a runny face, and began to talk to Mo Ran chirping.

"…"

Chu Wanning stood quietly at the corner watching him, watching him coax people, watching him carry the child back to the fire, watching him take the child back to the pond, watching him pull out a sweet potato from the fire, peel it carefully and hand it to the little girl.

He just watched.

It was as if he had seen the five years that Mo Weiyu had gone through.

“Ah, Shizun is here?”

“Yes.” Only after a long while did Chu Wanning walk to Mo Ran’s side and sit down. He looked at the flames dancing under the boiler for a moment and said, “What’s in it?”

“Peanut, sweet potato, corn. Here you are, I’ll roast a candy for you.”

“… Sweets can even be roasted?”

“Shizun can’t roast it. It’ll burn immediately.” Mo Ran laughed, “I think it would be better if I do it.”

As he said this, he took out another malt candy from his pocket and went outside to the brown paper. He took the poker and turned it over in the oven, then he immediately put it away and took out the candy, “Hiss, it’s a little hot.” He blew on it before passing it to him.

“Taste it.”

“…” Chu Wanning was not used to being fed by others, so he reached out for a piece of candy. The milky-white candy was a little soft and when he chewed it, the fragrance of milk permeated the air and he said, “Not bad. Roast one more.”

Mo Ran was happy and another one was roasted. Chu Wanning took it in his hands and ate it himself.

“Give me another one.”

“…”

Mo Ran had roasted eight of them in a row. When it reached the ninth one, some kids ran over to ask Mo Ran for sweet potatoes. Since Mo Ran couldn’t get his hands on them, he had to let Chu Wanning take them.

Chu Wanning picked up the other poker and picked the biggest one. Mo Ran looked at it and said, “Put this back and take the small one next to you.”

“It tastes great.”

“Unripe.” Mo Ran laughed.

Chu Wanning was unconvinced, “How do you know?”

“Believe me, I often roast food in the wild. Take the little one and give it to him, the little one is sweet.”

The child didn’t know what kind of outstanding person Chu Wanning was in the cultivation world, but seeing that he was willing to pick out sweet potatoes for him, he leaned over and whispered to him, “Gege, I want to eat that big one.”

“Tell the other big brother. He didn’t let you eat it, he said it wasn’t cooked.”

The child then went to find Mo Ran. “Mo Ran Gege, I want to eat that big one.”

“If you want to eat something big, wait a little longer,” Mo Ran said.

“How long will it take?”

“From one to a hundred.”

“But I can only count from one to ten…” The child felt wronged.

Mo Ran laughed. “Then you will only eat the small ones.”

The little guy had no choice but to sigh and accept the injustice fate had done to him. He said with a listless face, “Alright, then this little one will be fine.”

Chu Wanning peeled the sweet potato for him. When it was almost done, the burnt candy was roasted until it was soft. If he didn’t eat it now, it would melt completely. He quickly took it off and passed it to Chu Wanning, “Shizun, come here, open your mouth.”

He still had sweet potatoes in his hand, so he didn’t think too much and just opened his mouth naturally. It wasn’t until Mo Ran fed him the warm milk sugar and rubbed the corner of his mouth with his rough fingers that he realized he had eaten a candy that his disciple had personally fed him, causing his ears to turn red.

“More?”

Chu Wanning coughed lightly. Fortunately, the light from the fire was already warm, reflecting off his face, but it was hard to see the change in his expression. He said, “No need.”

Mo Ran smiled and said, “Just to feed you. There’s only one last cow’s milk left. If you eat more, there won’t be any more left.”

He was lazy to use words because he was relaxed and did not think twice about it.

Thus, he naturally said the word “feed”. However, a disciple would naturally not dare to speak to his Shizun like that. These two words were filled with pampering and forcefulness, such as the Shizun feeding the children, the emperor feeding the wives and concubines, and even becoming the leader of the bed. The conquerors above used their scalding hot flesh to feed the woman who was groaning beneath them.

Chu Wanning was immersed in the rough words, unable to recover for a long time.

After the rice was steamed, it was time to set up a stall. It was a manual labor. All the strong men in the village were swinging their hammers to make the cake. The village chief gave Mo Ran a wooden hammer wrapped in gauze and wanted to pass it to Chu Wanning, but was stopped by Mo Ran.

Mo Ran smiled and said, “Village Head, my Shizun has never done this before. He can’t do it.”

“…” Chu Wanning was silent on the side.

He was very unreconciled, and even a bit angry, because from the moment he came out of the mountain until now, there had never been a person who could relate him to the word “not doing well”.

In the mouths of others, all he could hear was begging, begging, and “Immortal, how about you do me a favor?”

This was the first time someone blocked his way and said, “He won’t, he can’t do it well.”

Chu Wanning was furious, he wanted to shake his sleeves and shout, “You are the one who is not good at this!”

But he restrained himself.

Because what Mo Ran said was the truth, he really couldn’t do it well.

Finally, the Village Chief arranged for them to sit in front of a stone block. Inside the stone block, there was a steaming bowl of rice flour.

Mo Ran said, “Shizun, I’ll make a cake later. Remember to turn the rice cake over for me every three tries. Be careful not to get burned, and don’t be in too much of a hurry, don’t get smashed by me.”

“… If you could hit me with a hammer, then you quit cultivation, go home and farm.”

Mo Ran laughed. “I only meant it’s better to be safe than sorry.”

Chu Wanning was too lazy to waste words with him, the two on the side had already started swinging. He didn’t want to be too far behind, so he stood beside the stone block and said, “Come.”

In the first hit, he hit the soft and hot rice noodles, causing the rice noodles to sink in and wrap around the hammer. He hit it three more times, raised his bright eyes, and said to Chu Wanning, “Shizun, turn over.”

Chu Wanning flipped the rice ball over, and Mo Ran dropped the hammer.

After several rounds of working together, they had mastered the rhythm of Mo Ran. With the third wave of Mo Ran, Chu Wanning neatly turned the ball over. When he withdrew his hand, Mo Ran launched a new attack. The beating of the cake seemed simple, but to grasp it well, one had to be

strong and energetic, turning it over and over again so many times that the rice noodles became thoroughly soft and sticky before it could be considered complete.

After working for a while, the farmers were tired, they started shouting, “One, two, three — one, two, three —” The rhythm of the falling hammer was what they were shouting, and as if it was interesting for them to do so, they hit the rice ball until it was half sticky, the people beside them were already panting, but Mo Ran didn’t feel anything, so he smiled and said to Chu Wanning, “Come again.”

Chu Wanning glanced at him. The young man’s forehead was covered in sweat, shining like honey under the sun. His lips were slightly parted, unlike the usual sigh of exhaustion, but his breathing was somewhat heavy and his chest was heaving.

Seeing Chu Wanning looking at him, he was stunned for a moment. He wiped his face with his sleeve and smiled: “What’s wrong? Is there rice on my face?”

“Nope.”

“That is…”

Chu Wanning watching Mo Ran’s forehead, sweating profusely from the heat, but he could not bear to watch him fold the lapels of his shirt to his Adam’s apple. He asked, “Are you hot?”

Yesterday, he had asked Mo Ran if he was “cold”, and today, he asked if he was “hot”. This confused Mo Ran very much; it was obvious that the two days of temperature was not too far off.

“If it’s hot, just take it off.”

“If Shizun doesn’t like it, I won’t take it off.”

“…You’re sweating all over, and it’s even more annoying.”

Since he said so, Mo Ran started to feel uncomfortable, so he took off the outer robe and the upper garment and threw them onto the graphite. Chu Wanning watched coldly, but his heart was gradually getting hotter, he watched as Mo Ran revealed his broad shoulders, firm arms, and a layer of hot air that could be felt on his face after the inner garment was taken off. He was like a mermaid out of water, turning around and smiling at Chu Wanning, so handsome that it made one’s heart race.

“Two cultivators, would you like some water?” The Village Head’s wife, carrying a cup of tea, asked about them one by one.

Mo Ran returned to the stone block and once again picked up the wooden hammer. He smiled and said, “No need, I’m not thirsty yet.”

A hand reached over and picked up a teacup from the tray.

Under their astonished gazes, Chu Wanning took a whole cup of tea and passed it to the Village Head’s wife, “Please have another cup.”

“… Shizun, are you very thirsty?”

Unknowingly, these words had stabbed him. Chu Wanning abruptly raised his head, his eyes burning with caution, “Thirsty?… No, I’m not thirsty.”

He gulped down another glass of water.

Mo Ran looked at him and couldn’t help but be puzzled. When had his Shizun’s self-esteem become so serious that he was even ashamed of his thirst?

Ch. 141 Shizun, Don't Strip!!!!

After drinking the water, the two began to get busy again. However, once Mo Ran swung the hammer, Chu Wanning knew that things were not looking good.

The huge movement made the young man's body even more tense and fierce. The golden sunlight poured down on him like a waterfall, flowing down those sexy muscles. When he raised his arm, his shoulders were stretched wide open.

His chest was as smooth and firm as a piece of scorching hot rock, containing astonishing heat and strength.

The wooden hammer ruthlessly smashed into the stone block. It was tightly sucked up by the soft and wet rice cake. In the end, it became even more viscous…

He used so much strength that Chu Wanning felt that if he was unlucky enough to get hit by it, he would be smashed into smithereens.

Crushed to bits. His chest rose and fell together with his heart. His pitch-black eyebrows were covered with sweat, and his Adam's apple was moving up and down. The muscles on his upper arm relaxed as he watched his movements.

Suddenly, he couldn't help but think back to that dream he had over and over again.

In his dreams, he would be invaded, rubbed, humiliated, and turned into mud on Mo Ran's bed like a rice cake in a stone mortar… He was lost in

thought until Mo Ran called out to him again.

“Shizun.”

Or maybe he shouted a few times.

“Shizun, Shizun?”

He regained his composure but his heart was beating wildly. Glimmers danced in his eyes. His throat moved and his eyes lost focus. “Hm?”

Mo Ran’s cool eyes looked down at him. Because of his body heat, he appeared to be extremely hot. He said, “Shizun, come. Turn over.”

“…”

He suddenly felt a little dizzy, and a scarlet shadow seemed to flash before his eyes. He saw two people rolling in the middle of a red bed embroidered with a golden phoenix soaring dragon, and a muscular man pressing down on the other man. The man below tightened his toes, and his calve muscles were spasming.

“Shizun, turn over…”

He seemed to hear the man’s hot breath, as if it were just behind his ears.

“Let me see your face.”

Chu Wanning was shocked by the inexplicable flash of light. He abruptly closed his eyes and shook his head – what was going on? Illusion? Or was it a memory that was too detailed in that dream?

He felt his heart tremble, and his blood was boiling, yet cold sweat was dripping down his face.

Mo Ran sensed that something was amiss, he put down the wooden hammer and walked over to his side, “Shizun, what’s wrong? Is there something wrong with it?”

“Nope.” His voice made Chu Wanning feel as if he was being bitten by an ant. Chu Wanning abruptly pushed him away, raising his embarrassed and angry phoenix eyes which were slightly red. He panted heavily, hating himself, “The sun is just too bright, I’m seeing things. Don’t stand so close to me, you’re all sweaty.”

Mo Ran lowered his head and looked. As expected, he felt uneasy. He knew Chu Wanning loved cleanliness, so he immediately stood to the side. With a concerned gaze, he continued to chase after the man, unwilling to move away for even a moment.

After that, Chu Wanning remained silent. By the time the steamed cake was done and everyone was seated in a circle, he was no longer around them.

“Oh, ask Chu Wanning. He said that he has a headache and went back to his room to rest.” The village chief said, “When he left, his cheeks were a little red, could it be that he had a fever?”

Upon hearing this, Mo Ran was extremely anxious. He stopped helping to store the New Year’s cake and rushed back to the small courtyard where the two were staying.

He pushed open the door, but no one was on the bed. He was even more worried when he heard the sound of water coming from the kitchen. He hurriedly lifted the curtain and rushed in recklessly.

Then, he saw Chu Wanning with his clothes off, holding a bucket full of water, standing barefoot on the brick-red floor while taking a shower.

By the end of October, the frost had passed.

Chu Wanning… Washing the fuck out with cold water?!

Mo Ran was shocked, his face alternating between green and white, then red. He glared at his Shizun who was completely naked and only felt that other than the rumbling sounds of blood flowing like the surging of money, he could not hear anything else.

What did he see…

Since his rebirth, this was the first time he saw Chu Wanning's body in full detail. There was no mist, no concealment, nothing but this familiar figure, this body that had shattered the defense he had built and his tight memory lock. He felt as if all the blood in his body was burning like lava, wanting to break free from the flesh and skin.

Everything was exactly the same as what he was familiar with, not changing in the slightest.

He suddenly found himself unable to breathe.

He saw Chu Wanning's shoulder, with its perfect curve and force, like a bow that had been pulled to seventy percent full, ready to strike. He saw Chu Wanning's shoulder blades moving under his skin that was as thin as ice.

Then, he followed the stream of water. Yes, he followed it, and the water washed his gaze down to the ground. He saw Chu Wanning's slim waist,

and behind his were two shallow grooves filled with wine, trying to kill those who desired him.

Further down, he saw a pair of buttocks, straight and firm, like the full fruit of an autumn honey, and he knew how they would feel when he touched it. When he touched them, they would tremble with pleasure, their souls would seem to break apart, and from then on, they would be kneaded together with the person beneath them.

“Immortal Mo!” Suddenly, someone called out to him. “Immortal Mo, are you there?”

Mo Ran was shocked and turned around, but before he could do so, the curtain on the door was lifted. Ling’er leaned in, and said as she walked, “Why did you run away in such a hurry? My aunt told me to call you to eat the sweet rice cake, you —”

When she saw Chu Wanning taking a bath, she went silent.

Chu Wanning: “…”

Ling’er: “…”

“AH!” The girl screamed as she covered her eyes in panic. Chu Wanning also had a very bad complexion, it was rare for him to run to get some clothes, but he didn’t expect to run back here to take a shower, and there would be two uninvited guests barging into his room.

He had always been casual, leaving his clothes at the door when he took them off. Was he supposed to walk naked through the kitchen and fish for his clothes under the eyes of a girl?

While he was overwhelmed with anxiety, Mo Ran walked straight towards him. He actually raised his hand to press against the wall, blocking Chu Wanning's entire body in his arms.

Mo Ran turned around and said to Ling'er, "Get out."

"Ah! Yes! Yes!" The girl, too, was stunned for a moment, then she stumbled out the door and ran away, frightened.

Chu Wanning: "…"

Mo Ran's face darkened. After confirming that she had really walked far away, he heaved a sigh of relief and turned around.

It was a cold expression on Chu Wanning's face.

Only then did he realize that his movements were similar to a dog protecting food. He bared his teeth and scared away the intruders, then turned around and whined as he licked the food that was difficult to come by.

His hands were still leaning on the wall. In order to cover Chu Wanning tightly, he stuck close enough to him that he could easily smell his scent. He couldn't help but freeze…

His head was very hot and heavy.

Smells are the easiest to evoke memories and desires, like the smell of meat and hunger, the smell of plum blossoms and winter snow, and so on.

Emotions were the same.

Mo Ran could only feel his spirit surging. The wall built with great difficulty seemed to be about to be overthrown. The smell of Chu Wanning's body was like a spark, falling into his dry chest, igniting his beastly nature to burn him into ashes.

Normally, when he got close to him, even if he was dressed neatly, he would still be tempted, not to mention that the person in front of him was not wearing a single piece of clothing at all…

He wished that he could grab hold of Chu Wanning's cold, beaded wrist, twist him over and press him against the wall, then tear off his own clothes, fiercely sticking to this person, lifting him up so that his back was pressed against his chest. Just like in his previous life, he went in brutally and ruthlessly, killed and reborn in the midst of his sweat and breath.

He really couldn't do it anymore… He really wanted him.

Mo Ran's breathing suddenly became heavy.

He did not say anything, and neither did Chu Wanning.

The two of them stood very close to the wall, almost touching each other, but Mo Ran's arm muscles were taut and his veins were popping out, trembling slightly and holding on.

Don't touch him, don't touch him.

To respect him, to love him.

I can't do something stupid like cheating on my Shizun and exterminating our ancestors again.

He repeated to himself, mechanically.

It was cold, but his forehead was starting to sweat.

I can't… I can't… Mo Ran, you can't. Don't let your thoughts run wild.

His Adam's apple rolled and he closed his eyes with a tremble. He closed his burning gaze under his eyelids, but his face was filled with confusion…

If it was the usual Chu Wanning, how could he not see the difference?

But at the moment, his condition was not much better than Mo Ran's, or worse.

He looked cold, but God only knew how much effort it had taken him to keep his balance.

Mo Ran's breathing was so hot and heavy that it had a strong male scent, almost as if it was going to burn him. He had not fought with Mo Ran since his rebirth, but he knew that if he fought hard enough and did not use any spells, he would only end up as a pile of bones in front of his arms.

He was unwilling to look at Mo Ran's eyes. He lowered his gaze a little, and his gaze fell upon Mo Ran's chest.

Although they were not stuck together, Mo Ran was so close to him that it was almost a straight line away, and he could clearly feel the male tension radiating from the hot chest, broad and blazing.

It was as if he could melt the coldest ice in the world and turn it into a weak spring tide.

"Shizun…"

The young man suddenly called out to him. He didn't know if it was his imagination, but he felt that the other party's voice was a little hoarse, filled with a moist desire and heat.

Mo Ran had called him Shizun countless times, calm, respectful, angry, and ridiculing, countless.

But this was the first time he heard a different 'Shizun'. It was mixed with the fishy smell of love and lust, making it look dirty and bewitching. Chu Wanning felt his bones tingling.

Impossible, Mo Ran couldn't call him that.

He had heard wrong, he had thought too much.

It was his heart that was dirty.

He subconsciously retreated backwards, his bare back knocking against the cold wall. He couldn't help but shiver, his lips quivering as he slightly opened them. He seemed somewhat at a loss.

Mo Ran's eyes darkened.

He looked at the moist, pale lips. Although he did not move, his mind was preoccupied with the thought of lowering his head to kiss him, prying open his lips, his hot tongue savagely invading that forbidden land that had never been invaded before. He imagined his hands grabbing onto his waist, vigorously rubbing it, and his skin stained with a violent red color with his marks.

No matter how he tried to suppress it, the blood in his body was still wolf blood.

The sex he released was always hot and violent. He even wanted to tear up the person he slept with, eat it clean from inside out, and lick the last drop of blood, an inch of meat.

He couldn't help but be a carnivore.

Closing his eyes, he suppressed the lava boiling in his chest. He knew that the situation was not good, and he knew how close a man's desire would be to a wild beast.

He withdrew his hand and spoke in an almost hoarse voice, "Shizun, I'll give it to you… Take your clothes."

A heavy breath brushed Chu Wanning's eyelashes.

Mo Ran turned around and strode to the door, picking up the robe Chu Wanning left behind.

Chu Wanning was still leaning against the wall, but he felt as if he had run a hundred miles and was completely exhausted. He could not even breathe. He narrowed his phoenix eyes and saw Mo Ran looking at his clothes. He suddenly thought of something and was stunned for a few seconds. Then, he suddenly woke up!

When Mo Ran entered the room, he was showering with his back facing him. However, when he turned around, Mo Ran was stuck close to him, so he didn't look down. That was why he didn't notice his desire.

However, if Mo Ran took his clothes and turned around, then the aloof Elder Yuheng, the image of the aloof and restrained Chu Wanning, would be shattered into ashes in an instant.

Chu Wanning was instantly anxious.

He saw that Mo Ran had already parted his clothes and was holding them in his hands. He was about to turn back…

There were only two choices left for Chu Wanning.

First, his leg suddenly hurt and he squatted down.

Second, poke him blind.

Before he could come to a decision, Mo Ran had already turned around and said, “Shizun, you…”

You what?

He did not finish.

The rest of his words, the moment he saw the scene before his eyes, were all cut off between his lips and sunk deep into the quagmire, unable to be pulled out again.

Ch. 142 Shizun, This Is Cruel Torture

It turned out that the moment when Mo Ran turned his head around, Chu Wanning's mind was set ablaze. Almost at the very last moment, he turned around and leaned against the wall with his arms crossed, leaving the man with a firm and powerful back.

This way, he wouldn't be able to see the man's face. Chu Wanning felt that he was really smart.

This fool didn't even know that what he has exposed under Mo Ran's eyelids was a low-lying, sexy waist, a full, firm butt, and a pair of long, powerful legs… He was like a rabbit that had been skinned.

The roasted meat was crisp, almost saying, "Please eat, thank you."

Mo Ran felt his throat go dry and his eyes were bloodshot. After enduring for a while, he said, "Shizun, what is this… for?"

What for?

…Hmm… This posture was indeed a bit strange. How could he describe it in such a way that he could quietly muddle his way through…

Chu Wanning turned his face to the side. His expression was cold and solemn as if he wanted to cover it up.

Mo Ran had already put down his clothes and was walking towards him. Perhaps because of the light, he felt that the expression on his face was extremely chilling. He was like a wolf that had been starved for a long time in the jungle.

The wolf hesitated. The thirst in its stomach and the reason in its mind fought intensely. The flames of war spread from its body to its eyes. Its black burning eyes were very bright and gave off a ghostly light.

Chu Wanning finally felt that something was amiss. With a single word, he placed the bowstring on the bow and spoke in a sharp tone, piercing through the eerie silence.

“Rub my back.”

“… Hmm?” The voice of Mo Ran was stuck in his throat, carrying a bit of a nasal sound, making him seem very sexy. “What?”

This was an excuse that Chu Wanning came up with when he was in a hurry, but since the words were already in his ears, he had no choice but to pretend to be calm and say, “Since you’re here, why don’t you rub my back and leave.”

Mo Ran: “…”

“I’ve been busy these past few days. My body is covered with sweat and I feel uncomfortable.” Chu Wanning tried his best to act casual and nonchalant, “Washing is always good.”

He didn’t know if he had tricked Mo Ran, or if his lies were natural.

In the end, Mo Ran listened to him and obediently took out a towel. He poured warm water over his body and started rubbing his back.

Yuheng had always been a wise man. But this was the stupidest thing he had ever done.

What was the most tormenting thing in the world?

The one he loved stood behind him, with a rough towel, rubbing his whole body with his large hands. Every touch was like a sail over spring water, leaving a hot red mark. Although the power of Mo Ran had been restrained, it was still very strong. Moreover, his skin and flesh had never been caressed like this before. He could only feel his muscles twitching, and he had to tighten his body to barely be able to keep from being seen by the person behind him.

His forehead was pressed against the wall. In a place where one couldn't see it due to Mo Ran, he tightly bit down on his lips. His eyes were red at the edges of his eyes.

He was still an innocent person, so what if he had to endure such a provocation in front of someone he deeply loved? He pretended to be aloof.

It was too unbearable…

However, if one were to ask Mo Ran, what was the most torturous thing in the world?

I'm afraid the answer will be very different, he might say. The man is standing naked before you, his hands against the wall, his back relaxed, the man completely confident of himself, giving you everything but himself, while you rub his whole body with your hot, dirty hands, through an obstructing towel.

Of course, he knew that he was rubbing the back of his Shizun, but with just a little bit of strength, that person's skin would turn red. It was the sexy look of someone who had been humiliated and abused.

He ran his hand over his shoulder blade and wound it around the side of his waist. He felt the person beneath him tremble slightly, but he did not know if it was an illusion. He stared at the white and plump arc, and restrained himself until his eyes were bloodshot, so as not to lose the bath towel, grab him directly with his hands, and press hard, five fascinating red marks.

He had already tasted the ecstasy of the man before him. So what if he held back his words and forced himself to act like a gentleman in front of him?

It was too unbearable…

The two of them felt uncomfortable for a long time. If they continued to rub on it, they were afraid that they would start a fire.

Chu Wanning finally could not hold it in anymore and said hoarsely, “Okay, you can leave. I can do the rest, I’ll do it myself.”

Mo Ran heaved a sigh of relief. His forehead was covered in sweat.

He lowered his voice and said, “Yes… Shizun…”

The curtain of the door was lifted and fell, and Mo Ran left.

Chu Wanning had not recovered from his shock for a long time. He was still leaning against the wall, his forehead pressed against the wall. His ears were blood-red, the same as the marks of being rubbed on his back. He did not know whether Mo Ran had actually seen it or not.

“…”

He slightly opened his phoenix eyes as if he was feeling humiliated. He bit his lower lip and hesitated for a long time. However, he still reached out his hand and grabbed onto his desire.

Originally, he came back to take a shower to suppress this foul mood.

Who would have thought that by chance, Mo Ran would push him deeper into the sea of desire. Chu Wanning, who had been relying on the Heart Cleansing Method to defend against human nature, could not help but release his overflowing desire for love in the most ordinary and embarrassing way.

His lips were slightly parted and his almond-shaped eyes were half-closed. His expression was somewhat pitiful and somewhat aggrieved…

He stood against the cold wall, his forehead burning, his beautiful shoulders hunched, his Adam's apple rolling, his breath coming in low gasps and gulps.

So sinful, yet so beautiful.

It was like a white phoenix tail butterfly that had fallen into a spider web. It shook its wings powerlessly in the tightly-knit emotions, but it could not, never, never escape from the clutches of death.

He was dirty after all.

Dirty to the bones, dirty to such a miserable, so pitiable, tempting to invade, addictive.

In the end, Chu Wanning was furious. He punched the wall. He was so ruthless, so angry, and so unwilling. He even used a lot of strength. His finger bones were broken and blood seeped out.

“Bastard.”

It was unknown whether he was scolding himself or Mo Ran.

Chu Wanning’s eyes were moist. There was affection, there was hatred, and there was also bewilderment.

In the blink of an eye, more than half a month had passed since they had arrived at the village.

From the day he took his shower, Chu Wanning had been avoiding Mo Ran like a scorpion or a wild beast. He did not feel anything strange about Mo Ran, but he could not bear the change in his body.

A person, when light and elegant for a long time, would be easy to carry around. Otherwise, why would Chu Wanning despise a pair of cultivation lovers? He really wasn’t jealous. Elder Yuheng truly felt that it was unbearable, that he was fed up with it, and that he loathed it.

He didn’t want to look at the painting because he really didn’t want to, not because he was pretending. For Chu Wanning, things like “liking” and “kissing” were still acceptable, but if he got any closer, such as consoling or intruding, his face would turn green and he wouldn’t be able to accept it.

This was just like a vegetarian. If you were to secretly place some lard in his bowl, he would probably find it fragrant. However, if you were to give him a piece of roasted yellow meat that still had a bloody smell to it, he would probably feel extremely disgusted.

After venting that day in a daze, Chu Wanning woke up. He gasped for breath as he looked at the sticky feeling in his hands. He felt as if a handful of cold water had been poured over his head.

His face turned green.

What was he doing? He was actually tempted by a twenty-something year old brat, and had to rely on self-consoling to calm his surging emotions.

Chu Wanning felt goosebumps rising all over his body. When he encountered Mo Ran, he had to step back, afraid that he would accidentally release the power in his heart and do something that would make him regret.

He retreated, and Mo Ran retreated as well.

Mo Ran was also truly afraid. He felt that his desire for Chu Wanning was much stronger than he expected. The dam he had built was about to collapse from the raging waves, and the enthusiasm in his bones was about to burst out at any moment.

He knew that being human and being a beast was just a thought, and he did not want to hurt Chu Wanning again because of that thought, so he avoided him.

The distance between the two of them was too far. Instead, it gave him the impression of a respectful disciple or a benevolent Shizun.

The days passed peacefully.

On this day, the hunters in the village came up to the mountain and slaughtered a fat and beautiful deer. The villagers proposed to hold a bonfire in the small sunning ground at the entrance of the village in the evening.

Therefore, every household brought out some food, be it cakes or dried meat. The Village Head even opened two jars of sorghum wine, and sat in a

circle around the bonfire, smelling the scent of roasted deer, eating and drinking in a discontented manner. Chu Wanning and Mo Ran were not sitting together. The two of them were quite a distance away from each other, and there was a fire burning between them. They looked at each other through the fire, not wanting to be seen by each other.

You glanced at me and thought it was silent, but the two sets of eyes always met halfway, so you pretended to glance down and then, after a while, sneaked up on each other's cheeks.

The orange flames were surging and the firewood crackled.

The people around them were all talking and laughing. However, none of them could hear or see what was happening. The only thing they could see was the moon in the sky, illuminating the hearts of the two of them.

The village chief's wine soon ran out, but the crowd still felt that it wasn't enough to enjoy themselves to their heart's content.

Mo Ran recalled that there was still a jar of top-quality Pear Blossom White in his room, so he bid his farewells and went back to get his wine.

Halfway through, he heard a sound behind him.

He turned around. "Who?"

The rustling footsteps immediately stopped, and a pair of green shoes embroidered with yellow flowers slowly emerged from the corner.

Mo Ran was stunned. "Miss Ling'er?" It's you."

She stood in the moonlight with her eyes fixed on the wine as her chest heaved up and down along with her rapid breathing. She said, "Immortal

Mo, wait a moment, I have something to tell you.”

Ch. 143 Shizun Turned Out to Be My Pure Unattainable Love, My Bedazzling Passion, the Apple of My Eye, My Fated One

No matter how slow Mo Ran was, how could he not know what was going on when he saw her burning gaze? He immediately said, “Miss Ling’er, you drank too much. If you have anything to say, you can say it tomorrow…”

“I want to talk about it today!”

This little girl was quite fierce when she was bullied. Her hair was a little scattered, and her eyes were glowing.

“…” Mo Ran was afraid that he would get pestered. He wanted to run away, but the corner of his sleeve was pulled by her. He was angry and amused at the same time and said, “Let go of me.”

“Not letting go.” The so called wine strong courage, not to mention Ling’er was not small, and the idea of clinging onto the Sisheng Peak was not a day or two, so she loudly said, “I like you, do you like me?”

Mo Ran: “…”

Seeing no response from the man, Ling’er became anxious.

Ever since Mo Ran arrived at Yuliang Village, she had felt that this man was a formidable and heroic figure. When she found out that he was the famous “Mo-zongshi”, her heart sank deeper and deeper into her thoughts.

The only thing she could show was her pretty face and good figure. Although she didn’t know what Mo Ran thought of her, if she didn’t express herself now, it would be very difficult for her to have another

chance in the future. Thus, tonight, with the help of some alcohol, she was able to muster up the courage to follow Mo Ran around and disable Mo Ran to block her from confessing.

To be honest, even Mo Ran was a bit taken aback by this torrent of courage.

Ling'er's face turned red.

She thought, if only Mo Ran could promise her, then that would be great. With such a handsome brother, not to mention climbing up to him, that would be the same as climbing to the Sisheng Peak. Then from now on, she wouldn't have to stay in this crappy little village to be insulted, and she could live a comfortable life.

"I'm sorry, Miss Ling'er, you should let go."

However, his words had easily shattered the floating pavilion in her mind.

Ling'er's blush had yet to fade as her pale face turned ugly. After a while, she said anxiously, "I-am not good-looking in any way?"

"You look good everywhere." Mo Ran was very polite and gently pulled her hand away. "But I don't like it."

If it was said that he had left her with some face just now, then the phrase "I don't like it" could be said to be like pulling apart dry weeds or rotten wood, ripping off the last bit of her face.

Ling'er's eyes were filled with tears. She was sad. Although she admired Mo Ran, she wasn't that emotional. She wanted to improve a bit more, so she lost most of her dreams.

“Then you…” She held back her tears and asked, “Then what do you like?”

“I —”

Mo Ran was stunned by her words.

What does he like?

Out of habit, he felt that he liked Shi Mei’s appearance, but when the words came to his lips, he suddenly felt that this wasn’t the case.

“Tell me, what do you like?” Ling’er pressed on him. Her beautiful eyes stared at his face. She didn’t want to let him go.

She was also a pitiful person. She had an older sister who had married an ordinary cloth merchant from the upper realms. She had moved to Laizhou a few years ago to live a good life.

She had visited her sister with her mother and carried a pile of dried pepper on her back. But her brother-in-law had felt that the fish was very smelly, that the two of them had been very shabby and he was too ashamed to have them live in his own house, so they had driven home within a few days. This matter was deeply engraved in Ling’er’s heart. From that day on, she was unwilling to live a poor life. She swore to live a better life than her elder sister, and to return all the grievances she had suffered in the future.

So all these years, she had been searching for a hero, wanting to submit herself to others and change her fate.

She really did not want to let go of Mo Weiyu.

So she was almost anxious and crazy, under the wine, she lethargically leaned against him, she had a soft and graceful body, and on summer days when she walked through the fields, the men would steal glances at her, and she was betting on herself to use her warm body to tear open Mo-zongshi's armor.

"What's wrong with me? You didn't even think about it, didn't even think about it, and rejected me just like that?"

Her hot and soft body stuck close to Mo Ran's body, but he felt that his entire body was not used to it. He felt ill-suited and pulled her away, his face already mostly black.

"Miss Ling'er, how long have I known you? Why would I like you? Why would I consider you?"

"How do you know if you don't try!"

Seeing that she was about to come over again, Mo Ran immediately said, "Don't get any closer!"

"You don't like it that much?" Ling'er's eyes were wide open as she said in disbelief, "Just a little…Just a little bit…"

"I don't like it at all." Mo Ran felt that he hadn't said it clearly enough, so it was better to end this matter thoroughly. Even though it was cruel, he still added, "Not a single bit moved."

Ling'er was speechless.

No, she could understand.

But she wasn't moved…

How many unmarried men, facing a woman with an extremely good face and figure, and facing a woman who took the initiative to throw herself into his arms, would be righteous enough to say “not moved”? To be able to face the gentle fragrance and soft jade, he doesn’t have any desire at all?

She stayed in place for a while, then said: “You… How could you. How could you…”

She found it hard to speak.

What she’s really wanted to say was, How come you don’t have any desire? This isn’t normal.

Mo Ran also understood what she meant from her hesitation, but he didn’t want to explain it to her. They had originally met by chance, and this concubine wanted to have some sort of relationship, but he didn’t have this intention at all.

She could think what she wanted, and let her like it.

Mo Ran whispered to her, “I’m sorry.” He slipped into the night.

The night wind blew against his cheeks, and he couldn’t help but squint.

After talking with Ling’er for a while, he suddenly realized that he had been wrong about love.

Ling’er asked him, “What do you like?”

It seemed that he had never asked himself this question before.

To those who received less warmth, they would never have the right to choose. As long as there was someone who treated them well, he would be the one to offer all his blood.

“Like what?”

These were words that he subconsciously did not dare to even think about.

Actually, everyone in this world originally had their own unique tastes and hobbies. As a child, Mo Ran often heard other children tugging at their parents’ clothes, saying, “I like to eat this. This one has green onions.” Or “Mother, this red lantern looks better than the yellow one. I like the red one.”

However, he could not say it. It was useless even if he said it. The only thing he could afford to eat was the cheapest white flour cake. He still had to open it up and eat half of it with his mother.

Later, when he was in the library, he would sneak glances at the rich young masters who had come to listen to the play. He would watch them wave their silk fans and slowly say something like, “I like that Cui’er from the last time. This time, I will sing for her.” Sentences like that.

In fact, in the eyes of Mo Ran, Sister Cui’er was not as beautiful as Sister Bai Rong, but who would care about what he thought?

No one would ever ask him, “What do you like,” or the aesthetic, or the choice, these words were related only to the rich. For Mo Ran, what others gave him was what they gave him, what he ate he should be grateful for, what clothes covered him he should slobber — “like?”

What right did he have to like it? How could he dare to like it? What right did he have to like it? He had to struggle with all his might to survive this wretched life of his.

As time passed, this habit of grasping whatever he got went down to the bone marrow. Later on, even with all the gold, silver, and jewelry that entangled his body, the Dragon Saliva from his brain made him sneeze, but was still unable to cover up the layer of poverty in his bones.

Throughout his life, Mo Ran had fallen into poverty when he was young. His emotions were like the mud on the soles of his shoes, worthless, so he asked, “What do you like?” No one would ask him that.

Later on, his rise to greatness was simple in the Emperor’s heart, accompanied by a king and a tiger. Others could only guess at his thoughts, so he asked, “What do you like?” No one dared to ask this question.

Just now, Ling’er suddenly asked him that. It was just a few simple words, but he actually stopped her.

He had thought that when you love someone, you would be respectful. You would hold them in your hands and not dare to have any wild thoughts.

Just like how he treated Shi Mei.

He felt that this was love, that nothing was wrong.

But at this moment, he faintly understood that this situation wasn’t what he was thinking.

Did he really like gentleness more than he liked stubbornness?

Did he really like delicate instead of strong?

Did he really like his eyes that were like peach blossoms, sharper than phoenix eyes, two blades of frost?

He… Did he really like Shi Mingjing instead… instead of…?

He did not dare to think about the name, but his heart was beating fast, and his blood has become hotter.

Mo Ran was shocked by his desire for love.

Love, desire, love and desire were originally inseparable. Being attracted by the other party's appearance, being bewitched by his voice, his smell, and even a single glance from him, he wanted to seize and possess them. He wanted to leave behind his own aura on the body that originally had nothing to do with him.

He had always believed that love was sacred and that those he loved could not be desecrated.

But how could he not blaspheme?

When a body that he loved, yearned for, and admired appeared before his eyes, how could he bear it?

All the love in the world, only love, and clean fate.

It was destined to be hot and sticky with sweat, to have the color of flesh, to have tangled hair and the smell of heather, to have something to do with moans and passions, to have a delicate stamen to grow in the damp and humid beds.

In the darkness of the night, Mo Ran suddenly stopped in his tracks. His eyes were frighteningly bright, and his expression was aghast.

Something in his skull seemed to have broken. It had been suppressed by his steadiness, his stupidity, and his stubbornness. It had drowned him and swallowed him up with a force that could topple mountains and overturn seas.

He stood in shock on the spot.

Desire, desire.

Love.

Chu Wanning…

He finally dug out the name.

As the sands were emptied, treasures were revealed.

It had always been Chu Wanning… Such private feelings, such passionate love, had always belonged solely to Chu Wanning!

He felt his vision darken, the obsession of two lifetimes shattered, the shattered brick walls washed away by the violent tides, slapping him hard in the chest and making him almost breathless.

He was overwhelmed with shock.

Could it be… so… Could this be the case…

Had the person he liked, the love he called, been wrong all along?

By the time Mo Ran returned to the bonfire with Pear Blossom Bai, Ling'er was already gone.

Of course, no one noticed the departure of a young girl. Naturally, no one knew about the conversation that Mo Ran had with her. They were still chatting and drinking merrily.

After three rounds of drinking, the villagers began to play games. They made a straw ring with the rice stalks and invited a man to beat the drum. When the drum was extinguished, whoever held the ring would be asked a question and would have to answer.

This was a free time for the peasants in the lower cultivation world. It was simple to play and easy to get started. Even for someone like Chu Wanning, who couldn't play, it was not hard to get involved.

"Alright, it's time for Old Bai! Come on, Old Bai will draw lots!"

With a bitter face, Old Bai grabbed a folded piece of paper from the big bowl and unfolded it. He then read it out loud, "Is it a woman with big breasts, or a fat buttocks, that looks good?"

The surrounding crowd immediately burst into laughter.

Old Bai was so angry that his face turned red. He raised the paper slip and cursed, "Which bastard wrote this kind of question and threw it in? This old man will fuck you up!"

"Don't." One of the villagers laughed and pulled on his clothes. "Don't be so hasty, you answer the questions first."

After a few moments, Old Bai's wife came and also sat down and stared at him. Old Bai's hair stood on and he mumbled after a while, "I think it's about the same."

Immediately, someone laughed and shouted, “What the fuck are you talking about? There’s no point in lying! You clearly told me a few days ago that a woman who thinks she’s as big as a butt is good to look after, so why aren’t you telling me the truth! Drink, drink, drink! The forfeit!”

Old Bai had no choice but to drink the wine with a grimace of pain on his face. After that, he was constantly being scolded by his wife.

Chu Wanning hid in the crowd, looking at the awkward yet novel situation. However, this kind of question was too vulgar. If one were to ask about him, he would definitely not be able to answer.

At this time, the village chief took a foot of black cloth, smiled and said, “Someone else can beat the drum. Change Old Zhang and let him play with it. Who can replace him?”

Chu Wanning immediately said, “Let me do it.”

He walked over to the leather drum, which was tied with thick leather, and took the drumstick. He then sat on the ground.

The village chief carefully tied up the blindfold with a black belt. After adjusting it left and right, he asked, “Is it tight?”

“It doesn’t matter.”

“Is it see through?”

“Not a bit.”

The village chief smiled and said, “Then I’ll ask the Immortal to beat the drum. If you want to stop, just do it.”

Chu Wanning agreed, “Sure.” He took up the wooden hammer and knocked on the surface of the skin, then he nimbly struck out the dense drum, creating a cacophony of noise.

His eyes were blindfolded, and he did not notice the gaze of Mo Ran through the bonfire. It was so complicated and confused.

Mo Ran looked at him, the sparks flying, like an orange firefly scattering into the night. He looked at the man in white clothes lying on the ground, his gaze moving inch by inch, like a sharp knife, across Chu Wanning’s forehead, the tip of his nose, his lips, his chin.

To him, the black cloth that covered Chu Wanning was an indescribable temptation. However, this time, Mo Ran did not let this temptation slip away. He chewed and licked it.

He tasted love in it.

Once again he felt the tremor in his heart, once more he confirmed. That’s right.

He loved Chu Wanning. That love had nothing to do with the relationship between Shizun and disciple, and nothing to do with kindness.

He simply adored him, longed for him, wanted him.

He…

Finally, he realized that he loves Chu Wanning.

It was love.

He was so confused, so paranoid, so stupid, so blind.

He was finally enlightened today.

He loves Chu Wanning.

He had thought through this part thoroughly. The layer of sealed soil that had been accumulating in his mind had finally collapsed. Many things that he could not understand in the past, many answers that he could not come to any conclusion, all came flooding in this love that came too late.

But before he could taste it, before he had time to ponder.

With a “dong” sound, the sound of the drum stopped, and the sound spread out like ripples.

At this time, the grass bracelet landed on his knee. He picked it up in a daze, and when he looked up, he saw that Chu Wanning was relieved. He took off the black ribbon with one hand and opened his beautiful eyes, looking over at him.

He was also curious to know where the flowers had fallen when he stopped drumming.

He met Mo Ran’s gaze.

Chu Wanning: “…”

Mo Ran: “…”

There’s nothing more awkward than when he peeked at you, and you peeked at him, too. Their eyes met, and they both avoided each other.

However, Chu Wanning stopped hiding very quickly because he suddenly realized that there was a complex feeling on Mo Ran’s handsome and

upright face. He could not hide it even if he went past the bonfire that was surrounded by gold stars and the bustling crowd.

Chu Wanning widened his eyes.

“Immortal Mo, good luck.” The village chief smiled and went to pull Mo Ran up.

He hesitated for a while and put on the grass ring according to the rules. His black eyes were very bright, but he did not know what to do. He put on his hat and looked at Chu Wanning again carefully. That handsome suntanned face actually gradually turned red in the midst of the flames.

Chu Wanning was shocked by his abnormal behavior. His eyes widened as he stared at him.

Under Chu Wanning’s undisguised gaze, Mo Ran lowered his eyes and pursed his lips without saying a word. He looked obedient and shy at the same time.

He seemed to be like one of those stupid young men in love for the first time. At this stage, his emotions had just started and everything seemed so clumsy. He was a bit pitifully stupid and a bit cute at the same time.

Chu Wanning: “…”

If he had been shocked just now, it could be said that he was terrified now.

…… He must be going blind!

Otherwise, why would he feel that this big and stout bear had suddenly become so hypocritical, as if it had taken the wrong medicine?

Ch. 144 Shizun, I Like You

Mo Ran took out a piece of paper from the big bowl and unfolded it.

When he saw the contents on the paper, he was first relieved, and then a little nervous.

“What is it?” the village chief asked.

Mo Ran showed him the piece of paper. The Village Chief read it and said, “Haha, fortunately, this came to Mo Xianjun. There is nothing to do with elders and sisters. Otherwise, he might offend others.”

Chu Wanning was already curious about what he picked, but after hearing what the Village Head said, he became even more curious. He stared at the piece of paper as if he wanted to dig a hole in it.

Mo Ran laughed, “But, Village Head, look at what is written on this piece of paper. It should be against the rules. Other people said one question, but this one asked me three questions.”

“Who said that an cultivator could hit the spot? I got this one.” The village chief said, “If the immortal is not satisfied, then I will just throw it away and catch it again.”

It was unknown if he caught something like “a woman with long legs looks good or a woman with small waist” again. Mo Ran smiled and said, “Forget it, then let’s just keep it here.”

As he spoke, he handed the paper back to the village chief and said, “What I got was to say about the three people I liked most in my life.”

Chu Wanning: “…”

At this moment, Ling’er returned with reddened eyes. She did not move forward, afraid that others would notice that she had just cried and was sitting at the outermost edge of the fire. Thus, Mo Ran did not see her.

In fact, after Mo Ran finished with his question, no one looked at him. He felt that such an overly private question was awkward for anyone to answer, so he could not say a single word. Thus, he simply stared at the fire.

The bonfire flickered within his black eyes, causing his handsome face to flicker between light and darkness. He stared at that cluster of flames for a long time before saying:

“Let’s talk about my mother first.”

“My mother left rather early. In fact, I don’t really remember her face anymore. I only remember that when she was here, I could always eat and sleep well. So if you’re talking about three people, she’ll be one of them.”

The village chief nodded his head, “You have a deep relationship with her. Fine, let’s consider it one for the immortal.”

“The second is my shixiong. He treats me gently. Although I am not related by blood, he treats me like his own brother.”

Chu Wanning had expected this answer, so there was not much of a stir on his face or in his heart. It was obvious that Mo Ran liked Shi Mei. Back then, when he was at Jincheng Lake, he had heard it personally, so it wasn’t surprising at all.

He only gazed at the man under the light of the night flames. He had the rough outline of a cleaver and an axe, appearing extremely handsome. Deep in his bones, however, he was also somewhat stubborn. A person's spirit could be largely reflected in their eyes. The eyes of Mo Ran were dark and bright, extremely spirited. It was like a lamp that would never be extinguished unless it ran out of oil.

A person with such a pair of eyes was destined to be extremely stubborn.

Chu Wanning was obsessed with stubbornness, but unfortunately, it did not belong to him.

Mo Ran said that Shi Mei was so good that Chu Wanning didn't listen to him. He felt that the night wind was a little cold, so he poured himself a cup of hot tea and drank it slowly with the cup in his hand.

The tea warmed his throat all the way down to his stomach, warming his flesh and blood, softening his heart.

He quietly poured another cup and was about to drink again when he suddenly heard Shi Mei's part finish. He then paused and said,

"There's still one more person. The third person to speak is my Shizun."

"Cough, cough, cough!" Chu Wanning choked on his tea as if he had been scalded. His face was flushed red from coughing. He tried to wipe the water away and did not look up at Mo Ran.

If you pull him up from the ground, he will only panic because his body is covered with dust. He wants to hide in the dark again, to curl up and hide.

However, Mo Ran clearly did not intend to give him an opportunity to escape.

Chu Wanning had such a aloof personality, if you let him have his way he would withdraw, only giving you view of his back and the back of his head. He looked fierce, and between his eyebrows was purple lightning and blue frost. Faintly, it seemed to be filled with the will of thunder. However, he was clear that this was just a polished human skin mask.

He had seen Chu Wanning's gentle soul in the steaming mist of Mengpo Hall, pitiful and helpless.

He did not want Chu Wanning to continue looking down on himself.

He could not afford Chu Wanning to wear such a ferocious mask. If this self-respecting man was unwilling to remove the mask, he would extend his hand for him.

The tea had only been spilled a little bit, and had long been wiped clean. However, Chu Wanning was still repeatedly wiping away the dried water stains.

He was used to building an emotional armor around himself, so he didn't look up.

Gradually, they began to feel that the surroundings were very quiet, so quiet that it was a bit strange. Then, some children began to laugh. Their laughter seemed to be suppressed very low, but anyone could hear it.

"Mother, Immortal Chu is so dumb."

Mother quickly covered his child's childish mouth. "Shh —"

However, Chu Wanning still heard it.

Stupid…

No, in this lifetime, Elder Yuheng had always been different from the word “idiot.” He was arrogant, sharp, fierce and cold, and —

“Shizun, if you rub again, I’m afraid the table will make a hole for you.”

The black cloth boots came up to his desk, close enough to be considered offensive, and then stopped. Chu Wanning saw a black shadow fall over him, pressing down on him like a mountain, crushing him to the point where he almost couldn’t breathe. It made him feel humiliated and angry at the same time.

He was suddenly a little angry with himself for his sudden weakness.

Therefore, he threw the handkerchief aside and suddenly raised his head, full of provocation. His pair of angry and wanton phoenix eyes stared at Mo Ran, as if he was ready to fight at any moment.

Almost at the same time, Mo Ran spoke in a respectful and gentle tone:

“Shizun, please take care of me.”

This sentence was like a magic spell. It was the same reaction as Chu Wanning’s. Only Chu Wanning knew that it wasn’t because of the “you reason me” that he raised his head. It was just a coincidence.

But what was the use?

Other than him, whether it was Mo Ran, or the onlookers, they all felt that it was because of this plea that Chu Wanning quickly agreed to his disciple’s request.

Quickly.

There was nothing more humiliating than these two words.

Chu Wanning's face was as cold as ice, but his eyes were ablaze.

But the only thing he bumped into was Mo Ran's soft and warm gaze. Like the spring water, it easily wrapped around his anger, his sharp teeth, and his sharp mouth.

Mo Ran said, "Shizun, the third answer is you."

Chu Wanning had nowhere to vent his anger, so he became expressionless, "…Right."

He was truly calm and indifferent.

He had a calm demeanor and was worthy of being called Chu-zongshi. Chu Wanning cheered for himself in his heart.

But Mo Ran looked at him in amusement.

Mo-zongshi thought, could this Chu-zongshi be a little fool?

Chu Wanning was completely unaware that he had placed a signature of a little fool in his disciple's heart. Due to his nervousness, he appeared even more aloof and arrogant.

He said, "So? What are you doing here?"

The question hit him squarely in the face, and the smile on his face stiffened.

Mo Ran wanted to do anything.

But he could do nothing.

So what if he liked Chu Wanning? He discovered it too late, so he couldn't be pursued anymore. Furthermore, he had already spent two lifetimes chasing after Shi Mei. Suddenly telling him that he loved the wrong person and wanted him to turn back wasn't that easy to accept in his heart.

If he could understand his own thoughts when he was reborn, perhaps he would have had time to do so.

Until now, this 'discovery' was just an addition to his suffering.

Chu Wanning had suffered too much physical torture in his previous life, and he was used to seeing lovemaking as the most brutal form of torture for such a proud man.

As such, in Mo Ran's heart, Chu Wanning had always been an image of a deity. He never ate the hardships of the mortal world, much less had any desire for love.

He had thousands of intimate ways to destroy Chu Wanning.

However, he had to be good to Chu Wanning.

He couldn't think of too much.

He suddenly became very stupid. All he knew was that he had to keep his Shizun at a distance. He had to lift him up onto the altar and kneel down to welcome him.

This "like" actually contained a boiling and hidden desire for love.

However, he could not let Chu Wanning see through him. He could only restrain himself, using his love as a Shizun and disciple to hide his feelings, before respectfully presenting it to him.

Mo Ran replied, “I just wanted to let Shizun know.”

“…” Chu Wanning quietly looked at him.

Mo Ran said, “It’s just that I can’t help but want everyone to know that…”

“Know what?”

Mo Ran smiled. His black eyes were very bright, and the light was very bright. It was able to cover up the surging undercurrents of desire below.

“I know my luck is good. Worship the best, best, best Shizun in the world.”

He used three of his best, very clumsy, very forceful expressions.

It had a rough and simple style.

Chu Wanning looked at him with unfathomable eyes, only his eyelashes moved.

Mo Ran took in a deep breath. He had no idea where he got the courage from, but he felt that if he were to miss this opportunity, he would never again be able to express his feelings so brazenly in his entire life.

He suddenly half-knelt, wanting to be on the same level as Chu Wanning. Unfortunately, he was still too tall. He was still looking down on his Shizun even though he was kneeling in front of him.

He couldn’t care less. He felt his heart beating so fast, the blood flowing so fast.

“Shizun.”

“…” Chu Wanning suddenly felt that something was amiss.

The man’s eyes were so anxious that he had to lean back.

However, in the end, the arrow still pierced the heart.

“I like you.”

There was nowhere for him to run. The deer that was jumping in the forest had its legs pierced by the hunter’s arrowhead and fell down. Chu Wanning looked at him in a daze, a loud noise echoed in his mind. He could hear nothing and see nothing else…

Like — the word is more subtle, more vague.

It was not as straightforward as “love”. It could burn someone’s heart with just one word. It had many ways of understanding, giving many men and women the opportunity to express their feelings and love.

Mo Ran thought to himself, I like you, but I will not disturb you. I will not force you, but you think that what I am talking about is just the relationship between Shizun and disciple. Although it is regrettable for me, it’s better for you.

Chu Wanning thought to himself, “You said you like me because of pity, because of the love of teaching, because of saving your life, but in exchange for your good feelings, I’ve done everything I can to help you. I don’t have the strength or the chips to exchange for more of your feelings.” To be able to gain your acknowledgment of me as your Shizun with a single word of love, that is enough. I don’t insist.

They didn’t say anything more to each other, and the surrounding onlookers only praised their Shizun-disciple relationship.

Only Ling'er, who was in the corner, vaguely felt that something was wrong. She looked at Mo Ran's handsome face. That face contained a desire that was too deep for her, and a passion that made her feel strange.

However, she was still a pure and honest person. She had never heard of anyone who grew up in a small village having even heard of Long Yang's good fortune. Thus, she only felt that it was strange.

In this world, there were always some people who were heartless when they didn't like it. They were unscrupulous when they walked, and even the gods would be afraid when they came.

However, once they fell in love, it would be like boiling oil, and their hearts would turn hot and their eyes would turn red. They yearned to be discovered all the time, and they would be unable to part with each other no matter how hard they tried.

But what if the other side really found out? They were afraid that the other party would not like them and would reject them, but they were also afraid, not to mention the God of Heaven, this time it was just a cold cicada on the tree chirping twice, nothing could stop it, they would all be worried and think, "Oh my god, the cicada on the tree is chirping, it's so scary, does it not like me?"

The most hazy of love, often you guess, I guess, you hide, I hide, the distance of two miles can smell the pervasive sour smell.

In his previous life, Mo Weiyu had been Taxian-jun, and in this life he had been Mo-zongshi.

The notorious, the wise one.

He had been the most evil of ghosts and had now become the best of men. However, in the end, he was still unable to escape from this sour stench.

What about Chu Wanning?

That guy would always be a fish in a net, even the slightest bit of love could give him a headache, causing him to be at a loss.

However, he still insisted on keeping his face and said with a snort, what can be said about such a vile and rotten matter.

He was truly courting death.

Ch. 145 Shizun, Has a Meal Companion Now

The layer of forest had been dyed completely, and the farming was over.

The villagers of Yuliang Village prepared several bags containing dried meat, rice cakes, spices, and coarse cloth, stuffing them into the arms of Chu Wanning and Mo Ran.

Although the Sisheng Peak did not lack food and clothing, this was the heart of the villagers. If they did not accept it, then it would not be good. Therefore, the two of them did not hold back and helped the village chief fill up the saddlebags.

Ling'er also came with a bamboo basket in her arms. The basket was covered with a small blue and white cloth. When the cloth was opened, there were steamed buns and ten cooked green shells and eggs.

She walked up to Mo Ran's Horse, her clear black and white eyes avoiding him. She wanted to look at him, but she felt embarrassed when she remembered her bold confession that day when she was half drunk and half awake. After waiting for a long time, they finally got close.

Raising the basket above her head, she said to the handsome man who had mounted the horse, "Immortal Mo, these… I cooked all of these this morning. Bring them along with you and eat them along the way with Immortal Chu."

Mo Ran didn't know what she was doing, so he hesitated, unsure whether he should refuse or accept.

Ling'er, however, understood his worries. She suddenly raised her head. Her face was red, but her eyes looked stubborn and hurt.

Although she mustered all her strength and wanted to climb up to become an outstanding immortal, she was not the type of girl without dignity who would continue pestering others even if she was rejected.

She said, "Don't worry, immortal. Ling'er doesn't have any other intentions. She just wanted to thank the immortal for taking care of our village over the past half month."

Mo Ran then kept the bamboo basket. He sat on the horse and looked at her with his eyelashes down. He said sincerely, "Thank you, Miss."

"Thank you, Immortal."

Seeing that she was willing to let it go, Mo Ran was somewhat moved. So he asked, "What is Miss's plan for the future?"

"Why do you ask, Immortal?"

"I don't think the girl is someone who wants to stay in the village for a long time."

Ling'er then laughed, and her eyes were filled with warrior power again: "I want to go up to the cultivation world to see, and I heard that the Shizun of the Rufeng Sect is kind and willing to help the world, as long as we lower ourselves to find a job here, he will not chase us away. I'm a good girl, and I can cook. I can always stay for a few days."

Of course, the most important thing she didn't mention was that the Rufeng Sect had the most disciples out of the ten great sects. The Rufeng

Sect had the most disciples out of the ten great sects, with a total of seventy-two cities.

Chu Wanning did not know what she was thinking. Hearing that she was going to Linyi, he frowned and said, “The Rufeng Sect is complicated, it is not as simple as you think. If you want to stay in the Upper Cultivation World for a long time, you might as well consider Yangzhou Linling Island.”

“Yangzhou can’t survive any longer, the cost of food and clothing is too high.” Ling’er said, “Thank you for your kindness, Ling’er has her own considerations.”

Since he had already said so much, Chu Wanning knew it was useless to say anything more, so he gave up.

The two of them were carrying bags full of food as they whipped their horses. When Chu Wanning passed near Butterfly Town, he paid attention to the boundary. Fortunately, it was full of spirit and was stable. As a result, the horses never stopped galloping. It was now noon, and they had finally returned to the Sisheng Peak.

Chu Wanning went to report the situation to Xue Zhengyong, Mo Ran didn’t have anything to do, so he wandered around. He bumped into a person at the bridge, wiping the stone lions off the pillars.

Mo Ran thought, I don’t know who made the mistake of being punished to come here and work hard.

The faces of those who were punished would usually be a little ugly, so Mo Ran did not intend to walk onto the bridge. Just as he was about to turn around, he suddenly heard someone call out to him from not too far away.

“A-Ran!”

“…”

Upon closer inspection, it turned out that the person wiping the lion was not just anyone else, he was actually Shi Mei. Mo Ran was stunned for a moment, but he felt an indescribable strangeness in his heart.

The first reason was that even a person like Shi Mei, who followed the rules, would be punished to wipe the Bridge of Helplessness.

Second, was the appearance of Shi Mei.

It had been a long time since he last saw Shi Mei, but he hadn’t been able to recognize Shi Mei’s current appearance. Instead, as time passed, he felt more and more unfamiliar with Shi Mei, to the point where he couldn’t recognize him when he first saw him on the bridge.

“Why are you here? Did you do something wrong?” asked Mo Ran, walking up to him.

Shi Mei was clearly a bit embarrassed: “Um… I was punished along with the Young Lord.”

“Xue Meng?” Mo Ran paused, then laughed.

This was not strange at all. Xue Meng’s mistake was nothing new.

“What did he do to you?”

“He said that he wanted to go to the back of the mountain and capture a few ghosts to practice.”

“…”

“In the end, we almost broke the barrier that Shizun sealed before he left.”

Mo Ran did not know whether to laugh or cry. “Does he think ghosts are cats and dogs? He caught them as he said he would, he raised them as he said he would. You too, he’s messing around. You shouldn’t have followed him in, why aren’t you persuading him?”

Shi Mei sighed and said with a helpless look on his face, “Of course I tried to persuade him, but it’s useless. I was afraid something would happen to him, so I could only go in with him… Forget it, let’s not talk about it anymore. Fortunately, there was no need to stir up any trouble. A-Ran, tell me about you. A few days ago, you and Shizun went to the village of Yuliang to farm?”

“Yes.”

“How was it?”

“Yes, it went pretty smooth.”

The two chatted nonchalantly for a while longer. After bidding farewell to Shi Mei, Mo Ran silently walked along a small tree-lined path by himself. When he pushed his mind away and looked back, he felt his feelings for Shi Mei more and more clearly. It was a kind of obsession, a kind of habit, not a love that he thought it was.

He had once thought that looking at Shi Mei’s appearance, he felt that he was beautiful, that he was amazing, and that it was very comfortable. This was desire, but actually, it wasn’t.

Humans always admire beautiful things. He admired the appearance of Shi Mei, but if one were to carefully distinguish it, this appreciation did not

contain any hint of intimacy.

He liked to look at him as if he liked to see the red leaves of the autumn mountains and the lotus flowers in the summer pond.

He still cherished Shi Mei as before.

But it was different from the past. The current Mo Ran finally understood what love was. He was not a Willow, his love was probably moist and hot, accompanied by encroachment, with physical collisions, and with the gushing of blood and turbid fluid.

He was a wolfhound, and he could sniff roses.

However, if one were to eat a tooth, it would not be eating flowers or grass. It would be flesh and blood.

During dinner time, Xue Meng finally finished compiling all the books in the second book section of the Compendium Pavilion. He was so tired that he sighed and lied down on Mengpo to complain.

Just as he was bored to death playing with the chopsticks, he suddenly saw Chu Wanning walk into the dining hall. His spirits were lifted as he stood up and shouted, “Shizun!”

Chu Wanning looked at him and nodded.

Mo Ran sat beside Xue Meng. He, Xue Meng and Shi Mei, the three of them normally ate together, but today, when Chu Wanning walked in, Mo Ran moved the plates on the table, leaving a large space.

“What are you doing?”

However, Mo Ran smiled at Xue Meng without saying anything. He stood up and waved at Chu Wanning, “Shizun, come sit here.”

Xue Meng, “…”

Shi Mei: “…”

Respect was one thing, but eating together was another.

Most people who were able to sit at a table and chew on bones did not have very stiff relationships with each other. At the very least, they would have to get used to each other’s smacking lips, endure each other’s unsightly manner, and occasionally lose their composure.

Seeing the expressions on Xue Meng’s and Shi Mei’s faces, even though Chu Wanning was usually calm and aloof when eating, they were still not used to it. They did not want to eat together with him.

To them, eating occasionally with their Shizun was the same as socializing. Both of them had to be taut and polite, and their backs were often stiff from eating without a care in the world.

Chu Wanning understood this as well. He looked at Mo Ran in surprise and shook his head. He then carried some vegetables to where he was used to going.

It had been five years since he had last eaten at Mengpo Hall. The moment he sat down, Chu Wanning saw a small copper piece carved with six small cards: “Elder Yuheng’s Special Table”.

“…”

Was Xue Zhengyong sick?

Placing the wooden tray heavily on the table, Chu Wanning sat down gloomily. Before he could even eat two bites, a person suddenly pulled up the wooden chair in front of his and sat down on the “jade seat”. The tray he brought was placed right in front of his plate, very close to each other, almost touching.

Chu Wanning looked up, “…Why are you here?”

“It’s too crowded over there.” Mo Ran said, smiling as he picked up the rice bowl, “So I came to eat with Shizun.”

Chu Wanning glanced at Xue Meng and the others, feeling quite baffled: where was it too crowded?

Not to mention him, even the other two people who were thrown away by Mo Ran had complicated expressions on their faces as they stealthily looked at Chu Wanning and Mo Ran’s table.

Xue Meng muttered, “Could that dog have gone mad?”

Shi Mei: “…”

However, Mo Weiyu did not care much about it. Just then, he felt uncomfortable when he saw Chu Wanning sitting alone. Chu Wanning was a person with a sharp tongue, and he was very pretentious in the way of food and drinks. He had always either eaten this or tasted that disgusting dish, and he felt that this was not a good situation, as he was going to get sick when he grew older.

In the past, he did not care much about what Chu Wanning ate, but now it was different. Not to mention liking this matter, even if it was out of respect for his teacher, he still had to feed his Shizun.

But feeding Chu Wanning was a type of knowledge. It was like feeding a cat, he couldn't be too forceful. He wouldn't want to eat it, so he wouldn't be able to do it.

Thus, Mo Ran came up with an idea. He picked up a piece of fat Red Braised Meat and placed it in Chu Wanning's bowl.

"Shizun, try this."

Sure enough, Chu Wanning frowned, "I don't like streaky pork, take it away."

Mo Ran was prepared for this and laughed, "I heard that it's made in a very sweet manner, with a Jiangnan flavor."

Chu Wanning said, "Jiangnan cooking is different from this."

"If you don't eat it, how do you know the difference?"

"Seems like it can be seen."

"But the chef said it was Jiangnan flavor." Mo Ran threw it down and waited for the cat to take the bait. He smiled and said, "Mengpo Hall's chef is an old cook. How could he be wrong? Shizun must have left home for too long, and have forgotten what the Red Braised Meat looks like at home."

Chu Wanning said, "… Nonsense, how could I be wrong about that?"

Mo Ran then ate a piece and seemed to really savor it seriously. He sincerely said, "I think Shizun is wrong. This meat is very sweet. Try one if you don't believe me."

Chu Wanning did not notice the intention of Mo Ran at all. He picked up the plate of Red Braised Meat with chopsticks and put it in his mouth indignantly.

“How is it?” Mo Ran suppressed his laughter as he looked at the hooked white cat.

Chu Wanning frowned seriously and said, “No, the star anise is too fragrant. I’ll go tell the chef that this is not the way to cook the Red Braised Meat in Jiangnan.”

“Ai ai –” Mo Ran immediately pulled him back. He could not help but feel speechless. Who would have thought that this fellow would be so serious? If he really went to argue with the chef, wouldn’t he be exposing the filling? “Shizun is not in a hurry. Right now, the chef is busy. Since Shizun has tasted the wrong food, then it’s definitely not the case. I’ll go tell him later. Let’s eat first.”

Chu Wanning thought about it for a while and agreed. He then sat back down and continued to eat.

Mo Ran began to trick him again, this time with a piece of fish.

Chu Wanning’s chopsticks paused for a second before he asked, “A sage fish?”

“Yes.”

“No, take it away.”

“Why not?”

“I don’t like it.”

Mo Ran laughed. “Isn’t it too much?”

“… No.”

“But every time Shizun eats fish, he picks the ones without bones or the ones that are easy to choose from. It can’t be that Shizun isn’t going to eat the little Thorny Fish, hahaha.”

He was very familiar with Chu Wanning’s soft side, he was very picky. Chu Wanning was fooled again, he was a little angry and said, “Ridiculous.” He picked up the grazer that Mo Ran had given him and ate it, showing by his actions that he was not a fish that could not eat bones.

Just like that, under the coaxing of Mo Ran, Chu Wanning unknowingly ate a lot more dishes than usual. It was as if he had tasted all kinds of vegetables and fowl meat. Originally, he had eaten a very fast meal by himself, but in his confusion, he had not finished it even after an hour.

By the time they cleaned up the dishes and went out, Xue Meng and the others had already left, and the disciples of Mengpo Hall were only left in groups of twos and threes.

The night breeze was blowing. He put his arms behind his head and walked leisurely. Suddenly, he smiled.

“Shizun.”

“What?”

“Nothing, I’m just calling you.”

“… I think you ate your fill tonight.”

Mo Ran smiled even more gently. “Yes, it’s so full. Shizun, in the future, can I always eat with you?”

Even though he knew it was useless to refuse Mo Ran, Chu Wanning’s heartbeat still missed by two beats. Fortunately, his eyes remained calm and collected.

“Why, did you and Xue Meng quarrel?”

“No, no.” Mo Ran waved his hand and laughed, “It’s just that I haven’t eaten with the two of them for a long time. It’s been five years, and sitting with them again feels a little awkward. If Shizun thinks that I’m a hindrance, then I’ll find another place to eat tomorrow.”

“…”

Of course, he could not say “I feel very sorry for you to be eating alone”, nor could he say “I want to feed you more food”. He did not even need to say these words because Mo Ran knew that it would not work. He could only show mercy. He had to say that he was pitiful, that he needed someone to accompany him. Chu Wanning was kind, and he would not reject him.

Mo Ran could almost see the wavering in his eyes. He was only missing the last bit of strength.

So he continued, “But in fact, I really don’t want to eat alone.”

“Why?”

Mo Ran lowered his soft eyelashes, and half of the emotion in his smile was real, the other half was just coaxing Chu Wanning. “Don’t you think so,

Shizun? If someone were to casually eat his food, it would be called having a stomach."

He paused for a moment. In the red glow of the embroidery, he brushed away the strands of hair that were blown in front of his forehead.

"If two people eat together, talk, talk, taste in the mouth, it is hot in the stomach. That's what eating is all about."

"…"

"Shizun, can I still go with you tomorrow?"

The little wolfdog's heart-warming words were truly unstoppable.

Mo Ran was so obstinately moving that he said:

"Shizun, I've been alone outside for five years. When you woke up, I ate with you."

"I'm not used to it without you."

"I don't eat rabbit heads nor duck necks." At the end of his sentence, he burst into laughter and pulled on Chu Wanning's sleeve, acting like a scoundrel. "I'll eat scallion tofu and osmanthus root with you. Just promise me, okay?"

It would be better if he didn't say anything. Once he said it, Chu Wanning suddenly thought of an old grudge and his face darkened. He then sneered and said, "That's fine, but you have to eat the same food as me in the morning."

Before Mo Ran could react, he agreed. "Sure, what's the same?"

“Salty bean blossoms.” Chu Wanning was merciless, “Add more seaweed.”

Mo Ran: “…”

It seemed like this was a grudge he had gotten from eating hotpot with Xia Sini!

Chu Wanning ground his teeth and spoke word by word, “And dried prawns.”

Ch.146 But Shizun, Her Wanting to Marry Really Has Nothing to Do With Me!

From that day onwards, a wondrous sight appeared in Mengpo Hall.

There had never been an idle person who dared to sit proficiently in the “Elder Yuheng’s Special Table”, but now there was the addition of Mo Weiyu.

The disciples that came and went would always see Mo Ran and Chu Wanning eating together. The two of them sat opposite to each other, and Mo Ran would always bring some dishes to his Shizun’s plate.

“Hush, look, shixiong Mo gave Elder another piece of beef belly. Wow, such a big piece, I bet Elder Yuheng won’t eat it.”

Not far away, a group of disciples whispered to each other as they placed their bets in low voices.

“I also bet that he won’t be able to eat it. Elder Yuheng doesn’t seem to like eating beef.”

“Then I bet he would eat it. After all, he also accepted the pigeon eggs.”

The group of people sneaked glances over and held their breath. They saw Chu Wanning frowning and poking the piece of beef with the tip of his chopsticks. His face was sullen as he said something to Mo Ran.

They were a little further away, so they couldn’t hear him clearly. However, since Mo Ran seemed to have said something, Chu Wanning’s expression became even more unfriendly.

The juniors who bet on Chu Wanning's not eating were immediately overjoyed. They were so engrossed in the sight that their spoons almost went down their noses.

"Look, the elder is not eating anymore, he is not eating anymore!"

"Don't poke me with your elbows. Be quiet. If Elder Yuheng hears that you're using him as a wager, he'll skin you alive!"

"Hehehe, I don't care. These twenty silver leaves are mine now ~"

As the disciple spoke, he wanted to use the silver leaf placed on the table as a bargaining chip, but before he could even touch it, he heard the voice of the person beside him whisper nervously, "Wait, victory is uncertain. The elder is using the chopsticks again!"

"What?"

When he looked again, he found that Chu Wanning had picked up that piece of beef. The gamblers could not wait and felt their hearts being pinched by that piece of white jade. It hurt to pinch.

"He wants to eat, he wants to eat, he want to eat…" "Twenty silver leaves, twenty silver leaves, twenty silver leaves…" The disciple who had bet that Chu Wanning would eat a piece of beef was talking nonstop, shaking his legs nervously. Suddenly, his gaze froze, as though his entire body had frozen over. "Ah!"

Elder Yuheng had actually thrown the beef that had already been picked up back into Mo Ran's bowl without any explanation!

"…"

“Ha ha-ha ha, victory is a close call, victory is a close call!”

“I already said that the elder definitely won’t eat it. Come on, the leaves all belong to me.”

The disciple who had lost the bet sighed and was immediately dispirited, knocking his head against the table. He turned his head to the side and was speechless, staring blankly in the direction of Chu Wanning.

“Elder, I was wrong. I should not have made you my wager.”

As he was complaining, he suddenly saw Mo Ran’s elbow move. He leaned his tall body forward and said a few more words to Chu Wanning. Then, the defeated disciple saw with his own eyes that their shixiong Mo picked up the beef, along with some vegetables, and brought them to Chu Wanning’s lips.

……

This disciple was stupefied… was senior apprentice brother Mo planning to feed the Elder directly!?

Apparently, Chu Wanning was not used to it either. He took his chopsticks and knocked on Mo Ran’s chopsticks, saying two words seriously.

That mouth was too easy to understand.

Drop!

Mo Ran then smiled as he put back the chopsticks, vegetables and beef, but not in his own bowl but in his shizun’s bowl. Chu Wanning had no choice but to sigh and eat the vegetables and beef silently under the watchful eyes of the other bandits.

“…”

The gamblers at this table were all dumbfounded. The disciples who thought they would win for sure were all flabbergasted. The silver leaves in their hands slid off.

However, the man lying on the floor immediately got up and revived with his blood flowing out. His eyes lit up as he said passionately: “Hahaha, victory is lost ah! To turn a defeat into a victory! shixiong, shidi, sorry, but these leaves belong to me. Hahahaha, I’ve sent it, I will bet again tomorrow, haha, I will bet again tomorrow!”

On the other side, the master and disciple were completely oblivious to it. Mo Ran was holding the chopsticks, slowly eating the rice in the bowl while watching Chu Wanning eat the beef jerky.

Mengpo’s Hall was a little hot. He had rolled up his left sleeve all the way to his elbow, revealing a firm and slender arm. The arm muscles moved, undulating under the honey-colored skin. He scooped up a bowl of soup and added a few more ribs into the bowl, especially when Chu Wanning wasn’t paying attention.

“Shizun, finish the soup and dispel the cold.”

“Clear soup?”

Mo Ran blinked his eyes. “I think so. I didn’t notice it when we fought. I forgot.”

Chu Wanning took a look at the noodle soup. There was a piece of green, greasy, and hairy vegetable leaf floating on the surface. It looked extremely tasty, so he did not reject it. He picked it up and drank a spoonful.

“Is it good to drink?”

“Not bad.”

“Then don’t waste it. Drink some more.”

Chu Wanning glanced at him blandly, “You still dare to say anything about me? In the future, don’t cook so many dishes for me. If you can’t even finish your own food, I’ll share all of it with you.”

“Haha, good, then I’ll play a bit less next time.”

Seeing Chu Wanning nod, Mo Ran picked up his bowl of soup. The soup was a bit hot, he blew on it and the steam dispersed, causing his resolute face to appear gentle.

It was clearly just a bowl of boiled water with some meat seasoning, but it was able to warm his entire body from the pit of his stomach to the depths of his heart while he drank the soup with the people he loved. That kind of feeling of satisfaction was as if he had thrown a small stone into the water, and ripples spread out on the surface of the lake layer by layer, flickering with light.

Mo Ran, in the peace that he had experienced in his entire life, couldn’t help but sigh softly.

As it turned out, time was carefree. Once it entered one’s mouth, one would only be able to taste the flavor of a bowl of soup.

For this bowl of soup, he had once grind his teeth and sucked his blood, killing people to death just like he did for this bowl of soup.

He held the bowl of soup in his hands and drank very quickly.

The uneasiness in his heart, the uncertainty of his future, and the guilt of his regret were all things he didn't want to think too much about. His good days lived too little, and he needed to fight for them day and night. It wasn't that he didn't want to taste it slowly, but that he was very relaxed. In fact, he was very envious of people like Xue Meng. Because they were born rich and powerful, they were always calm and unhurried.

Mo Ran could not remain calm, as there were so few things in his possession that he could only grit his teeth and constantly fight for them, while the things that he had stolen would not be taken away, so he could only immediately devour them. In this aspect, he had retained almost the nature of a beast, and felt that only by eating the food and hiding it in his stomach would he be able to feel at ease.

When he was a child, he fought with other children for food.

In his previous life, he fought with the various deities for the land under the heavens.

In this lifetime, he only wanted to snatch this bowl of soup.

He knew that he had done many evil things, and feared that fate would one day settle with him. Thus, all he wanted was to snatch away his pitiful happiness and run for his life, leaving fate far behind him.

Like all those who tried to start over after committing a felony, Mo Ran was still laughing, but his heart was still uneasy. When the liveliness gradually turned cold, he would always feel that the peace in front of him was fake. It was like a mirage, like the reflection of the moon in a mirror. In the end, he would still wake up and return to the empty Wushan Palace and return to hell.

Thus, he wanted to drink a few more mouthfuls before the soup turned cold.

If this was the case, one day, if he really did get his retribution for his sins, be despised by the world, be judged by fate, and be once again pushed into the depths of the cold pond, then he could use this hot breath to walk down by himself.

“What are you thinking about?” Chu Wanning asked him.

“Ah!” Mo Ran came back to his senses and gently replied. He then smiled and said, “It’s nothing. I like to be in a daze when I’m full.”

Chu Wanning glanced at his empty bowl, “Have you finished drinking?”

“Yes.”

“You seem to like the soup today?”

“Haha, that’s right.”

Chu Wanning took his bowl and said, “I’ll go get more for you.”

He returned very quickly, and sure enough, he brought a big bowl full of broth. It was a bit hot, so after putting the bowl down, Chu Wanning used his fingertips to warm his ears, warming his ears and lowering the temperature of his fingers.

He sat down again and said, “Drink.”

“A full bowl.”

“Drink slowly. There’s more than enough, no one will fight with you for it.”

Mo Ran was moved by this simple sentence. He held the bowl of soup in his hands, his black eyes drooping. With a shallow nasal voice, he smiled and replied, “Alright.”

Chu Wanning did not know that at that moment, Mo Ran had used all the effort of his life to prevent himself from holding the bowl full of soup. When he heard the words “not enough, no one will fight with you”, tears fell from his eyes.

Chu Wanning had been gone for five years, and he had been tormenting himself for five years.

Five years later, his shizun told him to take his time.

Mo Ran’s heart suddenly hurt. The closer he got to Chu Wanning, the more upset he felt. In fact, if he did not pay attention to many things, he would not be able to see the emotions behind them. However, when he looked at them with his heart, he could see how kind and tolerant Chu Wanning was to him.

He had defiled such a person in his previous life.

In this life, what virtue or ability did he have to be able to be his companion for the rest of his life?

His heart was trembling, he was painfully struggling, while feeling that he was unworthy. He felt that he should have stayed far away from Chu Wanning. Where did he get the face to have a smile on his face? Shameless!

But on the other hand, he longed for it all the time — was this it, could it be that they were still a long way off in their lives, letting him redeem, little

by little, the sins he had committed, all right?

—

I have returned from the mountain of corpses with all my sins.

I hold the rich and warm soup of this life with hands that were full of blood in my previous life.

I am willing to kneel for the rest of my life and return my soul to Purgatory after death. I only hope that you… will still willing to hold a cup and have a taste.

“Shizun.”

At some point in time, Xue Meng had arrived.

In fact, ever since Chu Wanning died, he had been feeling this way of self-reproach and unease all day and all night. After being immersed in this sort of emotion for a long time, his entire body would seem very heavy, which was not a good thing for others.

However, there were one or two things in life that would occasionally touch him, and he would once again fall into a dilemma and self-loathing because of a single sentence, a single matter.

He raised his head and looked at Xue Meng. His gloomy face had not yet disappeared, which caused Xue Meng to jump in fright.

“Oh, what are you doing, you dog? That kind of gaze at me? Do I owe you money?”

Mo Ran knew that he was in a good mood and couldn't recover it in a short while, so he forced a smile and said, "I ate too much, do you have something to say to Shizun?Then you guys can talk, I'm going out to get some fresh air."

"No, don't go. Sit down. This has something to do with you."

"It has something to do with me? What is it?"

The expression on Xue Meng's face was somewhat subtle. "Speak out and don't be disappointed…"

Chu Wanning said, "Alright, Xue Meng, just say it directly."

"Oh, oh." When Xue Meng, who had originally wanted to keep him in suspense, heard his Shizun's words, he immediately said, "It's like this. I just received an invitation. Song Qiutong is getting married."

Mo Ran's expression changed, and his face instantly lost all color.

However, the trembling was not because of Song Qiutong, but Xue Meng — In his life, Mo Ran knew very well what kind of trash Song Qiutong was. He wished that he could walk around her and pay her back with clean water.

But Xue Meng…

Why would Xue Meng believe that he would be disappointed when Song Qiutong got married?

Mo Ran felt his heart clench. Almost at the same time, he thought of the fake Gouchen who had been causing trouble all this time, the mastermind who had yet to surface and was hidden very deeply.

That person was most likely someone who had reincarnated. If that was the case, then that person would be very clear about the past of Mo Ran. He would be very clear about the sins that Mo Ran committed in his previous life!

Mo Ran's face was pale, but he forced himself to remain calm. He calmly looked at Xue Meng and asked, "Why is it related to me?"

"Don't you know that yourself?" Xue Meng's expression was somewhat strange as he said, "Today, the Rufeng Sect came to deliver the wedding invitation. That Miss Song even specially arranged for someone to send you a letter. You don't want to have anything to do with her, so why would she write to you? Mo Ran, I am not talking about you, but when did you offend her?"

"…" Mo Ran's emotions were difficult to calm. It felt like a thorn in his back. After a while, he said, "To me? Could it be that I made a mistake…"

"It can't be wrong."

As Xue Meng spoke, he took out an envelope from within his robes and slapped it onto the table in front of Mo Ran.

Mo Ran glanced at the envelope, his heart beating like a drum as countless thoughts flashed through his mind.

It was indeed Song Qiutong's handwriting, but why had he coincidentally met Song Qiutong in this life and fixed a letter for him before her wedding?

Xue Meng crossed his arms and said unhappily, "Are you going to break it off privately, or do you want to watch it with us here?"

"…"

Mo Ran turned his head to the side and saw Chu Wanning staring back at him with a frown on his face.

“Remove it?” Xue Meng couldn’t hold back his anger. He hated the act of messing around with a man and a woman the most, and it was somewhat overbearing.

If that was the case, there was no way to avoid it…

Mo Ran only felt a wave of weakness. His outstretched fingers were cold. He did not make a sound, but silently took the letter and opened it.

Ch. 147 Shizun, We Can Talk This Out

There was only a thin piece of paper inside, with a few words written on it.

Mo Ran took a glance and his heart dropped. He was almost relieved to find that his heavy shirt was soaked with cold sweat.

Xue Meng also came over to take a look.

“What?” With a single glance, he frowned, “How could this happen?”

“… Otherwise, what else would it be? I already said that I’m not familiar with her.” With ease, Mo Ran truly laughed. He placed the letter on the table and said, “You made the matter sound so weird, you’ve really fooled me.”

One of them was a carp essence, which was a disaster for the Dreamy Cloud Swampland. Because of its profound magic power and its desolation, many cultivators went out to fight, turning into bones that could be used to build caves.

Although the Dreamy Cloud Swampland was filled with demonic aura and was a place where demons could easily cultivate to the Exquisite Spirit Realm, carp were not animals with high attack. It was reasonable to say that demons that cultivated this kind of aura would not have such a strong killing ability. After battling with it for over eighty rounds, Mo Ran finally killed it under the effect of ‘the devil’. He cut open the fish’s belly and finally found out the reason.

“The carp essence from back then had a Wangshu Crystal in its abdomen. The thousand year moonlight condensed from this crystal is a top grade

spirit stone. It can be used to temper weapons or to cultivate spiritual cores. It is a top quality spirit stone."

Chu Wanning said, "She's just a Butterfly-Boned Beauty, why would she want this for?"

"She said that she wanted to ask for her husband's Fire Spirit Core, but he's been cultivating too fast these past few years and is in danger of going berserk, so she didn't hesitate at all and wanted to ask me to buy the Wangshu Crystal as a dowry to help her husband suppress the evil aura."

Hearing this, Xue Meng nodded his head. "To think that she would ask her husband to be at peace even after his daughter has gone missing. Her intentions are rather hard to come by."

Upon hearing that, Mo Ran laughed, "Where did she get the money from? Wasn't she just asking for it from the Rufeng Sect? She was so good-looking and had spoken a few words in a soft voice, which martial brother could reject her? If it was you, could you?"

Xue Meng immediately opened his eyes wide. "Don't make me sound like I'm a fool."

"Don't be angry, I'm just making an analogy." As Mo Ran said this, he handed the letter back to Xue Meng. If one did not reply to the letter at the summit of the dead, it would usually have to be stored in a box in the Compendium Pavilion.

Xue Meng was stunned. "Archive?"

"No return? Then you can burn it."

“… No,” Xue Meng was getting a bit anxious. “She asked for a spirit stone for her wedding, but she didn’t ask for one for nothing. She said she would pay at all costs and was sincere. Why didn’t you sell it?”

“It’s not that I don’t want to sell it, it’s not useful for me to keep the Spirit Stone. But I’ve already given it to you.”

“To, to me?”

“Yeah.” He smirked and pointed at the saber, Longcheng, that was at Xue Meng’s waist and said, “Didn’t I send you a crystal a few years ago so that I could temper the Longcheng for you? The Longcheng today is no longer the same as the Longcheng from before. Aren’t you going to thank that carp spirit?”

Xue Meng’s mouth was agape and he was speechless for a long time.

“…”

He only knew that when Mo Ran traveled the world, he obtained a gem. However, he had never cared about where this gem came from. Towards Mo Ran, he was always holding back a breath. No matter if this person was evil or kind, he still retained a trace of unwillingness, a trace of rejection.

Therefore, when his father said that the gem Mo Ran had given him could help him ascend to the Longcheng, although he was grateful in his heart, he was also very aggrieved. He felt that he had been favored by his competitors for no reason, so he didn’t ask any questions.

Unexpectedly, Mo Ran had actually given him a priceless “heavenly weapon”. Xue Meng’s mood immediately became even more complicated, and he was unable to tell what he felt like.

After a long while, he finally said, “Thank you.”

“You’re welcome, you’re welcome.” Mo Ran smiled and waved his hand, “It’s just a coincidence.”

Xue Meng’s expression became even more unsightly, and he stubbornly said, “It’s not as if I’m thanking you, it’s that carp spirit that has lost its life. I thank him.”

“Hahahahaha, then in the future, don’t eat carp meat anymore. You must be generous to your benefactor.”

“Humph!”

After laughing for a while, Mo Ran suddenly thought of something and asked, “Oh right, who was Song Qiutong going to marry when you bluffed her? To be able to cause such a big commotion, he is merely a junior, to be able to make the Rufeng Sect send out invitation cards. Amazing, is she going to get married to the Bitan Manor?”

“That’s not it.”

“Not with Bitan Manor? I thought that old shizun of the manor was lustful and that the Rufeng Sect was on good terms with them, so I gave Song Qiutong to him.” Mo Ran smiled. “Which one is that? To be able to get engaged with the Rufeng Sect and even cause such a ruckus… It can’t be the Taxue Gong, right?”

“What are you thinking!” Xue Meng glared at him. “Why must we get married?”

Mo Ran was stunned. His smile froze as he asked, “Then who else can he be with?”

“How dare you! Have you forgotten, this wild horse Young Master of the Rufeng Sect is already old enough to get married. Song Qiutong is so beautiful, it’s not bad if it’s compatible with him…”

Before he could finish his muttering, Mo Ran suddenly stood up and exclaimed: “Nangong?!”

Xue Meng jumped in fright. “What are you doing?”

“She… How did she get married to Nangong Si? How could this be…” He was too shocked, Mo Ran’s heart was in turmoil, he was unable to calm down for a long time, he could only mutter, “Nangong Si…”

No wonder he had this reaction.

One had to know that at this time in his previous life, Nangong Si had already died from a serious illness!

All these years, he had wholeheartedly bowed down to the conflict among the refugees and had not cared about the matters of the famous sects and clans. Since he did not have many connections with the Rufeng Sect, he was naturally even less worried. It was only at this moment that Xue Meng suddenly announced to him the marriage of Song Qiutong and Nangong Si that he suddenly realized —

That’s not right.

All of this was wrong. The change in the fate of this world did not only happen to him, it even happened to the Rufeng Sect of Wind, which he did not seem to want to close.

Yet, the person who should have entered the coffin did not go in. Instead, it became a hot affair and he even wanted to marry his previous life’s

empress as his wife…

This news was a bit shocking, and he was momentarily unable to swallow it. He began to choke.

Also, was Nangong Si blind!? To such a woman?

However, he still had to celebrate. He had to present gifts. Since Sect Leader Nangong had delivered the invitation card to him, how could he not go? The wedding banquet was set to be held on the 15th of the month. Xue Zhengyong had properly arranged the affairs of the sect and handed them over to the two Elders Tanlang and Xun Ji, preparing to set out on his journey to Linyi.

Besides him, due to the etiquette of the cultivation world, Madam Wang, Xue Meng, and Mo Ran all had to attend the meeting. In addition, Nangong Si specially invited Chu Wanning by name, saying that he had received some advice from the elder when he was young. He wanted the elder to show him some face, so Chu Wanning had to go as well.

“The Rufeng Sect is the number one sect in the world. Their Young Master’s wedding, all the reputable people in the world will come to celebrate.” Xue Zhengyong said, “The Sisheng Peak is usually free from trifling matters, but when encountering a situation like this, one must still discipline themselves and not let others see them as a joke.”

Xue Meng asked, “What rules? I think I’m good enough myself.”

Xue Zhengyong tugged at his bun and said, “It’s wrong to wear a crown like this. You’re wearing a golden one.”

“What happened to the gold crown?”

Madam Wang smiled sweetly. “Meng’er, this is your first time attending a wedding and you still don’t understand many things, so let me tell you, you better listen carefully, marry in the Upper Cultivation World. Only the groom is allowed to wear a gold headdress. If you wear a gold crown on your head, you’ll go and snatch the bride away.”

Xue Meng’s face suddenly turned red and he stuttered, “Snatch the bride? No, no, no, I won’t take the bride.”

Mo Ran then teased him,” And then we capture you and Miss Song and lock them in the small house, are you afraid?”

“You’ve only just been locked in the small house!” Xue Meng was ashamed and angry at the same time. “I won’t wear it!”

Xue Zhengyong said, “I can see that you don’t have a clear request to make for the wedding decorations. How about this, I’ll have someone order something for each of you. When the time comes, you can wear it.”

He paused for a moment, and looked at Chu Wanning in particular, and asked tentatively, “Yuheng, is it okay?”

Xue Zhengyong did not fear the others and would at most make a joke, but Chu Wanning was too used to wearing white, and if they did not mention him, it would be possible for him to attend the wedding. By then, Nangong Si would be so angry that he would vomit blood.

Chu Wanning agreed, “Sure.”

The evening before the departure, the wedding attire Xue had ordered for everyone had arrived. He had specially hired Linyi’s tailor to make these clothes. They were well-made, with dense threads, and very beautiful

appearances. Even a picky person like Xue Meng nodded in satisfaction upon receiving the clothes.

Mo Ran carried a pile of clean clothes to the top of the southern peak, then he entered the Red Lotus Pavilion and said in a clear voice, “Shizun, Uncle entrusted me with the task of sending this set of clothes to you.”

He walked over to the lotus pond and saw Chu Wanning practicing his swordplay.

He recalled that Chu Wanning’s second weapon was a sword, but that sword was filled with killing intent. It had the power to destroy the heavens and the earth, so Chu Wanning did not use it lightly. However, the blade was not sharpened, nor was it skillful. Even if the blade didn’t have any chance to leave the sheath, Chu Wanning would still swing the other swords from time to time.

At this moment, the moon was cold. Perhaps it was because he was practicing his sword, but he took off his outer robe. Inside, there was only a white silk undergarment.

Instead of his customary high ponytail, he had pulled up his hair and tied it into a neat bun, making his face appear exceptionally spirited and thinner. When the frost bloomed, it was as light as a lotus illuminating the water, and when the cold electricity appeared, it was like a flood dragon tearing through the air, opening and closing, retracting and releasing, all pointed at the best advantage, and even with Mo Ran standing not far away, he could not find the slightest flaw.

All of a sudden, Chu Wanning’s eyebrows shot up as he pointed his long sword at the lotus pond. The water in the pond was cut in half by the

sword's aura and was forced by the blade of the sword to stop moving for a long time. With a tap of his toes, his long body gracefully flew over the center of the water wave. His arms were spread open and his white sleeves were flowing. Like a fairy, he gracefully landed on the pavilion on the other side of the pond.

"Shizun!"

Mo Ran was afraid that he would run far away with another leap, so he hurriedly chased after him to the pavilion and called out to him. The bright moon hung high in the sky, and the night was a little cold. The tall haitang trees beside the pavilion were covered in snow-white petals, Chu Wanning stepped on the sharp end of the pavilion, his clothes somewhat spread out, revealing the jade moonlight. When he heard the commotion, he lowered his head, his eyes were black and bright.

"Why are you here?"

He narrowed his eyes as the night wind blew through the scattered strands of hair on his forehead.

"I'm here to give you some clothes. Why don't you try and see if they fit?"

Chu Wanning humphed lightly, suddenly remembering that Mo Ran had been reputed as a Grandmaster in this world. He had not fought with him after waking up, and his heart skipped a beat. In a flash, he flew down with his sword in his hand and shouted, "Try catching my sword first!"

Ch. 148 Shizun, A Natural Tease

Mo Ran was shocked. He did not expect that Chu Wanning would use this move. He hastily dodged and used his sword to cut his chest.

“Shizun wants to spar with me. At least try on your clothes first. Uncle is still waiting for me to return to him.”

“Let’s spar first, and then I’ll test the clothes.”

“Uncle is in a hurry. The tailor is still in the hall. If you want anything, you have to change it.”

“Then let’s hurry up and do it.”

“…”

This point was very similar to that of Xue Meng. They both competed in the heart of martial arts and it was extremely difficult to suppress them. As the two of them spoke, the long sword had already pierced several of the vital points of Mo Ran. It was fortunate that Mo Ran had been tempered for a long time and had dodged in time.

Otherwise, if he was not injured, his clothes would have been riddled with holes.

Suddenly, the blade of the sword landed on Mo Ran’s shoulder. Chu Wanning retracted his momentum and just raised his sword to attack him, “Mo-zongshi, is this all you’ve got?”

Mo Ran was forced into a corner by this person, he had nowhere to put the clothes in his hands and said with a bitter smile, “Shizun doesn’t plan on

letting me go now, but bullies me instead?”

Chu Wanning’s eyes were like sharp knives, his brows were slightly knitted, “Do you want me to let you live a life?”

“Haha, that’s true.”

“… Are you going to fight or not?”

“Alright, alright, alright. I’ll fight, I’ll fight okay.” Mo Ran smiled and shook his head. Flames shot out from the tips of his fingers. “Jiangui, summon them!”

He had just grabbed hold of the willow vine, and with another sword thrust forward, Mo Ran flew back a few feet, and suddenly shot out a whip, wrapping itself around Chu Wanning’s sword hilt. Chu Wanning didn’t seem to mind. With a flick of his wrist, he broke free from the shackles and appeared behind Mo Ran in a flash. He raised his long blade and pressed it against Mo Ran’s neck.

Chu Wanning stuck closely to his back, looking a little gloomy, “You’re not paying attention, start over.”

His throat moved under the blade of the sword as he said with a low laugh, “Shizun, don’t be so hasty with your words. If you look carefully again, have I put in the effort?”

As the sound of his voice faded, Chu Wanning was startled to find that the burning willow vine had wrapped itself around his arm and was holding him firmly in place, not allowing him to move an inch.

Chu Wanning stared at his arm for a while. Suddenly, his eyes lit up.

“Hmm? That’s right, take it back.”

Mo Ran smiled and said, “How can you just accept it as you please?”

“What are you going to do?”

“I want Shizun to go change.”

Chu Wanning snorted coldly, “…Let’s decide who wins and who loses.”

As he said this, he poured his powerful spirit energy into his right arm, forcing Jiangui out of the way. Then, he suddenly flew backwards, creating a distance between him and Mo Ran.

For a time, the willow vine and the long sword clashed against each other in midair. The two weapons didn’t give any spirit energy, so when they fought, they didn’t have the spectacular momentum of the Spiritual Current colliding with fire and lightning, but each move was executed perfectly. Mo Ran was still holding onto the robe that he wanted to change for Chu Wanning with one hand, so Chu Wanning used his right hand to fight with the other.

Chu Wanning was breathing heavily, a drop of sweat was flowing through his pitch-black brows, almost reaching his eyes, but he was too focused on Mo Ran to be distracted. The sweat seeped through his eyelashes and into his eyes, and he endured not blinking.

The fighting spirit of the Beidou Immortal had been aroused by his disciple. He loved to fight and fight to his heart’s content. He was usually indifferent and cold, but it was only because he was hard-pressed to meet his opponent. Mo Ran was like a fire. With a boom, it lit up the entire pool of liquor. In an instant, flames lit up the sky.

At the end of their fight, their swords made ominous creaking sounds because it could not handle such a powerful impact. In the end, when they got close to each other in the air, it actually made buzzing sounds and broke into thousands of pieces of iron powder!

“The sword is broken.” Mo Ran said helplessly, “Do we still need to fight?”

Chu Wanning’s eyes were filled with the smoke of the beacon. He threw away the hilt of his sword and stood tall and straight with his white robe slightly open. He said firmly, “Fight.”

“…”

Before Mo Ran could react, Chu Wanning had already shot out a crossbow and an arrow. Like a cheetah in the forest or a falcon in the snow, he attacked Mo Ran. Mo Ran hurriedly retreated Jiangui. He raised his hand to block and the two of them once again used a new method to contend for the upper hand. It was a difficult fight.

Close combat was not the same as melee combat. Powerful men usually had the advantage, not to mention the fact that there was already not much of a difference between Chu Wanning and Mo Ran. Thus, this time, Chu Wanning was at a disadvantage.

Mo Ran smiled. “Shizun, stop fighting. If you don’t use your spiritual power, then to be honest, you can’t beat me.”

Chu Wanning was furious, “You are an arrogant renegade disciple!”

“If Shizun is angry, I’ll let Shizun have ten moves.”

“Mo Weiyu!” Chu Wanning became angry out of embarrassment, and his punches and kicks became faster and fiercer.

The haitang blossoms fell one by one, soft as the wind and the snow. Under the tree, the Shizun and disciple duo lashed out with their kicks, doing whatever they wanted. After another 80 or so rounds, Chu Wanning gradually felt exhausted — he had first practiced the sword for an hour before Mo Ran came, then he had used the weapon and Mo Ran to fight a hundred times. He was truly exhausted.

However, his eyes were very bright, and his heartbeat was very fast. His handsome face was filled with spirit and radiance.

The longer they fought, the more entangled they became. Chu Wanning suddenly turned to the side and used his elbow to slash towards the chest area of Mo Ran, but he was stopped by Mo Ran.

The two of them pressed against each other as their arms trembled…

Chu Wanning's arm was held so tightly by Mo Ran that his long, coarse fingers looked like they were going to crush him to pieces. Even his bones were broken.

The beast nature of Mo Ran and the desire to conquer him were also ignited. With a sudden burst of strength, he finally managed to control Chu Wanning's strength and then suddenly flipped his hand.

Chu Wanning was shocked. By the time he regained his senses, Mo Ran had already buried his body into his sweaty embrace.

"Do we still need to fight?" Behind him, Mo Ran's voice was laughing, his back pressed against his broad chest. His heart was pounding, and the young man's chest was hot as fire, solid as iron, like a rock that was about to melt him down. Mo Ran's lips were pressed against the back of his ear, and his breath was scorching hot, spraying all over the back of his bare

neck. Since Chu Wanning had tied a bun around his head and no hair on his neck, he could feel the terrifying aura of a tiger or wolf, almost to the point of ripping his entire male body apart.

Due to his perspiration, the ruthlessness was intertwined with his embrace, and it was as moist as spring water…

“Shizun, are we still fighting?”

“…” Chu Wanning bit his lower lip until his eyes turned red.

fuck, he was unwilling!

Just as he was about to fight again, his lips were pressed down, as if by coincidence, a rough yet warm feeling caused goosebumps to rise all over his body. Chu Wanning’s hair stood on end as he shouted through gritted teeth, “Let go of me!”

Although his words were fierce, his body was trembling uncontrollably in Mo Weiyu’s embrace. Luckily, Mo Ran was unable to distinguish that he was trembling because of his exhaustion. In fact, Mo Ran could not protect himself, so how could he be distracted and discover Chu Wanning’s abnormality?

Chu Wanning heard his low and hoarse voice. It sounded like he was on the verge of breaking out into a deep smile, “After I let go, will Shizun be willing to go back to your room and change?”

Chu Wanning’s eyes reddened in anger, “……Let go!”

His evasion was rewarded with an even more forceful and brutal clamping. Chu Wanning’s arm was almost crushed into a dislocated position. His body went soft, and he couldn’t help but let out a hoarse moan.

This moan was too similar to a moan from a bed. Mo Ran froze for a moment, then his lower body immediately reacted. At this moment, he was very close to Chu Wanning. He was afraid that his Shizun would feel his anger at the hot and hard moment. How could Mo Ran dare to let Chu Wanning know? Instinctively, he pushed Chu Wanning away, not daring to continue suppressing him from behind.

The instant he let go of him, Chu Wanning was caught off guard. He hugged his arm that was in pain and turned his head to give him a powerful kick. With real strength, he threw the unprepared Mo Ran onto the ground. Mo Ran didn't expect the fellow to suddenly kick his butt. His entire body went numb as he laid on the floor. Feeling as though his ribs were about to break, he frowned in pain.

"Shizun, you're too…"

The victory was a bit unfair.

He didn't dare to say anything else. He forced himself to squint his watery eyes and tried his best to raise his head to look at Chu Wanning.

He saw that his Shizun's clothes were in a mess. The white silk robe had long since been opened due to the intense fight, revealing a firm and smooth chest that rose and fell with the rapid breathing. Chu Wanning was gasping for breath. He pulled on his messy clothes, his hair was in disarray, and his temples were in disarray. Due to the intense fighting, his eyes were slightly red.

Chu Wanning slowly stood up, looking down on him from above. His chin was slightly raised and his eyes were filled with arrogance.

He caught his breath and said, "You lost. It's useless to be tall."

Mo Ran did not know whether to laugh or cry. As he spoke, the corner of his mouth curled up into a bloody foam, “Didn’t I lose? Even my bones will be broken by Shizun’s kick.”

“…”

As he said this, Chu Wanning felt a little weak. He had been enjoying the fight, and he did not remember if his last kick had stopped yet. He bent over and pressed his chest bone, “Where did I kick?”

“Here…”

“Does it hurt?”

“…” Of course it hurt, but he wasn’t a fifteen-sixteen year old boy at the moment.

Seeing that he was not in a good mood, Chu Wanning grabbed the stack of clothes. With his other hand, he tried to lift Mo Ran up, but unexpectedly, he had exhausted too much of his strength. Mo Ran was heavy and high so he didn’t pull him up, instead his whole person fell on Mo Ran’s body. He heard the groan of the man below him, and quickly sat up. Without thinking, he went to check Mo Ran’s injury.

“Does it hurt?” Chu Wanning’s face turned pale.

“Get off me first.”

Luckily, he was still able to speak. It seemed that he wasn’t dead yet.

Chu Wanning got up in a hurry, but those who were weak would find it difficult to get up once they fell. His legs were actually soft, and they were unstable, not standing still.

He fell back down in a sorry state.

At first, Chu Wanning didn’t notice, but at the moment, he was only wearing a thin layer of silk, and this position was very awkward. As soon as he moved, he felt that there was something huge sticking out of his body.

Ch. 149 Shizun, I Can't Stand Up

"…" Chu Wanning was speechless.

Mo Ran: "…"

Almost in a panic, with an unknown source of strength, Chu Wanning got up abruptly. His lips quivered as his face alternated between green and red. It was as if he was extremely shocked, and frightened.

The mighty and prestigious Elder Yuheng, to think that he actually, really seemed to have been shocked.

Mo Ran's heart was instantly thrown into disarray. He felt extremely uneasy. He clutched his chest, which was in so much pain from the kick, and sat up. He carefully said, "Shizun…"

Chu Wanning took a big step back as if his tail had been stepped on.

It must have been hard on him to be able to open his phoenix eyes so wide.

It seemed like he was really shocked…

Mo Ran smiled bitterly, "I'm sorry, I'm not… I…"

He didn't know what to say.

In fact, it was Chu Wanning who was the most shocked. What do you mean by 'I am not'? What am I? How could Mo Ran react? Was he mistaken? But if there was no response, how hard and big could he usually be? That would be more.

Suddenly, he thought of that damned ranking list. There were four words written on it.

This was definitely not a common thing…

Chu Wanning's face turned completely red. He saw that Mo Ran still wanted to say something, so he raised his hand and said, "Don't say anymore, you can go back now."

He endured the pain and got up. When he got up, he maintained his half-kneeling posture and said in a low voice, "Shizun, I'm sorry, I didn't do it on purpose."

"…" Chu Wanning looked at him with a complicated expression. He looked like he was thinking about a lot of things, but in reality, his mind was stuck on the word 'definitely not normal'.

After Mo Ran had ran away, Chu Wanning stood still for a long time.

The fine hairs on his arms stood on end, and he seemed to be in a daze.

He suddenly recalled that when they went to the Jincheng Lake to ask for a sword, he accidentally wrestled while bathing in the hot spring, and they also encountered him accidentally. However, they only came into contact for a short period of time, Chu Wanning wasn't sure if he was mistaken or not, but just now, Mo Ran personally said that he was sorry, and that it was an accident, which also meant that he was really… Desire. It wasn't an illusion.

Although he knew that it was normal for men to want to burn because of what they saw in front of their eyes, Chu Wanning knew from his own

heart that he wasn't that attractive. There were many more people in the world that were more handsome than him.

…… What's there to look at?

Even though he was confused, the creepy feeling between his legs would not fade. Even though there was a layer of clothing between his legs, it still seemed so fresh and ferocious.

In the midst of all the jumbled thoughts, a thought suddenly popped into his head at the wrong time.

He couldn't help but think, if such a ferocious beast was thrown out of the cage, who would be able to withstand it…

Chu Wanning clenched his teeth gloomily, but the blush on his face could not be hidden as the contents of his eyes were blurry and messy.

It was as if he had been set on fire and was being entangled by hot flames.

He stood outside for a long time before returning to his room. Chu Wanning took off his bun and bit down on his lips. He raised his hand and rearranged his long hair, tying it tightly into a ponytail.

He heaved a sigh of relief and raised his head to look at himself in the mirror.

The phoenix eyes were narrow, and when he wasn't smiling, there was always a domineering and ruthless feeling, not pleasant to look at.

The nose is not too high, the curvature is gentle, the outline is not very vivid, not likeable.

His mouth…

Forget it, this mouth was just like the words that came out of his mouth. It was very thin, and its color was cold. There was no warmth within it, and of course, it was also unlikeable.

Who knew what kind of madness Mo Ran was, to be so fervent.

Chu Wanning had always been a conservative person who didn't know much about matters of the heart. Even when he met those books, he felt that they were dirty, so he stared at the mirror and tried to figure out what was going on.

Forget it.

Then, he might as well forget about it, Elder Yuheng, who had never experienced love before, thought to himself. After all, it wasn't necessarily true that men would only react when they were in love. Perhaps this was just a coincidence.

The next day, Xue Zhengyong and Madam Wang stood in front of the mountain gate, waiting for the arrival of the other three guests. The first person to come was Xue Meng. He usually wore the Bluesilver Flexible Armor on the Sisheng Peak, always appearing to be sharp and overbearing.

However, he was dressed in an elegant and dignified ceremonial robe today. He had combed his hair very simply, leaving behind only a jade hairpin. His entire demeanor was a bit different. He was dignified, and his shoes were elegantly made of clogs.

Seeing his parents, he actually felt a little embarrassed. He tugged at the corner of his sleeves and said, "Father, Mother."

Xue Zhengyong couldn't help but exclaim, "Meng'er is so pretty, he's basically carved out of the same mold as your mother."

Madam Wang had a pair of beautiful eyes that dropped downwards. Her face was a little red from being praised like that by her husband.

She waved at Xue Meng and said, "Come here, Meng'er. Come here."

Xue Meng stood in front of her. She raised her head to look at him for a while, and her eyes seemed to contain the passage of time, wasting away time. After a while, she lightly sighed, "This dress looks white and very nice on you."

Xue Meng laughed. "It's all because my mother was born and raised."

"All you know how to do is talk like your father." As Madam Wang spoke, she felt somewhat sorrowful. "In the blink of an eye, more than twenty years have passed…"

Xue Meng seemed to have anticipated what she was going to say next. His smile suddenly froze, and he subconsciously took half a step back.

But what use was half a step like this? He still couldn't avoid his mother's nagging.

Sure enough, Madam Wang pulled him along and said earnestly, "Meng'er, today we are going to the Rufeng Sect to congratulate Young Master Nangong. Look, you and him are around the same age, shouldn't you be at the age to discuss marriage?"

"Mother, I still don't want to get married yet…I don't have anyone I like…" Xue Meng mumbled.

“Mom knows you don’t have anyone you like, so you should pay more attention to other girls when you go to the meeting. They don’t necessarily have to be rich or powerful. As long as someone is good and you like them, your mother will definitely make sure to find someone to matchmake for you.”

Xue Meng’s face turned red.

“You haven’t even said a single word. How could I, your mother, directly think of a matchmaker?”

“Mother only mentioned it…”

“But I don’t like anyone. Mother, just speak of those girls we’ve seen in the cultivation world. They’re not even as good-looking as me. If I marry them, won’t I suffer a loss? Not marrying, not marrying, not marrying.” Xue Meng’s head shook like a rattle drum. Suddenly, an idea came to him, and he said, “Besides, why did you just urge me? Isn’t Mo Ran a year older than me? Why don’t you worry about him? And my Shizun—”

“What realm is Elder Yuheng at? Are you going to compete with him?” Madam Wang found it somewhat amusing. “Alright, I won’t force you. That’s all Mother said. She wants you to take a look, but if you really don’t like her, then forget it. Mother can even tie you up to go to school?”

Xue Zhengyong thought about it for a while and said, “But I think Meng’er is right. I mentioned to Yuheng about a cultivation partner last time.”

“Huh?” Hearing this, Xue Meng was very surprised. “Father, you mentioned this to Shizun? He didn’t fall out with you?”

“So hostile.” Xue Zhengyong laughed bitterly, “He kicked me out.”

Madam Wang, "…"

Xue Meng laughed loudly. "Like I said, my Shizun is an immortal, not an heavenly god. Someone like him has long since lost his passion and desire. What does he need a cultivation partner for?"

Xue Zhengyong sighed, obviously not resigned. He was about to argue with his son when suddenly, Madam Wang covered his mouth with her sleeve and said softly, "Husband, don't say anymore. Elder Yuheng is here."

In the undispersed morning mist, Chu Wanning slowly walked on the wet stone floor, his robe was as wide as a mountain, and his sleeves were fluttering.

As he moved, the golden threads of his robe began to ripple under the sunlight. His hair was tied with a white jade hairpin, and the end of the hairpin was inlaid with a plum flower carved from a ruby. He looked very pure and dignified, as well as cool and aloof.

At that moment, Xue Zhengyong suddenly felt powerless. He opened his mouth and closed it.

He thought that Xue Meng was right.

What kind of woman would be placed beside such a person, so that she wouldn't be annihilated by his brilliance and be covered in dust because of his imposing manner?

The God of Heaven walked to the mortal world and stood in front of the mountain gate. He frowned and glanced at Xue Zhengyong.

"Sect Leader."

“Haha, Yuheng, your clothes really suit you.”

Chu Wanning raised his hand, a scented sachet with intricate patterns was swaying in the air. He said, “This scented sachet that was delivered along with the ceremonial robe is different from the usual one.”

“Ah, that was according to Linyi’s skills. What happened?”

The high and mighty Elder of the Heavengod Society slightly frowned. He said, “It’s too difficult. I don’t know how to do it. I hope that Sect Leader can give me some pointers.”

Xue Zhengyong: “…”

He taught Chu Wanning three times. Chu Wanning still couldn’t get around the knot, and finally gave up. Xue Meng could not bear to watch any longer, so he volunteered to help his Shizun tie the scented sachet. He quickly put the sachet on his waist, and Chu Wanning looked at it and was a little surprised. He praised, “Not bad.”

Xue Zhengyong couldn’t help but think, “Oh my god, if such a person didn’t have a cultivation partner, would he really not die in his own hands?”

After a while, Mo Ran came down, his face was a a little afflicted. Yesterday, Mo Ran was kicked too hard by Chu Wanning, so he was too embarrassed to find someone to treat his wound. Others would ask who had kicked him, but he could not say that he was being disrespectful to Elder Yuheng, right?

He could only meditate and rest. He was feeling better now, as his chest didn’t hurt so much that he had to breathe.

However, he saw Chu Wanning, who was standing beside Xue Zhengyong, quietly waiting for him. This man was dressed in a suit of gold silk embroidered in white. His collar was pressed very high, and he was both restrained and solemn. He was a very proper and handsome man.

Mo Weiyu felt a movement in his chest. His breathing, which had calmed down with great difficulty, seemed to have stopped. He was unable to catch his breath and became disordered.

“Cough!”

This was terrible. He had fallen in love with a man he could never, never, never touch again.

This time, the old ghost of the second reincarnation was really like a young man in his early twenties. He was impulsive and hot-blooded, and would feel the world was in chaos because of a glance from his lover, or the change of a piece of clothing, or the happiness he would experience would be related to him. The sadness was related to him, his heartbeat was related to him, his breathing was related to him, even the moonlight shining into the window, the line of stamens attracted by an ant in the moonlight was related to that person.

He felt very tormented and aggrieved in this kind of affection.

Because every flower and leaf was him, but he could not get it, and could not pick it.

Fuck, the human world was making things difficult for him.

After temporarily handing over all the matters of the sect to Elder Tanlang, Xue Zhengyong was on his way with his wife and invitation card.

As long as Chu Wanning was on schedule, they would usually travel in carriages, and this time was no exception. The group of people leisurely walked along the public road towards Linyi. They were sightseeing along the way and even helped to get rid of some of the smaller monsters.

It took them more than ten days to reach Dai City.

The rouge in Dai City was famous. Once in the city, Xue Zhengyong took Madam Wang to buy rouge first. Xue Meng despised the old couple for being so bored. He rubbed his goosebumps and refused to follow them.

The Shizun and disciple duo sighed as they revisited the place.

Xue Meng said, “Unfortunately, Shi Mei is not here. Otherwise, it would be just like when we were begging for the sword six years ago. We could still go to the Dawning Peak to play.”

Mo Ran laughed, “Aren’t you afraid that the fake Gouchen will still be there? Seeing that you’ve come, I’ll pull you to the bottom of the lake to reminisce about the past.”

After speaking of the fake Gouchen, Chu Wanning frowned, “It seems like he hasn’t made a move in the past five years?”

Mo Ran said, “It’s hard to say. There were a few large incidents that occurred, but they were all related to the Divine Martial Realm. I suspect it was him, but there’s no evidence either.”

Xue Meng played with the cup in his hand, looking at Mo Ran and said, “I actually don’t think those pending cases have anything to do with him. Think about it, a few years ago, he spent a great deal of effort to find a

Spiritual Body. Since you are a Wood Spirit Body, he chased behind you to harm you, so he should be looking for a human and not a weapon."

Chu Wanning said in a low voice, "But there haven't been any cases of people disappearing in the past five years."

Mo Ran raised his hand: "I didn't encounter any kind of encirclement or trap. But it could also be that I've been wandering around for the past five years and he doesn't know where I am."

The three of them pondered in silence until the Lady Boss brought them the tea leaves and dried fruits. Then Xue Meng scratched his head and said, "Say, could he have done too many bad things and died playing with fire?"

"…"

"Don't look at me like that, aren't most evil spells easily devoured?" Xue Meng mumbled, "Otherwise, why is it that even after five years, he still hasn't made any big movements?"

Mo Ran suddenly said, "There is one possibility."

"What?"

"Look, Shizun hasn't done anything in the past five years."

Before Mo Ran could finish his sentence, Xue Meng knocked him with his chopsticks. "What do you mean? You suspect that the fake Gouchen is Shizun?"

"… Can you wait for me to finish?" Mo Ran said helplessly, "I'm just making an analogy. I was thinking that if those cases of the theft of a godly weapon

had nothing to do with the fake Gouchen, then he really didn't do anything important in the past five years. Then, could he be the same as Shizun? For some reason, such as him being injured or some other reason, he must stay in some place and not come out."

At this point, he suddenly thought of something and froze.

"Shizun…"

"What?"

Mo Ran first shook his head, as if he did not believe his thoughts. But after a moment of hesitation, he still stammered out two words, "Master Huaizui…"

For the past five years, he did not know about the other experts, but there was one person who was trapped in the Red Lotus Pavilion like Chu Wanning, not even half a step away.

Master Huaizui.

However, this idea was too outrageous. No matter what, Master Huaizui had done Chu Wanning a favor by imparting his knowledge to him. Mo Ran did not know what kind of feelings his Shizun held for Huaizui, so he did not dare to be too rash.

"There's no need to think about it, it can't be him."

His words were light, but there was no hesitation.

Mo Ran immediately nodded his head. Since Chu Wanning didn't want to talk about the past when he was a boy, he wouldn't force himself to ask.

He continued to ponder, “Then, are there any other experts who have never appeared in the past five years?”

“Guyue’ye’s head, Jiang Xi.” Xue Meng said, “In the Spiritual Mountain Competition, all the Sect Leaders are present. Only he claims that he is sick and rarely shows himself.”

Mo Ran laughed, “That’s your mother’s shixiong, right? You suspect him?”

“Jiang Xi has a very high opinion of himself and has never been willing to let Guyue’ye stay under the Rufeng Sect. Thus, ever since Nangong Liu became the head of one of the top ten sects, he has not attended any gatherings. It’s not just five years.”

“Then that’s all.” Xue Meng said, “Sigh, forget it. If you can’t figure it out, then forget it. There are too few clues, so thinking about it makes my head hurt.”

It just so happened that Madam Wang and Xue Zhengyong had returned. It was already late at night, so the five of them prepared to find a place to stay in Dai City.

Xue Meng said, “I know an inn that is especially good. There is also a hot spring pool that we can soak in.”

Mo Ran: “…”

Using his brain, he already knew which inn Xue Meng was talking about. Wasn’t it the same inn they had stayed on when they were teenagers?

When he was bathing in the hot spring, he had fallen into Chu Wanning’s arms without a reason…

Thinking of this, he could not help but lightly cough and silently turn his face away. He did not want others to discover the slight blush and anticipation in his eyes, but his heart involuntarily began to beat faster.

Xue Meng always exaggerated the things he liked and was blind to its faults, whereas the things he hated gets stepped upon so hard that they will never recover. Xue Zhengyong felt that his sons words were only to be half believed, so he asked Mo Ran, “Ran’er has also stayed at that inn before, what do you think?”

Mo Ran coughed twice, and did not dare to look his uncle in the eye. “It’s not bad.”

“Then go and stay.” Xue Zhengyong made his decision. Mo Ran then sweat on his palms, his fingertips curling up from the throbbing of his heart.

He lowered his head and gave a seemingly tame and gentle “En”. But in his heart, he was thinking, “I…” Could he soak in the bath together with his Shizun again, just like that year…

He could not help but recall the blurry mist. Chu Wanning’s tall and handsome body was lined and taut, filled with an alluring and aggressive tension.

However, if he was in the same bath as Chu Wanning and was shrouded in the steam, would he really be able to hold it in?

After discussing where to go, the others had already stood up. After eating the peanuts in his hand, Xue Meng also dusted off the pieces and stood up. He turned his head to look at his cousin, who was still sitting there with an unfathomable expression.

“What’s the matter, let’s go?”

Mo Ran’s expression was somewhat subtle. It was unknown whether it was due to the setting sun, but his handsome face seemed to have turned red.

He reached out his hand to pour himself another cup of tea, and refused to stand up. He continued to sit there awkwardly, and said with a few light coughs, “… I’ve not finished after ordering so much, I don’t want it to go waste. You guys go first, I know the way. After drinking the tea, I’ll come over.”

Ch. 150 Shizun Change Rooms With Me

Speaking of which, this small town was famous for its Dawning Peak. However, after the fake Gouchen's incident that happened back then, Jincheng Lake's weapons were all destroyed. In the blink of an eye, many years had passed, and the small town gradually became lonely.

Many of the inns that were used as lodgings for the swordsmen had closed their doors because their business was in a bad mood. They had started other businesses instead.

However, the inn where the Shizun and disciple stayed in that year, the hot spring pool, was still tenaciously surviving. Moreover, because of Young Master Nangong's wedding, the guests who came to congratulate the Rufeng Sect would all stay in Dai City.

Xue Zhengyong pushed aside the bamboo curtain and walked into the lobby. "Boss, going to stay here!"

"Four people?"

Before Xue Zhengyong could answer, he heard a soft voice from behind him, "No, five."

Mo Ran had left in a hurry, and had arrived just at this moment.

When Xue Meng saw him, he was somewhat surprised. "So fast?"

At first, Mo Ran was taken aback, but then his face darkened as he thought angrily to himself, "Are you going to disappear very slowly?" Sitting in front of the tea stand, he had read out a few words about the mind cleansing spell.

However, he also knew that what Xue Meng said and what he was thinking were not the same. It was not good to flare up, so he could only nod his head rather subtly.

“You’ve swallowed all the melon seeds at once, haven’t you vomited the shells?”

Mo Ran: “…”

“Five guests, how many rooms do you need?”

Xue Zhengyong said, “My wife and I will share a room, and we’ll have another three rooms of the highest quality, a total of four rooms.”

Listening to his uncle’s arrangement, Mo Ran remained silent, but his heart was slightly agitated. He actually secretly hoped that the conversation with his uncle from back then could be repeated. The boss told them that the restaurant was full and that they had to squeeze together.

Forget it, he still could not do anything. However, if he could be alone in the same room with Chu Wanning, he would feel warm, uneasy, and excited. In the end, the blood that flowed in his veins was still the blood of tigers and wolves.

However, coincidences didn’t happen that many times. This time, the shopkeeper happily said, “Good job, four rooms!” He turned over and went to the cabinet to get the key. He drawled: “Dear guest, the second floor, please do —”

Mo Ran looked at him in silence, his eyes gloomy.

Stupid thing, he thought, four rooms and you’re so happy? What’s there to be happy about! What’s there to be happy about! What was there to be

happy about earning more money!

“A-Ran, why are you pinching the tabletop on the other side of the counter?”

“…” Mo Ran calmly retracted his hand and smiled. He had already made a few cracks on the floor where the board had fallen. He was afraid that if he used more strength, it would shatter. “Nothing.”

When he took the key from Xue Zhengyong and went upstairs, Mo Ran stood in front of the room that belonged to him and was suddenly startled.

Turning his head, he saw that Chu Wanning was also looking at him.

“You live in this room?”

“Um… Yeah.” Mo Ran hesitated for a moment, his eyelashes drooped, but he still couldn’t help but raise his eyes to look at Chu Wanning’s face, “Shizun still remembers?”

“… Remember what?”

Mo Ran pointed to his own room and said, “When we came to ask for the sword, Shizun slept in this room.”

“…”

Mo Ran carefully looked at him, his voice very patient, but he could not conceal his weak anticipation. “Shizun, do you still remember?”

How could he not remember?

As he walked up the stairs, he noticed that the old staircase was creaking. It smelled like old wood being soaked in water and rotting away.

He could almost see the teenager, Mo Ran, pushing open the door with a cynical expression, grinning at him. The dimples were shallow, and the years were long.

Seeing him keep silent for a long time, Mo Ran seemed to be disappointed. He lowered his gaze and said, “Perhaps I remembered wrongly and confused it…”

“That’s right.”

Mo Ran suddenly raised his head.

Chu Wanning looked at him and gave a faint smile, “You’re not mistaken, it’s this one.”

The sentence was like a spark igniting the darkness in the depths of Mo Ran’s eyes. Mo Ran gradually cracked a sweet smile, as if he had eaten a candy. He pointed to the room Chu Wanning was in now and said, “Also, Shizun stays in my old room today.”

He was very happy, but he spoke frankly.

Chu Wanning was a little embarrassed, but he stopped laughing and said sullenly, “I can’t remember.”

As he spoke, he pushed the door open and shut off Mo Ran.

“…”

Uh… What did I do wrong to make him unhappy?

That night, Mo Ran did not dare to go to the bathhouse to soak in the hot spring. There were some things that he was afraid of, just in case. He felt

that he was close to the limits of his desire.

He laid on the bed with his head resting on his arm. He was bored and started to think about how he and Chu Wanning would get along.

He wanted to be nice to him, wanted to take care of this snow-white kitten. However, he would roll up his fur a few times and the white cat would trade him for a paw. It was as if he was not comfortable touching him and was not satisfied.

He felt guilty, but he didn't know where to touch or where not to touch the cat. He was like a man who had just raised a cat and knew nothing but how to lick the whole white cat under his palm.

Then, he let out a furious roar, and gave himself another slap.

Mo Ran rolled over and blinked his eyes, looking very depressed.

He suddenly recalled that the layout of the inn, the bed in the next room and his own room should only be next to a wooden wall.

The moment this idea appeared, Mo Ran could no longer fall asleep. He felt his mouth going dry.

Had Chu Wanning gone to take a bath? Or was he preparing to go?

However, he didn't hear much from his room… If Chu Wanning did not plan to take a bath, would he have been lying down by now? Then they were actually very close to each other now. If it weren't for the thin wooden partition in the middle which separated them by two rooms, they would actually be lying down together…

Lie down together. The thought made the young man's blood hot, flowing dangerously like a dormant volcano, but not gushing.

He could not help but sleep further in. He slept close to the wall, which was made of wood and mud. The wood was so thin that it was at most three fingers wide.

Mo Ran thought that Chu Wanning was lying about 3 feet away from him. He took off his clothes, or perhaps he was just wearing a thin undergarment… He closed his eyes and swallowed something down his throat. He felt as if his heart was burning, covering his entire body and burning to the corners of his eyes. He did not open his eyes, but if he did, there would definitely be traces of blood inside.

Ah, and then he suddenly remembered something else — it had been so exciting that his whole body tensed and blood was rushing down his lower body.

He had once, slept in the same bed as Chu Wanning.

The old memories were so damp, so sinful and sweet, that Mo Ran's scalp tingled as he recalled the incident. He thought back to that year when he was soaking in the hot spring and accidentally fell into Chu Wanning's arms. The hot and dry feeling would never go away, so he could only rub himself against the wall and let out his desire for love…

Mo Ran slightly opened his eyes. His eyes were gloomy. The dark area was like a rock, but there was also scarlet red lava flowing under the rock. He pressed his forehead against the wall again.

His heart felt like it was about to burst. Why was he so silly all those years ago? It was clearly such a bright desire and love, why… I just can't find it…

He pressed a hand against the wall, trying to restrain himself, but he could not.

When he thought he wasn't in love, he could think about Chu Wanning venting his anger without restraint, but when he fell in love, he was destined to beg for the life of the man who was separated by a wall. Even when he was dreaming, he felt that it was a blasphemy to Chu Wanning.

His nose was pressed against the wall, and his body was boiling hot as he pressed his body against the thin wall as hard as he could. His thoughts were in a mess, and his eyes were blurred.

It was as if Chu Wanning's breath, along with the faint fragrance of haitang from his body, had seeped through the gaps of the wood pattern and seeped into his bed, wrapping him tightly.

The smell of Chu Wanning seduced him and pitied him.

The beast that seduced him pitied his humanity.

To seduce him and set him on fire, he felt pity for him.

Amidst such enticement and pity, Mo Ran painfully furrowed his brows, supporting himself against the wall with his hands. His joints were clearly defined, and his veins were popping out one by one.

Contrary to his violent expression, he was begging with a whimpering voice, "Chu Wanning…Chu Wanning…"

What he did not know was that on the other side of the wall, Chu Wanning did not dare to bathe in the hot spring.

The two of them had misunderstood each other so deeply in their past life that they were separated by a huge abyss. Therefore, in their lifetime, they had used their blood to water the abyss into a sea of blood and swam towards each other. However, because of a barrier, they could not see each other's surging emotions, and could only allow their love to flood by itself.

But they had clearly stuck it so close.

It was so close to Mo Ran that he seemed to have heard Chu Wanning's heartbeat. As for Chu Wanning, he seemed to have heard Mo Ran's breathing.

Knock, knock, knock!

Mo Ran was shocked and didn't seem to be in a good mood. "Who is it?"

Hearing his shout, Chu Wanning, who was sitting next to him, realized that Mo Ran was really sleeping close to him, close to the wall. His hoarse voice sounded as if he was crying right next to his pillow.

"…" Chu Wanning clenched his fingers and opened his phoenix eyes in the darkness.

"It's me, Xue Meng. My mother said she left me with your luggage, so you should open the door. Just wait for me to take a bath."

Eavesdropping was not a good thing, but Chu Wanning thought to himself, he did not eavesdrop. It was because the wooden board was too thin, the room was not soundproof, and it was because Xue Meng shouted too loudly.

In short, he didn't want to listen.

As Chu Wanning thought of this, he wrapped himself in a blanket and leaned even closer to the wall.

The creaking sound of a bed came from next door. After a while, the door opened, and Xue Meng's voice sounded again: "Hey, why are you already asleep? So early?"

"I'm sleepy." Mo Ran felt a little choked. "Hurry up, you woke me up halfway through my sleep. Take your clothes and let's go for a walk."

"Why are you in such a hurry?" Xue Meng paused for a moment, his voice carrying a trace of suspicion. "You left the door latch so early and kept bored inside. I was just talking to you and you got angry. You couldn't be…"

What are you doing?

Chu Wanning suddenly opened his eyes wide, unconsciously thinking about how in the lotus pond, he accidentally rubbed against Mo Ran. That youth was overly passionate and high-spirited, ready to take a person's life at any time.

If a young man in his early twenties didn't cultivate the path of abstinence like him, how much lava would he be hiding within his body? How often does it have to be vented before it's normal? This was something that Chu Wanning did not know. He had been quiet for too long, he did not understand.

Now, he wanted to know a bit, but he couldn't let go of his pride due to his thin face.

He was such a prideful person, yet he asked such a question. Who else could he ask? He couldn't just grab a disciple and say, "Sorry to bother you,

but I would like to ask an ordinary able-bodied man, how many days should I release him?”

…… Just by thinking about it, he felt that the other party was ineffable.

Of course, at the Sisheng Peak, there were books related to love affairs. But to borrow every book, one needed to register and create a book. Chu Wanning could not imagine the words that would appear in the book.

“The Legend of the Wise Sea” and “The Sea of Desires and the Floating Record”

Borrower, Yuheng Elder Chu Wanning.

…… Just kill him.

Ch. 151 Shizun, I Only Want You

>>sexual content

Just as he was lost in his thoughts, he heard a low voice from the neighboring Mo Ran say, “Where are you looking? If there’s nothing wrong, I’ll grab your clothes and quickly scram.”

Xue Meng froze for a moment. “I want to see where you are?”

Mo Ran: “…”

Xue Meng looked at his cousin’s face and pondered for a long time. Suddenly, he thought of something. “What I was going to say, you left the door locked, do you think there are too many people in the bath house? If you want to take a bath in your own room, your head is full of dirty thoughts!”

In the next room, Chu Wanning’s face darkened.

His mind was filled with dirty thoughts…

Xue Meng let out a heavy sigh. He stared at Mo Ran as he sized it up before saying, “I hadn’t thought of that kind of thing at first. Just saying it in this way is actually reminding me of something. You couldn’t have really been…”

“… Aren’t you bathing? So much talk!”

“No, I suddenly feel that you’re very suspicious.” Seeing how hostile the other person’s tone was, with sparks burning in his black eyes,

Xue Meng felt that something was wrong. “When you first became a weakling, you ran all the way to the brothel. All these years, you’ve been walking everywhere, yet there wasn’t even the slightest bit of romance. How did you suddenly change your personality?”

“…” Mo Ran seemed to be silent. Chu Wanning waited in this silence, he actually also wanted to know how Mo Ran would answer.

The longer he remained silent, the more agitated he became. Why didn’t you say anything? Embarrassment? Regret? Or…

“Do you really want to know?”

Mo Ran opened his mouth, his voice clearly filled with anger.

He still had the face to be angry.

Chu Wanning was amazed. He felt that Xue Meng’s question was reasonable, there was no reason for him to be unhappy just because the other party dug out their secrets, so he just tried to cover it up.

Before he could finish his last cover, he heard Mo Ran say, “I’m sick of it. I’ve had enough. Alright, you can scram now.”

“…” Chu Wanning was speechless.

Xue Meng, “……”

After a long period of deathly silence, Xue Meng burst into an angry roar that the entire inn would probably hear, “Mo Weiyu, you shameless dog! You scoundrel!”

“Fine, whatever you say is fine. Get out, and don’t fucking disturb my sleep.”

“Don’t touch me! I hate it!”

“What do you hate?”

He had originally wanted to make Mo Ran feel uncomfortable, but who would have thought that Mo Ran would shamelessly rebel against the army? He couldn’t help but think that he was already in his twenties, at this age, Nangong Si had already become married to the number one beauty of the cultivation world, and Jiangdong’s fourth Young Master was already the father of three children, and the Mei Hanxue of the Taxue Palace on Mount Kunlun…

Mei Hanxue hadn’t died of Flowering Willow Disease yet.

It seemed that he was the only one who had yet to experience love affairs. Xue Meng felt very aggrieved.

It wasn’t that he was sullen because of his lustful nature, he wasn’t lustful at all. Instead, he felt that he was much worse in this aspect. He had left more than ten streets behind, which was why he was so angry. If Mo Ran didn’t mention avoiding it, if he was deeply ashamed, then Xue Meng’s mentality would probably be different. However, Mo Ran actually threw a sentence at him with a look of despise and annoyance on his face.

“I’m sick of it, I’ve had enough.”

Young Master Xue felt that he couldn’t take it anymore, and his pride had taken a blow.

He said, “You, you, you,” and after a long time, he angrily shouted at Mo Ran, “You are annoying anyway, you are not human!”

As he spoke, he slammed the door.

Chu Wanning also choked. Although he was calmer than Xue Meng and could hear that Mo Ran was deliberately bullying Xue Meng, he could not help but feel a surge of emotions and could not calm down for a long time.

The man next door used words that were too crude, and the low growl was like a lion’s breath bursting out of the muscles of the jungle. The low growl combined with the coarse word, and like a crude, hot poker, it plunged into his heart.

Chu Wanning’s throat moved, his eyes were gloomy and flickering.

Before, Mo Ran had broken the rules while strolling in the brothel, so he knew that Mo Ran was not as pure as Xue Meng. It was just that the previous Mo Ran was not enough to capture one’s soul, causing him to be unable to stop himself from thinking and depicting such a scene in his mind.

But now that the old story was brought up again, Chu Wanning could not help but think of the hot, smooth, smoky, and sturdy body that he had seen before. It had been coquettish with those charming, white, and alluring young men.

He felt like he was once again burning with anger, and his heart felt like it was being scratched by feathers.

In the midst of his anger and desire, Chu Wanning’s eyes were slightly red. In the dark night, there was the color of a flower…

Xue Meng returned after leaving.

“Open the door!”

“… What’s the matter again?”

“Busy arguing with you! Where are my clothes!”

“Take it from the table.”

“Humph!” Xue Meng carried his clothes and angrily left.

This time, it was finally quiet. Chu Wanning heard the heavy footsteps of Mo Ran, then the creaking of the bed. This time, he could clearly hear the man next door lying back on the bed, he even felt the shaking of the bed supporting his hot mountain-like body.

He felt thirsty and wanted to get up and drink a glass of water.

But he heard Mo Ran lying down, and he knew that if he got up, the man would be able to hear him too, so he stayed still, like a piece of rock with a cold exterior and colorful rocks inside.

Next door, Mo Ran was actually feeling uneasy.

Men who were dissatisfied with their desires were always irritable, yet Xue Meng chose to disturb him at this moment. He kept going back and forth without controlling himself. He shouted without shame just now, but he didn’t know if Chu Wanning heard him or not.

If he wasn’t asleep, he must have heard it…

He lay on the bed, regretting his decision the more he thought about it. He turned his body back and forth and Chu Wanning listened to his

restlessness from behind the wall.

After a while, Chu Wanning heard a low voice, “Shizun…”

In the end, Mo Ran was unable to calm himself down. He could not suppress his anger, so he tried to call for Chu Wanning to see if he had any reactions.

“Shizun, are you asleep?”

“…”

“Can you hear me?”

Chu Wanning’s heart thumped like a drum. He felt that his heart was beating too loudly, making him feel embarrassed. He quietly pulled the blanket over his head and tried to cover his heart which he could not hear at all with a quilt.

“Shizun…”

But this quilt, the sound of Mo Ran was so close, it was as if they were lying on the same bed, the moment Chu Wanning lifted the quilt, he could see his handsome face and his bare chest, looking at him sideways, his eyes shining like wolves and tigers, staring at him hungrily, wanting to devour him along with his belt and blood.

“Can you hear me?”

Chu Wanning made up his mind to pretend that he didn’t hear him. He naturally knew that Mo Ran was hoping he didn’t hear his question.

Otherwise, they would be embarrassed when they met tomorrow morning.

The man called out to him a few more times. Seeing that Chu Wanning had not moved, he sighed softly. Mo Ran really thought that Chu Wanning had fallen asleep. He was relieved, but also a little regretful.

He wanted Chu Wanning to take care of him.

However, Chu Wanning ignored him. First, he caressed the thin wall that separated the two of them with his rough fingers and closed his eyes, as if caressing his chest. Then, he touched his hot lips and murmured softly, as if he was touching his lips.

Mo Ran said, “No need. I just want you…”

But the sound was too light. Chu Wanning did not hear it. He wrapped himself in the blanket and rolled himself up on the bed. His face and heart were very hot, and after a while, he heard the sound of the bed next door creaking, as if the person lying on it was very anxious and had turned over in anger.

He said, “Fuck it!”

Chu Wanning had the sensitivity of an animal, he could predict what he might hear. For a moment, he felt the hairs on his body stand up, and he wanted to cover his ears. However, he only moved his fingertips before lowering them.

He stared blankly in the quilt, and, after a while, he heard.

He heard the low, hoarse breathing coming from outside of the blanket. The breathing was rhythmic, violent, and urgent. A layer of goosebumps

appeared on Chu Wanning's arms, and from this sound, he felt as if his spine was going numb and soft.

Mo Ran's breathing was so sexy, so sinful, choked in his throat, repressed and unrestrained. He could hear the sound, and there was nothing he didn't understand.

Chu Wanning closed his eyes. He felt suffocated, his lips trembling slightly.

He thought of the wet dreams he had had many times, the dreams in which he had seen Mo Ran's body, naked. Thus, when he closed his eyes, he could clearly see what was happening outside the blanket. He felt that Mo Ran was right beside him. His robust and well-built body was lying on his back, and his inky black eyes were squinting as they flickered with a hazy luster…

Mo Ran's hands stretched down, untied his pants, and the angry cockhead popped out. Chu Wanning did not dare to think about the shape of the giant, but only roughly depicted a contour, imagined the furious flesh red. He held the life-threatening thing moving, rolling with Mo Ran's prominent throat knot, swallowing saliva, wondering who he was thinking about, so passionately and painfully pleasuring himself.

"Ah…"

Chu Wanning heard the deep groan of the man next door. It was deep and sexy. His scalp felt numb. In the darkness, his phoenix eyes were steaming with lust.

He couldn't stand it anymore…

After several struggles, the slender white hand of elder Yuheng eventually stretched out, trembling, and reached down, holding his already boiling length.

The rough touch made him feel ashamed but also stimulated. He raised his throat slightly, suppressed a gasp, and under the cover of the bedding, faded the cold skin. He floated in Mo Ran's gasp and was brought into the sea of desire. He treated himself clumsily and roughly. He hurt himself several times, and finally he could not bear it any more. He threw open the bedding, hung down on the bedding surface and grind it. Rushing, rubbing, long legs shaking, eyes half open and half closed, falling a few wisps of wet and sweaty hair, lips open, silently breathing heavily.

Maybe because he was suddenly exposed to the air, he could hear more clearly, or maybe he was confused. Either way, his listening became more blurred. He seemed to hear the wet sound of water, thinking it was the motion of Mo Ran next door, but when he looked down, he found that it was the crystal secretion oozing from the top of his own tip, which lubricated his palm and made an obscene noise.

Chu Wanning's face was even hotter. He looked sideways and did not face the wall, so that he would feel Mo Ran beside him, pleasuring and loving each other's naked bodies.

His loftiness and reservation had already collapsed. He could only hear the breath from next door and feel the pleasure under him. He could not stand the stimulation of eroticism even if he tried to. Every inch of his skin was sensitive. He longed to be close with another burning body. He was like a dry well that had dried up for a hundred years, hungry and thirsty.

With the voice of the next room becoming more and more urgent, Chu Wanning felt his heart burning, waist becoming more and more soft, legs almost unable to support himself, his body fluids had already wet the sheets. He vaguely felt that all this was ridiculous, that he shouldn't be doing it, but he could not help but feel too good. He had never tried it in so many years, and didn't know there was such a pleasurable thing.

If he once relieved himself in the past, he would suffer from the first break of the precepts, feeling bored and nauseous. But this time, apart from the loved one, he heard the repressive and sexy breathing of the other side, he did not feel so ugly, but could feel more pleasure in the ups and downs of the sea of desire, rather than excluded.

He opened his wet and misty eyes slightly, and a few strands of hair drooped over his eyes.

Gradually he lost his focus, and for some reason flashed some strange phantom before his eyes.

Or maybe not a phantom?

It's the weird, too real dreams he's had before.

In his dream, the bedding was golden and red, and the smell of animal skins between pillows and quilts seemed clear and visible. He was lying on the bed like this, sweating on his forehead, lips slightly stretched out, hair scattered and falling in front of his eyes.

The candle was not extinguished. The man behind him thrusted fiercely into him. Their legs and feet were overlapping and entangled. He could clearly feel the man's tense bones and muscles because of the stimulation.

The bedding sheets were out of place. The men could not help stirring and twitching around. Sexy and hot gasps overflowed from their throats. He heard him speak behind him: “Why don’t you say a word? Moan for me”

Dreams and reality overlapped and Chu Wanning clenched his teeth. Even in the accumulation of ferocious desires, emotions can not be curbed, but also inclined to face unwilling to open.

He closed his eyes and his movements became more violent.

He closed his eyes, but could not forget the details of those dreams.

After several times of pulling in, the man scolded, and then stepped back. Strong and powerful hands forced Chu Wanning to turn over. In the light of the lantern, he saw a handsome, lustful face. It was Mo Ran’s face.

Because Chu Wanning clearly depicted Mo Ran in his dream, he felt more and more tortured and excited. He shook his head almost in shame, trying to get rid of the phantom in front of him.

But it was no use.

He heard Mo Ran’s gasp across a wall.

Like the rough and lingering man in his spring dream, he was silent and hot.

He even recalled shamefully the details of the dream, turning him over in Mo Ran, a wet and sticky cock against his spasmodically contracted hole, a huge tip rubbing at his entrance, shallow thrusts, but not yet penetrating inside.

In the inn, Chu Wanning's other hand, which had never soothed his desire, tightly grasped the mattress.

Shame.

He felt extremely humiliated.

How could he have such a dream?

He obviously did not… He has never seen anything like this before… How can you dream something so real, as if this body had really carried such hot and crazy, ugly and lingering passion? Is this the animal nature carved into bone marrow by human beings?

"You are stubborn, do you think you can keep your innocence forever if you bite your lips and keep silent?" His dreams are full of Mo Ran and wet eyes, with a somewhat grim look, and full of erotic desire.

"How many times have you been with me? What about the struggle? It's you who want me to fuck you. It's you who want to be fucked under me."

"Stop talking…"

Dream, reality.

They were all murmuring.

"What if you were noble? You were already dirtied by me, holding me, sucking me, spreading your legs and letting me thrust into you, and all that I gave you. Innocent? Don't be silly. When you went to bed with me on the first day, this word was no longer related to you."

"Don't say that…"

Clean.

No more innocence.

Pride.

It’s like a torn shirt.

“You really ought to see what you look like below…” Mo Ran’s eyes moved down inch by inch, like a sharp knife cutting the person under him. At last, his eyes fell on the trembling and convulsing hole, which was still smeared with body fluids and blood.

His eyes became deep and his throat was swollen. He cursed in a low voice, held his angry cock, and then slowly thrust in again, stretching the shrunken entrance one inch at a time.

Strange to say, Chu Wanning, floating in the memory of this spring dream, seemed to have really produced an illusion, as if he had a tough blade of flesh and blood impaling and filling him up inside…

Mo Ran went deep, inserted to the bottom, even his ballsack was close to the mouth of the hole and could not wait to go in, a huge sexual organ suddenly stretched him to the extreme. He felt that he could no longer withstand even a slight penetration of that length pulsing in his body.

“Ah…”

Dream? Or reality?

Eventually a moan overflowed, and it was this moan that made Chu Wanning suddenly wake up.

The illusion was rapidly dissipating and the smoke was vanishing.

The last thing he saw was that Mo Ran was thrusting into him fiercely on top of the bed. They were almost madly mating on the mattress. He heard Mo Ran gasping roughly; his voice was hoarse and hot: “If you were a woman, with how I fuck you every day, you would have already been pregnant with my seed… Oh, you, bearing my son, should we call it a sin?”

Shame, stimulation, animal desire, human nature.

Inside his room at the inn, Chu Wanning turned over and seemed to want to get rid of such a dirty scene in his mind.

Suddenly he felt very wronged.

Why was it that his eyes were reddish?

He had never dreamed of these things before. He had never seen anything he should not have seen. He had never even seen an erotic picture. Why did he dream of such an absurd and shameless spring dream? What would he do if it was known?

The memory of the dream disappeared, but the bed next door suddenly shook, and Mo Ran kept going for a long time before Chu Wanning. At this time, the pleasure accumulated. When he wanted to spray thin, he could not help but stiffen his strong waist and make an involuntary gesture. He was really holding back for too long and let out in a low roar.

Chu Wanning heard his hoarse growl and was stimulated. He almost looked red and wet. He moved himself roughly and could not help coming on the bedding.

He had never experienced such an exciting orgasm, the end of ejaculation.

He could not help but gasp and shout out, "… Ah ah…"

Suddenly he wanted the wall to disappear, to have the same sweaty Mo Ran leaning over, his heaving chest against his back, gasping, kissing his shoulder, his neck.

After releasing, his vision blurred. Chu Wanning did not know how he fell into such a sticky situation. He had no strength left, so he laid on the quilt with a dazed look in his eyes, gasping for breath.

He rejected desire.

However, he was willing to be in love.

When desire and love intertwined, lust seemed to become less difficult to accept. As a result, the self-reproach vent from Yuliang Village finally became different. He still felt ashamed, but shame was swallowed up by the warmth in his heart, swallowed up by comfort and excitement.

Suddenly he wished for the wood wall to disappear and for the same sweaty Mo Ran to lean forward, for his rising and falling hot chest to press against his back, gasping, kissing his shoulders, his neck.

Chu Wanning lay there in a daze. He thought, if that was the case, then everything would be perfect.

Then he would be enough.

The next day, Mo Ran woke up early.

This was Linyi, Chu Wanning wasn't used to eating spicy dishes, and there weren't any light dishes in the tavern, so he went to the west market to buy ingredients and borrow the kitchen to cook some food for his Shizun.

In this world, there were some men who pursued others, using all sorts of tricks. A single breakfast would be enough to fill the entire banquet, but as long as they saw that they could not catch up, they would immediately turn around. There were so many beauties in this world, how could they spend even the slightest bit of effort on an object that was absolutely impossible to catch up with?

But Mo Ran is different.

He had spent two lifetimes chasing after his Shizun.

Now that he understood his own intentions, he knew that he would never be able to have a relationship with Chu Wanning that surpassed Shizun-disciple level. However, he was still willing to do it, and he treated him well day after day.

He knew better than to do anything. Even after his death, he had never changed.

“Young Master, why are you out so early to buy vegetables? Take a look at this radish, do you want to buy some? But it’s already watery.”

“Young Master, look at the decorations here. There’s a sword in your hand, a necklace and a hairpin. There’s everything. The craftsmanship is excellent.”

“Come, come, let’s take a look. All kinds of spirit stones are necessary to temper weapons. Come, come, come —”

Mo Ran had intended to leave after buying some food, but he carried a full basket of vegetables and walked past a grocery store. On the counter, there was a pile of beautiful and fragmented items. His gaze was attracted

by one of the items. Unknowingly, he walked over and stopped in front of the counter.

On the other side stood a man wearing a hat and a hood. He was sizing up a wide variety of goods.

The man raised his hand. Beneath his black sleeve was an extremely pale, exquisite, and beautiful five fingers. Because of those five fingers, Mo Ran noticed this person.

He looked at his body and thought it was a man, but when he saw the hand, he also thought it was a woman.

Thus, he turned his head and curiously sized up this person's appearance. However, he only saw a black veil covering his face, revealing only a pair of clear and cold eyes.

The two looked at each other, and Mo Ran smiled at him out of habit.

The man withdrew his hand that was about to touch the stone in front of the stall. Out of the corner of his eye, Mo Ran saw a ring on his thumb.

Silver snake markings, thick scales.

He suddenly felt that the snake pattern on the ring looked somewhat familiar. When he looked more carefully, that person had already retracted his hand from his wide sleeve. He calmly glanced at Mo Ran, then wordlessly turned around and left.

"What a weirdo…" Mo Ran muttered. However, the Young Master of the Rufeng Sect was overjoyed. With so many wedding invitations, all sorts of weird figures were rushing to Linyi. This sort of person, who was covered with a cloak, was actually nothing much.

At this moment, Mo Ran heard the wind chimes from the back door of the shop. The curtain was lifted and lowered as the Lady Boss came out.

Mo Ran then threw the matter of the black clothed man to the back of his mind. He smiled as he pointed to one of the spiritual tools and asked, “Lady Boss, how much is this?”

Ch.152 Shizun, Look! Mei Hanxue!

The Lady Boss just released the door latch and yawned as she lazily stretched, preparing to start a business. Her eyes were sleepy. Suddenly, she saw the bright morning light.

A tall and handsome man was standing in front of her shop. He clearly had an air of grandeur and a posture that was as straight as a pine tree. He should have been accompanied by a sword and a knife.

However, this handsome man was smiling. The dimples on his cheeks were light, and his eyelashes were thick and gentle.

In his arms was a bamboo basket. Inside the basket were neither spirit stone materials nor magic scrolls, but a basket of fresh and tender fruits and vegetables. The apple was red, the radish was white and fat, and the lettuce was verdant and lush. The dew on them glistening. Against his handsome face.

His handsome face.

The Lady Boss's yawn was frozen in place. She stared blankly at the sight of the iron-blooded and the gentle side in front of her. She blinked for a long time, unable to recover from her shock.

"Lady Boss?"

"Ai ai ai, what do you want?"

"That's it." Mo Ran picked up a pair of light red crystal pendants and asked, "How much?"

“Young Master has good eyesight, these pendants are made from top-grade Dragon Blood Crystals, carved by the craftsmen of Kunlun Sword League. Although the materials are not expensive, the pendant itself is very special, Young Master definitely knows about Dragon Blood Crystals, it will turn red with the temperature of the wearer…”

At this point, the Lady Boss laughed. “Since the cultivator has taken a liking to a pair, he probably wants to be each of his companions, right? I wonder which nun is so blessed to be able to climb up to you. If you buy the pendant, you definitely won’t lose anything. When you go back, each of you will put it on.”

Originally, Mo Ran wanted to buy a pendant, but he thought that the Dragon Blood Crystal was the best way to nurture a cold body.

But hearing the Lady Boss’s words, his heart was moved. He thought of Chu Wanning who had a captivating look on his face. The pendant was bright red from his Shizun’s excessive body temperature, like a bead of blood on a knife.

He coughed lightly and said, “Let’s wrap it up for me.”

In order to prevent Chu Wanning from feeling strange, Mo Ran bought gifts for Xue Meng, Xue Zhengyong and Madam Wang. When he returned to the inn, he put down all the random things on the table and took out the small paper bag with the Dragon Blood Crystal wrapped in them. There, the water droplet shaped pendant on his head had already turned crimson due to his high temperature.

After doing all this, he straightened his clothes to ensure that the pendant did not show up. Then, he picked up the remaining one and wrapped it

again.

He touched his chest and felt that his heart was beating fast. He had experienced all sorts of ridiculous things in his previous life, but now he was flustered because of a little hidden secret under his clothes. He could not help but feel surprised.

“For me?”

During the meal, Xue Meng took out the tasseled short sword (dagger) that had been gifted from Mo Ran, revealing an expression as if he had seen a ghost.

“Why did you give me this? It can’t be that you want to apologize to me for yesterday’s matter, right?”

Speaking of last night’s incident, because he did not know Chu Wanning was awake, Mo Ran was quite calm and did not show any signs of emotion.

Chu Wanning, on the other hand, could not take it anymore. He picked up the teacup and drank a few mouthfuls of cold tea in an attempt to calm himself down.

Mo Ran smiled at Xue Meng, “What are you thinking? You obviously provoked me first. This is something that I thought was pretty, so I bought it for you to wear and play with.”

He paused before continuing, “It’s rare to be able to come out together with you. At least I have to buy some things. I bought them for Shizun and Aunt too. They’re all small things and aren’t worth much.”

“We have one too?” Madam Wang appeared very surprised.

“Auntie’s is a saffron box, Uncle’s is a folding fan pendant.” As he spoke, he handed over the Dragon Blood Crystal to Chu Wanning, “And this one is for Shizun.”

“… What is it?”

“A pendant. The Dragon Blood Crystal can dispel the cold. Linyi produces this kind of stone and I bought it for Shizun to warm his body.”

Chu Wanning took it. This stone was not expensive, but it was very easy to use. He said, “Thank you.”

“Don’t thank me, Shizun, why don’t you put it on for me to see?”

Chu Wanning glanced at Mo Ran, but he did not see the intimate look in Mo Ran’s eyes. It was only natural that he wore it around his neck. The light red crystal was shining. As Xue Meng looked at it, he could not help but say, “It’s nice to look at. This one is good. It’s better than my sword. Where did you buy it? I want to get one too.”

Mo Ran said, “No, there’s only one. I can’t buy it even if I wanted to.”

Xue Meng was greatly disappointed. He picked up his tasseled sword and looked at it, then turned his head to look at the Dragon Blood Crystal around Chu Wanning’s neck and mumbled, “… I don’t believe it, in any case, Linyi has a lot of these things. When we arrive at the Rufeng Sect, I will go and ask Nangong Si. He will definitely have a lot more of them, piled up like a mountain…”

Mo Ran ignored him and looked at Chu Wanning. After Chu Wanning put on the pendant, he did not hide it into but left it hanging on his lapel. After

a while, he could not hold it in and said, “Shizun, this pendant is not for the outside.”

“Hmm?”

“It should be in you.” As he spoke, he leaned over to help Chu Wanning put the pendant in. He got too close to him and his breath burned his ear. He pushed Mo Ran away.

Chu Wanning lowered his eyes, his expression was solemn and cold, but this time, Mo Ran looked more carefully. He saw a layer of red from the haitang blossoms around Chu Wanning’s ears, both pitiful and adorable, making people want to kiss it, sucking and licking those trembling petals.

Mo Ran was surprised. He was thinking, why would Chu Wanning blush?

He didn’t seem to be doing anything excessive. If it was helping him with the pendant, then it was nothing…

He thought about it carefully and recalled what he had just said.

“It should be in you.”

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment and his face suddenly turned red. If it wasn’t for the fact that his skin was darker than Chu Wanning’s, it would have looked even more red than his skin.

He swore that when he said those words just now, he really didn’t want a double entendre…

He suddenly felt astonished, thinking that he did not think wrongly. How could a righteous person like Chu Wanning think wrongly?

Mo Ran pondered over this, but he was unable to come up with an answer no matter how much he thought about it. Even when Chu Wanning stuffed the pendant into his clothes without saying a word, his face was expressionless and his ears were bare. He could not figure out what was going on.

Last night, there was a three-finger-wide wooden board wall, causing Taxian-Jun to miss out on too many wonderful scenes. He missed out on spring sunshine, green impurities, and even missed out on Chu Wanning, who had fallen into a quagmire of love and flesh. He did not know anything about what had happened in the bed, so of course he did not understand. At this moment, Chu Wanning was still immersed in yesterday's quagmire, throbbing with love, ashamed for love, sensitive for love.

Because of that dream, because of the wet and hot words in the dream, because of that tiny thought that he did not want anyone to find out, he had uncharacteristically misread that simple sentence.

Chu Wanning raised his head and looked at him, feeling the heat in his heart. The evil fire from yesterday had yet to completely subside, he stretched out his hand.

The beam of the teapot was caught by Mo Ran.

"Drink less. This tea is too cold, it hurts the stomach."

"…" Chu Wanning was silent. He looked at him, his hand still outstretched, indicating that he just wanted some cold tea.

"I'll get you a hot one."

"There's no need…"

However, Mo Ran had already gone to find the shopkeeper. After a while, he brought out a pot of boiling hot tea and poured a cup for Chu Wanning, “Shizun, please drink this.”

“That’s right. Yuheng, drink some hot tea. It’s not cold at all. It’s really helpful.”

Chu Wanning had no other choice but to accept the cup of tea. He blew on it but didn’t drink it. Instead, he placed it by his side.

His heart was already burning.

If the heat continued, he was afraid that the last layer of ice in his eyes would melt as well. When the endless spring water overflowed and he raised his eyes to look, he would no longer be able to hide his shameful thoughts.

Then where else could he put the face of the Immortal Elder Yuheng?

When they were about to leave the store, a group of people came in.

The leader was wearing a light blue straw cloak that covered his face, making him look very low key, so he was not noticed by the crowd. However, when he entered the inn and saw Xue Zhengyong, he took the initiative to walk over and bowed to him.

“Hello, Uncle Xue.”

“You are…”

That person took off his cape and hat. Xue Meng saw him and let out an “ah.” He took a big step back. Xue Zhengyong laughed. “Aiya, isn’t that Hanxue?”

Mei Hanxue raised his head. He was born with a fair skin and a high nose, distinct eyebrows and profound eyes. He was quite handsome, clearly different from the rest. This person's skin was extremely good. Even though the room was dark, he still emitted a faint glow. Perhaps it was because he had grown up in the ice-cold snow of Mount Kunlun since childhood, but his face was drenched in a frosty aura.

All in all, based on his temperament, no one would believe that he was that renowned seed of romance, Mei Hanxue.

"There's something going on at the palace. This humble one only came to Linyi today. I didn't expect to meet Uncle Xue here." Mei Hanxue was too cold. Although he politely smiled, his eyes were clear and cold. "This nephew will pay his respects to aunt and uncle."

"Very, very good, alas, if only Meng'er had been as polite as you."

However, when Xue Meng heard this, he was not happy. He kept shooting poison arrows at Mei Hanxue with his eyes, each one more vicious than the last.

He thought to himself, This grandson, Mei Hanxue! One in front of the other! He was clearly a cold rogue that didn't care about eating both men and women. Back then, at Peach Blossom Springs, he had reached out his hand to touch his waist, but now, standing in front of his elders, he acted like a prideful monk, this guy was really good at acting!

However, Mei Hanxue didn't even look at his young playmate. He only lowered his eyebrows and narrowed his eyes, even his lips didn't move slightly. He said in an extremely orderly manner, "Uncle must be joking. Young Master Xue is the pride of the heavens."

“That’s right, father. This fellow was defeated by me…”

“Meng’er…” Madam Wang was rather embarrassed as she reached out her hand to pull Xue Meng. Only then did the irritable Phoenix finally mutter nothing, but his nostrils still burned.

Mei Hanxue asked, “Uncle, are you leaving for the Rufeng Sect?”

“It’s about time. It doesn’t matter if we go earlier or later. Nangong Liu doesn’t lack a room. Didn’t he say that every month before and after the wedding, a whole city was vacated for the guests to settle in?” Xue Zhengyong laughed, “Let’s go over and take a look first, so that the juniors can interact more with each other.”

As he spoke, he glanced at Xue Meng, implying that he wanted to find a wife for Xue Meng.

Xue Meng, “…”

“Won’t Hanxue go directly to the Rufeng Sect?”

“Shizun has asked me to buy a lot of Spirit Stones so I will stay in Dai City for a few more days. I will go the day before the wedding.”

Xue Meng muttered in a low voice, “You clearly feared that it would be over soon. Those righteous members of the famous sects and schools that you failed to meet, chased you and beat you up into a dog.”

Mo Ran’s ears pricked up as he laughed, “Mengmeng, what did you say? What dog?”

“…”

Xue Meng harrumphed and crossed his arms. “It’s nothing. I’m still meditating.”

“Pfft, I’m afraid you’re reciting the plum blossom cultivation method.”

“Keep talking nonsense!”

When Mei Hanxue heard his words, he finally glanced at them. Xue Meng’s eyes met his, and he suddenly froze —

He felt that something was wrong. This Mei Hanxue was very strange. The last time he saw him at the Peach Blossom Springs, the grandson’s eyes were filled with flowers. Those eyes seemed to be laughing when he was angry.

However, the eyes of the person in front of him, not to mention seeing, there were no ripples at all. His entire being was cool, neat, restrained, and even when he was smiling, his eyes seemed to be filled with anger.

Xue Meng blinked and paused for a moment. He thought of the battle in the Heavenly Rift. Mei Hanxue and the Taxue Palace disciples had come to help. In front of the crowd, everyone was acting all serious. He couldn’t help but be furious. How could this guy act so well? Why was he acting like this? This was truly the heart of a beast with a human’s face! A scoundrel with a gentle face!

“Hey, Meng’er, where are you going?”

“The room is too stuffy! I’ll wait outside for you guys, and come out after we’re done talking!” As Xue Meng said this, he strode to the door, lifted up the curtain, and angrily walked out. The son of heaven really felt wronged.

He was puzzled. The room was filled with the smell of human scum. How could no one else see it?

How infuriating!

Ch.153 Shizun's Most Hated Sect Leader

Infuriating or not, he still had to hurry on his way.

After bidding farewell to Mei Hanxue, they ascended from Dai City and walked for over an hour before finally arriving at the world's greatest sect — the Rufeng sect of Linyi.

It could be seen from the name that according to Linyi, the Rufeng Sect had built 72 Ethereal Immortals' Residence in the city. Because the mansion was too big, from the front door to the back door, riding a horse would require a whole meal's worth of time, so these residences were simply called "cities". Even someone like Xue Meng, who hated the cultivation world to his bones, couldn't help but be shocked when he stood at the city gate.

Heaven decorated the Rufeng Sect gate.

These words were true.

They came to the main city, which was also the largest city in the entire Rufeng Sect. The white wall, Deva, from the top to the bottom, from the four corners of the tower, towering in the sky, from all four directions with stars and stones in the north, south, west, and red painted on it. The main city gate was extended by five feet of road, a long road without an end in sight, paved with top-grade Qi Refining Stones.

Xue Zhengyong sighed, "It's good to have money…"

Madam Wang laughed. "You want to lay down a path of refinement at the Sisheng Peak even with money?"

“No, I will make a plaza in every village in the lower cultivation world. This stone is full of spirit energy, and normal ghosts would not dare to approach it. If we can make one in every village and encounter some demons, our disciples would be able to hide in time.” Xue Zhengyong mumbled to himself as he counted with his fingers. He shook his head and said, “Unfortunately, I can’t afford it.”

Hearing this, Xue Meng sighed as well. “The Sisheng Peak, alas, is a bit poor.”

“Yeah.” Xue Zhengyong nodded his head like he was pounding garlic, “We all cultivate our path, I wonder where the Rufeng Sect got so much money from.”

At this point, Chu Wanning, who had been silent all this time, spoke, “Does Lord knows how much is an ordinary disciple of the Rufeng Sect asking for to get rid of demons?”

“I’ve never asked around. How much?”

Chu Wanning extended four fingers.

“Four hundred silver?” Xue Zhengyong’s eyes widened. “That much?”

“Four thousand gold,” Chu Wanning replied.

“…”

“There are a lot of wealthy people in the Upper Cultivation World. It’s easy for the Rufeng Sect to earn money, but with the Sect Leader’s 80 silver method of earning money, how can we catch up to them? Moreover, sometimes Sect Leader doesn’t even take a single cent.” Chu Wanning said, but his eyes were gentle, “Let’s go into the city.”

Large sects tended to treat people with respect. Recently, the Si Li Division of the Rufeng Sect had been waiting at the city gate. Although they were all smiling at everyone, they were very clear on the importance of the guests.

A small wandering cultivator would accompany them on a tour around the area before bringing them to their residence. As for the smaller sects, they would bring them to see the head Protector Elder, which would then receive them.

As for the top of the top ten sects, the Rufeng Sect did not put on any airs and directly invited them to the Warm Pavilion to rest. After the Rufeng Sect's leader, Nangong Liu, was done with his work, he would come to the Warm Pavilion to meet the distinguished guests.

The pavilion burned with the fragrance of dragon saliva, and the soft carpecould almost cover half of one's feet. Inside the pavilion were alluring camellias, eight of which were of the same color, the Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea, and the White Petals Dotted with a rosy red. It was made of red makeup, and the stem of the petals were stained with red silk.

Xue Meng also did not understand. Seeing that one of the tea leaves was so lovely with a pair of black spots on it, he felt it to be fun and reached out his hand to touch it.

Chu Wanning said, "Don't move."

"Why?"

Chu Wanning didn't say anything and just shook his head. Madam Wang sighed and said, "Such a precious item would sell for more than ten thousand taels of gold."

"…" With an ashen face, Xue Meng retracted his hand and then slumped into the cushions of his teacher's chair.

He thought back to the ranking list he had seen in the bookstall before. Back then, he was still angry because he wasn't among the top 100 young elites of the cultivation world, but now, he felt that that book was sincerely deceiving him.

On his forehead, there was actually a huge character that was covered in black air.

Poor.

But then again, he didn't know where the book had gone. He hadn't even finished flipping through it before he'd lost it…

After a while, the curtains made of red coral and freshwater pearls began to creak, and two dainty ladies, dressed in snow-white gowns, arrived, lifted the curtains, dropped their eyes and bent their knees, their voices like the warbler's.

"The Sect Leader Immortal has arrived."

With that, a man in his forties walked in with a smile. His appearance was ordinary and somewhat bookish, like someone who would drown if thrown into a crowd of people. Other than his fair skin, there didn't seem to be anything else to say.

However, the moment he opened his mouth, Mo Ran that was sitting there almost spat the tea out.

"Aiya, Sect Leader Xue, Sect Leader Xue, I was anticipating at the stars, anticipating at the moon, hoping that you can come to Rufeng Sect soon.

Look, this time, you are extremely handsome and imposing, a hero of the world, who can compare to you! Great, great, great! Great! Great! Alright!”

Xue Meng, “…”

Mo Ran: “…”

The dignified head of the number one sect in the world, against the last ranked dead leader of the top ten sects, he was actually sparing no effort and giving praises without restraint. Each of the three “good” words was more generous than the last.

Xue Zhengyong, of course, enjoyed the praise he gave to him. He smiled and said, “No, not at all. Sect Leader Nangong is being too polite.”

“There’s no need to be polite. Merely a sincere admiration for Sect Leader Xue. He is a hero of his generation, majestic, awe-inspiring, capable of making others submit to him.”

Nangong Liu’s words were filled with enthusiasm. Xue Zhengyong originally wanted to hold it in, but the tail of the peacock couldn’t hold it in and started to move on: “I don’t dare, I don’t deserve it. Haha, hahahaha, Sect Leader Nangong is too modest.”

In his previous life, Mo Ran had never interacted with Nangong Liu before. When he was slaughtering his way through the Wind Gate, this person quickly ran away. Mo Ran could not be bothered with this random fish and did not care if he died by his saber, spear, and stick, or escaped to hide his identity for the rest of his life.

This was the first time in his life that he had such close contact with Nangong Liu. However, when he saw his tone, Mo Ran disliked it. He

lowered his voice and said, “So the sect leader of the world’s strongest faction has a mouth.”

Xue Meng heard him and unexpectedly agreed with him. He said in a low voice, “That’s right, the moment he opened his mouth, he truly has a sharp tongue. I can’t smell even the fragrance of flowers in the room. Tsk tsk, what’s left is only the sweet taste of Nangong Liu’s mouth.”

After Nangong Liu finished praising the old, he came to praise the young.

“Aiyo, isn’t this the pride of the heavens, Young Master Xue?”

Poor Young Master Xue Meng was quite poor.

He cupped his hands in an indifferent manner: “Sect Leader Nangong.”

“Truly a young and handsome hero! Powerful! Look at this nose, these eyes, tsk tsk, spirit! As expected of a tiger father doesn’t have a dog son!”

Xue Meng, “…”

Nangong Liu turned around and said to Xue Zhengyong, “Brother Xue, I am truly envious of you. Look, across the entire world, which Young Master has half an inch of air for a son? Speaking of me, in such a vast cultivation world with so many outstanding youths, if your son is ranked second, then no one can be considered as number one!”

Xue Meng was originally carrying the basket and loathed him, but Nangong Liu acted as if he didn’t see the distance between the two of them. He threw a basket full of warm praises at Xue Meng, causing the perfectly fine Young Master Xue to faint.

When he once again whispered to Mo Ran, he said, “Cough, this Sect Leader Nangong, although he is exaggerating a bit, he is speaking the truth.”

“What truth?” Mo Ran found this funny. He squinted his eyes and said, “what if I say you’re number two, no one would dare claim to be number one?”

“What’s wrong, I won the Spiritual Mountain Competition…”

“That was a competition, and many rogue cultivators did not participate. Do you think that the heroes of the realm can truly compete in that small competition?”

“…” Xue Meng’s face flushed red. After a while, he muttered indignantly, “Forget it, I know you’re envious of me.”

If it was when he was young, Mo Ran would definitely mock him again. But now that the words were about to come out of his mouth, he felt that with Xue Meng’s competitive and narcissistic temperament, what was there to argue about. Thus, he nodded and laughed, “Okay okay okay okay, I envy you, you’re the strongest.”

However, when he looked at Nangong Liu again, the smile in Mo Ran’s eyes disappeared.

In this world, there were many types of villains. Some people were unscrupulous, and their sins could reach the heavens. The entire world wished to kill them because they wanted to kill them as soon as possible.

However, there were some people who were extremely powerful. With their sharp tongues, they were able to flatter others. They were clearly

rotten to the bone, yet they were not despised by the crowd.

In his previous life, Mo Ran was the first person to do this, but he hated people who went against him the most, not the kind people in this world. He did not hate Mei Hanxue, nor Xue Meng.

What he hated the most was people like Nangong Liu. As long as there was anything he could use, they would kneel on the ground and lick other people's hemorrhoids.

Shit, sucking carbuncle licking hemorrhoids.

Ever since Nangong Liu came in, Chu Wanning had been standing by the window, watching the magnificent scene outside.

The wind was blowing strongly from high up, causing the fragrant curtain covering the window to become hazy. Chu Wanning stood in the mist, Nangong Liu's face was filled with warmth for a moment before he quickly tidied himself up and walked towards the window.

"Chu-zongshi…"

Chu Wanning did not look at him. With an indifferent expression, he said, "Sect Leader Nangong, you and I have long known each other."

The muslin that was as soft as spring water blew against his face under the influence of the east wind, causing Chu Wanning to become impatient. He raised his hand to block that annoying thing and said, "No need for pleasantries."

Nangong Liu smiled and said, "I have no other intentions for being a mere person. I've not seen Zongshi for so many years, that's all. Zongshi, why do you keep people at arm's length?"

“I have come for Nangong Si.” Chu Wanning still did not turn around, “Not for you.”

“No matter what, I will be very happy to see you. Although you didn’t take him in as your disciple, you have shown him great kindness. After you left, he would often tell me that he missed you.”

“…”

Seeing that Chu Wanning finally did not retort, Nangong Liu continued to speak, “Zongshi, when Butterfly Town was in the Primordial Heavenly Rift, you suddenly stepped forward, causing the world to sigh in admiration. Later on, you were saved by master Huaizui and you returned to Yuan Yang. Rufeng Sect has specially prepared twenty top-grade Soul Nurturing Pills for you to help immortal scholars of the world to express their goodwill towards Zongshi. I hope that Zongshi can accept them —”

“Nangong Liu.”

Chu Wanning finally looked back at him, but the way he addressed him had changed. He withdrew his arm from the muslin and suddenly turned around, his slender figure seeming to merge with the sunlight.

His eyes were like fiery lightning, his brows were furrowed in cold frost, and his gaze was extremely sinister.

“Don’t put me on such a high pedestal that cannot be climbed down from. How can a mere Rufeng Sect like that thank me on behalf of all the immortal warriors in the world? Who gave you face?”

“…” The corner of Nangong Liu’s mouth twitched, but his charming smile did not fall. After a long while, he said, “Why do you think that……”

When Chu Wanning was fifteen years old, Nangong Liu acknowledged him as a guest. He ate well, drank well, and lived well as a god, but a few years later, Chu Wanning suddenly fell out with Nangong Liu in front of everyone. The two of them were talking about Jincheng Lake, Godly Martial Arts, the requests of the monsters at the bottom of the lake, the morals and the long illness of the Rufeng sect madam. The bystanders were all completely confused by what they heard.

However, everyone knew that in the end, Chu Wanning was unable to contain his rage and stood up in anger.

At that time, he was paid ten thousand gold coins and received over a thousand spiritual stones and talismans every month. He stood in front of the hall and took out the Qiankun bag at his waist, returning all the remaining money. Then, with a dark face and no words, he took down the jade crown that Nangong Liu had previously given to his guest, the top-grade Shizun Jade Crown. His long hair was scattered about, and he returned the jade crown to the Gift Officer of the Rufeng Sect.

This was a part of the story that many teachers of the lower cultivation world loved to talk about.

So, he said to Chu-zongshi, 'Since Immortal Elder Chu has worked in our sect for so long, even if you have to leave now, we still have to settle the score. The Rufeng Sect does not want to have any words that would take advantage of usual.'

However, Chu-zongshi replied, "Back in the day, I only served the Hall to repay Madam for a single meal. Now that Madam has passed away, I have no intention of staying. There's no need for money, I'm ashamed of my

salary.” With that, he closed his eyes and turned around, bidding his farewells to the Rufeng Sect.

At first, Xue Zhengyong thought that the storyteller was exaggerating, so he tried to ask Chu Wanning how the Feng Clan had offended him. However, Chu Wanning didn’t like to talk about people behind his back, so he could only shake his head and never go into detail.

But from the looks of it, Mr. Storyteller’s words might actually be true.

When Madam Wang saw the tense atmosphere, she couldn’t help but step out to smooth things over. She said softly, “Elder Yuheng, don’t be angry. What if you ruin your body?” Then, she turned around and bowed towards Nangong Liu, “Nangong-xianjun, we appreciate your kindness but Sisheng Peak does not lack spiritual stones and precious medicines. We cannot accept your Soul Nurturing Pills…”

“… Haha, Madam is right. It’s just a mere miscalculation.” Nangong Liu picked up the steps before speaking in a friendly manner, “Elder Yuheng, please forgive us. Elder, please do not take it to heart.”

Mo Ran watched on from the side and thought to himself, “This person was splashed with cold water by his shizun, yet he can still smile so calmly. Truly amazing.”

As he thought of this, he lowered his head and took a sip of Sunshine Snow Green Tea.

Who would’ve thought that just as he was drinking his tea, Nangong Liu had already arrived before him with a smile on his face.

Ch. 154 Shizun, I'm Gonna Look For Ye Wangxi

This was not good. When Nangong Liu entered the room, Madam Wang, Xue Meng, and Xue Zhengyong immediately stood up and greeted him courteously.

However, Chu Wanning was not in the mood for this, so he just stood by the window.

As for Mo Ran, from his past life, he had flattened the Rufeng Sect. No matter how bright and beautiful they were, he knew that they would be reduced to a pile of loose sand in the future.

Nothing to fear. However, he did not intend to make things difficult for Nangong Liu. Instead, he got used to it and never thought of standing up.

This scene was strange.

As the Shizun and elders, Nangong Liu stood there with a pleasant smile. He was not angry, and his face was filled with the same warmth as before.

As a guest and a junior, Mo Ran's lazy sitting posture was caught red-handed. He leaned against the armchair with his legs crossed and a cup of hot tea in his hand.

Xue Zhengyong didn't pay attention to Mo Ran's actions earlier. Now that he turned around, he couldn't help but feel embarrassed.

This Mo Ran was too unruly!

"This is… In recent years, the famous Mo-zongshi should be doing well."

He stopped drinking tea and covered the lid. He raised his eyes and said, “Yes.”

“He really is a hero!”

Mo Ran interrupted him and said with a smile, “Immortal Nangong, you have already used the phrase ‘Hero spawns’ on my younger cousin, so you don’t need to use it on me anymore, right?”

His tone was gentle and his smile was gentle, as if he was very polite. However, what he said was not polite at all. He did not even stand up. After saying this, he picked up the teacup again, scraped the rim of the cup with the blue and white porcelain lid, and blew away the rising mist.

He lowered his long and thick eyelashes, lowered his eyes, and took a sip of tea at a leisurely pace.

He was young, handsome, tall and calm. His demeanor made it seem as if he was the true owner of the Rufeng Sect. He stood at the peak of the cultivation world.

“Haha, Mo-zongshi is right. I’m just an inexperienced genius who was unable to think of a better way to put it, so…”

“Not at all.” Mo Ran set down his tea cup and raised his eyes to smile, “Since Immortal Nangong has entered this room, he has already spoken a bunch of good words. If the Immortal doesn’t know how to speak, who would be able to speak?”

“Aiya, Mo-zongshi’s praise isn’t worthy of it.”

“Who said I was praising you?” Mo Ran looked at him with his pair of black eyes, smiling, “Being able to speak too well is not always a good thing.”

Xue Zhengyong couldn't resist anymore, he lowered his voice and said, "Ran'er —!"

From his point of view, it was still reasonable for Chu Wanning and Nangong Liu to have a falling out. At least, there was a reason behind it. Chu Wanning also had the same identity, but Mo Ran…

Mo Ran ignored Xue Zhengyong and instead said to Nangong Liu, "Please leave these words of praise for the other juniors. I'm a boor, I don't understand, and I don't want to hear it."

Xue Zhengyong: "…"

Of course, Mo Ran knew that if he did this, his uncle would be unhappy, but he did not regret it.

There were too many disgusting things in this world, Chu Wanning had a fiery temper and was willing to take the lead. Long ago when he was exterminating evil in Luo Jian's residence, Chu Wanning humiliated a weak old man of the Chen family members, and disregarding his own reputation, he beat the flesh out of the client's body.

Chu Wanning did not do anything wrong, but he was always condemned for being "cold-blooded", "reckless" and "ungrateful".

Mo Ran did not want anyone to say that his Shizun was 'disrespectful.'

As a result, he would rather go out of line than Chu Wanning. He could only use such a stupid method to protect him. Thus, in this house, the three of them accepted Nangong Liu's flattery and kind intentions out of courtesy. However, Mo Ran did not do so.

This was not a moment of excitement, since he knew that it was Chu Wanning who had carried him on his back, crawling from the mountains of corpses and the seas of blood. Ever since he saw his soul in Mengpo Hall, that bowl of wonton in his hands. Ever since he went to the depths of hell to save Chu Wanning, he swore an oath —

As long as Chu Wanning was still willing, he would stand with him.

Nangong Liu had bumped into it twice in a row. If it was the other sect leader, he would have flipped the table and chased him away in a fit of rage.

But Nangong Liu didn't, he just pretended that nothing had happened. He happily chatted with Xue Zhengyong for a while, making Xue Zhengyong feel very awkward. He pulled Nangong Liu to the side and apologized, saying that he didn't discipline his nephew.

Nangong Liu laughed and said, "Aiya, young people, who doesn't have some guts? I think Mo-zongshi is a man of character and good."

After meeting up with Nangong Liu, the disciples of the Rufeng Sect led the group to the guest courtyard.

Mo Ran kept sneezing along the way. Xue Meng turned around and looked at him, "Don't tell me that you were cursed by Sect Leader Nangong for not keeping your mouth shut just now…"

"Go away, you're the one being cursed." Mo Ran's eyes filled with tears, "I… Achoo, I can't smell the heavy incense, that house just now — Achoo! The spice was so… Jiu! That's too…"

"It smells so bad."

“Ah, Shizun — Ah choo — ah.”

Chu Wanning passed the handkerchief to him, frowned and said disdainfully, “Wipe it, it’s nothing.”

With tears in his eyes, Mo Ran received the handkerchief embroidered with flowering blossoms with a smile. “Shizun still loves me dearly. Thank you, Shizun.”

Chu Wanning was embarrassed by his words, “Who cares about you?”

“Exactly!” Xue Meng was unconvinced. “Who cares about you? The one Shizun cares about the most is obviously me!”

Mo Ran was slightly contemptuous, “How old are you to compare yourself to someone else?” Then, he took the handkerchief in his hand and said seriously, “Look, Shizun promised to stitch me an identical piece, what about you?”

“…” Chu Wanning grabbed the handkerchief and said harshly, “Mo Weiyu !”

Xue Meng was stunned at first when he heard this, but then he immediately became angry. “Only a genius would sew a handkerchief for you. Even in your dreams, you didn’t do that. How shameless.”

As they talked, they arrived at the courtyard Nangong Liu had arranged for them. The courtyard had four entrances; with Xue Zhengyong and his wife, the other three entered as well. The courtyard was serene, the shadows of flowers dancing in the breeze could be heard, and the sound of water flowing could be heard.

As Mo Ran hesitated, his eyes were unconsciously covered with a layer of dust. When he followed everyone into the courtyard and saw the bricks and tiles, as well as the plants, trees, and rocks, his mood became all the more gloomy.

This was a place that had left a deep impression on him from his previous life's Rufeng Sect.

Now that he was back at his hometown, he couldn't help but think that if it wasn't for the fact that Chu Wanning had given his life in exchange for his, perhaps he would still have walked the same path and become Taxian-Jun. Thinking of this, he couldn't help but break out in cold sweat. For a time, thousands of thoughts flooded his mind and chest.

Mo Ran closed his eyes. He was able to hold back his emotions. He was no longer a youth who was sharp in both joy and anger. Therefore, no one could see the haze hanging over his heart.

They all went back to their respective rooms to rest. Mo Ran stood in front of the courtyard he had for himself. He stood with his hands behind his back for a while, but he did not push open the door to enter.

The female attendant in the courtyard was a little uneasy as she cautiously asked, "Is the Immortal not satisfied with this room?"

"Oh, no." Mo Ran came back to his senses and smiled. "I feel that this courtyard is very similar to the one I used to live in. It's just that it's so romantic."

"What a coincidence. This servant even thought it was because the immortal lord didn't like this place. If the cultivator has other requests, you only need to tell me about them. I will do my best to help the cultivator."

Mo Ran smiled and said, “I’m fine. You guys go back to your work.”

After he finished speaking, he raised his head and looked at the hundred year old laurel tree in the courtyard. The shade of the tree was like the ghost from his previous life brushing past his eyelashes.

His eyelashes trembled slightly, and his heart raced.

Suddenly, he turned around and called for the maid who was about to leave. “Wait a moment!”

“Immortal, do you have any other orders?”

“… I want to ask you about someone.” Mo Ran paused, raising his eyes like torches, “Do you know, there is one…”

“What?”

“Forget it, let’s not ask about this. Let’s ask about another one. Do you know where Ye Wangxi is?”

The maid said, “Lord Ye is Elder Xu’s direct disciple. He lives in the same yard as Elder Xu. If the immortal wants to see him, then we can just go there.”

The last time he had met Ye Wangxi was in the restaurant. Ye Wangxi had begged Nangong to go back with him, but at that time, Nangong had refused. Ye Wangxi had said, “If it’s because of me, you don’t want to go back to the Rufeng Sect, then I will go.”

In fact, he was missing Ye Wangxi. He felt that Ye Wangxi had suffered enough in his previous life. He was actually very similar to Chu Wanning.

Both of them were gentlemen who would not regret their actions even if they died.

Mo Ran regretted what he had done in the past, so he hoped that Ye Wangxi could lead a better life. He could not help but rejoice. It was fortunate that Nangong Si had not been so heartless as to really drive Ye Wangxi away.

Elder Xu's courtyard was called "Sansheng Yard". It was said that it had the meaning of "one drink of Mengpo's Water, and then forget three lives". Elder Xu wanted to show how long life could last, so he should have forgotten the things that he should have forgotten earlier. He shouldn't leave them in his heart to add to his worries; in any case, after he died, he wouldn't remember anymore once he reached the Bridge of Helplessness.

He sounded like a pessimistic person, no wonder Ye Wangxi was taught to be so stingy.

"Interesting, this parrot is really clever. Come, carry it a bit more. A gutter, a ladle of wine, in the alleyway…"

"Please report to the guards and inform them of your intentions." Before he could get around the wall, he could hear a man's lazy laughter coming from the courtyard.

Mo Ran took a few steps forward and saw a man in his early thirties standing in the sunlight. That person was dressed in plain clothes, and there were even a few patches at the corner of his robe. It was a cold day, and he did not wear a pair of shoes; he stood barefoot on the cold stone tiles, holding a handful of melon seeds and teasing a snow-white, blue-eyed parrot with long feathers.

The parrot flapped its wings left and right as it moved back and forth on the shelf. It seemed to be very proud of itself as it chanted loudly, “Ahhh ~ a gourd of food ~ a ladle of wine ~ in the alleyway ~ ~”

“Mm, good, not bad. “You’re smarter than Xiao Yezi, Xiao Yezi wasn’t as good as you when he was young, so he can’t even recite this part of it.” The man fed a handful of nuts to the parrot, “Come, your father will reward you.”

“…”

This person called himself a father for a bird.

Does that mean he’s a birdman?

The man turned around and saw Mo Ran standing next to the wall. He first knocked a melon seed on the ground, then spat it out and suddenly laughed. His smile was bright, yet it also had a hint of malice to it.

“Mo Ran, Mo-zongshi, right?” He laughed. “Nice to meet you.”

Thus, Mo Ran smiled and said, “It’s a pleasure to meet you.”

After he smiled, he carefully sized up this man’s face. He felt that this man’s face was a bit good. In his previous life when he massacred the Rufeng Sect, he seemed to have seen this man before. He was…

“Father, why are you running around without your shoes?”

Suddenly, a familiar voice rang out. It was clearly such a light sentence, but when it entered his ears, it was as if spring thunder had struck.

He was still tall and straight, with a warm expression and a pair of bright yellow satin shoes in his hands. He walked up to the young man and bent down to put them down.

Foster father?

[Ye Wangxi's foster father…]

The blood in his heart ran like wild wolves, and he could almost hear the cries of the next generation, the clashing of swords and drums.

"Foster father!"

A bloody face suddenly appeared in his memory.

It was Ye Wangxi. He was crying and screaming… Back then when he massacred the Rufeng Sect, Nangong Liu secretly ran away while the 72 cities were in chaos. Later on, the number one protector of the Rufeng Sect, Elder Xu, stepped forward and swept up the sand.

He clearly did not have the surname 'Nangong', but he did what the Sect Leader Nangong was supposed to do. As an elder, he lived and died with the 72 cities of the Rufeng Sect.

He was clearly not Ye Wangxi's biological father, yet when the sharp blade filled with spiritual energy stabbed towards Ye Wangxi's back, he stood in front of Ye Wangxi, using his flesh and blood to protect the child he raised with his own hands.

At that time, Mo Ran was standing on top of the city wall looking down at the crowd. Seeing this scene, a twisted smile appeared on his face — only God knew how jealous he was at that time.

A person without any blood ties would actually be willing to die for another person in this world!

His narrow heart was in shock, in pain, he was mad with jealousy, his eyes were red.

He was thinking, “Good, very good, Ye Wangxi is really lucky, he’s made of ink and drizzling…’ If there was anyone in this vast world other than his mother who was willing to die for him, Mo Weiyu, then how could he have reached his current state?!

The heavens were good to anyone, but they were only so stingy and vicious to him!

He wanted to destroy all the people he envied, making all those who were hugging each other all fall into hell. Why was he the only one who didn’t have a day’s worth of good days, didn’t have a moment’s warmth, and the only one who was kind to him, was already long dead.

He only had that little bit of warmth left, why would he take it away?!

He hated it!

“…”

Thinking about it later, Mo Ran felt that he was such a fool back then. There was clearly a person in the world of mortals who was willing to die for him. He had missed out on that person. He had failed, and he did not know that.

Mo Ran closed his eyes and calmed his surging heart. Only then did he raise his eyes again.

He now knew who this man was. He was Ye Wangxi's Shizun, and also his foster father — Xu Shuanglin.

On the second day after he left the Rufeng Sect, he had died in the midst of battle in order to save Ye Wangxi.

Mo Ran turned around with bitterness in his heart. He could not bear to look at the smiling and handsome man in the sunlight any longer.

He went to greet Ye Wangxi.

"Lord Ye."

Only then did Ye Wangxi realize that Mo Ran was standing far away. He was stunned for a moment before he smiled and said, "Ah, Brother Mo is here too. Long time no see."

"Long time no see."

In fact, Ye Wangxi had only met Mo Ran a few times in his life and was not very familiar with him. Hence, he continued to smile and said, "Are you here to find my foster father?"

"…" Mo Ran glanced at Xu Shuanglin, feeling somewhat embarrassed. Shaking his head, he said, "No, I came looking for you."

"Xiao Yezi, how long has it been since anyone came to find you in this courtyard? It's not easy." Xu Shuanglin smiled lazily and stuffed another melon seed into his mouth. "Where did you meet Mo-zongshi?"

"I met him at Peach Blossom Springs."

“That’s good, that’s good.” Xu Shuanglin smiled and threw the rest of the melon seeds into the birdseed bowl, saying, “You youngsters can continue chatting. I’ll go somewhere else for now.”

Ye Wangxi pulled him back, “Father, why aren’t you wearing shoes again?”

“Oh, I forgot.” Smiling, Xu Shuanglin put on his shoes and said, “That’s good enough.”

From the corner of his eye, Mo Ran saw the man slowly cross to the corner, then bend down to take off his shoes. He actually put his shoes into his pocket and walked away leisurely.

“…”

Because of the mental cultivation method, Xu Shuanglin was very young, and his face did not age even at the age of thirty. He looked just like Ye Wangxi’s brother.

Judging by his temper, this person was a little stubborn. He didn’t seem like a big brother at all. He looked like Ye Wangxi’s little brother.

Therefore, was the solemn “Sansheng Courtyard” plaque outside a tease?

Ye Wangxi and Mo Ran walked slowly along the boulevard, shoulder to shoulder.

There were many flower trees and fruit trees planted in this yard, but it was midwinter right now, so only a few dried up yellow leaves hung from the treetops. The wind blew, rustling in the air.

“I’m sorry, I let you down last time in the restaurant.”

“It’s nothing. How have you been these days?”

He felt a little regretful when he said it, because someone like Ye Wangxi would never say anything, no matter how bad his life was. As expected, Ye Wangxi smiled and said, “Not bad, what about you?”

“I’m fine.”

The two of them were actually not that close. The reason why Mo Ran came to find him was because he thought of the grievances from his previous life. He wanted to see Ye Wangxi who was still alive, but he did not know what to say when they got to being alone.

Mo Ran knew a lot of Ye Wangxi’s secrets, but he couldn’t tell him any of them. The two of them walked for a while in silence before Ye Wangxi asked, “How is Xia Sini?”

Mo Ran was stunned and then laughed, “You still remember this name? So powerful.”

“His name is especially easy to remember.”

“Haha, that’s true. Xia Sini also came along this time. You’ll be able to see him in the future.”

Ye Wangxi was surprised, “He is here too? However, the Sect Leader shouldn’t have invited…”

“You still don’t know who Xia Sini is, right? Let me tell you, this is a long story.”

Thus, he told him the whole story. Ye Wangxi sighed and said, “Young Master Mo is so lucky to have this man as your Shizun.”

Mo Ran said, “How lucky is the Rufeng Sect to have Lord Ye as their disciple.”

Ye Wangxi was a little embarrassed, he smiled and said, “Young Master Mo, you’ve gone overboard.”

They arrived at a small floating bridge painted with red wood. Along the way, it was filled with withered branches and withered leaves. Only the lush greenery could be seen, and the trees planted here were lofty and the snow were in the wind. The water of the Rufeng Sect was imbued with spirit energy, so it would not freeze over. Thus, when standing at the end of the bridge, one could hear the gurgling sound of the water beneath their feet.

Mo Ran turned around and saw Ye Wangxi staring at the crystal stream. His black eyes were filled with light. He was still the same person, but everyone could see the haggard look on his face.

Nangong Si’s wedding, to him, was just too cruel.

Suddenly, he couldn’t bear it anymore. It was as if he saw Chu Wanning, who had paid a great price, looking back at him and asked, “Lord Ye, why don’t you come to the Sisheng Peak?”

“What?”

“…” He felt that he had been too rash and also knew how Ye Wangxi would reply. Mo Ran sighed, “I was just casually asking. Young Master, you don’t have to take it to heart.”

Ye Wangxi smiled. His smile had originally been filled with vigor, heroic spirit, and elegance. But now it was the same person, the same smile, but

his cheekbones were slightly sunken, his heroic spirit was still present, but his three points of beauty had dried up, leaving only two pools of desolation.

He wanted to hide it, but the sadness was too deep. He used all his strength, but he still could not hide it well.

He smiled and said, “So Brother Mo is here to steal someone for Sisheng Peak?”

“Haha, yes, yes. But I don’t think Lord Ye will come. It was just a joke.”

“Mm. Since my foster father is still here, I won’t leave.”

“What does Young Master plan to do in the future?”

“…” Ye Wangxi seemed to be in pain. He actually couldn’t answer him right away. What was he going to do in the future? He also did not know that he felt like he was a moth and Nangong Si the flame. He always wanted to follow the light, even if it would only cause him to break apart.

But Nangong Si did not want him.

“I will still be doing what I should in the Rufeng Sect.” Ye Wangxi smiled, “Assisting the Sect Leader and foster father. In the future, I will support the Young Lord.”

He paused, his hand forming a fist, his knuckles white as jade.

Mo Ran was surprised that Ye Wangxi could actually say the last half of the sentence calmly. He could really say it…

“Adjunct, Young Madam.”

When he had finished, as if at last he could bear it no longer, he lowered his eyes. But after a while, he raised his head and looked at Mo Ran with a humble and elegant expression. His face was still smiling, and his entire body stood there like a bamboo in the winter.

Suddenly, a westerly wind rose up, blowing the accumulated snow between the bamboo forests, like reeds fluttering in the wind.

In that instant, Mo Ran thought, he can’t. Nangong Si can’t marry Song Qiutong.

Ch. 155 Shizun, Are You Shocked?

The the wedding day of the Young Master of the Rufeng Sect was getting closer and closer. Suddenly, rumors began to spread among the guests of the various sects.

“Master Zhang, I’ve heard a lot about myself recently, but I think it’s really out of the question. I think it’s very likely to be true, do you want to hear about it?”

“What a coincidence, I also have a secret about the Rufeng Sect. It’s also very shocking, it can’t be that you want to talk about the same thing.”

The other party raised his eyebrows meaningfully and asked, “Is the secret that master Zhang knows related to only two people?”

“Indeed.”

Both of them exchanged glances. One of them lowered his voice and said, “Let’s talk about me first. I heard that Ye Wangxi from the Rufeng Sect and…”

When the other person heard this, he could not hold it in any longer.

Young Master didn’t even want to be elegant anymore. Laughing loudly, he slapped his thigh, his eyes flashing with the radiance of the gossip, excitedly said: “Right, right! Ha ha-ha ha, that’s what I’m laughing about! The Ye Wangxi from the Rufeng Sect is involved with Song Qiutong!”

“Truly, good things never go out of doors and bad things spread far and wide. Who would have thought that even Young Master is aware of this person who doesn’t like to listen to gossip.” But talk about it in a softer

voice, this is Linyi, wherever we go we will bump into people from the Rufeng Sect, I'm afraid they will hear us."

It was hard to say if they had ears or not, but it was true that the three of them had become like tigers in water. Even if no one had seen it with their own eyes, the content was becoming more and more plentiful and alluring…

In the end, even those villagers outside Linyi City who did not cultivate were aware of this and the rumors were spreading.

"Brother Goudan, I'm going to tell you a secret, don't tell anyone else."

"What secret?"

"If you are so cautious, come and listen to me. It's not like you don't know what I'm talking about and you definitely won't reveal it."

"Then you better listen up, there's a huge scandal in the Rufeng Sect, you know that Song Qiutong, who is about to marry the Young Master Nangong Si, she is really a slut. Although Brother Goudan doesn't know it, she has long been carrying her fiancé behind his back and has fallen in love with Ye Wangxi!"

"How is this possible?!"

"How is that impossible? Didn't you know that back then, when Song Qiutong was taken out for the auction, Ye Wangxi was the one who saw her beauty and stirred up those dirty thoughts, buying her for a double cultivation?"

Lee Goudan was extremely shocked. His mouth was wide open, and only after a long while did he stutter, "Heavens, heavens… How could there be

such a thing…”

When he slept at night, he would hug his wife and chat with her. He sighed with emotion, “Chunhua, you’re still the best.”

The townsman’s wife Zhao Chunhua blinked, “What’s wrong? Why are you suddenly talking about this?”

“You see, although you are a bit ugly, a little bit fat and a little bit short, you are diligent and fertile, unlike some women who would steal men behind their husbands’ back and disobey the rules of women.”

Zhao Chunhua was a bit annoyed. “How am I ugly? Isn’t my face just a bit yellow?” And then she became curious, “Which wife has a broken shoe? How could I not know?”

“It’s not the villagers, it’s a group of nuns and Dao Lords that fly here and there on their swords all day long.”

Zhao Chunhua was shocked. “Who is it?”

Lee Goudan said, “Whoever gets married recently will be the one.”

Zhao Chunhua subconsciously did not think towards Nangong Si. She was stunned for a while before realizing what was going on and suddenly sat up from the bed, “Oh my god, that’s amazing! There was actually such a thing? Don’t spout nonsense.”

“Why would I speak nonsense?” Lee Goudan stuck out his chest, in order to make his wife more trusting of him, he swore, “A friend of mine saw it with his own eyes. Those two have already slept on their backs since long ago!”

The romance between a man and a woman was often one of the fastest things to fly in this world. The poor and the rich would not cultivate the real thing, and would be happy to talk about it. In the blink of an eye, more or less all the guests gathered at Rufeng Sect were aware of the scandal. When it reached Chu Wanning's ears, the details were already so extravagant that even Ye Wangxi's meeting with Song Qiutong on a certain day in a certain month of the year was described in detail. It was also said that Song Qiutong had married Nangong Si because she already had Ye Wangxi's child, but Ye Wangxi was unfaithful and did not want to meet his mother and son for the sake of his own future.

"If you don't believe me, just you wait and see. Look at that little kid's birth! Does he look like Nangong Si or Ye Wangxi!"

Chu Wanning understood Nangong Si, but he did not know about Ye Wangxi and Song Qiutong. Thus, he was not sure if what he said was true or false, and only felt very angry. However, for someone like him, although he was good at dealing with evil that had a clear outline, he was helpless when it came to matters that involved men and women.

That day, when Nangong Si came to visit him in his courtyard, Chu Wanning faintly hit him on the head, but he could not hear any hidden meaning behind his words. He was still happily telling Chu-zongshi the story of how he raised the demonic wolf, Neptune and Platinum.

"A few days ago, I gave it some seed and it was quite smooth. That female Demonic Wolf should be coming next month, I wonder how many little wolf pups will be born in this nest. If there are any good ones, I will ask my father to send one of them to Sisheng Peak."

Chu Wanning heard this and thought it was a good opportunity, so he said, “Yes, but I’m afraid that the wolf cub’s lineage is not pure.”

“How could it be impure? Naobaijin and the female Demonic Wolf were both cultivated by the Snow Wolf tribe, and were extremely pure.”

“Are you certain that the female Demonic Wolf was not bred with any other Demonic Wolves before?”

Nangong Si was stunned for a moment, “How could that be? That female demon wolf was raised by the Bitan Manor, and there’s only one of it in the entire manor. If she wants to match it, she doesn’t have the right to, she has to rely on our family’s Naobaijin.”

Chu Wanning felt that he had pointed out the truth. He understood that he was comparing people to wolves, implying that Nangong Si should pay attention to those rumors. How could he not understand?

After thinking for a moment, he continued, “Although the Bitan Manor only has one wolf, when you take it over to breed Naobaijin, you should at least stay at the Rufeng Sect for a while, right? You raise so many demon wolves, do you think…”

“No, no!” Nangong Si laughed heartily. “So the Zongshi was worried about this? That female Demonic Wolf and Naobaijin are in the same cage, locked in the same cage.

“…”

Forget it, you idiot!

He stood up and invited Chu Wanning, “Zongshi, when you left, the Moonhowl Courtyard was not completed yet, but it has been expanded

twice already. I will bring you over to take a look, how about riding a mount with some gold?”

“Nope,” Chu Wanning replied.

Nangong Si was clearly disappointed, “Why?”

“I don’t know how to ride anything but horses. You are going to be a husband soon, so don’t be too playful. If you aren’t raising wolves all day long, you should be busy on the school field. If you have the time, you should go back and accompany Miss Song. People and animals are the same. If you don’t accompany her, the relationship will be estranged.”

“No, Song treats me very well and is very obedient.”

“…”

“If the Zongshi thinks I’ve neglected her, I’ll call her along. I’ve often mentioned you to her, and she should be happy to see you.”

Hearing him say so, Chu Wanning thought to himself, he doesn’t know much about Song Qiutong, and he doesn’t know if the rumors were true or false. To be able to know more about this young couple before Nangong was married, it might be a good thing.

Thus, he nodded his head and stood up. “Sure, then you can go and find her. I’ll wait for you at Howling Moon Academy.”

The two of them greeted each other in front of the wall and exchanged a salute. Mo Ran made his way into the courtyard and saw Chu Wanning standing under the osmanthus tree. There was a small red-clay stove in front of him that was steaming with water and two half-drunk Eight Treasures Tea were placed on the stone table.

“Shizun, Nangong Si was looking for you?”

“Yes, I’m going to Howling Moon Academy to take a look at the demonic wolves he’s raising.” As Chu Wanning spoke, he turned around and prepared to return to the house, “It’s inconvenient to ride in this outfit, I’ll change my clothes.”

The demon wolf was ferocious. Although Mo Ran knew Chu Wanning was capable, he was still worried about letting him go alone. Thus, he said, “I will go with Shizun.”

Chu Wanning stopped and glanced at him, “Do you know how to ride a wolf?”

Mo Ran smiled, and his black eyes were very bright. “Why not? I am good at riding horses, not to mention riding wolves, I’m good at riding anything.”

Chu Wanning wanted to laugh at him, but he suddenly felt the choice of words “I am good at riding” was a bit vague and wet. He couldn’t help but think of the scene in his dreams, the posture of the two, the sweat converging on their belly, and the powerlessness of his body while lying on the bed. It was as if he had really become a plaything under Mo Ran.

Suddenly, Chu Wanning’s face turned red.

He cursed under his breath, “Shameless!”

It was unknown if he was cursing Mo Ran or cursing himself. He turned around and slammed the door and entered the room, leaving only the half-rolled curtain outside the door slightly swaying in the wind, like the trembling heart of the person who hid inside.

At present, the sky was freezing cold, the vegetation was bleak, and the green and yellow intersecting fields were covered with a thin layer of frost. Winter was neither salty nor light as it hung in the sky, but because of the clouds covering it, it seemed a little cold, and the sunlight that sprinkled down was perfunctory and lifeless.

Suddenly, Nangong Si saw two people walking over from the mist. It was Chu Wanning and Mo Ran. He could not help but be slightly startled at first, but then he smiled and said, “Master Mo, are you worried about handing your Shizun over to me, so you came as well?”

“No.” Mo Ran also laughed, “I followed you because I’m afraid that if Shizun meets with any troubles and is unable to vent his anger, it would be unfair for him to get angry at Young Noble Nangong. So I came here just to be a punching bag.”

“…” Chu Wanning glared at him and said coldly, “I think you’re here to make a fire knife.” (to be a reason of troubles)

“Pfft.” When Song Qiutong, who was standing behind him, heard this, she let out a soft laugh. She lifted up her feather-like eyelashes and walked out from behind her fiancé.

She looked at Mo Ran and Chu Wanning and said gently, “I’ve long heard that Chu-zongshi and Mo-zongshi have a deep relationship. It seems that it’s true today.”

Ch. 156 Shizun, Good Riding Skills

Chu Wanning looked her up and down. When he was at Xuanyuan Pavilion, he had felt that this person had the disposition to topple nations, and now that he saw her up close, she looked even more beautiful, like a lotus blooming in the morning sun. Her ebony hair seemed to shine brightly, and she was indeed a peerless beauty in the world.

As he thought of this, he could not help but stealthily glance at Mo Ran, wanting to know how he would react.

Unexpectedly, his eyes met Mo Ran's, who didn't even look at Song Qiutong. It was as if Nangong Si was standing next to thin air, but was staring at him instead. Mo Ran smiled gently when their gazes met.

Chu Wanning was stunned by his gaze, but he still pretended to be calm. He exchanged a glance with Mo Ran for a moment before turning his gaze away.

"Howling Moon's drill ground is filled with many demonic wolves. The most valiant one is Naobaijin. I also like it the most."

Nangong Si led the crowd to the center of the open grassland, took out the jade flute at his waist, and blew three urgent whistles. After a moment of silence, in the distance, a gust of wind blew from all directions, and a snow-white figure leapt out of the forest like lightning, and in the blink of an eye, a glittering and translucent demon wolf whose claws were covered in gold leaped into the air, its body drawing a smooth arc, and it let out a howl, which reflected the cold and desolate winter sky.

"Aooo!"

Nangong Si stepped forward and stroked its fluffy neck, turned his head and smiled, “Zongshi, look, it has already grown so big. When you left, it was still a little puppy.”

“When I left, he was already as tall as a grown man.” Chu Wanning said expressionlessly.

“Ha ha-ha ha, is it? I always thought it was small and a baby.”

“…”

“Zongshi, come ride and see.”

As Nangong Si spoke, he blew his flute again, summoning the two snow-white demonic wolves from the forest, “Mo-zongshi, are you here to play as well?”

The three of them jumped onto the back of the demon wolf. “Hold onto the rope chain or the hair on the neck tightly,” said Nangong. “You have to hold on to your legs. It’s actually more or less the same as riding a horse.” After he finished speaking, he lowered his head and said to Song Qiutong, “Qiutong, ride with me. I’ll take you with me.”

Initially, Chu Wanning thought he wouldn’t, but after walking a few steps on the back of the demon wolf, he felt that it was not that difficult. In fact, because the demon wolves were intelligent, they could understand the riders’ intentions and so were much easier to control than normal horses.

Nangong Si laughed, “How is it? Run a round?”

“Can I go anywhere?”

“Anywhere is fine. You can just run around the forest garden at the back of the mountain or the Howling Moon Academy.”

Mo Ran smiled and said, “Is this a competition?”

“Give it a try.”

Chu Wanning took a look at the Young Master, who was riding on the demonic wolf with Song Qiutong. He thought that this was an opportunity to improve their relationship, so he readily agreed.

Nangong Si said, “In that case, let’s first go to the northern part of the Forest Boa Lake and catch five of the Groper Fish. The first person to come back here will win, and this chain will be the prize, what do you say?”

“Seven star spirit stone chain, Young Noble Nangong is too generous with his money.”

“I’m happy that you can’t buy it with a thousand taels of gold.” Nangong Si tightened his grip on the rope, then lowered his head and said to Song Qiutong, “Sit tight, don’t fall down. If you run fast, tell me.”

Mo Ran glanced at Song Qiutong and smiled, “I’m afraid that Young Master Nangong’s chain can be taken out in advance.”

“Ha, belittling me. I grew up on a wolf’s back. Not to mention bringing one more person, even if I brought one more, it wouldn’t be much of a big deal. Let’s go. I’ll count to three and two, then start.”

“Three, two — one!”

As the voice faded, three snow-white figures shot out like arrows piercing through the forest. Stepping into the killing fields, they instantly

disappeared into the depths of the forest.

At first, Chu Wanning had slowed down his pace to follow behind Nangong Si and Song Qiutong, but later on, Song Qiutong's screams came rushing towards them from time to time. After listening for a long time, he could not help but feel the pain in his ears.

As the "Gongzi, slow down" cry of surprise rang out behind him, Chu Wanning gradually felt the joy of riding a demonic wolf. This type of spirit beast was extremely intelligent, he only needed to lift his finger a little and Naobaijin would understand his intentions. It was no wonder that Nangong Si would care so much about these animals.

Chu Wanning raised his head and looked at the mottled sunlight that fell in front of him, it was a continuous, self-contained, and unending stream of sunlight that flowed like a torrent, rolling far away in the distance. He couldn't help but laugh, feeling that this was a very good run, so he urged his onyx gold to run, his wolf claws stepping on the thick coniferous forest, raising a cloud of dust.

Behind him, Mo Ran, who was riding the black wolf, followed closely. In that split-second, a sense of happiness and relief arose in Chu Wanning's heart.

He suddenly had an uncertain feeling that he finally had the power to move forward on his own. It was as if no matter where he went, there would always be the sound of footsteps behind him.

Chu Wanning and Mo Ran arrived at the same time at the spring lake, which was filled with blue waves, clear as a calabash, rich in water and spirit energy, nourished by the spirit flow on both sides of the lake, the

trees and flowers were not affected by the four seasons, the orange trees in the winter were still lush with leaves, countless golden fruits were hidden behind the dark green leaves, the wind was filled with a sweet citrus fragrance.

He landed firmly on the ground. Chu Wanning looked around and said, “It’s quite a nice place.”

“If Shizun likes it, when we go back we can plant a lot of fruit trees at Sisheng Peak, keep it nourished with spiritual energy all year round, and pick it whenever you want to.”

Chu Wanning gave a “hmph” and walked to the lakeside, raising his hand to call Tianwen.

Seeing that something was wrong, Mo Ran stopped him and asked, “What are you doing?”

“Catching the fish.”

“… Shizun shouldn’t be thinking of using Wind and wringing all the fish out of the lake, right?”

“What are you thinking about?” Chu Wanning glared at him and tossed the golden vine onto the lake. He then said to the lake lightly, “Who’s the one that is tired of living? The one who wishes to take the bait.”

After saying this three times, Chu Wanning retracted Tianwen. On its golden leaves, there were actually some chubby fishes that looked up to the sky with their white eyes.

Chu Wanning took a look and asked Mo Ran, “Did he say he wanted the Groper?”

“Yes.”

“…” “Do you know what Groper looks like?” After Chu Wanning finished speaking, he felt that asking this question would be a bit of a detour, so he simply picked up Tianwen and showed it to Mo Ran, “Among these, are there any?”

“… it’s better if I capture it for Shizun.”

After that, he caught ten fish and placed them in the Qiankun bag by the two demon wolves’ necks. Chu Wanning then put the “tired of living” fish back into the water and said, “Life is short, so I’ll have to trouble you all to endure a little longer.”

Hearing this sentence, Mo Ran felt that this man was both funny and cute. He put down the last stone speck and turned around to see Chu Wanning walking over from the edge of the Frost Jade Pool. The lake water was flowing behind him, gently soaking his white figure.

Suddenly, he had a strong desire to walk over and hug him. He wanted to be close to him, touch him as gently as he could, but he also wanted to crush him. He wanted to drag him into the orange grove, press him down on the tree, and lift his legs to occupy him.

He watched as Chu Wanning got closer and closer to him. He was surprised to find that his desire was so contradictory and strong. The softest and toughest kind of karma could even be born from an Emperor.

Love, love.

Wasn’t it just like that?

Hard heat is when you cut open your fiery blade.

Soft, is wrapping up your spring water tenderness.

“That’s true.” Chu Wanning, however, did not notice the uncertainty in Mo Ran’s eyes. He walked up to him and checked the Qiankun bag on his neck, “He brought a girl with him, running so slowly.”

“Maybe he’s doing something else.”

Mo Ran felt his head burning. His wolf-like eyes were fixed on the white neck Chu Wanning had exposed when he lowered his head. His stomach was burning as he mumbled to himself without a second thought.

Chu Wanning was stunned, “What?”

“…” Mo Ran finally reacted and felt like he had misspoken. He coughed dryly and turned his head away, “It’s nothing.”

Chu Wanning, on the other hand, had already thought about it. His eyes widened as he narrowed them dangerously, and angrily said, “What are you thinking about? Get on the horse and go back!”

Mo Ran moved his lips, wanting to say, “It’s not a horse, it’s a wolf.” But looking at Chu Wanning’s sullen face and flushed ears, he swallowed his words.

He watched with some regret as Chu Wanning mounted the platinum wolf, riding with unparalleled grace and beauty. He could not help but crave for more, he thought, if only Chu Wanning were his man, he would have been too weak to get on the horse or the wolf’s back, so he could only get on his lap.

Then he was shocked and guilty at the thought, and he shook his head.

This action was seen by Chu Wanning. He asked, “What’s wrong? Why did you shake your head? Did I say anything wrong?”

“No, no. Shizun taught me the correct lesson. I was thinking too much.”

However, he was not thinking about the ridiculous things that had happened between Nangong Si and Song Qiutong.

The person I am thinking of is you…

Then, he thought, “Sigh, if only I could break the legs of that platinum wolf. That way, even if Chu Wanning had no wolf to ride, he might be willing to ride that black claw of his.”

He really wanted to hug him again, like a person on the verge of death due to thirst, and miss the sweet dew that he had once defiled… While Mo Ran was still indulging in these lingering thoughts, he followed Chu Wanning back to the Moonhowl Courtyard where he saw Song Qiutong and Nangong Si already waiting.

Song Qiutong sat on the ground, her feet that were sparkling like jade sticking out with traces of blood on them.

It turned out that they were only halfway through running and had forgotten that Nangong Si had warned her to tighten her leg. Therefore, her skin was cut by thorns. Even though it was only a small wound, Nangong Si still wouldn’t let her go and brought her back to bandage it.

Mo Ran glanced at her legs. They could be considered beautiful, but compared to Chu Wanning, they were nothing. It was a shame that he still liked Song Qiutong’s feet in his previous life.

How blind.

Right now, he felt that everything about Chu Wanning was perfect, whether it was looking at things horizontally or looking at things vertically. Even his always cold and emotionless eyes that felt proud and reserved, that was his temperament, Chu Wanning should be like that.

When he saw him glaring, scolding, or rolling his eyes at him, he felt overjoyed.

“I admit defeat.” Nangong Si was straightforward. He casually passed the gold chain to Chu Wanning, “Here, give it to Zongshi.”

Chu Wanning looked at the chain and said, “Seven star spirit stones are good for raising spirit cores, I do need it, thank you very much.”

Hearing this, Mo Ran did not feel good. Somehow, he muttered, “Next time, I’ll buy you something even better.”

“What?” Chu Wanning did not hear him clearly and turned to look at him.

Mo Ran saw his pair of phoenix eyes that were so close to him, and the clear reflection of his face in his eyes. The distance between them made the astringent feeling in his heart slightly fade.

Mo Ran smiled, “I said, the next time I see something more suitable for Shizun, I will buy it for Shizun.”

“Alright.”

Chu Wanning agreed without hesitation, which made Mo Ran even more happy.

He even went so far as to look at Nangong Si, who didn’t care about this at all. He was still competing with him, proudly wanting to let him know, that

Shizun would politely thank you for taking your things, but not me for taking mine. Look, he wasn't even distancing himself from me.

"Just remember to ask the boss to give you the bill, and I'll give you the money."

Mo Ran: "…"

Ten flecks of fresh water were taken out of the Qiankun bag and led to the hunting cabin at the edge of the Moonhowl training field. Outside, there was a dark gray furnace with pots and pans all around, but the cabin looked old and mottled, which didn't seem like it was built at the same time as the magnificent grassland.

Chu Wanning's fingertips brushed the fence, stopping in front of a bundle of rope tied to the fence. The rope had experienced countless winds and rain, so it no longer looked as gorgeous as it did before.

Nangong Si took the seasoning and came out of the wooden house. Seeing Chu Wanning looking at the rope, he smiled and said, "That was the year the Zongshi left, the ones I tied here, they are all almost all gone."

Chu Wanning did not say anything. He just sighed and sat on the wooden bench.

When he was serving the Rufeng Sect, Nangong Si was still just a child. He often brought him to the Howling Moon Academy to walk around, leaving behind this hunting room.

The fire soon started, and the Grouper was roasted on the branch of a tree. Fat Fish dripped down from under the crispy skin, emitting a rich smell of meat.

Nangong Si gave six pieces to the demon wolves squatting by the wooden fences, while the other four were sprinkled with salt to serve the crowd.

Song Qiutong only ate a few bites before handing the grilled fish to Nangong Si, who had already quickly finished gnawing on the whole fat fish. She said, “I’m not eating anymore. Young Master, please share some with me.”

Chu Wanning glanced in their direction, and seeing that Nangong had accepted the roasted fish, he happily ate the second fish. He thought to herself that this Song Qiutong seemed to be well-behaved and gentle, a very considerate person.

While he was deep in thought, a lotus leaf was handed to him. The top part of the fish was carefully divided into different parts, and the main fishbones had been removed. The white and tender meat was exuding heat and burnt fragrance.

Chu Wanning was taken aback. He turned his head and saw Mo Ran putting away his silver dagger. He smiled and said, “Shizun, let’s eat this.”

“Where did you get the lotus leaves?”

“Just now, when I was catching fish by the lake, I picked them along the way.” Mo Ran passed the fish meat to him, “Eat while it’s hot. It won’t taste good if it’s cold.”

Chu Wanning took the lotus leaf, his heart rippled as he said, “Thank you.”

He really did not like fish bones, so the prepared spots melted immediately in his mouth. Chu Wanning ate them piece by piece, but he did not feel bored. After he finished eating all of them, the tea that was hung over the

fire had also boiled up. Song Qiutong got up and took down the pot, pouring a cup for everyone and offered it to them with both hands.

“Chu-zongshi, please have a cup of tea.”

She held the small white porcelain cup in her slender hands. Her arm was like the bright moon, and her wrist impressively held a bit of cinnabar.

Chu Wanning suddenly recalled that back at the “Xuanyuan Pavilion” auction, the pavilion shizun said that she had a cinnabar mark lit up on her wrist by the Cold Scale Sacred Hand. Presumably, it was this one.

Having thought so, Chu Wanning finally heaved a sigh of relief in his heart. Nangong Si was a heartless person, like a wild horse on the prairie, like a lone wolf on his own, with a simple and vigorous blade and axe. Chu Wanning did not hate people like this, so he did not wish for Nangong Si to be unlucky.

Song Qiutong’s tea was served to Mo Ran, who accepted it but did not drink it. He placed it to the side and smiled. “Miss Song, I have something to give you.”

Ch. 157 Shizun, That Wedding Night, Truthfully I…

While speaking, he took out a thin chain, which was made from pearl mother of the East China Sea and the Xihe crystal of Zhu Rong Mountain. From a glance, one could tell that the chain was quite valuable.

“Earlier when you were cultivating, you wanted to ask for carp crystals, but unfortunately, that stone has already been taken by my cousin to refine the sword. I also did not prepare any other gifts. After buying this chain of fire and water, it should be suitable for you to wear.”

“This… This is too precious, I’m afraid Qiutong cannot accept it…”

“What logic is this?” Mo Ran laughed, “Moreover, the fire and water chains can also suppress the fire elemental spiritual energy, but they are only suitable for women. If you wear it on your body, you will be able to accompany Young Master Nangong in the future. It’s a practical thing.”

Song Qiutong turned to look at Nangong Si, accepting his nod. She then received the chain with both hands and bowed respectfully, saying in a warm voice, “Thank you, Mo-zongshi.”

The four of them drank tea and chatted for a while.

Chu Wanning was concerned about the grand matter of Nangong Si’s life so he asked him to pay more attention to the details of the wedding ceremony so that no mishap would happen.

He finished his tea in a few gulps and tossed the empty cup in his hand.

Then he smiled and said, “Don’t worry, Zongshi. I go to see her every night. I’m different from when I was young. There are some things that I should

take seriously. As a result, yesterday, I noticed that there was a pearl inlaid on the gown of Qiutong, so I immediately sent someone to go back to work."

When he spoke of the wedding, a hint of shyness actually appeared on his face that had always been free and unrestrained.

He glanced at Song Qiutong and smiled, "Qiutong will definitely look good then."

These words fell into the ears of Song Qiutong's husband in his previous life. Mo Ran absentmindedly poured another cup of tea for himself. Of course he knew Song Qiutong was a beauty with peerless grace, but so what?

Back then, Xunyang Peak offered sacrifices to the heavens and Taxian-Jun married the first queen of the cultivation world. The night of his wedding was shining with the light of a phoenix candle, but he had never stayed in his new home.

That night, he drank too much, the red candle smoke, the drowsy, he raised the bride's flushed face, and stared at for a while. Before the great ceremony of life, it is easy for people to give birth to the emotion of the passage of time and the vicissitudes of life. Even Taxian-Jun was no exception.

He suddenly felt that it wasn't real. His gaze seemed to pierce through the charming and beautiful red light in front of him, and it landed on the snowstorm that covered the sky many years ago.

When he was naked in the cold wind. When he was dying of hunger and thirst, when he was being pitied and licking the rice soup that the man

brought him… When he first came to Sisheng Peak, feeling anxious and fearful… When he stood on his tiptoes to pluck a haitang blossom… When he knelt in front of Chu Wanning, with lashes his body…

He had never imagined that one day, he would trample over all the Immortals to gain the respect of the world.

“Husband, what are you thinking about?” Her red lips parted and her eyes focused on him. The air she exhaled was all sweet and extravagant, just like his lofty status today.

He seemed to have everything. Beauty, status, power…

What was he not satisfied with now?

He couldn’t think of anything to be dissatisfied with, but he felt very empty. He felt as if he was standing at the peak of a steep cliff, surrounded by a face that was low and blurry.

He walked through the fawning faces, they praised him, they knelt to greet him, they fawned over him, they had the same faces.

He heard someone calling to him in an extremely alluring manner. Her voice was soft and tender like the petals of a peony. “Darling…”

He felt sick and disgusted, and he tried to get away from the tide of fans, but the sweet voice held him like sugar.

He suddenly pushed Song Qiutong away, the charming bride was pushed extremely violent as she crouched on the crimson dragon and phoenix bed. Her head full of golden and silver jade was trembling, her steps trembling, and within the precious jewel like illusions, Mo Ran felt that everything was

so distorted, so unreal, that the golden light was like a ghost's fire, and the bright red candle was like a bloody tear.

He felt so disgusted. Who was he disgusted by this, Song Qiutong? Or he could become like this.

He rushed out the door.

In his previous life, very few people in the world knew that on the day of the grand wedding of Taxian-Jun, Empress Song Qiutong was ignored, her red dress burning as she pushed open the door of the Red Lotus Pavilion.

He walked in. After a while, the fire in the pavilion extinguished and Song Qiutong's new husband stayed there for the entire night.

It was only on the evening of the second day that Xue Meng rushed to the Sisheng Peak to stir up trouble. Mo Ran lazily opened the door, tidied up his messy clothes, and with a lustful expression on his face, strolled to the front hall.

What happened in the Red Lotus Pavilion that night was something that no one else knew about.

After bidding farewell to the two of them, Chu Wanning and Mo Ran returned to the courtyard where they were staying.

Chu Wanning suddenly asked nonchalantly, "When Nangong Si said that Song Qiutong was good-looking, why were you staring at her in a daze?"

"I was thinking of her in her wedding dress," he said.

Chu Wanning was still jealous. He shook his sleeves and coldly said, "Don't think about molesting someone else's fiancee. What do you have to think

about?”

Mo Ran laughed. “Who said I was thinking about her? I was thinking about the way she looks in her wedding dress, that’s all. It was not even half the beauty of Shizun (in the wedding dress;).”

“…”

He was just about to vent his anger, but he was caught off guard and was licked in the palm by the little wolfdog’s tongue.

Chu Wanning’s face turned red and he couldn’t utter a proper sentence for a long time. Finally, he waved his sleeves and said, “The Ghost Master Illusion, you can’t bring up that ridiculous matter again.”

Mo Ran sighed in his heart. It’s not that I want to bring it up, it’s that you asked me. It’s not like I want to lie to you.

However, I feel very pleasant when I get hurt by you.

When he thought about how he had lost him before, he felt like he would be scolded for the rest of his life just like that. It felt like he was soaking in a sugar bowl, Chu Wanning…

What to do, I can’t help but yearn for you.

The days passed quickly. There was still one more day before the day of Nangong’s wedding.

The Rufeng Sect was already filled with guests from all over the world, whether they were sect heads of major sects, wandering martial practitioners, or wealthy merchants without spiritual energy, all of them arrived early on this day in front of the main city. For a moment, the city

was covered with clouds, carriages and horses, and a stream of men and women dressed in luxurious clothing flowed in.

Xue Meng was dragged along by his father to greet those female cultivators who were about the same age as him.

“Wang Xianjun, long time no see, it’s nice to meet you! Aiya, isn’t this little Xue Meng? You’ve already grown up this long. Truly beautiful. Come, Xue Meng, come quickly and say hello to your Uncle Wang.”

Unwillingly, Xue Meng moved over and said, “Greetings, Uncle Wang.”

Xue Zhengyong slapped the back of his head and smiled, but he gritted his teeth and said, “It’s Uncle Wang, not Uncle Wang.”[157]

“Hahaha, it’s the same. It’s all the same to me. The proud son of heaven is truly handsome. He’s just like you! Old Xue, you’re so lucky.”

After a while, Xue Meng was pushed along with “Little Man Tuo” to stroll in the garden. Little Man Tuo was sixteen this year, which was exactly twenty-eight years old, but he looked a little cold. After walking together with Xue Meng for a while, she said, “Young Master Xue, you should understand the meaning behind our elder’s pushing us out together.”

“Yes.”

“But as I said, we can take a walk. I really don’t like the way Young Master Xue is. So don’t think about the others.”

“Oh… Hmm?”

Xue Meng was shocked. He suddenly stopped his steps, his face ashen as he waited for little Man Tuo.

That little wild flower lifted her chin in a rather haughty manner, and with rather a demonstration of her strength, looked at Xue Meng and coldly said, “I have my own possessions, even if you fell in love with me…”

“Are you sick?! Me?” He pointed at himself in surprise, “To you?”

“Why else would you pull me down a deserted path? It can’t be that you have something on your mind, right?”

“Why didn’t you say that you had a hole in your brain!”

Xue Meng’s temper flared up in an instant. He was furious and his eyes shone with fire as he repeated: “I like you? I like you? I —”

“Why do you say you like me so many times? You lecher!” little Man Tuo was very tough. She stomped on the ground, raised her head and slapped Xue Meng’s face.

Xue Meng was already so angry that his vision was spinning. To be slapped by this tender and delicate hand for no reason, he felt like spitting out a few more mouthfuls of blood. If not for the fact that Madam Wang had taught him how to be courteous to girls, he would probably have smashed little Man Tuo into the ground and turned her into a blooming trumpet.

Right at this moment, a man with light eyes and a high nose bridge walked over from afar. When little Man Tuo saw it, she was stunned at first. Then, her eyes filled with tears. Her charming voice sounded, “Young Master Mei!” She ran straight towards the man.

The man who came was none other than Mei Hanxue. He did not think that after walking down such a remote path, he would be able to meet other people. He was obviously startled for a moment, but seeing that

Little Man Tuo was flying towards him, he raised his hand and threw down a barrier. The girl was caught off guard. She was hit by the force of the lightning and fell to the ground.

Mei Hanxue didn't intend to help her. He looked down at her and frowned. "Miss, you have recognized the wrong person."

"How could it be wrong? How could it be wrong… That year, you promised me a golden scented sachet, saying that it would be hard to forget after meeting me. When I turn eighteen, you will marry me, you… Have you forgotten?"

Mei Hanxue: "…"

"Young Master Mei…"

"You really recognized the wrong person." Mei Hanxue didn't say anything else. He just shook his head, dropped the sentence, and walked past the tearful girl.

When Xue Meng saw this scene, he felt both angry and relieved.

Angry because Mei Hanxue really was a seed of wind and truly did not recognize people when he lifted h pants. It was no wonder that he only dared to choose the small path in this kind of situation.

It was also because he did not expect that the one little Man Tuo liked was actually Mei Hanxue. Mei Hanxue was the same name as him, flowery and ruthless. It was said that before and after hooking up with women, they were two completely different faces, and little Man Tuo's love for him was really bad luck for eight lifetimes.

Mei Hanxue walked up to him and narrowed his pale glass-like eyes. He looked at him for a moment.

Xue Meng thought to himself, what are you looking at? How dare you look at me like that? You are renowned throughout the world. My name is renowned throughout the Nine Prefectures, and I cannot lose in terms of momentum.

So he proudly raised his head and swept the tail of his eyes over Mei Hanxue. He was prepared to give a rather disdainful and cold snort to the two of them when they completely missed each other's shoulders.

"Why is your face swollen?"

However, when Mei Hanxue was halfway there, he stopped and stood in front of him, looking at him indifferently.

"The swelling is quite unique."

Xue Meng could not get up in one breath, but he still could not stop the car. He let out a proud "hmph".

Mei Hanxue: "…"

"…" Xue Meng's face quickly turned red and he abruptly turned his head. His killing intent surged, "Why do you care about me? I accidentally fell!"

"Then watch your step in the future. It's not easy to fall like this."

With that, he left, leaving Xue Meng standing blankly on the spot for a while. Then, he stomped his feet in anger and said, "Mei Hanxue! You son of a bitch! You, you just wait for me! We are irreconcilable!"

After suffering from a belly full of grievances, Xue Meng ran out from the garden with red eyes. He was in a hurry to run, but he suddenly bumped into a person's chest.

Xue Meng was furious and scolded, "What the hell is that thing! Do you not know how to walk?"

Raising his head, he was a tall and elegant man clad in green, his clothes embroidered with golden threads of pollia pattern, with Guyue'ye's green jade crown on his head, and two long and soft eyelashes that fell before his eyes. When he lifted his eyes, he saw the hazy figure of Jiang Nan's Misty Rain, a face that captivated one's soul.

He pushed Xue Meng aside and adjusted his clothes. He seemed to be in a bad mood as his slender fingers smoothed the wrinkles on his front. Xue Meng was stunned for a moment when he saw the silver ring with the Black Tortoise shell on his index finger.

Guyue'ye's head, the richest man in the world, Jiang Xi!

This person was about the same age as Xue Zhengyong, but his mental cultivation method was different. Jiang Xi's appearance was also around twenty years old.

At the time, Xue Meng was still thinking about how this absent fellow looked like. Now that he saw him today, he couldn't help but be shocked. He stared at the other party with his eyes wide open.

Jiang Xi's face was sullen but he was not in a good mood. "You can call the name of the sect Master? How laughable."

Hearing these words, Xue Meng felt that the humiliation he felt was a hundred times greater than the humiliation he received from Mei Hanxue. He immediately said angrily, “What? Do I have to call you Sect Leader Immortal? Even Nangong Liu does not have such arrogance!”

“How unruly! Whose disciple are you?”

“Why would you answer whenever I ask? What are you? When Guyue’ye’s group of monkeys listen to your commands, do I still want to buy your money? I won’t tell you! I think you’re just a —”

“Meng’er!”

Suddenly, a gentle voice sounded. Xue Meng abruptly stopped his mouth and looked behind him, avoiding Jiang Xi.

Madam Wang had walked over at an unknown time. She had probably heard Xue Meng’s unruly retort, so her face was pale and somewhat anxious. She quickly stopped him. “Meng’er, quickly don’t say anymore. Come over here and come to your mother’s side.”

Xue Meng glared fiercely at Jiang Xi and walked toward Madam Wang as he respectfully lowered his head. “Mother.”

Jiang Xi stood in the same spot for a moment before slowly turning around as well, narrowing his eyes. Those eyes of his, which were obviously beautiful to behold, were actually flickering with a sinister light.

He looked at the mother and son beside Dewar on the pink wall and said coldly, “Oh, so this is the son of Heaven, the good son of Xue Zhengyong. Xue Meng?”

Madam Wang, “…”

Jiang Xi's eyelashes trembled for a moment before he closed his eyes. When he opened them again, his eyes were filled with ridicule. "As expected of Xue Zhengyong's seed. Truly good self-restraint."

"You are not allowed to insult my father!"

"Meng'er!" Madam Wang immediately grabbed him and pulled him behind her. Then, with a pale face, she bowed slightly to Jiang Xi and said, "My son, Xue Meng, is too willful. Sect Leader Jiang, please forgive me."

"Heh, Sect Leader Jiang…" Jiang Xi was like a venomous snake, soaking the three words in his moist lips for a while before swallowing them down, and then he said, "It's alright. At least he has half your blood, shijie, if you count him in seniority, I can recognize him as my nephew…"

"Who wants to be your nephew?! Why aren't you looking at that ugly face of yours? Scram!"

"Meng'er…"

Jiang Xi laughed coldly, staring at Xue Meng for a moment before shifting his gaze to Madam Wang's face. Madam Wang lowered her eyes and said, "Sect Leader, please stop joking. I am no longer Guyue'ye's disciple. How can I continue to talk about seniority with Sect Leader?"

"… Alright." Jiang Xi nodded and replied coldly, "Great, great. Seeing an old friend and son of an old friend today has really broadened my horizons. I wonder how the Sisheng Peak is raised, and how the fine White Yulan can be covered with mud."

"Jiang Xi! Say that again! I'll tear your mouth apart!"

When Xue Meng heard this person insult his mother in front of him, blood immediately rushed to his head and desperately rushed forward. Seeing that the situation had gone out of control, he suddenly heard a loud sound in the sky. A bright firework exploded with a loud sound, and the sound of the drum rumbled.

“The welcoming banquet for the hundred families will be held at the Poem Hall at the same time. Distinguished guests, please enjoy the limelight…”

Jiang Xi coldly glanced at Xue Meng, flicked his sleeves and left.

Ch. 158 Shizun at the Wedding Reception

The wedding ceremony was held three days in a row. The first day was a welcoming banquet, held on the night before the wedding ceremony. As the name implies, it was meant to be a welcoming reception for the guests. However, the most lively part of the evening was not the tables, but the hunting grounds. According to the rules…

That evening, before sundown, a venerable elder would put three spirit deer in red silk into the garden, and the groom's father would select twenty-two unmarried men and women and send them out to the garden to chase the deer.

Three spirit deer, if the guests were able to hunt one, they would receive ten million gold coins. In the end, it was just a gimmick for the rich and oil-filled sects like the Rufeng Sect and Guyue'ye sect.

The Shi Le Hall was a large hall, and looking down from the hall, one could see a hunting forest not far away shrouded in the afterglow of the setting sun.

The guests came in succession to greet Nangong Liu. Nangong Liu, regardless of whether they were high or low, politely returned their greetings and invited them to take their seats. They busied themselves for half an hour before all the guests took their seats.

The night banquet officially began.

"I wonder which guests Sect Leader Nangong will send to the forest garden to chase after the deer."

“Didn’t you say to draw lots?”

“If you ask me, those who were chosen were all extremely lucky. Think about it, for the Spirit Deer, a bounty of ten million, other people who didn’t have a Spirit Deer could also obtain other spirit beasts or immortal fruits. Is there anything better in the world?”

As the discussion was going on, the door of the hall suddenly opened and both Nangong Si and Song Qiutong walked up the balcony at the same time. Both of them came before the Sect Leader, the handsome man and the golden-red woman.

Nangong Liu stood up and smiled as he nodded, saying in a clear voice, “Esteemed guests, you come from all over the world. It is truly a great fortune you were able to visit the Rufeng Sect and attend my son’s wedding.”

The guests below all cupped their hands and said, “Sect Leader is really courteous.”

“Young gongzi and young madam are a perfect match. Truly a rare pair.”

“Yeah, yeah.”

These flattering words were almost exactly the same as what his fans told him when he was married in his previous life. Mo Ran was annoyed by what he heard. His gaze subconsciously scanned the crowd and soon found Ye Wangxi, who was sitting beside Elder Shuanglin.

Ye Wangxi had his eyes downcast and was still dressed in simple attire. He was busy eating the food in the bowl and had not raised his head to look at Nangong Si at all.

His expression, his manner, everything was the same as usual, even calmer than usual, perhaps because he had been having a hard time all this time, and such a man already knew that he was powerless to fight for his life. Mo Ran looked at him and suddenly thought back to when he was young, he really liked lantern on sale at the night market.

The lantern was made in an exquisite manner. Every roof tile had been outlined, but the prices for the old artiste were not low. Thus, although the lantern was good, he could never buy it. Mo Ran naturally couldn't afford it, but almost every night, he would wait until the night market opened before running to the side of the stall to take a look.

However, one day, a young man and a young woman came to the scene. They were dressed in silk, and the young girl took a fancy to the lantern. She then gave the lantern to the man beside her with a coquettish expression.

The lantern was taken away. Mo Ran raised his head and watched as the old artist took it off the wooden shelf that had been hung for a long time. He handed it over to the girl, and the flickering light illuminated the face of Mo Ran.

At that time, Mo Ran felt very uncomfortable, but he was also very obedient and calm.

He was the same as the current Ye Wangxi. In fact, the moment he saw the lantern, he knew that such a luxurious item was destined not to belong to him. Every night when he were illuminated by the pagoda, the scene of him losing this ray of light had already been practiced countless times.

It wasn't something he could let go of, it was something he could be at ease with.

It was because from the beginning, he was very clear about what the outcome would be, so he had never dared to pick it up.

"Come, come, come, draw, draw —" The old servant of the Rufeng Sect held onto a bronze twined branch and walked to the seat of honor with a face full of smiles. He held it above his head and presented it to Nangong Liu, "Sect Leader, the time has come, please draw your lot, Sect Leader!"

"Good! Come! Sect Leader Nangong has come to capture one!"

Nangong Liu smiled and said, "Then we will do as you say. We will draw twenty-two lots and the young heroes that have been selected will have to show their respect and participate in the night deer hunting. If anyone is unwilling to go, I'll have to trouble you to inform me in advance. Thank you!"

After a while, there were a few girls from some small sects who had low cultivation bases and were too timid, so they asked their parents to go up and tell them their names, and had Sect Leader Nangong take their names away in advance.

Xu Shuanglin glanced at Ye Wangxi and lazily smiled, "Xiao Yezi, do you want to go play? If you want to go, I'll do it for you. Open a secret door."

"I'm not going." Ye Wangxi said, "Foster father, may I trouble you to inform the Sect Leader to remove my name?"

"How can we do that? What if we get lucky and get ten million gold?"

Ye Wangxi: "…"

Xu Shuanglin's personality was far more untamed than his adopted son. He thought for a while, his lips curling into a wry smile. "Then if you don't want to go, I'll go."

"Foster father… You are already in your forties this year…"

"Why, I look young. When I get all three deer back, I'll have thirty million gold. If we do not take the windfall, we shall destroy the heavens and the earth."

Xu Shuanglin was stubborn, not noticing his foster son's depression at all. He put on his shoes and went to find Nangong Liu with a smile. He whispered a few words beside Nangong Liu. The others would have thought that he was going to take away Ye Wangxi's lot. Who knew that he loved money so much that he wanted to go in and play with them himself?

Nangong Liu quickly picked out the guests for Zhulu.

"Shen Feng, Lin Sheng, Qu Yanran…"

Elder Shuanglin stood at the side and took the lot from the Sect Leader. He reported them one by one in a slow and unhurried manner, "Oh? This is a bit amazing, the proud son of heaven, Xue Meng."

Soon, all twenty-one people had been selected, leaving only one remaining. Elder Shuanglin was extremely thick-skinned and smiled as he raised his hand. "One more person is me. I'm old bones now. Please advise me." Nangong Liu knew his elder's personality and did not stop him. He only gave a helpless smile and gave everyone a fuse.

"Deerchaser, the fuse as evidence. After three messages, it means that all three Deer have been captured. The hunt will be over." Nangong Liu said,

“At that time, we will personally welcome all of you back from the Moonhowl Courtyard. The winner will receive a reward of ten million gold.”

Everyone applauded when they heard the commotion, cheering for their acquaintances.

Nangong Liu smiled and said, “In addition, under the instruction of my son, I will add another one. The person who gets first place will be rewarded with ten Demonic Wolves. Make a blood contract and bring it home!”

Demonic Wolf!

Even on the black market, such a precious spirit beast was hard to find, imagine ten of them!

The main hall was in an uproar, someone couldn’t help but stand up and shout at his fellow sect members: “Senior Brother, it’s up to you! If you take first place, I’ll brush your boots for you for a year!”

The crowd burst into laughter.

A female cultivator was not convinced and shouted, “Senior brother, let’s beat them all. If you win, I will agree to dual cultivate with you!”

“Waa— That’s good. That’s good. Hahaha, which girl is so spicy?”

For a moment, the entire Poetry Hall burst into cheers and laughter. Those who were initially uninterested had looks of anticipation in their eyes as they watched the grand show with glasses in hand.

Mo Ran left amidst laughter and said, “Shizun, I’ll accompany Xue Meng to the hunting grounds. You sit and eat well, wait for me to come back.”

Chu Wanning said, “Go on, pay attention to Xue Meng, he is too reckless.”

“Alright.”

Mo Ran walked down the brightly lit grand hall with the other 20 people. Chu Wanning watched the tall and straight stature of the young men and women disappear into the night, gulping down the red wine in his cup.

He felt that once he reached Sisheng Peak, he would have the money to build a spiritual energy stone path for himself in the cultivation world. He was confident in his disciple’s abilities.

Thirty million gold was easily obtainable.

After entering the forest, before he could even send Xue Meng back, the first bright red firework exploded in the sky. Nangong Liu clicked his tongue in wonder and sighed, “Amazing, someone is hunting the first deer before I even finish my cup of tea. Who knows which disciple is it? Such courage is truly admirable!”

Li Wuxin from Bitan Manor sat beside Nangong Liu, and upon hearing that, he twirled his beard and laughed, “If everyone here is interested, why don’t we make a bet? These twenty-two young talents, just who will die and who will win the prize money?

As everyone seconded him, twenty-two wooden sticks with names written on them were placed on the long table. Red silk was placed on the bottom, and those who wanted to bet quickly wrote down their chips and signed their names.

Xue Zhengyong turned around and whispered to Chu Wanning, “Why is the Bitan Manor giving out 50,000 credits? With so little money, is that Old

Man Li very poor?”

“It’s a small gamble, a big gamble that hurts the body,” Chu Wanning replied.

Xue Zhengyong chuckled and asked Chu Wanning, “Then why don’t we have some fun?”

Chu Wanning just stared at him, not saying a word. Xue Zhengyong felt goosebumps all over his body. He pulled back his neck and said, “Good, good, good. I know you don’t like it, so—”

“What are you doing?” Elder Yuheng took off his money pouch and slammed it on the table, then said expressionlessly, “If you want to do it, then go on and harm your body.”

“…”

Xue Zhengyong stared at him for a while as if he had seen a ghost. Then he asked, “How much do we bet?”

“Three hundred thousand.”

“… So many? What happens if I lose?”

“We can’t.” Chu Wanning said, “Don’t you want to cultivate spirit stones? If I gather more money, I can build a few more villages with especially heavy poverty-stricken people.”

Xue Zhengyong: “You’re really going? What if Xue Meng loses?”

“He won’t lose, he is your son. You should know this better than I do.”

“…”

Seeing that Xue Zhengyong was still worried, Chu Wanning said straightforwardly, “If you lose, so be it. If you win, so be it.”

The names were all written on the paper, and the small sects who didn’t want to bet felt their hearts itch. They couldn’t help but spend a little bit of money to try their luck.

He stood up and was about to take a gamble when Song Qiutong called out to him. “Husband, why are you going as well?”

“I’ll buy you some jewelry if I can earn some money.”

Song Qiutong stopped talking. She lowered her head with her glossy face and a strand of black hair falling down her forehead. She looked especially shy and pitiful. Chu Wanning glanced in that direction and felt awkward seeing the newlywed couple’s sweet expressions. He quickly turned his head back, so he didn’t notice the faint trace of unease on Song Qiutong’s face.

Suddenly, he heard a sharp sound behind him. In a split-second, his reaction was as quick as a lightning bolt, and he suddenly turned his body to the side, dodging the attack. A snow-white light flashed past his face, and then, “Bang!” With a loud sound, it struck the main pillar of the palace.

The powder scattered in all directions and entered into the three points of the tree!

“Who is it!”

“Assassins!”

“Watch out! They are blowing the martial law’s entry!”

A sharp whistle sounded throughout all seventy-two manors, and just then, the singing hall that was filled with music suddenly became chaotic, and swords were pulled out in all directions.

Nangong Si's eyes were gloomy, a ruthless light could be seen flowing out of them. He suddenly wiped off the blood on his face and walked towards the pillar, lifting his head to take a look.

It was just an ordinary arrow, yet it was able to pierce deep into the hard Nan Mu.

Suddenly, his face greatly changed. His fingers clenched into a fist and he looked at the letter in disbelief. As he read the letter again, his entire body was trembling, and his fingertips had even punctured the letter.

"Qui, what's wrong?"

Nangong Si raised his head, his nose was wrinkled, and his face was ferocious, as if he had transformed into a leopard.

"This is simply a rumor!"

As he spoke, he prepared to destroy the letter.

But Nangong Liu was faster than him by a step. He raised his hand and used his spirit energy to trap his son, "Give me the letter."

"Father, you don't need to read it. It's just a piece of nonsense!"

However, Nangong Liu did not listen. Waving his hand, he got the letter from the paralyzed Nangong elder. He took the letter and scanned it, the color of his face turning extremely ugly in an instant. Before anyone could react, he had brought the letter into the fire and instantly burnt it into a

greyish black, then laughed dryly, “My son’s words are correct, it’s really too absurd. I don’t know who did this, but they made such a cheap joke, it’s really…”

“What is it?”

Suddenly, a low and hoarse voice came from the corner of the eaves.

Everyone’s expressions changed. Ye Wangxi drew his sword and stood in front of Nangong Si. Chu Wanning stood up and stared at where the voice came from.

One had to know that the Rufeng Sect hosted such a grand meeting. The disciples in charge of martial law were all senior disciples of their sect, yet this person had stealthily arrived at the top of the hall without anyone noticing. Moreover, no one noticed him when he spoke.

“Sect Leader Nangong, I kindly remind you not to let your son marry a woman with a lustful nature for no reason. Not only did you not listen, you even said that I am a fool. You truly opened my eyes.”

Before he finished speaking, a shadow flashed past, and before the others could see clearly, he was already standing with his hands behind his back in the middle of the hall, in the middle of the crowd.

“AHHHHH!”

“Run, run!”

The people who were nearby instantly turned pale with fright. They fell down like the tide, scattering out a circle with no one around. The senior martial siblings protected the junior brothers and sisters, the Sect Leader protected the disciples, and the robust youths protected the younger ones.

The black clothed man wore a ferocious bronze mask and an ink-black cloak, and said indifferently: “Run away from what? If I wanted to hurt someone, this hall would have long been filled with blood. Just stand there.”

Ch. 159 Shizun, I'm Scared of Tianwen the Most

Nangong Liu appeared calm, but beads of sweat had already appeared on his forehead. He estimated this person's strength and felt that what he said was not false. He could not help but feel more flustered.

"Who exactly are you? What do you intend to do by barging into the wind sect at night?"

"Like I said, I just wanted to remind you not to let your son marry someone he shouldn't."

As soon as he said this, the guests couldn't help but glance at each other.

The news of the affair between Ye Wangxi and Song Qiutong had already spread to every corner of the streets. Everyone was aware of it, and the only ones who did not know of it were Nangong Si and Nangong Liu.

However, the marriage contract had already been sent out, and the marriage contract had already been passed down. At this moment, he was regretting it. What face does he have now? Nangong Liu's lips trembled for a moment before letting out a cold snort. He said, "It's fine as long as my son likes her. There's no need for outsiders to worry about it."

The man in black smiled, "The Sect Leader has such a big heart. He doesn't even care about Song Qiutong's heart. Is she from your Nangong Clan or the Ye Clan?"

Song Qiutong was alarmed and furious, her face pale as her beautiful eyes widened as she shouted, "You're slandering me!"

“Why am I slandering you? You and Ye Wangxi, don’t you know what you’ve done?”

Ye Wangxi did not expect to be mentioned. He was stunned for a long time before he knew what the man in black was talking about. However, his first reaction was not anger, but laughter. “What are you talking about?”

“I did not say any nonsense. What I said was true. I saw it with my own eyes.” The man in black spoke clearly, “Everyone knows that you have spent a lot of money to save Song Qiutong in Xuanyuan Pavilion. Master Ye, what are your intentions?”

“Looking at her in such a pitiful state, I couldn’t bear to watch.”

“You saved her, so you can just let her go. What do you want to do? Go in and out and bring her along with you.”

“Miss Song is from the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast Sect, and everyone knows about that. If I let her go, I’m afraid that she would immediately be targeted by some unscrupulous people. That is why she was brought back to the Door of Justice and given a place to rest.”

“What a good place to stay. Lord Ye is so kind. He stays with such a beautiful lady all day long. He actually dares to be rude.”

The man in black mocked him, but Ye Wangxi did not seem ashamed at all as he said, “I have a clear conscience.”

Ordinary people would be willing to judge everyone’s mind with their own knowledge and experience. Most of these people were from the Upper Cultivation World, so if they were able to obtain the Butterfly-Boned Beauty sect, they would have to protect the spiders in their arms even if

their heads were bleeding, or they would even stew them to eat. Who would believe that Ye Wangxi was innocent?

As a result, the group of people exchanged glances with each other. Their expressions couldn't help but carry a look of contempt. In the originally uneasy atmosphere, there was also a distinct sense of pleasure in peeping into one's privacy.

Nangong Si said in a gloomy voice: "I think you are just looking for trouble, take this opportunity to discredit my Door of the Rufeng Sect. What does it have to do with you who I marry? There's no need to say it anymore. Where did you come from and where are you going?"

"Young noble Nangong, you truly do not recognize good intentions." The man in black was pacing around the hall. He suddenly stopped not far from Song Qiutong, smiled at her, and said, "Miss Song, your husband blindly trusts you, no wonder you are able to stand here with your face unflustered and act like the young mistress of the Rufeng Sect."

Song Qiutong, on the other hand, was far less composed than the other two as she said nervously, "Don't you dare insult my innocence!"

"How can you and Lord Ye be innocent?" The man in black spoke confidently, "Not long after you were saved by him, you volunteered to serve him. When the two of you met in private, you thought that no one had seen you, but you didn't know that I had been watching you in the dark all this time. If you want people not to know, then don't do it…"

Song Qiutong suddenly shouted, interrupting him. "You're lying!"

"If I'm talking nonsense, why are you trembling?"

“I-I am being humiliated…I…” She panicked and looked towards Nangong Si, “Young Master…”

Nangong Si went back to her side and protected her from the rear. He stared at the black clothed man with a pair of wolf-like eyes. “Stop slandering me.”

“Whether I’m slandering you or not, I have something to tell you.” The black-clothed man laughed, “Young noble Nangong, this beauty Song’s left thigh has a drop of red mole, is it not so?”

Hearing this, Nangong Si was stunned, “You…”

“It is about the size of a grain of rice. It is bright-colored, not dark red, but blood-red. If I didn’t see her having fun with Lord Ye, how could I know such details about her?”

“This…”

“Young Master!” Song Qiutong panicked and pulled at Nangong’s sleeve, saying with tears in his eyes, “No, no, he wronged me… He must have taken advantage of the time when I was bathing…”

“What’s so good about watching you bathe?” The black clothed man was somewhat unhappy and interrupted her, “Why don’t you go to Sisheng Peak and watch Elder Yuheng bathe and change his clothes.”

The fact that Elder Yuheng was spied on by the female disciples was also one of the rumors in the cultivation world. Now that the topic was brought up, everyone felt that it was a little funny. The braver ones glanced over at Chu Wanning, but were shocked by the astonishing killing intent on his face and lowered their heads in succession.

As the black clothed man walked around Nangong Si and Song Qiutong, he suddenly seemed to have thought of something. He clapped his hands and smiled, “Right, I suddenly remembered something. Back then, when Lord Ye smacked Miss Song, Miss Song had a Shrine Sand personally placed on her wrist by the Cold Scale Sacred Hand. If Miss Song is truly pure and clean, and I was the one who cursed and slandered her, then her wrist must still have some cinnabar sand left on it.”

He paused for a moment, and then smiled at the pale-faced Song Qiutong, who was trembling like a sieve. “Miss Song, if you really want to return your innocence, why don’t you show us that gatekeeper sand?”

He turned around and comforted Song Qiutong, “It’s alright. Take a look at everyone, you…”

However, when he saw that Song Qiutong’s lips had lost their color and her face was as white as paper, shivering with fear, he could not help but be stunned. After a while, he asked with some doubt, “Why are you… What’s wrong?”

Song Qiutong loosened her grip on Yuanyu’s hand and took a step back, clutching her sleeve as she shook her head tearfully.

“No… No…”

Nangong Si’s eyes suddenly widened, as if he knew something had happened that made him unable to speak.

The black clothed man laughed coldly and said, “What happened? You don’t dare?”

“No, that’s not it. I don’t know either…” Song Qiutong slumped to the ground, her tears falling like rain as she said sorrowfully, “I don’t know, I don’t know either…Please… Let me go…”

She tightly held onto her sleeve, not letting anyone see it. However, this sort of concealing sensation was no different from telling everyone that the gatekeeping sand on her wrist had indeed disappeared just as the black-clothed person had said.

She was a virgin, but she was not married yet, and the red marks on her hands were gone.

Even if she jumped into the Yellow River now, she wouldn’t be able to wash herself clean.

The black clothed man was just about to say more when he heard a cold and harsh voice not far away. In the light, Chu Wanning stood tall and said, “The sand on Miss Song’s wrist was still there a few days ago.”

For some reason, the man in black had a look of speechlessness in his eyes. That aggressive look disappeared as he turned around to face Chu Wanning, “…”

After a long while, the man in black sighed.

Some of the people present felt that they had misheard. This man, who had just started spouting nonsense to force them onto a dead end, seemed to have spoken with a tone of indulgence.

“Chu-zongshi is right, but I didn’t say that Song Qiutong and Ye Wangxi had an affair at that time, I only said that the two of them had an affair. If we were to talk about the time of an affair, it would only be a few days ago.”

Ye Wangxi murmured, "… This is ridiculous…"

Chu Wanning's face was cold and dignified, "Words are no proof. Is what you said true? Allow me to interrogate."

"You…"

As he spoke, a gold light flashed on Chu Wanning's fingertip. The pupils of the man in black suddenly contracted. He turned his body to the side and barely dodged the Divine weapon Tianwen that came piercing through the air.

"Chu-zongshi, what are you doing?" The black clothed man was both helpless and funny. He was extremely agile, Chu Wanning's whip could not wrap around him for a while, and he did not retaliate. He was chased by the vines all over the place, and the originally tense and weird atmosphere suddenly turned comical, revealing a hint of a spoiled child, "Don't hit me, I haven't finished my sentence."

"If you want to complain, why don't you take off your mask and talk about it?" However, Chu Wanning's sharp voice was filled with contempt.

"If you want me to, I'll take it off for you. Just not now."

"Why not!"

"I'm not good-looking. Under these lights I can intimidate people."

After running for a long time, the man in black noticed that Chu Wanning's skills were getting fiercer and fiercer. He couldn't help but think that something was wrong as he moved to the back of the pillar, dodging the attacks of the golden light and shouted, "Ye Wangxi, aren't you a gentleman? Today, I will let the world know your true face! You bought a

pair of female cultivators and forced Song Qiutong to serve you, you disregarded others and bullied the lord's wife! You – you are dressed like a beast, with a human's face and a beast's heart!"

Ye Wangxi flew into a rage, "What nonsense are you talking about?!"

"Am I wrong? Don't you know how Song Qiutong's gatekeeping sand disappeared? She knelt in front of you the other day and said that she was Nangong's unmarried wife. Please let her go and don't get entangled with her again. Yet, you insisted on not listening to her, and you still said —"

Ye Wangxi's face turned green as he gritted his teeth and said, "What did I say? You're making it up!"

"You have already forgotten what you have said, so you still need me to remind you. You said at that time," The man in black cleared his throat, changed his tone, and imitated Ye Wangxi's tone, "Miss Song, I spent so much money and made clothes for others. Now that you have the favour of Young Master Nangong, you will not leave here unscathed."

In the end, he even laughed out loud three times. His tone of voice was that of a rogue.

Ye Wangxi, "…"

Ch. 160 Shizun, Do You Still Remember That Voice-Changing Spell

When the surrounding guests heard this, quite a few of them revealed a look of disdain. Their gazes swiveled between Ye Wangxi, Nangong Si and Song Qiutong.

Someone said softly, “What a scum…”

“Young noble Nangong is still not angry?”

“So Miss Song was forced into a corner because of helplessness, that’s why… Sigh, she could not be blamed… As a daughter, what can she do in front of the two famous Young Masters?”

Luckily, he was able to avoid it quickly. His wounds were not heavy and he was not entangled, but his cloak was still torn. Blood splattered everywhere. He let out a muffled groan, no longer daring to be negligent.

The willow vine was hiding more frequently than before, but it still did not let Ye Wangxi go.

“Master Ye, Miss Song did not dare to admit to what happened two days ago. She was probably worried that she would hurt your relationship with Master Nangong. However, the blue sky has eyes and it is clear that it is not open to the public. Do you not have the slightest bit of shame, and do not intend to lower your head and apologize in front of everyone?!”

Ye Wangxi was extremely angry, but he also found it laughable. He said, “What crime have I committed?”

“You are not guilty, is it still Miss Song’s fault? Even though she didn’t resist, I think she was only being coerced by you. Are you trying to say that

she took the initiative to recruit you? You didn't force her?"

At this moment, the quiet Nangong Si suddenly turned around. He lowered his head to look at Song Qiutong and reached out a hand to help her up.

Song Qiutong thought that he had extended his hand in an attempt to confirm the cinnabar mark on her wrist. When she woke up this morning, she found that the cinnabar on her wrist had disappeared, causing her to panic even more. However, this situation was getting darker, and she was unable to explain it clearly for the moment, she thought that she would soon have a wedding night with Nangong. When that time came, the cinnabar would also disappear, so it would be better to not say anything for the next two days, in order to avoid any further misunderstandings.

Who would have thought that someone would splash dirty water on her like that…

Recalling that she was indeed saved by Ye Wangxi, and that she had once served him, and that the red mole on her leg had been clearly pointed out, she felt her mind buzzing and did not know what to do.

Amidst the chaos, she raised her moist eyes and looked at the crowd. She saw those people looking at her with disdain and pity, whispering to each other and gossiping among themselves.

That black-clothed man was still being chased around by Chu-zongshi's willow vines, as he shouted, "Ye Wangxi! You and I have accumulated resentment for a long time, today I will expose you, you are a hypocrite! You secretly made contact with the Young Master's wife, forcing a young lady from a good family, how vicious is that!"

Song Qiutong was stunned for a moment, then realized what she should do. It seemed that the man in black had a deep grudge against Ye Wangxi, and was trying his best to destroy Ye Wangxi's noble reputation as a gentleman.

She could not afford to commit the crime of fornication, but if she were to follow the words of the black clothed man and say that she was forced to do so by Ye Wangxi, then at least…

She almost hysterically shouted, "He's the one who dirtied me!"

Nangong Si's hand suddenly froze. He stood on the spot and looked at her in shock. It was as if he couldn't believe that his fiancee had been tainted by his father's right hand. He was completely shocked.

Song Qiutong covered her face and sobbed. She choked and said, "Yes, it was Lord Ye who humiliated me. He… He forced me to. I never promised…"

Nangong Si stared at her, the candle light suddenly flickered, his eyes darkened, and after a while, he lowered his hand that was about to pull Song Qiutong away. His voice was hoarse and sparks flew everywhere. "Do you know what you are talking about?"

Seeing that he was angered, Song Qiutong felt even more uneasy as she cried, "Young Master, I'm sorry… I was afraid that my Young Master wouldn't allow me to, so… Always. I never dared to say it… I'm more afraid. I was afraid that if I said it out loud, I would make Lord Ye and Master Nangong be enemies. He is so highly valued by the sect leader." As she spoke, she leaned forward, her long sleeves falling to the ground. Her slender shoulders couldn't help but tremble, and she looked miserable and lamentable at the same time.

“Qiutong really doesn’t know what to do…” He didn’t dare to ask for the Sect Leader to make the decision. The humiliation he had suffered could only be concealed by himself “… Young Master, you and Qiutong have our faults, but… But to you, it is something that I am sincere towards…”

But Nangong Si’s face was pale white. He retreated backwards and shook his head, repeating: “You knew… Do you know what you’re talking about?”

Song Qiutong’s silky black hair covered her shoulders as the dim light in the lantern’s shadow glimmered like silk, further making her seem delicate and pitiful. She sobbed sorrowfully, “It’s Qiutong’s fault. Young Master should not have hidden it from you. But I’m lonely, I…”

Nangong Si suddenly shouted out and interrupted her, “Do you know what you just said!?”

“I…” Song Qiutong’s entire body shook violently from his voice as she raised her head. Her beautiful hair was wet from the rain, and her beautiful face was full of tears. Her lips could not help but tremble. “I…”

“You can actually do such a thing? How dare you… You can actually do such a thing!”

When the crowd heard Nangong Si’s words, they could not help but frown and exchange glances with each other. Some of them could not help but softly say, “I have long heard that the Rufeng Sect respected men and women are lowly and despicable, but I did not expect that such a thing would happen. The one Nangong Si blamed was not Ye Wangxi, but the plain and innocent Miss Song.”

“Yeah, he’s really shameless.”

Chu Wanning had retracted his willow vines when he heard that Song Qiutong had admitted to it. Seeing Nangong's reaction, he was also at a loss.

In his memory, although Nangong Si was occasionally arrogant and willful, he was still a righteous man. He was definitely not a person who did not understand anything. If this matter was true and he pursued his crimes, then he should at least investigate Ye Wangxi and not Song Qiutong.

But from the looks of it, all of Nangong's anger was directed at Song Qiutong… How could this be?

Among all the guests, only Mei Hanxue was safely seated. He drank his wine as he watched the scene unfold. If Xue Meng was here, he would have noticed that Mei Hanxue and what he saw just now were completely different. At this moment, he was like a romantic seed from the Peach Blossom Springs.

Song Qiutong was still weeping and complaining, pushing all sorts of ugly things onto Ye Wangxi. Ye Wangxi was probably shocked by her identity, and could not even utter a single word. He could only stare with wide eyes at the girl whom he had shot down from Xuanyuan Pavilion.

"Qiutong was weak. She didn't have the courage to prove herself before Lord Ye showed up. The Young Master had bestowed everything that he had gained upon the body of the duckweed, and everything that he had gained was due to him. But now… Now that he knew he was in the wrong… I… I've heard everything from my Young Master…"

When he had finished listening to her cries, he suddenly raised his head and closed his eyes.

The light that was originally lively and warm was now shining on his face, causing a dark shadow to billow about. His eyelashes trembled as if he was doing his best to restrain something.

His palms were like fists, devoid of any flesh. His Adam's apple was rolling in his throat, and his heart was in turmoil. He endured, his cheekbones cold, his veins bulging, his bones trembling, blood burning in his heart.

He held it in and finally could not hold it in anymore. With an explosive curse, he pulled out his sword and slashed the table before Song Qiutong into two! The cup was a mess!

"Song Qiutong, do you know… In my life, the thing that I hate the most, hate the most, and cannot tolerate the most is lying!" As soon as he finished his sentence, he shouted, "Ye Wangxi!"

"… Young Master."

"Ye Wangxi, get over here!"

"…"

He suddenly turned around, his eyes red with tears. "Come here!"

Ye Wangxi walked over, and the spectators thought that in the next moment, Nangong San's sword would stab straight into Ye Wangxi's chest, directly cutting open the stomach of the courteous beast, pulling out the heart and throwing it onto the ground. They held their breath, staring nervously at the scene before them.

Nangong Si gasped for breath and stared at Ye Wangxi for a while before saying hoarsely, "… You, remove the Voice Transmission Technique."

“Sound Changing Technique?” Everyone was stunned as they looked at each other: “What does this have to do with the sound changing technique?”

“That’s right. Ai, but it’s so strange. What is this Ye Wangxi trying to do with the Sound Changing Technique? Was his original voice really that scary that it would frighten others? Or was there something shameful about his original voice?”

However, Ye Wangxi lowered his eyes and said, “Young Lord, I can’t.”

Nangong was startled, he stared at him and asked: “What did you say?”

“Since I was thirteen, I have been using the Sound Changing Technique. I have been using this voice for over ten years, and the Sound Changing Technique has already penetrated deep into my spirit core.” Ye Wangxi paused for a moment before saying calmly, “I will never be able to regain my original voice.”

“…” Nangong Si took a step back in shock. After a long while, he raised his head to look at the man sitting on the chair with an obscure expression and muttered, “Father?”

Nangong Liu finally spoke out, “Si Er, this matter is indeed a pity, but… The change of tone was indeed a voluntary act on Ye Wangxi’s part. He hadn’t expected it at all. You don’t have to think too much about it.”

“But…”

Nangong Liu walked down the stage and stood behind the many guards. He stood with his hands behind his back and said, “Father knows that you are very friendly with Ye Wangxi and is very grateful to him for his dedication.

But this matter, he… To have an affair with Song Qiutong and not care about anyone else is a capital offense.”

Never would he have thought that Nangong Liu would say such a thing. He was stunned and said, “Father!”

Nangong Liu waved his hand and a blue light flashed and Nangong Si was immediately enveloped by a binding enchantment. He was stunned for a moment, but then he angrily roared and smashed into it, but that enchantment was passed down by the Rufeng Sect for generations, and because the Rufeng Sect had once killed his father for the throne, the Sect Leader’s son was able to sign a blood contract with his father when he was young. This enchantment was specially used by his father to detain his son, but it lasted for less than an hour.

The words that he had shouted inside the barrier had been completely sealed and couldn’t be transmitted to the outside world at all…

At this point, it was better to admit that Ye Wangxi had a secret relationship with Song Qiutong than to reveal the other secrets of the Rufeng Sect. Nangong Liu walked over to the black-clothed man and cupped his hands in greeting. “Although I do not know what grudges Mister has with Ye Wangxi, it is fortunate that Mister has brought up this matter today. Otherwise, we would have truly met with misfortune.”

The black clothed man said lightly: “Sect Leader Nangong is courteous.”

“Men, capture Ye Wangxi immediately! To —”

“Wait.”

The sudden action of the black clothed man caused Nangong Liu to feel uneasy. However, his face remained impassive as he smiled, “Mister, do you have any other advice for me?”

“I am thinking that your son has only said a few words about the art. Why is the Sect Leader so anxious to imprison Lord Ye?”

“Cough, this is a private matter of our Rufeng Sect, so it would be inconvenient for us to talk about it in detail…”

The black clothed man laughed, “Sect Leader Immortal, for the sake of the reputation of the Rufeng Sect, you really know what it means to abandon your home. The pitiful Miss Ye has risked his life for your sect for more than ten years, and now, you actually caused him to suffer innocently in order to preserve your dignity.”

After he said those words, before the others could react, Nangong Liu’s expression abruptly changed.

Mei Hanxue smiled, poured another bottle of wine, took a sip, and put it down.

Nangong Liu’s face turned sallow under the candlelight. After a long while, he asked with a forced smile, “What about him? Sir, you…”

The man in black’s eyes were bright as his voice echoed clearly in the hall. Each word was spoken with shock.

“Ye Wangxi isn’t a man at all.”

Ch. 161 Shizun, Let Me Take You Flying

“Ye Wangxi isn’t a man at all.”

“…”

After a few moments of silence, the crowd burst into an uproar!

All the guests in the hall turned pale with fright. All of their gazes were focused on Ye Wangxi. She lowered her head, closed her eyes and did not say a word.

Not a man?!

This handsome and upright young man was actually… Was it a girl?

This sentence was like a drop of water entering a wok, instantly causing a wave of heat to rise. Some people sucked in a breath of cold air, and immediately after, the buzzing sound exploded like a wok exploding with a crackling sound.

“Ye Wangxi is a girl?”

“Oh my god… How could this be…”

“No wonder Nangong Si didn’t blame her. He clearly knew about this! Then Song Qiutong just…”

“She is framing someone for her own safety!”

“This is too dangerous! If you didn’t do it, then you didn’t. Why do you need to frame others just to clear your name?”

“But I still don’t believe it. How could Ye Wangxi be a girl? I can’t tell at all…”

Nangong Liu’s eyes became cold. He stared at the black clothed man’s black eyes and said, “Sir, please don’t speak nonsense. Where did you get this evidence from?”

Nangong Si gasped for breath and stared at Ye Wangxi for a while before saying hoarsely, “… You, remove the Voice Transmission Technique.”

“If you do not feel guilty, then release Nangong Si. Fortunately, although your son has a wild temper, he is still a righteous man. He is not as cold-hearted and ruthless as you.”

“…”

Seeing that Nangong Liu’s face was covered in perspiration, the black clothed man clenched his fists and did not say a word. He coldly said, “What? Go ahead and release him.”

Nangong Liu said, “A mere unfilial son cannot allow an outsider like mister to poke fun at a person and put on airs!”

Although he didn’t admit that what the man in black said was true, everyone knew clearly that those who didn’t believe his words couldn’t help but waver. They once again looked at Ye Wangxi’s handsome face, wanting to find some clues about her womanhood.

At this time, someone from the crowd shouted: “Sect Leader Nangong, you are in the wrong.”

Everyone turned their heads and saw Mei Hanxue, dressed in a fox fur coat, looking dignified and graceful. He stood in the light of a candle and

said, “Although Miss Ye is a valiant and imposing woman, she is still a woman. The Sect Leader, as a man, should have mercy on the fairer sex. How can you bully a girl like this just so that you don’t lose face for the Rufeng Sect?”

He walked to the front of the hall slowly and smiled: “I am not ashamed, I have met Miss Ye before at Peach Blossom Springs, and felt that she was valiant, different from the weaklings of the Wind Raiser, and loved her in my heart. But I was stupid, so I offended Miss Ye with my words, causing her to feel disgusted, and had an argument with me. After receiving the high praise from Lady Ye, I could not help but exclaim at the number of outstanding people in the Rufeng Sect. The female cultivator was also extraordinary, and even secretly applauded the sect leader. However, seeing that the Sect Leader was acting today… Heh, but I feel that the brilliant and learned Rufeng sect does not deserve such a proud beauty.”

“… Immortal Mei, you and Ye Wangxi have only met once, it’s only natural that you would be mistaken.” Nangong Liu’s expression was dark, but he was still biting his lips with a smile. He said, “Considering the fact that you are from the Taxue Palace, I will not bother you. You better not make any mistakes.”

The way he spoke was no longer as calm and composed as it was at the beginning.

The man in black smiled and said, “The name of Young Master Mei is well-known everywhere. If he can’t tell whether a person is a man or a woman, perhaps no other person in the world can.”

When Nangong Liu heard him say so, he could not help but burn with anger. He said stiffly, “Sir had just accused Ye Wangxi of bullying Song

Qiutong, and now you are saying that Ye Wangxi is a woman. You are trying to disrupt the reputation of our Rufeng Sect by turning things around like this!”

The black clothed man said: “If I don’t come up with this plan, how can I let Young Noble Nangong clearly see Miss Song’s true personality? If he marries the wrong person, that would be enough to make him sick for the rest of his life.”

“But you clearly said it was reasonable! Furthermore, if Ye Wangxi was a woman, how did the cinnabar on Song Qiutong’s wrist disappear?”

“Why aren’t you asking her? Why are you asking me?” The black clothed man laughed coldly, “What’s more, your Rufeng Sect has thousands of male disciples. If the Sect Leader is free, he can interrogate them one by one. He will definitely find a satisfactory answer.”

No one spoke a word, but the contempt and curiosity in their eyes could not be hidden. Nangong Liu only felt a prickle in his back as he stood still for a while. Suddenly, he turned his head and shouted towards Ye Wangxi, “Come here!”

“…”

“Tell me yourself, did Miss Song wrongly accuse you?” Nangong Liu stared at Ye Wangxi’s face. He was betting on himself and he still had an important bargaining chip in his hand. He knew that Ye Wangxi loved his son deeply, so he did not want the reputation of the Rufeng Sect to be ruined. “Tell everyone, who exactly are you?”

Ye Wangxi had always been very obedient. Since she was young, she had always been the most obedient chess piece on his board.

He clearly remembered when Ye Wangxi was thirteen years old, she was ordered to come to the magnificent hall of the Rufeng Sect.

The doors of the palace were tightly shut, leaving only the two of them behind.

He sat on the cold pedestal and looked down. The thirteen-year-old girl was still in her hair, and she wore a green coat. Her hair was tied up in a satin ponytail and she had a small silver bracelet on her hand.

He smiled at her and said, “Forgotten, for you to come here today means that you already know the meaning.”

Ye Wangxi knelt down and kowtowed, “Yes, Sect Leader.”

“Your foster father was heavily injured many times before, and his muscles and bones were damaged. He is no longer fit to be the leader of the Dark Guard. You are his adopted daughter, and also the young plum and bamboo horse of a man. As for the others, I don’t trust them, I only trust you.”

Ye Wangxi didn’t get up. She was still lying quietly on the ground. Under his bun, his slender neck was exposed, just like a lamb that was about to be slaughtered.

Nangong Liu said, “Your talent is extraordinary and your future is immeasurable. I have the intention of making you the leader of the hidden guards of the Rufeng Sect and then ruling one of the cities within the 72 cities. In this way, you will be able to share both your foster father’s worries and become the right-hand man of my son. From now on, he is in the light, while you are in the dark. We will share the glory of the Rufeng Sect of Wind for a hundred years.”

He paused.

“However, if you don’t want to, then so be it. Your foster father can still hold out for a while, so I’ll look for a more suitable candidate. This matter is too much of a sacrifice for you, and I know it, so there is no need for you to force it.”

After Nangong Liu said this, she changed her sitting posture and waited patiently. This girl had no mother or father, no one to rely on, and he was absolutely certain that he could rely on her. He waited for her to nod.

At last Ye Wangxi straightened her back and looked at him silently.

For a moment, Nangong Liu trembled with fear, as if this girl had seen through his schemes and his fake smile. But the next moment, Ye Wangxi said, “My life was given to me by my foster father. In return for my father’s kindness, there is nothing that I am unwilling to do.”

Nangong Liu was quiet for a moment before he sighed, “In the end, I have wronged you.”

Ye Wangxi calmly said, “I should be thanking the Sect Leader, my eyes are clear.”

Nangong Liu changed the topic, “But, the Rufeng Sect is always inferior to men and women. When it comes to women, they are always weak. In this world, only as a man would one be able to convince the masses, and only then would one be fit to lead a city. Forget the past, since you’re so smart, you should know what to do.”

Ye Wangxi was silent for a moment. In front of Nangong Liu, she coldly took off the silver bracelet and tied it with a ribbon. Then, she took off her

jacket, leaving only her pure white robe. After doing all this, she let go of her hair and changed it into a ponytail, tied up high. The sunlight shone in, shining onto her body. Her back was straight and her expression was resolute. Although she was still young, her temperament was already like that of a cypress.

“That’s right.” Nangong Liu reminded her without leaking, “You should dress up like this in the future. But don’t forget, there’s still sound.”

Ye Wangxi lowered her eyelashes. She had already noticed when she entered that there was a pair of golden scissors in front of her seat.

She picked up the pair of scissors and wiped it down her throat.

Blood dripped.

“The old melody vanished, never to be changed.”

She slowly spat out the spell, then closed her eyes and tossed the scissors to the floor.

The scissors were stained with blood. Nangong Liu stared at it for a while before replying, “Good, good.” From now on, you will be the successor to the leader of Dark City, the Master Ye of the Rufeng Sect. Even if there is a debt, I will still call you…”

Ye Wangxi opened his mouth, but it was already a different kind of youth’s voice.

“May I trouble Sect Leader? From now on, do not let my foster father be troubled alone. I am willing to share the worries.”

Thus, Nangong Liu knew Ye Wangxi very well.

Ten years had passed, and he had learned to be a man without leaking a drop of water. He had taken a secret medicine every day while he was still enduring the pain from the medicine. Only then had he grown into a man.

In his eyes, she was a dog raised by the Rufeng Sect. In order to return the favor of raising her, she would never betray.

Ten years ago she cut her throat and bled, forever changing her voice.

Today, she wouldn't disappoint him either.

He was betting that Ye Wangxi would help him.

As long as Ye Wangxi could say "I am not a woman," what could they do even if the others didn't believe her?

The black-clothed man obviously thought the same. He took two steps forward and stood in front of Ye Wangxi, raising his hand to block her way, "Nangong Liu, Miss Ye has already spent all her efforts and years for your Rufeng Sect. Now that you can't argue, do you want to use the rest of her life as a sacrifice?"

Nangong Liu was just about to open his mouth to argue, when suddenly, in the distance, an orange light rose into the sky and exploded – there was another person that caught a Spirit Deer.

No one cared who got the second place, as everyone's gaze was still locked tightly on the center of the hall. The tables and chairs were all lying on the floor, and the table was almost split in half, the mysterious black clothed expert stood between Nangong Liu and Ye Wangxi. Tonight, the groom was trapped in the barrier by his father, while the bride was kneeling on the ground, her face full of tears and crying.

This was really too unexpected. From accusing people of having an affair to having a wife and daughter, and now the Sect Leader was adamant that he wouldn't admit it. This liveliness would probably cause the teahouses and restaurants to discuss it in three to five years.

Who would care about those three poor deer?

As a result, no one noticed a dark red crack in the sky of the dense forest until the sounds of fireworks suddenly echoed in the sky.

It was only then that the people from the Shi Music Hall felt that something was amiss and rushed to the fence to take a look.

"What's going on?"

"Why did everyone's fireworks explode at the same time?"

"Look! In the sky! What is that?"

"… Heavenly Rift!"

"It's the Heavenly Rift!"

Instantly, the hall was dead silent, followed by cries of surprise and screams: "Ghost World Heavenly Rift! How could the Upper Cultivation World have the Ghost World Heavenly Rift!?"

"Above the hunting grounds!"

"Senior! My senior brother is still there!"

"Sister!"

The crowd was like a fish swimming in a pond, tightly packed together in one area. Panic and shock were bait thrown into the pond, causing a wave of activity. In order to save face, Nangong Liu shouted with a sound amplifying technique, “My lords, do not be surprised. It is only a crack in the sky, a ghost realm. Everyone is in the Rufeng Sect, Nangong Liu will not cause any harm to our guests!”

As he spoke, he waved his hand summoning his sword. Stepping on the hilt of his resplendent blue sword, he brandished it and stood in the middle of the night wind.

“Guards of the five branches of the Rufeng Sect, immediately follow me to the dense forest to investigate. The rest of the elders and disciples, guard the poetry stage and ensure that the guests are well organized!”

After he finished speaking, he unexpectedly, in order to escape the interrogation of the black clothed person, led his five close guards and hastily rushed towards the Howling Moon Academy to ride his sword.

“Everything is fine, why did it suddenly turn out like this?”

“Yeah, the Upper Cultivation World has never had a crack in the sky of the ghost realm. What… what is going on here?”

On the jade beaded pavilion, people were anxious. These cultivators of the Upper Cultivation World were used to living a comfortable life. Facing the sudden invasion of the Ghost World, they were actually more afraid than responsible. It would be fine if they had to kill a lone Greater Demon, but Heavenly Rift was different. If it was a crack in the upper levels of hell, then it was an ordinary ghost that came out, that would be fine, but if it was like

the change in Butterfly Town five years ago, then the crack would be an unending hell…

They shuddered at the thought of a Grandmaster like Chu Wanning dying in that brutal battle. They could not help but feel threatened as they squeezed to the edge of the scarlet appendix and gazed at the scarlet crack in the sky.

Chu Wanning stood up and said to Xue Zhengyong, “Sect Leader, the color of this rift is wrong. After it breaks, it is most likely in the later levels of hell. I’m worried about Xue Meng and the others. I’ll go take a look.”

With that, he jumped up into the air and walked straight to his appendix. Under the astonished gaze of the crowd, he jumped onto a roof and quickly disappeared into the distance.

“Yuheng!” Xue Zhengyong was about to call for him, but Chu Wanning had already disappeared into the dark night.

He wanted to jump down as well, but his shoulder was caught. Turning around to face a bronze mask that was baring his teeth, the man in black patted him on the back and said in a low voice, “Uncle, you stay here and guard aunt. Rest assured with me by Shizun’s side.”

Xue Zhengyong was shocked. “Mo —”

The man in black lifted his hand and placed it on his lips, shaking his head.

“…” Xue Zhengyong never thought that the man in black would actually be Mo Ran. Mo Ran didn’t wait for him to ask any further questions, he supported himself with one hand and jumped into the darkness like a

falcon. His cloak rolled around like ink, and in a short while, he disappeared behind the same vaulted roof as Chu Wanning.

“Shizun!”

Mo Ran’s Flowing Light Technique ran along the eaves of the house. It seemed slow, so it summoned a sword that had its own agreement with it. The sword quickly caught up to Chu Wanning.

He lifted his hand and lifted his mask. He pushed the ferocious bronze mask to his forehead, revealing a handsome face. “Wait for me.”

Chu Wanning’s eyes widened, “It was you?”

“Come up, I’ll bring Shizun over on the sword. I’ll tell Shizun in detail on the way.”

Chu Wanning held onto the hand he extended towards him, lifting him up and landing steadily on the blade. He wanted to let go of Mo Ran, but his thick and rough hand tightened his hold, and Mo Ran was standing behind him. As he spoke, the unique hot breath of a young man brushed against the back of his ears, making the night air feel hotter and hotter.

Mo Ran said, “This sword’s momentum is too strong. It flies too fast. Shizun, hold tight.”

Both of them rode the wind on their swords, Chu Wanning asked, “Everything that happened in the hall just now, were you the one who planned it all out?”

“Yes. I’ve been travelling in the martial arts world all these years, and I’ve heard quite a lot about Song Qiutong. Although she doesn’t have the guts to kill people for the evil deeds she did, she is still a person who added

insult to injury. If she were to marry Nangong, and become the Young Master's wife of the Rufeng Sect, then this sect will probably be even worse off than it is right now."

However, Chu Wanning replied, "The Rufeng Sect will not be any worse off than it is now."

After he finished this sentence, he frowned and looked at the inky black cloak again. He felt suspicious, "… Come to think of it, how did you know that Ye Wangxi was a girl?"

Ch. 162 Shizun, I Will Fight With You

“I won’t hide it from Shizun; I’ve already known about it since I was at Peach Blossom Springs.”

He already knew about it in his previous life, but he couldn’t tell Chu Wanning the truth about it. Mo Ran then laughed, “I heard Mei Hanxue and the people from Taxue Palace talking about her while we were on the road. At that time, I believed that Mei Hanxue was right.

“I am even more sure that Miss Ye is not a man.”

“Why?”

“Didn’t Shizun notice that she always wears clothes with her collar pulled up very high? “They are all the type that covers the neck. The style is very strange. It’s one or two for an ordinary person, and that’s one or two for her.”

“… I didn’t notice.”

Mo Ran took his empty hand and gestured to Chu Wanning, “Everyone get to this position, it’s about this size.”

As he spoke, he inadvertently touched Chu Wanning’s Adam’s apple with his fingers. The slightly raised area felt very fragile, he couldn’t help but linger there for a while. He thought, his master was so ruthless, so wild and untamed, but he would expose such a weak spot to his fingers and let him hold it. This feeling was too inciting.

He was in a daze and forgot to look at the road. The sword was swift and fierce, but it was too late when he heard Chu Wanning’s “Careful!”. The

heavy sword collided squarely with a towering tree.

“Bam!” A loud sound rang out.

The only thing he could remember was to hold onto Chu Wanning’s hand tightly. In his anxiety, he called out “Wanning”, but everything happened too fast. The sound of trees breaking in his ears was so noisy that Chu Wanning didn’t hear it clearly.

Chu Wanning nearly fainted with anger. What kind of sword was this?! Can’t you just run on the roof? He had to be arrogant!

The two of them fell to the ground. Mo Ran was the first to hit the ground, and his back crashed into the rocky forest floor. Although it was unlikely he would be injured, the pain was certain. However, as he lay on his back and watched the stars twinkle through the branches, he suddenly felt very happy…

Haha, luckily the one who fell was him, not Chu Wanning.

He couldn’t help but laugh. Even though Chu Wanning had hit his chest and caused him pain in his ribs, he still couldn’t help but want to laugh. He narrowed his eyes and grinned, his dimples were deep and full of infatuation.

Chu Wanning looked up and saw him smiling like that. He was furious, “What are you laughing at?! Had you turned stupid?”

Mo Ran took the opportunity to hold him in his arms and press him against his chest. Although this was not the right time to do so, he still wanted to lift his hand to stroke Chu Wanning’s hair.

He thought so, and so he did.

Chu Wanning was right, he must have turned into a fool.

“Shizun…”

He ruffled Chu Wanning’s hair. The dark night seemed to give him a key, and the box that contained his private love was opened. The intimacy in his words could no longer be controlled, turning into a disaster.

His voice was deep, so hoarse it made Chu Wanning stiff at first, panic arising in his heart, and he hurriedly gathered his fierce dignity, “What? You can even throw your sword, you sure are capable.”

Mo Ran sighed softly, and then caressed his hair. He cleared his throat and said with a bitter smile, “Shizun, it was my fault. Please get up from my body quickly.”

Even though he was thinking to himself, he wanted Shizun to lie in his arms for a while longer.

However, such words obviously couldn’t be said out loud.

With a darkened face, Chu Wanning got up quickly and helped Mo Ran up.

“How is it?” He asked stiffly, “Where is the injury?”

“I’m fine. I have rough skin and thick flesh, so I can withstand a fall.”

Chu Wanning was about to say something when he realized that a withered flower was hanging on Mo Ran’s head. It must have fallen off and landed on the top of his head. He narrowed his eyes and said, “Your head…”

“Am I hurt?”

Mo Ran raised his hand and touched it, but it was all right.

“No, it’s blooming.”

Chu Wanning picked the flowers off his head and passed them to him expressionlessly. Mo Ran was a bit embarrassed. He rubbed the back of his head in a rather reserved manner, and his smile was even more brilliant.

“…” Chu Wanning turned around and coughed lightly, “Since there’s nothing wrong, then let’s move on.”

Mo Ran said, “Yu—”

“I won’t.” Chu Wanning looked back angrily, “qinggong!”

“… qinggong is qinggong.” Mo Ran waved his hand, reluctantly putting the heavy sword back into his Qiankun bag.

However, the deeper they went into the forest, the denser the trees became. The speed at which they controlled the sword was not as fast as qinggong, and Chu Wanning’s kung fu was good as well.

A cool breeze blew across his face, calming his heart, which had been unable to endure the agitation in his heart.

Chu Wanning’s voice suddenly came from the front, his tone was calm as he asked carelessly, “There’s a mole on Song Qiutong’s leg, how would you know?”

Mo Ran was taken aback. He was caught off guard. With a “peng” sound, Mo-zongshi crashed into a pine tree once again.

Chu Wanning: “… Are you blind at night?”

“Oh, no. Sorry, I was a little distracted today.”

Chu Wanning slightly frowned, then he seemed to have thought of something and flew into a rage, “Isn’t the mole on Song Qiutong’s leg making you lose your mind? The most important thing for cultivators is that they they have a pure heart and lack desire. When you peek at beauties, your heart will waver, so what else do you need?”

Mo Ran was speechless for a while and felt that what Chu Wanning said made sense. It was just that Chu Wanning had made a mistake. The beauty that he coveted was not Song Qiutong, but the man with a fierce temper who was roaring like a snow leopard.

He sighed and looked at Chu Wanning gently, “Shizun, I don’t like Miss Song’s looks. You think too much. There is a mole on her leg, and that’s what I heard from the people from the Xuanyuan Pavilion Auction House. What I said is not what I saw with my own eyes, Shizun, don’t be angry.”

“What’s there to be angry about? Fine, let me ask you, since Ye Wangxi is a woman, why doesn’t Song Qiutong have any cinnabar in her hands? This should not be a coincidence.”

“It’s indeed not a coincidence. Shizun, do you still remember the bracelet that I gave to Song Qiutong?”

“Yes.”

“There’s a spell on that chain that I created. It took four days. It’s not very good, but in a short period of time, as long as Song Qiutong wore that chain, it would be able to cover the cinnabar that was dropped by the Cold Scale Sacred Hand.”

“…” Chu Wanning did not say anything, but his expression was rather unsightly.

He felt that Mo Ran was hiding something from him.

After all these years, Mo Ran had changed a lot. He had learnt seventy percent of his disposition to meddle in other people’s business, but the so-called meddling in other people’s business was like seeing injustice and helping out with all one’s might. Having to go through so much trouble, even creating a small spell to expose one’s true colors and prevent her from marrying into the Rufeng Sect of Wind was a bit too much.

Unless there was a huge conflict between Song Qiutong and Mo Ran, or Ye Wangxi had a huge relationship with Mo Ran, this fella would not do such a thing.

In the silence, Mo Ran could also feel Chu Wanning’s emotions.

He flew a few feet behind Chu Wanning and said, “Shizun.”

“What?” Chu Wanning replied indifferently.

What happened in his previous life was naturally unspeakable, but Mo Ran did not want to make Chu Wanning uncomfortable. He thought for a moment, then decided to tell him half of his true feelings, “Shizun, Ye Wangxi is a very good person. She spent a lot of money at the Xuanyuan Pavilion to save a woman she did not know, you should know.”

“Yes.”

“But, Shizun, I can really tell that Ye Wangxi likes Nangong Si.”

“… Not bad, I can see that tonight.”

“It’s good that Shizun saw it. Since I already knew of Miss Ye’s true identity, I have always understood her feelings. Besides, he had no idea that Ye Wangxi was a girl before Song Qiutong, so he was only respectful and had no evil intentions towards her. However, if she marries Nangong Si, then the Rufeng Sect will not keep this a secret from her anymore. With Song Qiutong’s personality, she will definitely view the woman who loves Nangong Si as a thorn in her side.”

Mo Ran paused for a moment. He thought of his previous life. Song Qiutong could feel the private love between him and Chu Wanning. With jealousy and hatred in her heart, she tore apart Chu Wanning’s nails while he was not in the palace.

What would happen if a woman like this ever fell into her hands? The answer was obvious.

The evil that Song Qiutong had done was like pulling out a fingernail. It was not too outrageous. It was enough for her to hide behind other people’s evil deeds. It was enough for her to stay alive behind other people’s evil deeds.

In this world, doing good and doing evil were the same. One would fall from the heavens to the ground. The first smashed to death would be the most kind-hearted, such as Chu Xun, who would be pushed out by pairs of weakling hands to be a sacrifice. Kill the most vicious people first, such as Taxian-Jun, and the whole world would fight and kill tens of thousands.

However, if it weren’t for the accumulation of evil and evil one after another, if it wasn’t for those not-so-evil people slicing and scarring Mo Ran’s body.

Then, in this world, will it really create the likes of Taxian-Jun Mo Weiyu?

“It’s none of your business, aren’t you afraid of asking for trouble?”

Mo Ran also knew that he had revealed too much power this time.

In this lifetime, even if the rise and fall of the Rufeng Sect had nothing to do with him, he still owed Ye Wangxi a life. Therefore, even if it would arouse suspicion, he would not hesitate to do so.

Not only did he want to make life better for the people he had mistreated in his previous life, he was still hoping that he would be able to atone for his sins.

“I’m afraid. But now that I know the truth, I want peace of mind.”

Although Chu Wanning still felt that Mo Ran’s actions were too rash, after hearing his words, he did not think too much about it. Just then, a strong sweet smell came from the wind, along with a strong aura of spirituality.

Before Chu Wanning could react, Mo Ran’s color changed. He whispered, “Not good. It’s a Zhenlong chess game!”

“In that direction.”

The thick night sky was filled with a fishy smell. There were already ghosts crawling out from the crack in the sky. Five pillars of light shot up from the ground, one of them metal, wood, water, fire, earth, five of them were exactly the same as when Butterfly Town was shocked.

Chu Wanning’s eyes turned cold as he said, “It’s him.”

Mo Ran naturally knew who he was talking about. Jincheng Lake, Peach Blossom Springs, Butterfly Town…… He had stopped for five years, and now he had returned. It was the person who had been hiding behind the scenes all along, the one who had faked it!

However, there was a vague feeling in Mo Ran's heart. This chess game was completely different from the previous ones. It was done without any concealment or camouflage… That person seemed to feel that victory was within his grasp and that he was determined to win.

The birds in the forest were startled, flapping their wings and fleeing in all directions. Mo Ran sprinted forward, one in front and one behind.

When he got closer, he saw evil spirits rolling out from the cracks. Mo Ran muttered: "The Infinite Hells… The barrier to the Infinite Hells…"

This time, it was the same as five years ago in Butterfly Town, it was still the Infinite Hells!

Mo Ran turned his head around in panic and grabbed onto Chu Wanning's wrist, "Shizun, don't go over there!"

"… Don't be silly."

Mo Ran knew this was nonsense, but in his two lifetimes, he had seen the Heavenly Rift twice. The consequences of those two breakthroughs had been a nightmare. How could he not be worried now that he had seen it for the third time?

But what was the use of saying "you don't want to go"?

A person's nature was hard to change. Even if a person like Chu Wanning was given thousands or even tens of thousands of choices, he would never

run away from disaster. Mo Ran stared at Chu Wanning, not knowing what to say.

Chu Wanning looked at him and said, “Don’t worry, I will be cautious.”

After he finished speaking, he raised his hand to call out Tianwen. Golden light gleamed around his slender frame, fireworks splashing everywhere.

Mo Ran stared at Chu Wanning’s gaze for a long time, and finally sighed. A dazzling light shot out from his hand and grabbed onto the tip of his finger. The fiery red light and the golden light of Tianwen collided, and the two weapons met each other after a long time.

“… Alright, I understand. I won’t advise you. Whatever Shizun wants to do, I will accompany you.”

The resplendent light shone in their eyes. The bright red was burning the liquid gold, and the liquid gold was dyed a deep red.

“I’ll go with Shizun.”

Chu Wanning felt warm and helpless at the sight of Mo Ran’s dazed appearance when he was about to fight alongside him. There were too many emotions in Mo Ran’s eyes. It was as if he was no longer Shizun and disciple, but he was not sure what they were.

Thus, he raised his hand and poked Mo Ran’s forehead, saying, “There’s no reward.”

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment, then he pulled down Chu Wanning’s hand. When he held it in his palm, he tried his best not to kiss it. He smiled and said, “En, no, let’s go.”

Like a celestial shadow in the night, the divine martial spirit's light met with the golden red light and instantly reached the heart of the jungle.

Ganquan Lake.

Chu Wanning and Mo Ran hid in the orange grove and looked in that direction. The flow of spiritual energy that was supporting the lake was cut off. A thick layer of ice formed on the surface of the lake during the freezing night. Four formations were drawn around the lake, each with a weapon embedded within.

Chu Wanning said in a low voice, "Four godly weapons with different attributes?"

Mo Ran was stunned at first, but then he said, "The theft of his godly weapon during these five years is indeed related to him…"

"But back in Rainbow Butterfly Town, he was clearly using the heart of a living person, how come he suddenly changed the array?"

Mo Ran wanted to say something, but was stopped by Chu Wanning, "Silence, look over there."

Following his gaze, Mo Ran saw a group of close guards of the Rufeng Sect walking slowly on the surface of the lake in the distance, including the young cultivators who had come to hunt in the dense forest earlier. Their chests were pumping out a steady stream of spirit energy, converging towards different types of martial arts, and this strong and pure spirit energy caused the godly lights of the martial arts to continuously increase, shining through the heavens, and then tearing open a huge crack in the night sky, crazily biting open the opening of the Infernal Hell.

“What are they doing?”

“Looks like these guards have lost their minds. It seems like they were controlled by Zhenlong Chess.” Chu Wanning frowned with a depressed look on his face. His gaze swept across the crowd and stopped abruptly. His face suddenly turned pale. Unusually, he tightly gripped Mo Ran’s shoulder, his fingers trembling.

“…”

“What’s wrong?” Mo Ran turned his head and a moment later, he saw a familiar figure walking amongst the crowd. He said in fear, “Xue Meng?!”

Ch. 163 Shizun and Bu'gui

As one of the more than twenty youths chasing a deer in the forest, a Zhenlong chess piece was buried inside Xue Meng's body.

They were like puppets that were unafraid of pain or death, slashing at the ghost monsters with their swords, not allowing them to destroy the array, but they did not care about the ghost monsters that escaped into the darkness.

The purpose of these chess pieces was very clear. They were protecting this Five Elements formation.

Seeing his disciple being restrained, Chu Wanning could not bear it any longer. Just as he was about to get up and rush out, Mo Ran restrained him.

Chu Wanning gritted his teeth and said in a low voice, "Let go."

"Don't go out, wait a bit —"

"How can we wait? That's Xue Meng!"

Chu Wanning was too strong, Mo Ran couldn't grab him with one hand, so he could only hold him tightly in his arms. He covered his mouth with his other hand and refused to let go even when he was struggling in his embrace.

Mo Ran whispered in his ear, hot breath on his back.

"It's too rash to go out at a time like this. Don't be so impulsive, and listen to me for once. Hmm?"

The only response he got was a backhand kick, and Mo Ran was hurt in the face. Chu Wanning pulled his hand away and took a deep breath, his eyes were filled with anger as he said in a low voice, “Under the control of Zhenlong’s chess game, his spiritual force is being depleted rapidly. This place is full of evil spirits. If anything goes wrong, he will lose his life!”

“I won’t let that happen.”

“…”

“I know the game of chess. Believe me.”

Seeing his stern expression, Chu Wanning was slightly taken aback, but his breathing slowed down. At this time, a strange howl came from afar. They suddenly turned their heads and saw an evil ghost flying out of the sky and pouncing towards Xue Meng —

“Swish!”

The scimitar Longcheng reflected the cold moonlight. Xue Meng’s body was as light as a swallow, and the blade instantly pierced through the ghost!

“A living person who has been hit by a Zhenlong chess piece will gradually lose their spirit energy, and in the end, will no longer be as strong as before. However, the time that he has to stay under control is short, so he will be fine for now.”

Chu Wanning turned to look at him, a mark appearing on his forehead. “Why are you so clear about this?”

“… From my travels.”

The evil ghost fell and was quickly crushed into ashes. Xue Meng held the Longcheng scimitar in his hand. Black droplets of blood dripped down from the blade of the scimitar, dragging out strange and crooked marks on the snow.

The moonlight fell on his face, his expression was cold, and his eyes were devoid of light.

Mo Ran's heart clenched.

Xue Meng had never suffered being a pawn in his previous life before, just who…?

Suddenly, a commotion could be heard in the distance.

Mo Ran came back to his senses and whispered, "It looks like someone is coming."

Sure enough, two people walked into the forest. They walked along the frozen lake towards the eye of the formation. There was a jade-green brilliance at the eye area and one of them held a godly weapon. However, because of the angle, Mo Ran did not see clearly what that godly weapon was.

The man struck the ice layer and threw the godly weapon into the center of the formation. In an instant, the center of the formation lit up with a brilliant light, and the dark clouds dispersed. The moon appeared from behind the thick clouds, shining a cold light on the ice, illuminating the figures of the two people guarding the formation.

One was elegantly dressed in golden silk, but his face could not be seen clearly due to the thick and large demon robe he wore on his bamboo hat.

The other was barefooted in this cold world, so he didn't mind the cold.

The man raised his head, staring at the Seamless Gate.

Mo Ran suddenly widened his eyes.

"How is this possible!"

Xu Shuanglin?

Extremely shocked, extremely shocked. Xu Shuanglin… Elder Shuanglin?

He was Ye Wangxi's foster father. In his previous life, he had used his flesh and blood to protect Ye Wangxi. He was the one who had died under the random knife. How could it be him?!

Chu Wanning did not know the shock on Mo Ran's face. He patted his shoulder and said in a low voice, "Go."

"Why hasn't he appeared yet?" The man wearing the bamboo hat beside Xu Shuanglin spoke. When Mo Ran heard this, he realized it was Nangong Liu's voice.

Nangong Liu's tone was clearly anxious and depressed. He could not help but curse, "Damn it, are you mistaken?"

Xu Shuanglin said, "Let's wait and see."

"Faster! Tear this crack a little bigger. I do not know when the guests will send someone to follow, or else it will be too late!"

"I know you are anxious, but don't you know that Heavenly Rift can only be bigger? Last time at the Butterfly Town, because they were in a hurry, the

situation had gotten out of hand, leading to the arrival of the ten great sects. If you want to lose your patience, you will still fall short."

"… Sigh!"

Xu Shuanglin closed his eyes and said, "Sect Leader, it wasn't easy to find five Martial Spirits of different attributes that can absorb the accumulated spiritual energy of cultivators. You've endured for so many years, so why would you still need this short night?"

"You're right." Nangong Liu took a deep breath and nodded, "I've waited for five years already… No, it's not just five years. From the day I became the head of the Rufeng Sect, I have been waiting for it…" He rubbed the thumb ring in his sleeve, his eyes blazing with the dark knight.

Nangong Liu muttered, "I've been waiting……"

"You don't have to wait."

All of a sudden, a stern male voice resounded in the empty lake. It was like a bolt of lightning breaking the clouds, shocking the two people on the lake as they looked up at each other.

The bright moon hung high in the sky, and tens of thousands of mountains and rivers flowed freely. A slender man stood on top of a tree, his narrow and long phoenix eyes were shining, his white robes billowing.

"Nangong Liu, let's stop here."

Nangong Liu was shocked and then he clenched his teeth and said, "Chu Wanning…!"

The sky was bursting with golden light, which made Chu Wanning look even more dangerous than before.

“It’s Elder Yuheng of the Night Sky, Beidou Immortal, why didn’t you die after the calamity at Butterfly Town? And now you are messing with me, you evil creature!”

Chu Wanning was stunned, he lowered his eyebrows and said harshly, “So you were the one who caused the disaster five years ago?”

When Nangong Liu saw that the matter was exposed, he did not try to hide it and coldly laughed, “So what if I am?”

Chu Wanning lifted up Tianwen, his fingers brushed against the willow vine, and the cane was shining on his fingertips inch by inch. The light was so bright that it was almost platinum. His eyes were like a hawk’s. “At that time, when you were asking for a sword from Jincheng Lake and the spirit in the pool, you ordered your wife’s heart to be cut open and thrown into the lake. At that time, I was so disgusted that I wanted to kill you, yet you told me that Nangong was still young and couldn’t afford to lose a father… You said that you were in a trance and are full of remorse. You also said that from that day onwards, you would become a righteous man in the Rufeng Sect and would no longer be evil, you…”

As the willow branch brushed past the last branch, a golden light shone.

Chu Wanning gritted his teeth, “Nangong Liu, you are so vicious!”

“Blaming me?” Nangong Liu suddenly laughed deeply, “How can Chu-zongshi not blame yourself for being young and immature? At that time, you were only 15 or 16 years old, right? It was truly naive. After I said a few words, I shed a few tears, and used my responsibility as a cover, you

showed mercy and let me go. Heh, Grandmaster, why don't you think about it, what I have today, is it something due to you?"

Before the sound of his voice faded, Chu Wanning's Wind struck.

Tianwen broke through the dark night and headed straight for where Nangong Liu was standing. In an instant, dragon lights danced, flames broke through the heavens, and the frozen lake was split into two, completely shattering the ice!

Nangong Liu angrily shouted, "Everyone rise!"

The puppets that were walking around the lake suddenly had a glint in their eyes. They turned their heads and rushed towards Chu Wanning. Xue Meng had the most combat power, and he was leading the charge.

Clang!

Longcheng and Tianwen clashed fiercely. Afraid of injuring Xue Meng, Chu Wanning retreated in time and retreated a few feet back. With a ruthless expression, he said, "Nangong Liu, what kind of ability do you have to use him as a betrothal gift?"

"Ha, I won't let you kill me. This is my ability." Nangong Liu laughed out loud, "Hah, ah, ah. They are all living people who have just been taken over by me. Chu Wanning, is this Young Master Xue your disciple? Do you have to? You are helpless, you just have to sit back and wait for death. You are just like how you were more than ten years ago, there is nothing you can do, you can only let me go, you…"

He suddenly stopped. The smile on his face was like a bucket of cold water being poured down.

Chu Wanning was too calm.

He stared at Chu Wanning. The calmness on that person's face made him uneasy. He shivered and Nangong Liu's lips moved. He seemed to be afraid of him and said, "What do you want to do…"

Chu Wanning did not waste time talking with Nangong Liu. His eyes were cold. He raised his hand to wave Tianwen and shouted, "Tianwen, ten thousand coffins!"

Dozens of golden vines rose from the ground, trapping those puppets one by one. Like a dragon rising from the frozen lake, a thick and powerful vine flew out from the waves, scattering ice crystals everywhere. Chu Wanning sat on top of the ancient vines with his clothes fluttering in the wind as he raised his long and powerful hand, pausing after each word.

"Jiuge, be summoned."

Strands of golden light poured out from his palms and gathered at his knees to form a completely jet-black zither. The zither's tail twisted and turned like a tree that still had life, its branches having luxuriant foliage, haitang blossoms, and strings that were completely clear and ice-white.

Jiuge the godly weapon.

Tianwen's most commonly used ace attack was 'Wind', which was a killing move. Jiuge's most commonly used ace attack was 'Ode', which was a technique used to clear the heart and heal the body. Chu Wanning only lightly strummed the zither a few times and played the Ode. The people who were struck by the Zhenlong chess game had confused expressions on their faces. They were originally struggling with Tianwen vines, but now they looked left and right, as if they were confused.

Nangong Liu was furious. He chanted an incantation silently with veins popping out on his forehead as he fought against Chu Wanning. Seeing that he couldn't hold on any longer, he angrily turned his head back and said, "Shuanglin, interrupt his zither music!"

"… Me? Sigh, fine, fine."

Xu Shuanglin sighed, helplessly wanting to fly over to the top of the tree where Chu Wanning was. But a black shadow suddenly appeared in front of him, and he raised his whip, blocking his path.

"Elder Shuanglin, please advise."

Xu Shuanglin blinked his eyes, and suddenly laughed. "Stop me? Both of you are truly master and disciple, truly touching."

Meanwhile, Chu Wanning said to Mo Ran, "A barrier."

"It's all set up."

As it turned out, Mo Ran did not appear just now because he had been ordered to place a barrier around the lake. Although the Heavenly Rend was not as exaggerated as the time at Butterfly Town, the Unbroken Hell only held three or five Demonic Ghosts that were twisted in nature and lost in thought. If they escaped too much, then there would be a rain of blood in the mortal world and they wouldn't be able to stop for a long time.

Mo Ran and Shuanglin clashed, and in the blink of an eye, the two of them had exchanged more than ten moves. Mo Ran said, "Elder Shuanglin, don't try to run over to my Shizun's side. The person you should be dealing with is me."

“What for?” Shuanglin suddenly laughed, “Do we have to force our target to fight now? It’s not that I’m talking about it, young man, you’re too fierce. Uncle is too old, I’m afraid he won’t be able to stand up to your rudeness.”

Mo Ran: “…”

“If I come with you, I will break.” He grinned and said, “Little brother, have mercy and let me have some water. Let me play with your Shizun, okay?”

In his previous life he had seen Xu Shuanglin’s death and knew that he was probably not a bad person. Unexpectedly, the person behind the scenes, aside from Nangong Liu, also had his share. For a moment, he was somewhat helpless, so he remained silent and only focused on exchanging moves with him.

As long as he successfully entangled Xu Shuanglin, it would not be difficult to find out what he was truly thinking. However, Xu Shuanglin’s movements were light, and his speed was much better than Nangong Liu’s. He floated gracefully above the shattered frozen lake like a kite dancing, and the red light could only hit him, but not completely lock him down.

Besides, he was Ye Wangxi’s foster father, so before the matter was made clear, Mo Ran could not help but have some feelings for him…

Xu Shuanglin suddenly laughed sinisterly again. “That’s about it, Mo-zongshi. Let me apologize first.”

Mo Ran did not know why he said this, but he was startled. “What?”

“Because I’m going to bully your Shizun.”

Xu Shuanglin raised his hand and a light flashed on his fingertip. A white streak of light flew towards the direction where Chu Wanning was playing his zither.

Mo Ran was the most concerned with Chu Wanning, so he was momentarily distracted. Xu Shuanglin's eyes darkened as he used his other hand to restrain the folding fan at his waist. He then moved it towards Mo Ran's throat.

"Swish!"

Instantly, blood blossomed and splattered. Although Mo Ran dodged quickly, his neck was still scratched by the sharp barb of the fan. Xu Shuanglin retracted the handle which was stained with Mo Ran's blood and pointed downwards, only to see a drop of blood fall into the lake.

Lowering his head to take a look, he discovered that Nangong Liu and Xu Shuanglin were actually protecting the core formation of the wood element. That godly weapon was actually submerged in the frozen lake and was absorbing the surrounding plant essence.

At this time, because of Mo Ran's drop of blood that contained extremely rich spirit energy, the godly weapon suddenly erupted with a dazzling jade-green brilliance. The earth trembled, and after a few moments of deathly silence, an old sharp and ferocious black blade broke out of the water.

Xu Shuanglin shouted at Nangong Liu, "The forbidden spell has been cast! He was about to come out — hurry up and go down to meet him! Fight!"

Fight?

Did they call someone from the Infernal Realm just to fight?

However, this thought only flashed through Mo Ran's mind. When he saw the godly weapon floating in the air, he did not think of it anymore. His entire body seemed to have been whipped, standing there stiffly without uttering a word.

The reason for that was because the weapon before him that contained the wood element was…

Taxian-Jun's vicious blade that has experienced a hundred battles – the godly weapon Bu'gui!

He felt a dull pain in his chest, and his vision went black. There seemed to be some kind of inaudible mumbling in his ears that kept repeating itself. He couldn't breathe. He felt the blood of his previous life rushing towards him from the darkness, soaking his entire body. He felt disgusted, dizzy, and his heartbeat quickened…

Seeing what Xu Shuanglin was going to do after taking it, Mo Ran didn't have time to think. He raised his hand, wanting to recall his godly weapon. However, as soon as his spirit energy was released, he heard the sound of Chu Wanning's zither stop. He suddenly felt that something was wrong and turned around, enduring the indescribable stifling feeling.

The pupils of his eyes suddenly contracted.

"Shizun!"

How could he have forgotten!? Chu Wanning's core was fragile. Back in Xuanyuan Pavilion, a doctor had said that Bu'gui seemed to have some sort of repelling force towards Chu Wanning. It would devour his already weak core, making it even more unbearable.

How could he forget!

Mo Ran suddenly cut off the connection between him and Bu'gui, flew onto the huge vine, and jumped right before the spirit vine stopped moving. He hugged the pale-faced Chu Wanning, and together they landed in the orange grove.

At the same time, the ten thousand man coffin that Chu Wanning had summoned also disintegrated. Fortunately, the people who were bewitched were confused. Although they were not completely awake, they no longer listened to Nangong Liu's orders.

"Shizun!" He knelt in the snow and held the frowning Chu Wanning in his arms, stroking his face, "How are you?"

When he saw the blood seeping out of the corner of Chu Wanning's mouth, his heart ached even more. Wiping it, he suddenly thought of his previous life when Chu Wanning was lying in his arms on the peak of Mount Kunlun, bleeding to death from all seven orifices. Just like now, he wiped away the mottled blood in a flurry, but he could not wipe it clean no matter how hard he tried.

It was like stabbing into the heart.

His eyes were red. "Does it hurt?"

Chu Wanning was greatly affected by the aura of death. He felt as if the aura of death had instantly rushed towards his chest, as if it wanted to tear it open.

What was even more frightening was that there seemed to be many broken illusions in front of his eyes that were twisting and flickering.

He shook his head and tried his best to shake off the blurry illusions. He struggled to look towards Nangong Liu. With just a glance, the last bit of blood on his face faded away.

Unknowingly, he managed to gather his strength and grabbed Mo Ran's arm. He said hoarsely, "Over there, be careful!"

Mo Ran saw that his face was like golden paper, and his eyes flickered with extreme astonishment, reflecting the fiery light…

Flames?

He turned around and saw that what was gushing out of the Heavenly Rift wasn't a little ghost, but surging lava from hell. Earth Fire was rolling down from the sky. Those ghosts that managed to escape at the same time were burnt to ashes by the raging evil fire. They didn't even have the time to wail before they turned into blue smoke.

What kind of strange situation was this?

The infernal lava hung in the sky like a magnificent red-gold waterfall, slowly and leisurely flowing, dangerously and magnificently licking the lava. As the lava flowed to the lakewater, the crushed ice and the lake water were ignited and set ablaze like firewood. Nangong Liu and Xu Shuanglin, who were standing at the very front, activated the most powerful water-type incantation in order to prevent themselves from being engulfed by the flames.

Even though the flames were slow, it would soon reach those who were standing stiffly and fell victim to the Zhenlong chess match.

Mo Ran cursed silently and formed a seal with his hand. However, he was not familiar with water-type formations, so he was halfway done. Chu Wanning, who was in his embrace, suddenly held his hand and said with a pale face, “You are doing it wrong. Allow me.”

Mo Ran embraced him and allowed him to sit up, but stopped his hand. “Don’t move anymore. Teach me.”

Even though Chu Wanning was hesitant, he knew that his spiritual energy was damaged and he could not cast any spells. Therefore, he held Mo Ran’s hand and placed his ten fingers one by one in place. Then, he said hoarsely, “Cast the spell.”

Spirit energy flowed from the tips of his fingers and quickly formed a barrier in the air, forming blue water waves that wrapped around those puppets that were lost in thought.

Chu Wanning let out a sigh of relief. Just as he was about to say something, he raised his eyelashes and saw that under the light of hell, there were traces of tears on his handsome face.

He… Why are you crying?

Who was it?

Chu Wanning was at a loss.

If Shi Mei wasn’t here, Xue Meng wasn’t injured, so Mo Ran didn’t know who the others were. So, would he dare to cover up the greed in heaven and earth for the sake of himself?

“… Don’t cry.”

Mo Ran regained his senses and wiped his face in a panic.

“Such a big person, what does he look like?”

Mo Ran only looked at him with moist eyes and asked, “Does it hurt?”

Hearing his words, Chu Wanning froze for a moment. Then, a wave of warmth that was like a hot spring stream spread across his still aching chest. Grief and tenderness were intertwined, bitterness and pain, sweetness and astringency. For the first time in his life, before the catastrophe, he was filled with private emotions. That would be inappropriate, but it would be impossible to stop.

“It’s only a small wound. It was probably from summoning two godly weapons at the same time. The consumption of my spiritual power was too great, so my old illness flared up.” Chu Wanning raised his hand and touched his hair, “Don’t worry, it won’t hurt me.”

Then, he turned around to look at that vast soup of hellfire, that Blazing Flame Red Lotus.

His gaze gradually darkened, the pain in his eyes subsided, and his gaze became more and more vicious.

“You search what Nangong Liu was planning to do and find the right time.” He paused, and when he spoke again there was no hesitation. “Kill him.”

Chu Wanning’s gaze was filled with hatred and regret.

Nangong Liu was right. At Jincheng Lake, it was his fifteen-year-old self who hadn’t known the world well. He let go of Nangong Liu, who had already exposed his demonic face at that time. In order to ensure the stability of the cultivation world, in order to not let the young A-Si know, he did not

reveal the matter of Nangong Liu giving up his own wife in order to obtain the godly weapon. He did not let the world know about this, nor did he reveal the matter of Nangong Liu giving up his own wife for the sake of obtaining the godly weapon.

It was due to his ignorance when he was young and his excessive kindness that resulted in the current situation. It was due to him releasing the tiger back into the forest that the flames of the red lotus burned…

What did Nangong Liu want to do?

Ch. 164 Shizun's Killer

As if responding to him, a huge skeleton foot stepped out of the surging lava. Just its fingernail was as wide as the wheel of a car, and as soon as the foot fell into the spring lake, half of the lake was filled up. The other foot fell down, breaking countless pieces of orange wood on the shore.

A gigantic skeleton roared out of the fissure. It turned its stiff skull, howled into the sky, and let out a deafening roar. Then, with a sharp axe with its shackles jingling in the air, it slammed it down onto the shore.

The giant axe sank into the ground, stirring up waves of heat waves. Mud and rocks rolled about, and vegetation broke in an instant.

Seeing that the place where Xue Meng was standing was about to collapse, a blue light suddenly appeared. Nangong Liu was wielding both swords and he was using the spiritual energy in his body to contend against him. With a loud bang, the two forces collided, causing the soil and wood to shatter. At his side, Xu Shuanglin supported the water barrier and shouted, "Hit him between the ribs! Did you see that!"

"I saw it." Nangong Liu gnashed his teeth as he swept away his usual meek and submissive appearance and attacked the chest area of the giant skeleton. Upon closer inspection, he saw a flame burning on the chest area of the skull. Inside the flame, there was a faint shadow of a human figure that was hanging and bound. He wanted to get a better look, but he couldn't see clearly because of the flickering flame between the giant skeleton and Nangong Liu.

It was reasonable to say that Nangong Liu had spent a lot of effort summoning this fiend from hell. No matter what, it should have been ordered by him to bring disaster to the human world. That was understandable. But looking at Nangong Liu's current stance, it was as if he was risking his life's cultivation to fight this thing.

This was really strange…

However, Mo Ran did not have the time to think about it. Xue Meng and the rest were still standing at their original positions. If they continued fighting like this, they might be affected. Mo Ran recalling Chu Wanning's technique shouted: "Damn it, Ten Thousand Coffins!" Dozens of red vines swarmed over from all directions like a soaring snake, wrapping up all the chess pieces on the shore and then retreating towards the outside.

"Not bad, you used it well."

Chu Wanning's words must have warmed Mo Weiyu's chest. At this moment, the people he loved were right around him, and the people he needed to protect were protected by the god-like godly weapon. Seeing their fight this time, Mo Ran felt much more at ease.

He discovered that even though Nangong Liu's offensive techniques were not too impressive, his evasion and defense were first-rate. He did not know that this person had taken a liking to this type of spell since he was young. No wonder when he slaughtered the Rufeng Sect in his previous life, the head of the city escaped faster than a rabbit.

The giant skeleton's attack was ruthless, but because of its huge body and its slow movements, it did not harm Nangong Liu at all. Nangong Liu walked higher and higher along its bones, his Chinese robe fluttered, and

the red tassel of his bamboo hat flew up — He stood on the giant skeleton's ribs, through the white bones, he could clearly see the person who was hanging on the skeleton's heart.

Nangong Liu first loudly shouted, as if he was a person who was released from an extreme torment. His voice twisted sinisterly as he laughed loudly while facing the sky, "Hahaha… Hahahahaha! I found it! Finally… I've finally found you!"

His gleaming eyes were bloodshot from the depths of his bamboo hat. He yelled in fury, ecstasy, and roared: "I've found it!"

Wrapped in that flame was a man with his eyes tightly closed. He looked frail. He did not have a very striking appearance, a face that could easily be forgotten.

Nangong Liu muttered nonstop and nearly went insane, "I found it, I found it… Haha, hahaha… I found you. I found you…"

He suddenly raised the flowing blue light sword in his hand and fiercely stabbed towards the giant skeleton's inner core, towards the sleeping man!

But at that moment, the silent man suddenly raised his head and opened his eyes. Xu Shuanglin anxiously and angrily shouted from below, "Don't look at his eyes! I told you not to fucking look at his eyes!" However, Nangong Liu was too close to the man. He was caught off guard and met the man's eyes. Nangong Liu only had enough time to see the red bloodshot eyes of the dog. Immediately after, he felt a tearing pain all over his body.

He let out a loud "Ah!" and actually fell straight down, falling to the ground. If it weren't for Xu Shuanglin supporting him with a barrier, his

bones might have been broken.

Xu Shuanglin walked over quickly, his bare feet stamping the ground. “What are you doing? Look at him? Didn’t I tell you that when you look at him, you will feel the pain your spirit soul suffers? You…”

He stopped midway through his sentence. Nangong Liu stood up shakily. His bamboo hat had fallen off, revealing a messy bun and a pair of panicked eyes under his messy hair.

“Ah… Ahhh!”

The moonlight shone on his face without any concealment. His fingers spasmed in pain as he tried to cover his face, but it was to no avail. All the skin exposed to the moonlight rapidly began to crack and burst, revealing fresh red flesh.

“AHHHH!!”

Nangong Liu screamed and attempted to use his sleeves to cover his face. However, his hands and forearms were exposed in panic. His skin and flesh began to tear and become mottled.

Mo Ran and Chu Wanning watched from afar in disbelief — what was going on with Nangong Liu?

He actually… What is happening to him under the moonlight?

Xu Shuanglin took off his outer robe and threw it all over Nangong Liu’s face, covering him tightly while he stood there in the winter night, wearing only a white undergarment. He did not feel cold at all. His clothes were slightly open and his chest was moving up and down below him. Seeing that Nangong Liu was limply sitting on the ground, he got angry and used

his bare feet to kick the head of the Sect Leader without any respect, “Why are you sitting there, why aren’t you standing!? If you still can’t kill it after using up all your gathered spirit energy, don’t even think about it for the rest of your life!”

Who would have thought that Nangong Liu, that trash who acted tough but was actually weak at heart, would actually sit on the ground with tears and mucus flowing down his nose, and cry, “I’m in so much pain… It is better to die than live like this… this life is living hell… My face is covered with blood. My hands also… I can’t stand it. Shuanglin I can’t take it anymore. You’ll do it for me…”

“I’ll do it for you, I’ll do it for you, I’ll do everything else for you!” Xu Shuanglin flew into a rage, kicking him in the face. “Why don’t you just give me the position of Sect Leader, and let me take it for you!”

“Do you think I don’t want to!?” Nangong Liu was kicked to the ground and he howled, “Do you think I don’t want to!? I’m sick of it! The curse that Luo Fenghua left behind will affect me for the rest of my life! He wants me to remain in this seat for the rest of my life! Come on! I wish someone would do it for me! I just can’t take off this ring!”

“Luo Fenghua?” Mo Ran asked in a low voice, “This name is very familiar, I seem to have heard of it somewhere before.”

“… That is Nangong Liu’s preceding head of the Rufeng Sect.” As Chu Wanning listened to their conversation, his eyebrows tightened, “It only took him two years, and he has already passed away from illness.”

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment, “The descendants of the Rufeng Sect will be inherited by the Nangong Family, so why would there be a Sect

Leader with the surname Luo? Shouldn't he be surnamed Nangong?"

"Normally, his surname would be Nangong. However, Luo Fenghua had usurped his position and became the head of the Rufeng Sect."

Listening to Chu Wanning's words, Mo Ran suddenly recalled that he had read about this person in a book that recorded the history of the Rufeng Sect. However, due to the chaos of the family history, there were too many disputes and grudges in the book, so Mo Ran had no interest in reading this book.

He opened his eyes wide, "The power of the Rufeng Sect has been usurped?"

"Yes. Because this matter is disgraceful and involves the current Sect Leader, very few people would bring it up today. Nangong Liu's position as a Sect Leader was not easy to obtain. When he was young, his father went berserk and died. Before he died, he chose Nangong Liu as his successor, but Nangong Liu had a younger brother who was proud and had unparalleled magic. He refused to accept this decision, so on the night his father died, he took over the Sect Leader's ring, replacing Nangong Liu and became the leader of the sect."

"The person who usurped the position should also be his younger brother. His surname should also be Nangong. Why would he have the surname Luo?"

"Let me finish." Chu Wanning looked at Nangong Liu who was trembling as he climbed up from the ground and wrapped himself tightly in the clothes Elder Shuanglin gave him. He then ran towards the flame on the giant skeleton's chest and continued, "That little brother of Nangong Liu was

bloody and brutal. Later on, he was even more vicious. He captured everyone who denounced him, dragged them to the plaza of the Rufeng Gate, and began to dig out their eyes one by one. I have never seen the catastrophe myself, but there are records in the books that the eyes dug were carried away in three carriages."

Mo Ran's heart trembled, but he remained silent.

It was only natural for him to curse, but what right did he have to curse?

The current Chu Wanning did not know what Mo Ran had done in his previous life. He had killed almost everyone in the 72 cities of the Rufeng Sect because of his personal injustice and even tortured one of them with a Lingchi Fruit for a whole year before letting that person die.

Actually, when he came to the Rufeng Sect this time, Mo Ran had always tried his best to avoid encountering that city lord. His enmity with that person was too deep.

He was afraid that if he saw him, he would do something crazy.

Even now, it was still vicious.

What right did he have to curse others' ruthlessness and bloodlust?

Nangong Liu was approaching the core of the giant skeleton step by step, once again heading towards the burning flame with his sword. He drew closer and closer, the sword in his hand glinting with a cold light.

Chu Wanning said, "Luo Fenghua, as that person's shizun, could not tolerate his atrocities. Thus, he joined in the mutiny with Nangong Liu. The two of them started their army one night and successfully drove that person from the position of Sect Leader of the Rufeng Sect. However,

driven by power, Luo Fenghua was unable to hand over the sect head's thumb ring to Nangong Liu…"

Mo Ran was shocked. "He wore it himself?"

"That's right. All the sect heads' tokens are supplemented with powerful spiritual power. These tokens are owned by the shizun, and so is the ring of the Rufeng Sect. Whoever wears it will have it. Unless the sect changes hands, death is the only option."

"… That Luo Fenghua has only been in power for two years and he already died, could it be that Nangong Liu killed him in order to regain his position as sect head?"

Chu Wanning shook his head, "According to the history of the Rufeng Sect, Luo Fenghua died of illness. After he died of sickness, Nangong Liu reclaimed the Sect Leader's ring, but no one can say for sure. Nangong Liu had spent so much effort to lure this monster out to fight, and he had even cursed at him… I'm afraid that what happened back then was not that simple."

Mo Ran also felt that things would not be so simple, but he had another question in his mind, "Where is the little brother? What happened to Nangong Liu's little brother after he was kicked off the stage?"

"Dead." Chu Wanning said, "On the night of the mutiny, Luo Fenghua was able to clean up the mess and personally took his disciple's life. It was said that he was hacked and chopped into mincemeat."

Mo Ran: "…"

He could not help but feel weak. If he did what he did in his previous life and let the current Chu Wanning know, would his shizun also clean up and chop him into mincemeat before turning him into a thousand pieces?

As he was lost in his thoughts, suddenly, there was a loud bang. Nangong Liu's sword stabbed into the man wrapped in the giant skeleton, causing the skeleton to grit its teeth and let out an extremely painful howl. The huge, bony palm created craters in the ground one after another, and it angrily waved its hand.

Amidst the strange scent of blood and fruit, the giant skeleton suddenly stopped moving. It knelt down on the ground, causing lava to fly everywhere and its bones to shatter into fine powder, turning into ashes in the blink of an eye…

Nangong Liu pulled out his sword and caught the man that fell from the giant skeleton. He said ecstatically, "I did it! I'm free! The curse has been broken — The curse has been broken — Hahahaha!"

He descended from the wind and landed on the ground. At this moment, a group of cultivators who had rushed over from the Poetry Hall saw that something was amiss and rushed over to the lakeside.

As soon as the Sect Leader of Guyue'ye, Jiang Xi, saw the bubbling lava, his handsome and lofty face revealed a look of surprise, "Unparalleled Earth Fire?" He immediately raised his hand and sprinkled a layer of water type spiritual powder on the people behind him. Every sect had different defensive techniques and usually used a barrier, but when Guyue'ye used spiritual powder, he was also able to resist the scorching sun's flames.

After Jiang Xi finished all of this, he turned around in anger and asked with a stern voice, “Nangong Liu, what is going on?!”

Nangong Liu did not reply. He tightly held onto the man pulled out from the giant skeleton. The fire surrounding the man’s body had disappeared, and he had lost his strength and consciousness. He did not open his eyes again.

When Xue Zhengyong saw Mo Ran and Chu Wanning, he immediately rushed over and shouted anxiously, “Ran’er, Yuheng, are you guys alright? Meng… Where’s Meng’er?!”

Mo Ran hurriedly comforted him, “Xue Meng is fine, he is there—”

Xue Zhengyong looked towards where he was pointing and saw Xue Meng wrapped up in a huge vine, revealing only his pale face. Xue Zhengyong’s face couldn’t help but change, and he staggered as he rushed towards Xue Meng. Mo Ran pulled him back and said, “Uncle, it’s only temporary. He’ll be fine soon. He’ll be safer in the rattan tree. Don’t go over there. Stay with us.”

Xue Zhengyong said anxiously: “What happened?! From a distance, we can see the arrival of evil spirits, Sect Leader Nangong…” As he spoke, he turned around and saw Nangong Liu standing in the lava, as well as the lifeless corpse in his arms.

He suddenly felt that something was wrong. That corpse, why did it seem so familiar?

It seemed a long, long time ago, a long, long time ago… He seemed to have seen this man’s face before.

This person's facial features were too ordinary. It was easy for him to be submerged in the past. Xue Zhengyong was unable to recall it at the moment. But he felt that something was wrong. All of this was wrong. At this moment, he saw Nangong Liu suddenly raise his head. His face was covered with blood, but his mouth was wide open.

Nangong Liu was laughing out loud as his eyes flashed with a strange glow. It was completely different from his usual fawning appearance.

Among those who rushed over were Ye Wangxi and Nangong Si.

Nangong Si murmured, "Father…"

Ye Wangxi, on the other hand, saw Xu Shuanglin, who was standing at the side, and exclaimed in shock, "Foster father?!"

Xu Shuanglin glanced at Ye Wangxi and shook his head, indicating that he should not come over. His loose white robe fluttered in the wind. There was a trace of a lazy smile on his face as he slightly raised his chin and looked at the bustling scene in front of him, Red Lotus Hell.

When his bare feet touched the ground, his rounded toes moved, causing sparks to fly. Then he lowered his head, as if he was waiting for something, and the light reflected in his eyes, like a golden-red carp swimming through a dark pool.

"AHH!!"

Suddenly, a female cultivator cried out in alarm from the crowd.

Xu Shuanglin did not raise his head, but only smiled. Of course he knew what had happened. He had heard the sound of chewing flesh.

Behind him, Nangong Liu grabbed the man's shoulders. Under the moonlight, he tore open the man's neck and greedily drank the blood.

After that scream, no one made a sound, no one denounced him. For a moment, no one understood what was going on, and they were all shocked…

The number one sect in the world, the Rufeng Sect Leader Nangong Liu, was actually chewing on a corpse in such a sorry state?

This… Why… Perhaps…

"Father!"

Nangong Si was the first to collapse. He frantically ran toward Nangong Liu. Since Ye Wangxi was unable to stop him, they ran together to Nangong Liu.

"Father, what are you doing? What are you doing!"

"Sect Leader —"

The clothes he had used to cover his face had long since fallen off, and the flesh of his skin was constantly being rolled up in the moonlight, causing him to suffer even more. The more he suffered, the more he madly chewed on the flesh of the corpse, as if it were a spring, a medicine for suffering, a release he could not ask for.

Some of the cultivators couldn't take it anymore, and the sound of vomiting came from the crowd. Some people weakly muttered, "How could this happen…"

"Madman… Madman…"

“So disgusting…”

The moonlight slowly moved and shone onto Nangong Liu’s body. Nangong Liu first lowered his head and spasmed, blood continuously flowing out from his mouth. Then, he suddenly raised his head and opened his sticky mouth that was filled with blood.

The flesh on his face didn’t heal just because he ate the man’s corpse. Instead, it was still torn into pieces in the moonlight.

His face was already covered in blood, but his eyes were still white. He threw the corpse to the ground and stepped on it. Why wasn’t it of any use… “It’s useless!”

His meridians bulged, his hands trembled, his eyes were bloodshot, and large tears rolled down from the intense pain.

“Pain…” It hurts so much… He really wished he could die… “I wish I could die!” He let out a low growl, almost in despair. Suddenly, he thought of something, and let go of Xu Shuanglin, lowering his head to dig out that man’s heart. “Spirit Core!” He definitely didn’t have enough strength “… I want to eat his spirit core! Spirit core… A Spiritual Core…”

He reached into the wound on the man’s chest and kept rubbing it. His hands were covered in blood and he was almost crazy.

However at this time, a sharp claw pierced his back and penetrated his chest!

Blood spurted out!

Nangong Liu was momentarily stunned and did not seem to be able to react in time. He did not feel any pain and just blankly turned his head

back.

He opened his bloodshot eyes and saw Xu Shuanglin looking up, a smile on his clean and fresh face.

“What do you want to eat? For people like you, eating anything is a waste.”

Ch. 165 Shizun, It's Him!

The claws that had been infused with spiritual energy were abruptly retracted, bringing with them a large amount of bright red blood.

Nangong Liu's lips opened and closed repeatedly, unable to utter a single word for a long time. It was as if he had never expected that Xu Shuanglin would stab him from behind. After a long while, he spat out a large mouthful of blood and knelt on the ground.

"Father! Ahhhhhhhhh!" Nangong Si screamed in pain.

"Leader!"

"…!" Everyone was shocked.

Xu Shuanglin calmly squatted down and nonchalantly took out a fruit from his Qiankun bag. He stuffed it into Nangong Liu's mouth, forcing him to swallow it.

The tip of Mo Ran's eye immediately changed color: "lingchi guo?!"

The fruit that Xu Shuanglin had fed to Nangong Liu was the same lingchi guo that had been hanging onto the feathers of the people at the Peach Blossom Springs, making people want to beg for death! Nangong Liu instantly wished he was dead. He curled up on his knees like a shrimp.

A violent shudder ran through his body. Xu Shuanglin looked at him, the light in his eyes very warm.

"Sect Leader, I pity you for the greater half of your life, but in the end, you are still a good-for-nothing that is being manipulated by others."

Ye Wangxi was frightened, “Foster father?!”

“Father… Let go of my father! Let him go!” In the end, blood was thicker than water. Even though Nangong Liu was in dire straits, Nangong Si could not bear to see him in such a miserable state.

He attacked Xu Shuanglin, but Xu Shuanglin was able to block him with a single hand.

Xu Shuanglin rolled his eyes, coldly glancing at him.

“Since the elders have spoken, this junior shall not interrupt them. Kneel before them!”

With that, he pointed his finger into the air and felt as if a thousand pounds had fallen from his back. Surprisingly, he could not even stand properly. Gritting his teeth and enduring for a moment, he still knelt heavily on the ground.

“Ah Si.” Ye Wangxi immediately stood in front of Nangong Si to protect him. She could not raise her sword to face Xu Shuanglin, nor could she just stand by and watch without doing anything. For a moment, her expression was filled with pain and confusion, “Foster father, don’t hurt him…”

“Who cares who wants to hurt him?” Xu Shuanglin turned back and looked at Nangong Liu. He raised his foot and kicked Nangong Liu’s bloody cheek, “It’s been so many years. Now that we’re in front of the world’s heroes, I can’t help but want to reminisce with this person.”

Nangong Liu coughed out a large mouthful of blood, “Reclaiming from the past? What was there to talk about? Didn’t you tell me that as long as I recall Luo Fenghua’s soul from the Infernal Realm, the curse he placed on

me will be broken? I will recover from my illness, and I will no longer be afraid. No fear of the night. You lied to me… You actually… You actually lied to me…”

Hearing this, the young cultivators did not react yet, but the faces of Xue Zhengyong and his generation changed. Xue Zhengyong then looked towards the young man’s corpse.

“Luo Fenghua?”

“It’s Luo Fenghua!”

The one who was lying on the ground was the Shizun of Brother Nangong many years ago, the short-lived Sect Leader who had usurped the position of Sect Leader. He was the only disciple of the Rufeng Sect with another surname – Sect Leader Luo Fenghua!

“Your imagination is too beautiful.” Xu Shuanglin laughed, “A curse can be broken? You killed him with your own hands, and now you drink his blood and eat his flesh. You’re so naive.”

“Shouldn’t I drink his blood and eat his flesh?! Although I have stolen his position of power and sent him to his death, before he died, he left a curse on the ring of the Sect Leader, allowing me to wear it. Not a day passed… Cough cough, no… Not a day passed… He could lead a normal life at night! I… Could it be… I shouldn’t have…”

“Of course.” Xu Shuanglin expressionlessly agreed. “Too appropriate.” He twisted and laughed. He then squatted down, raised Nangong Liu’s face and said, “You have done very well. No one can do better, more outstanding and more obedient than you… Sect Leader, no one is more stupid than you.”

He smiled evilly and concluded, “Trash.”

After Xu Shuanglin finished speaking, he slowly stood up, his face carrying a solemn and gentle smile. Spreading out his arms, he said cordially to everyone, “Esteemed guests, the banquet has finished. I also have a snack, and would like to invite everyone to have a taste.”

Someone shouted angrily, “Xu Shuanglin! What exactly are you trying to do?!”

“Actually, it’s nothing much. I just want to invite everyone to share some interesting things. The Rufeng Sect of Wind looked down on the cultivation world for a hundred years, and has countless foul smelling scandals. And among them, there is one thing that I have waited more than ten years for, and will make it public today in front of the entire world.”

As he spoke, his voice turned from high-pitched to gentle.

He then said lightly, “This is probably the last part of the secret history of the Rufeng Sect.”

Hearing him say that, Nangong Liu felt a strong fear in his heart. He shuddered violently and his lips quivered so badly that he could not even speak. All he could do was stare at the person standing on top of the river of flames with his eyes fixed, “You… What the hell are you? Who is it?!”

Xu Shuanglin turned to the side and smiled, but did not answer.

Suddenly, a bright light shone from his hand as a dagger appeared in his palm. He gripped the dagger tightly and cut through the flesh, causing blood to flow out from the center of his palm. He dipped it in blood and drew an array formation on his arm.

Then, he turned around and smiled: “Sect Leader, if you want to know who I am, after you’ve seen all these things, you will understand very clearly.”

Mo Ran tried to stop him, but he was stopped by Chu Wanning.

“Shizun?”

“It’s not a curse, it’s the Dream Reflection Formation. It’s extremely similar to the magic of the Peach Blossom Springs’ Yu Min. It’s magic that allows everyone to see his memories. Wait a minute, let’s see what he has to say.”

Xu Shuanglin blew the light of the formation into the wind, soaring higher and higher, constantly expanding, instantly enveloping the entire lake below the formation. Fragments of memories fell from the sky like dust, and the lake surface was soon covered by Xu Shuanglin’s memories…

Like heavy snow, the ground was replaced with new clothes. As the power of the formation continued to spill out, the scene changed.

Although everyone was still standing around the lake, the wood and lava in front of them were gradually fading away, finally turning into the appearance of the Rufeng Sect’s Yao Tai.

In this illusion, the flying jade platform was empty. There were only two people there, one standing, one sitting.

The person standing barefooted and dressed casually. His hair was not properly combed, and his hair was even slightly crooked. It was Xu Shuanglin. The person who was sitting there was wearing a dark red robe and a white complexion. It was Nangong Liu.

Nangong Liu caressed the Sect Leader’s finger that was embedded with the jade green jade. His face was filled with excitement and anxiety.

“Have the five godly weapons been prepared?”

Xu Shuanglin lazily said, “You’ve already asked it for the ninth time. If you ask me for the tenth time today, I’ll give up.”

Because Nangong Liu’s mood was bad, he could not help but shake his legs, “Alright, alright, then we will wait for the guests to arrive and wait for the day of the wedding. Show me the sacrificial list again. I want to see for myself how many people are still missing from this list.”

Xu Shuanglin threw him a book, and Nangong Liu immediately flipped through it. His eyes were burning with passion, like someone who had gone crazy from thirst, as he flipped through the book. He counted them again, unconvinced, then counted them a second time, his fingers poking at the pages as if he were about to poke a hole in the page.

“Everyone is here.” Xu Shuanglin saw how crazy he was mumbling to himself, and said, “More than twenty pure people of the five elements, in addition to the five elemental spiritual energy guards that you’ve organized over the years, with their combined spiritual core power and godly powers, although their power may not be as great as using an elite spiritual body, it’s still more than enough. I guarantee that I will be able to open the doors to the Infinite Hells.”

Nangong Liu gripped the book tightly and nodded his head, “Alright.”

“However, this is our last chance. If we screw it up again, it will be even more difficult for you to break the curse.”

“We can’t smash it!”

Xu Shuanglin said lazily, “You should say it, it definitely won’t be smashed.”

“Good, good, good. I won’t smash it, I won’t smash it.” Nangong Liu paused for a moment before saying, “Shuanglin, I’m still worried. Shall we go over the plan again?”

“… Brother, you have already matched it more than ten times.”

Nangong Liu did not care. “Repeat it a few more times. It’s always better to be cautious.”

Xu Shuanglin seemed rather helpless. “Sure, it’s up to you.”

Nangong Liu calculated, “On the eve of my son’s wedding, all of the guests will come to the music platform. I will arrange for lots to be drawn, and the twenty-one lots that have been pre-marked will be drawn.” He raised his head to look at Xu Shuanglin. “Now it’s your turn.”

“… Yes, I’ll ask to go with you.” Xu Shuanglin had no choice but to follow him, “After entering the dense forest, I will lead the offerings to the spring lake and plant them with Zhenlong chess pieces, making them obediently obey me, giving their spiritual energy to the Divine Martial Realm. When this matter is successfully completed, I will control everyone to launch the fuses and fireworks into the air, and at the same time tear open the Infernal rift.”

“Good, good!” In contrast to Xu Shuanglin’s laziness, Nangong Liu was very excited, he began to talk on paper, “After seeing the fireworks, I will lead five squads of guards, and in the name of calming the chaos of heaven, I will first rush to the hunting forest to meet you. Afterwards, we will also turn the five squads of guards into Zhenlong chess, offering them as sacrifices!”

Xu Shuanglin nodded and concluded, “It shouldn’t be a mistake.”

“There must be no mistake.” Nangong Liu clenched his thumb tightly and his face turned blue. “I’ve had enough. I’ve had enough…” He mumbled to himself for a while, then suddenly lifted his head to ask Xu Shuanglin, “Shuanglin, is there really no problem in not using an essence spirit body? If the power of the Divine Martial Realm is not pure enough…”

“Don’t worry. These five godly weapons are the highest quality martial skills. They are at the peak of their ability to move mountains and fill the seas. Once they absorb the spiritual energy from the offerings, they will definitely succeed.”

“What if? I said, just in case, just in case the Gates of Hell couldn’t be opened, just like in Rainbow Butterfly Town, someone had to come out to obstruct us… Look at that Chu Wanning!” Nangong Liu said, “What do you mean by meddling in other people’s business? The last time in the Butterfly Town, accidentally killing him was originally a great thing, who knew that the old bald donkey who was carrying the crime had the ability to bring him back to life, it was truly hateful!”

When Mo Ran saw this, he was extremely furious. Back then, Butterfly Town was shocked, and the Rufeng Sect even sent a large number of cultivators to pacify the chaos. Over a hundred disciples of the Rufeng Sect also died in that battle, so the two of them knew this very well…

Then who was the fake Gouchen?

Was it Nangong Liu or Xu Shuanglin?!

“Chu Wanning deserves not to die.” In the illusion, Xu Shuanglin said, “He is a capable man. To die so easily is always a pity.”

“So what if you have the ability? I can’t stand his arrogant face!”

“Oh, so you’re saying, I remember now. Head Immortal, you saw Chu Wanning a few days ago, right? How was it? Resurrected from the dead, did he suffer any damage to his spiritual energy?”

“I do not know about Spiritual Energy, but his temper has not diminished at all.” Nangong Liu hatefully said, “High and mighty, looking down on everyone else. I’m like a dog that rolled around in the mud in front of him!”

Xu Shuanglin laughed, “Sect Master’s analogy is quite interesting.”

“It’s fine if you don’t mention it, but if you do, I’ll be filled with anger! I am a mighty Sect Leader of the world’s number one sect. It’s one thing for me to bow to Chu Wanning, but I still have to see the expression on his disciple’s face. That disciple of his is incredible. Mo-zongshi, he has no sense of etiquette. His character is even worse than his Shizun’s.”

He let out a breath, his eyes flashing with malice.

“What a great wood essence spirit body, I only wish I could abandon the godly weapon and use him. It’s still the same as the initial plan, using his flesh and blood as a pillar of power to sacrifice to the heavens! Go and tear open the gate to the Infinite Hell!”

“Jincheng Lake, Peach Blossom Springs, failed twice.” Xu Shuanglin said, “Afterwards, he walked alone for five years. In these five years, it was difficult for us to find his whereabouts, and we only tricked him once, successfully tricked him into getting severely injured by the Yellow River Pisces. However, that kid was lucky and was saved by Jiang Xi who passed by. Now that Mo Ran has grown wings, he’s no longer that sixteen or seventeen year old youth. None of us can touch him. The path of a Spiritual Body won’t work.”

“Just you wait!” Nangong Liu said angrily, “Once I break the curse, my power will increase greatly. When that time comes, both Chu-zongshi and Mo-zongshi will have to kneel in front of me and listen to my commands!”

Hearing this, Xu Shuanglin only laughed, but did not reply.

He let out a sigh of relief as he stared at the ring on his finger. Suddenly, he said, “Shuanglin, five years ago, you gave up on searching for the essences of the spirit body. And it’s not only because of Mo Ran’s traveling down the mountains, and you don’t know his whereabouts, right?”

“…”

Slowly moving his gaze away from the ring, Nangong Liu said, “It’s because you found out that the earth type soul is Ye Wangxi, right? You don’t want to give up your adopted daughter, she’s the only family you have in this world…”

“I have no family in this world.” Xu Shuanglin interrupted him with a deadpan expression, “Furthermore, Sect Leader, you are well aware that the fire attribute is your son. Even if I can bear to let Ye Wangxi go, can you bear to let him go?”

“Forget it.” Nangong Liu waved his hand with a dispirited expression, “Since godly weapons can be used as a substitute, then what else is there to say? Let’s not talk about it anymore, let’s do it this way.”

“Then what if the godly weapon cannot be replaced?”

Nangong Liu was shocked, “What do you mean?! Didn’t you say that nothing could go wrong?”

“Sect Leader, there is no need to be nervous. I am just curious, if in this world only the five living spirits were to sacrifice themselves to their families, then we would be able to smoothly open the gate. Do you want to continue enduring the pain of the curse, or…” There was a trace of ridicule on the corner of his mouth. He did not continue speaking.

Nangong Liu did not reply. After a long time, it was so long that everyone thought that this part of their memories would come to an end. Nangong Liu said in a soft and slow voice, “Look out for yourself, or heaven and earth will destroy you.”

“AHHH!”

Hearing him say that, everyone’s faces started to ripple, especially someone like Xue Zhengyong who loved his son as much as his life. They were completely unable to understand Nangong Liu’s choice, and angrily said, “Preposterous… The tiger was venomous, but he didn’t want to eat it. He didn’t hesitate to sacrifice his own son for the sake of living? This is ridiculous!”

Nangong Si stood stiffly on the spot with a blank look on his face. Other than that, he didn’t have any other expression on his face. His eyes were empty…

The scene turned dark, and the sparkling memory fragments once again fluttered, emitting the delicate sound of the wind chimes colliding with each other.

When the illusion lit up again, the sky was clear and the towering snow mountain reflected the blinding white light. Someone exclaimed: “It’s Jincheng Lake?!

Ch. 166 Shizun's Respect for Mrs. Rong

Near the edge of Jincheng Lake, a sign with strong red lettering read "proceed with caution, the road is difficult".

The scene was still filled with Nangong Liu and Xu Shuanglin. The only reason why they were still alive was because there were countless corpses lying on the ground.

Or it could be said that they were some of the dead merpeople.

"Hurry up, if we block the path and prevent other cultivators from going up the mountain, it might arouse suspicion."

"It's almost done." Xu Shuanglin stuffed a black seed into the mouth of one of the merfolk, then silently chanted a spell. The merfolk shakily stood up from the ground and bowed towards the two.

With a "putong" sound, he leaped back into the Jincheng Lake that was filled with floating crushed ice. Xu Shuanglin said, "I'm still not proficient with this forbidden technique. Once I'm somewhat proficient in it, I won't need to feed them pawns one by one. I can volley the pieces from afar and they will still follow all my orders."

"That powerful?"

"Why else would it be called a forbidden technique? And even if you can cultivate to that degree, it's just superficial knowledge. I've seen people…" Xu Shuanglin suddenly stopped talking and laughed, "I mean, I saw that there was someone in the books that could preserve the consciousness of a living being, and at the same time make them willingly listen to his

orders. That's amazing. At my level, I can only control the body. I can't control the mind, I'm still far from it."

Nangong Liu nodded his head, "You don't need to cultivate too well. It is not a good thing to attract attention."

"Sect Leader is right."

"But fortunately, you thought of this method— Undoing the curse requires one to open the Gates of Hell, and opening the Gates of Hell requires one to possess the five elements of metal, wood, water, fire, earth, and spirit energy. The spirit bodies in this world are hard to find, we can't just go through them one by one, but with the ability to change the heaven and earth from Jincheng Lake. It'll tell you what kind of spirit core those cultivators who came looking for swords have. It's really a good thing to sit back to enjoy."

As he spoke, he took out an orange from the horse's backpack and peeled off its skin. As he ate, he sighed in admiration, "Shuanglin, Jincheng Lake's monsters can't beat you. You're quite capable."

Xu Shuanglin smiled, "Even though Jincheng Lake is an ancient ruin, it has been hundreds of millions of years. The Heavenly Strength of Gouchen the Exalted has long been reduced to almost nothing, otherwise, with my abilities, how could I possibly enter it through the thin air? The Sect Leader is too kind."

Nangong Liu laughed loudly, "Speak, how do you want me to reward you?"

"I have nothing to ask of you."

"Sigh, no way. You have to say it."

“Then, Sect Leader, please give me half of the orange.”

Nangong Liu was stunned, then he smiled and said, “What is this?” Still, he peeled the orange and handed it to Xu Shuanglin. “I’ll give it all to you.”

“Half is fine.” Xu Shuanglin smiled faintly. “I don’t want much either.”

“You are truly a strange person. Half then.”

As Nangong Liu spoke, he handed the orange meat over. Xu Shuanglin’s fingertips had traces of blood on them, which was inconvenient to catch. He directly picked it up from Nangong Liu’s fingertip and said: “Sweet and juicy, not bad.”

In that instant, under the sunlight, Xu Shuanglin’s smile seemed to be somewhat terrifying. The droplets of orange juice dripped down to the corners of his mouth, but he stuck out his tongue and licked it away, like a poisonous snake flicking its tongue.

Nangong Liu was suddenly somewhat afraid and immediately retracted his hand. However, his face immediately revealed a look of vexation and confusion. He did not seem to understand what he was afraid of.

Xu Shuanglin suddenly said, “Look at that.”

“What?” Nangong Liu looked over when he heard that. After a moment, his eyes suddenly widened and an extremely complicated expression appeared on his slightly fat face, “Yes…It…”

“The man-eating fish.” Xu Shuanglin picked up the dead pomfret and threw it onto the sandy beach. The lion-faced fish monster bared its fangs, revealing its mottled, bloody canine teeth. Its grayish-black eyes bulged out, and there was no light coming from its eyes.

Xu Shuanglin dipped a little in his blood, smelled it, and subconsciously rubbed his bare feet. With a frown, he said, “Ugh, how stinky.”

He stood up and kicked the pomfret, “This should be one of the few evil beasts left in the golden city. Although the ones that Gouchen left to guard the Divine Martial Realm were auspicious beasts, the passage of time is enough to change a lot of things. The evil ghost can escape, the deity can fall, not to mention a mere Divine Beast.”

Nangong Liu muttered, “Back then, it was this… You want me to offer up Rong Yan’s heart…”

Everyone outside the illusion was shocked, other than Chu Wanning, who already knew the truth, everyone else was even more shocked than before, “What?!”

“Rong Yan… That was… That is…”

Some of them were muttering, while others had already turned their heads to look at Nangong Si, feeling both shocked and pity him, “That is his…”

At first, Nangong Si was stunned, then his entire body began to tremble. He staggered back, and his entire body fell to his knees. His face was paler than a dead person’s, and even more terrifying than a ghost’s.

“Mother? Impossible… That’s impossible!”

Ye Wangxi tried her best to hold back her tears as she said, “A-Si… Ahhhhhh!”

“Impossible.” He was so mad, his handsome face contorted with fear and anger, grief and horror. His facial features were almost dislocated, he could not hear anyone’s words, could not even hear a single sound, “Impossible!

My mother died while killing the demon beasts! Father told me that she died through the heart when she killed the demon beast!”

Then he suddenly shook and muttered to himself, “No heart…It pierced the heart, then died…”

He did not cry, his eyes were wide open, his eyes were bloodshot, he kept repeating in a hoarse voice, from mumbling to growling, from growling to growling madly, “Piercing through the heart! Piercing through the heart!”

Memories flashed back.

That year, when he was still very young, his parents and a group of people had set out together to ask for swords from the Jincheng Lake. He remembered very clearly that the night before, because he was a little too fond of fun, he had gone mad with Naobaijin in the forest garden at the back of the mountain. Only when it was late at night did he sneak back into the house and tried to look like he was revising his lessons all day. But he did not know that his mother had come to find him after dinner to give him a new embroidered cloth quiver. In the end, after looking around and not seeing anyone at the mansion, she knew that he had sneaked out to play again.

Rong Yan was an extremely cold woman, she would never be like an ordinary mother who doted on Nangong. When she came back to his bed, he was pretending to read a volume of “Free Travels” while shaking his head. So she told him to stop and asked him, “After dinner, what did you do?”

Nangong Si did not know that Rong Yan had already discovered that he was fishing. He put down the book, scratched his head and smiled brightly,

“Mother, I am reciting.”

“You were always here reciting?”

The child was afraid of being punished, so he stammered for a while and still nodded, “Hmm… Yes, yes!”

Rong Yan slightly raised her elegant neck, raised her chin, looked down, and coldly said: “Liar.”

Nangong Si was shocked and his face flushed red, “I did not.”

Rong Yan did not say much, took her bamboo scroll, and asked: “All the world does not have to be silent, what is the first sentence?”

“Moreover… And the whole world… And…”

“You are renowned throughout the world and yet you refuse to advise me!” Rong Yan frowned, she slapped the bamboo scroll on the table and said sternly, “Nangong elder, how does mother usually teach you? It’s fine if you just went mad and played outside so late, but how did you learn to deceive people?!”

“Mother…”

“Don’t call me!”

When he saw that she was annoyed, he panicked. Compared to his amiable father, he was actually more scared of his mother, who always came in and out of the military uniform.

“You’re too outrageous.”

The little child's eyes turned red. He was afraid that she would scold him again, so he argued, "I-I didn't come back too late. I just finished my meal and played outside for a while."

Rong Yan stared at him, his mother who was originally not so angry, became more and more disappointed after her son tried so hard to think of an excuse, and she became more and more angry.

"I returned as soon as the sky turned dark."

"Pah!"

A resounding slap on the face interrupted Nangong Si's words.

Rong Yan's chest moved up and down, she maintained her raised hand, and angrily shouted: "Nangong Si! Greed, hatred, lies, murder, rape, robbery and pillage are seven things a gentleman of Rufeng can't do. Have you not learned these words? Are you still going to continue lying to your mother?!"

It took him a while to regain his senses. Tears welled up in his eyes, and he felt wronged. "If you weren't so fierce, why would I have lied to you? You always hit me and scold me… You, you didn't treat me well at all! I don't like you! I like Daddy!" As he spoke, he prepared to run out to find Nangong Liu.

"Stop right there!"

She pointed at the tip of her son's nose with a finger that was wielding a red cardamom, the flames of fury in her eyes surging.

"Why are you looking for your father? Your father was always submissive, always flattering, and he was just a piece of trash. Are you going to learn

from him?! Sit down!”

“I don’t want it! I don’t want it!”

But the moment she let go of him, he wanted to run away again, so in the end, she had no choice but to raise her hand and suddenly place down a restriction, binding him completely. Nangong Si fell to his knees, both humiliated and angry. He was like a trapped beast in a cage, constantly gasping for breath.

“Let me go! I don’t want a mother like you! You. You’ve never spoken to me properly, you’ve never cared about me, you’ve only scolded me… You only know how to scold me!”

Rong Yan’s face was red and white, her lips were trembling slightly as she said halfheartedly, “Stay in your room and recite the entire Free and Unrestrained Tour, I will inspect it tomorrow. If you continue to be so mischievous, I’ll…”

As she finished her sentence, she was at a loss as well. So what? Actually, what she didn’t know was that she had always been a hard-blooded person with a strong personality. Even when facing her weak husband, she would not hesitate to reprimand him in public and teach him a lesson.

But, to Nangong Si… What could she do?

She stood in place for a while, feeling sad and resentful, sad and helpless. Under the rage that attacked her, she started to cough violently, she was an old patient, coughing and coughing up a mouthful of blood, but she did not care, before Nangong Si could even see it, she had used a handkerchief to wipe it off, and then spoke in a hoarse and heavy voice.

“Si’er, you are still young, and the world is full of right and wrong. It’s not always possible to see through them with just your eyes. Sometimes, the people who treat you with tolerance may not want you to be good, or those who treat you seriously may not want you to be bad. Your father is weak and incompetent, what’s more…” She paused for a moment and did not continue. After thinking for a while, she gave up and said, “Mother does not wish for you to become a cultivator like him in the future, a Sect Leader like him.”

Nangong Si bit his lips in silence.

“You are mischievous, your work is not diligent, these are not important, but how can you learn to lie and deceive people? Our Rufeng Sect, the School of Wind, has a hundred years of history. We have always stuck to the character of a gentleman in order to have the face to stand at the peak of all immortals. Your father never taught you these truths, but I’m your mother. He wouldn’t tell you, so I told you again and again. Even if you don’t listen, even if you think I’m strict, even if you hate me.”

“… Daddy didn’t tell me, it’s because he treats me as his boy. He makes me happy, so he’s happy. What about you?! What mother? You think I’m the Young Master of the Rufeng Sect, that I’m the future head of our sect?! I’m with you, and I haven’t had a good day! I won’t listen to you!”

She covered her face with her handkerchief and coughed for a while. After that, she panted for a long time before saying sternly:

“Alright. If you do not listen, I will continue to talk to you until you understand.”

“…” The child was stubborn, so he covered his ears with his hands.

She thought back to the injuries she had suffered when she was exterminating the Demons. Despite holding onto the medicine every day, it had turned into a grave disease which was getting worse and worse. When she looked up and saw the young child disobeying the orders under the lantern light, she could not help but close her eyes.

After a long while, she slowly said, “I will pay you back. Your mother will not be able to accompany you forever. One day, I will no longer be able to keep my eyes on you, and will no longer be able to warn you. I only hope that you can understand it for yourself in the future…”

She suddenly stopped talking.

Because she saw Nangong Si sitting on the ground, his small body curled up in a ball, crying under the forbidden spell she had cast, and her child, the one who had always been happy and smiling, sobbed and cried under her insults.

Rong Yan was stunned for a long time before she slowly stood up and walked over to the forbidden enchantment. She raised her hand, wanting to remove it, wanting to lean over to pick it up, caress his red and swollen cheeks, and kiss his forehead.

However, she endured it. In the end, she was still able to ruthlessly stand up.

She slowly finished the second part of the sentence. “Greed, hatred, lies, murder, rape, robbery and pillage are seven things a gentleman of Rufeng can’t do.”

“I don’t understand, I don’t want to understand, I…I…” Nangong Si raised his tearful eyes and cried out to his mother, who was outside the forbidden

spell, “I hate you! I don’t have a mother like you!”

“…”

In that instant, outside the Forbidden Spell Formation, Rong Yan’s face was so pale.

That face had appeared in Nangong Si’s dreams many times over the past twenty years. When he woke up, the pillow was already wet. At that time, he was like a venomous scorpion, waving his pincers and stabbing the vicious juice into his mother’s heart.

It was painful, really painful.

After a lifetime will never slow down, never be able to reconcile with themselves.

On the third day, Rong Yan did not come to see him at the mansion. She only asked the maid to bring him a quiver embroidered with camellias and a letter.

In the letter, his mother wrote solemnly, saying only that she had been practicing martial arts and loved bows, so she had embroidered a backpack for him to use. She also said that she was going to Jincheng Lake’s place with his father, and when she returned, he would properly read “Carefree Wanderings”[158] once again, hoping that he wouldn’t be so willful.

What about him?

How did he do it?

He was still angry and resentful, and he cut the quiver of arrows his mother had made into pieces with his knife. He threw his mother’s letters into the

fire and burned them to ashes.

He took revenge on her.

He hated her.

He wanted to let her know that he would never listen to the teachings of such a terrible mother.

He bared his teeth in the utmost malice, and he plotted his way up the wall.

He waited for his mother to bow her head to him, to apologize, or maybe. At that time, he was only using his pitiful malice to exchange for a soft word from his mother and a hug.

But she did not come.

It didn't matter if he made a mistake, hugged, regretted, or was gentle.

He was looking forward to his victory, waiting to declare war on that woman once more, and then —

He waited for her bones.

"The Sect Leader of the Rufeng Sect was ambushed last night. His wife protected him with her body and died from a heart wound."

When the coffin was brought back, Nangong Si stood in a daze beside the towering tower of the Julou Wind Gate. White silk and paper money were scattered all over the place, and as the sole legitimate son, he stood at the front of the group, waiting. According to custom, when an elder fell a basin, the Madame's coffin could be carried across the fire and back to the

sect. At this time, the first son was going to kneel down and cry. He was going to use his head to snatch the ground to welcome his mother's spiritual return.

However, Nangong Si could not cry.

He felt so ridiculous, so false, so unreal. The sun was shining down on the ground with a blinding white light, and he felt dizzy and nauseous.

Not real.

… It's not true!

If that was true, what should he do? How could he accept that… In this life, Yin and Yang were separated. The last warning she said to him was, "Greed, hatred, lies, murder, rape, robbery and pillage are seven things a gentleman of Rufeng can't do."

And what did he answer to her?

He didn't want to remember, but that hatred was so deep, and that yell was so deep-rooted. His mother's face was so painful and sorrowful outside the barrier.

Pain…

It was really painful.

He said that the last words he had said to his mother in his life… What he said was…

I hate you.

I don't have a mother like you.

The coffin was supported by the elder, who had broken the porcelain bowl on the side. A thousand people were kneeling on the ground and crying bitterly. His father was already weeping silently beside the coffin, while Nangong Si was just standing there, clutching the tea plant quiver that he had cut into pieces.

The bright red petals, the goose yellow stamens, were covered in snow. It was as if her warm fingertips had just touched the silk and touched the luxuriant purple flowers. It was unknown if it was because she had a premonition before she died, or perhaps it was a coincidence, but she was embroidering very carefully. It was as if she was embroidering all of the love she did not say, all of the advice and instructions for the rest of her life into that thread, locking them in that small cloth quiver.

Nangong Si gripped it tightly.

That was the last thing his mother, his mother, had left him in this life.

Ch. 167 Shizun, I Don't Want You to Be Scolded Again

The illusion did not disappear because of Nangong's pain. Instead, it continued to ruthlessly spread the bloody truth in front of everyone.

Beside Jincheng Lake, Nangong Liu used his foot to crush the man-eating fish's face. He looked around and said, "Beast."

"Bastard wants Madam's spirit core, the Sect Leader can't give it to you." Xu Shuanglin said, "But for the sake of the godly weapons, the Sect Leader sold off Madam."

"What are you talking about? Don't make it sound so bad. Senior Sister Rong was already in poor health, so she had invited the best doctor on Rinling Island to see her. They all said that her time was running out. If she was healthy, how would I be willing to give her up to this beast?"

Xu Shuanglin slightly raised his brow, but said nothing.

Nangong Liu stared at the man-eating fish for a moment and suddenly became somewhat angry. He angrily grumbled, "Destiny is unfair."

Xu Shuanglin seemed to have not expected someone like him, who had both fame and fortune, to criticize fate. Surprised, Xu Shuanglin couldn't help but laugh. "What?"

"I say, fate is unfair."

"…"

"Why is it that when people ask for a godly weapon, all of the tasks entrusted to them by the auspicious beasts are all broken branches, or

songs. Coming to my place, I just have to summon a vicious beast and take my wife's life… What can I do? How can I choose?"

Nangong Liu was clearly very angry.

"Back then, when I was asking for a divine might at Jincheng Lake… As you can see, the attendants are silent, and the Grandmasters criticize them. That Chu Wanning… Damn it, a fifteen or sixteen year old brat dares to offend me like that. It was so painful to stand and talk! I don't believe that if he was given the choice, he would choose the former from among a wife who is on the verge of death and a powerful godly weapon!"

Xu Shuanglin laughed. "I really can't say for sure. Don't look at me like that, I'm serious. You'll never be able to guess what they're thinking."

"What else can I think? It was nothing more than making a name for himself in the sea of history. How could I not know them?"

The more Nangong Liu thought about it, the more he felt aggrieved. He cursed and kicked the pomfret.

"Ever since I became the Sect Leader, I have truly suffered grievances. Not only do I have the curse, I even have to smile and welcome others all day long… I was lucky enough to swallow my anger and endure the humiliation. Otherwise, I would have died at the hands of Chu Wanning the year I sought for the sword."

"You're right." Xu Shuanglin was actually still smiling, "I also think that Chu Wanning really wanted to kill you back then. But I didn't expect you to persuade him. Not only did you escape death from his Tianwen, you even sealed his mouth to prevent him from making public what you did at Jincheng Lake. Speaking of survival skills, I quite admire the Sect Leader."

“He also knows that the Rufeng Sect cannot fall into chaos. No matter how angry they are, what can they do?” Nangong Liu said, “Moreover, I still have Nangong Si. For him to think that his mother died from serious injuries while exterminating the demon is much less of a shock to him than the truth.”

Xu Shuanglin sighed, nodding his head in a very just manner. “No wonder he wants to leave. If I were him, I would be completely disgusted by you.”

“Do you think I want to? Do I have a choice? I’ve already said —” Nangong Liu said, “Destiny is unfair.”

Upon seeing this, someone stealthily looked over to Chu Wanning and muttered, “So Chu-zongshi actually knew about Madam Rong’s matter?”

“He even helped Nangong Liu hide it. Yet, he actually did not tell the world about it.”

“He’s probably afraid of something. He was only fifteen at the time. If he really offended the Rufeng Sect, then he wouldn’t be able to take the consequences.”

Someone spoke up for Chu Wanning in a soft voice, “I don’t think so. He was merely making a big loss. Didn’t Nangong Liu say that Chu-zongshi would not tell the truth? He was afraid that Nangong Si would feel sad if he found out.”

“But he seems to be of a different level. Is he a child, or is it the head of the sect, that is more important?”

“Ai, if he had said it earlier, the Rufeng Sect would not have reached its current state.”

“You can’t say it like that. If he really said it back then, the Upper Cultivation World would probably fall into chaos… In short, everyone has their own choices. If it were you, you might not necessarily be willing to stand out.”

“Heh, that might not be the case. If it were me, I would definitely reveal myself to Nangong Liu. For a matter like this, if you do nothing and watch from the sidelines, it would be equivalent to being an accomplice.”

Although their voices were soft, Mo Ran’s hearing was good. A few sentences floated into his ears, and he was immediately enraged. He wanted to go and argue, but someone grabbed his sleeve.

“Shizun!”

Chu Wanning shook his head, “No need to say more.”

“But it’s not like that at all! Didn’t they understand? How can you make this public? Who couldn’t distinguish between priorities? Clearly —”

Chu Wanning said flatly, “Are you angry?”

Mo Ran nodded.

“Do you have to do something?” Chu Wanning asked.

Mo Ran nodded again.

“Okay, then help me cover my ears.”

“…”

“I have no intention of arguing with it, but I do not want to hear it either. You help me cover it up, and when they stop talking, you can let go.”

Mo Ran walked behind Chu Wanning, raised his hand and covered his ears one by one. He lowered his eyes and looked at the person in front of him. He felt both angry and pained. He could not understand why Chu Wanning did everything so well, how could anyone be dissatisfied with what he did? This person seemed to have lived two lifetimes for others, never taking his own life for granted. Why would he be poked in the spine by so many people if there was a dispute over just one thing, as long as there was not a clear distinction between the black and the white?

It was as if things were always like this, and people were used to weeping for a good deed of the wicked, and biting at a little mistake of the good.

In the previous life, Taxian-Jun killed countless people. One day, he bestowed 10,000 taels of gold to each of the masters of the Wubei Temple. As a result, people praised him and said that he had become a Buddha by setting down a butcher's knife.

As for Chu Wanning? Chu Wanning was an undisputed Grandmaster and the world's most benevolent cultivator. If there was even the slightest mistake, people would start to speculate on him maliciously.

How many times.

When Chu Wanning did something ruthless, people would scold him for being cold-blooded.

When Chu Wanning became soft-hearted, there were people who questioned his cowardice.

Mo Ran had even heard people talking about what happened outside of Butterfly Town during his five years of travels. There was someone who

pointed out that Chu Wanning was whipping his employer and injuring mortals because he wanted to attract attention from the public.

“He’s just a wooden person without a conscience. How else can a normal person not have three to five good friends?”

“Look at this Chu Wanning, he betrayed his Shizun at the age of 15 and has been alone ever since. Who would be willing to be his friend in this big world?”

“That’s right, that year outside of the Butterfly Town, no matter how wrong he was, he was still an employer.”

Psychological distortion?

In the end, who was the one who was being twisted?

Wasn’t this person paying enough?

If he really had to squeeze out all of his blood, chew his flesh to pieces, and even sacrifice his bones, wouldn’t that be the right decision? As expected of a true Chu-zongshi?

Mo Ran covered his ears. Chu Wanning was tall and slender, but in front of the current Mo Ran, his head was still as tall as his chin. Chu Wanning was not a weak person, but when Mo Ran looked at him with his lowered eyelashes, he suddenly felt very pitiful. He could not help but feel a boundless amount of love and tenderness towards him.

He wanted to hug this person more than ever before.

He just wanted to hug him, to warm him in this hard world with his flesh and blood. That was it.

Towards these questions that came from the mouth of his brain and the words “If it was me, I would do it to you, how would you do it to me?”, Chu Wanning was more used to doing it than he was to use Mo Ran.

At this point, Jincheng Lake’s memories also came to an end, the fragments of his memories started to collapse and reform themselves. Chu Wanning shifted his gaze to Nangong Si.

Nangong had his back to him and was still kneeling, never getting up again.

Chu Wanning sighed softly.

Although he and Nangong Si did not have the title of Shizun and disciple, they had the ability to be Shizun and disciples. If possible, he wished that Nangong Si would spend his entire life thinking that she died tragically while killing the demon beasts. However, things didn’t go as he wished.

In Chu Wanning’s eyes, the kneeling Nangong Si, and the child kneeling in the mourning hall, suddenly overlapped.

The child was clumsily swimming around on his back, but his back was rough and he could not get it coherent. As he wiped away his tears, he slowly recited it to his mother.

“There is a fish in Darknorth. Its name is Kun. The size of the Kun is unknown, but if it were to transform into a bird, then its name would be Peng…” He stumbled. Every time he stopped, his young and tender face would be filled with pain that he shouldn’t have felt at this age. “The entire world… He would not advise it, but the entire world… The difference was… And if he didn’t add it… Ju, it must be… It must be differentiated from the outside and the inside, and it can be argued that…”

The child's soft voice suddenly stopped. He did not turn around, but his small body lightly trembled like a willow in the wind. In the end, he covered his face, and could no longer hold back his tears.

"Mother… I was wrong, I was wrong… Wake up, will you, Mother… I don't want to play anymore. Just wake up and teach me again, okay?"

Later on, the free and unrestrained tour became a silent transcript of every morning lesson by Nangong Si. Accompanying him, he went from a dying child to a high-spirited, scholarly Young Master.

Madam Rong had left and could no longer teach him.

Not long after, Chu Wanning also left, never turning back.

He relied on the old arrow quiver that had been sewn up to make up for his mistakes and the words, "Greed, hatred, lies, murder, rape, robbery and pillage are seven things a gentleman of Rufeng can't do." Finally, in this world's number one sect, which was separated from the hearts of many people, he became a righteous hero that was completely different from his father.

At this time, nearly fifteen years have passed since Madam Rong's death.

The illusion gathered once again. This time, it was Nangong Liu's sleeping hall that appeared before the crowd. It was a full moon night and Nangong Liu was curled up on his bed.

Chu Wanning patted Mo Ran's hand, "Let go, I want to keep watching."

Mo Ran said, "You can also choose not to watch. I'll tell you." He still didn't want to let go of the hand that was covering Chu Wanning's ears, but after being patted by Chu Wanning twice, he knew that he couldn't refuse, so he

lowered his hand and gloomily scanned the surroundings. He thought that if anyone said anything more about Chu Wanning's wrongdoings, he would secretly record it down in his head and then find these people to settle the score alone.

In the illusion, Xu Shuanglin walked in from the doorway and gave a crooked bow, very lacking in manners. However, Nangong Liu seemed to be used to it and did not care. His eyes were bloodshot and he trembled as he asked, "Shuanglin, where's the medicine? Where's the medicine?"

"Yes, I failed."

Nangong Liu cried out 'ah'. He was so scared that his tears flowed down his nose. "How could it be… How could this be… You said you could. I can't take it anymore, all the bones in my body are stabbing themselves like spikes! You, hurry up and shut the windows tightly for me, don't let even a speck of light in, don't let even a speck…"

"It's already closed. Today is the full moon, so even if you don't go out, you will still feel pain. "Xu Shuanglin said, "It's useless. You won't be able to escape."

"No-no! Where's the medicine?" Nangong Liu was a little crazy, "What about the medicine?! You said it's worth it! I believe you! Where's the medicine?!"

"I reread the book. It's not worth it. The evil curse on you is too vicious. You need something to get rid of it."

"What?!I can give you anything you want! Just give me the medicine! Give me the medicine!"

Xu Shuanglin said, “I want the spirit core of the person who cast the curse.”

Nangong Liu’s face instantly turned pale.

“Spirit core… You want. You want his Spiritual Core?”

“Is there?”

“Why would there be more!” Nangong Liu roared, his hair was in disarray and he was drooling, “You know who cursed me! My good Shizun, that piece of trash… Pus… A gentleman! Luo Fenghua! He took my place, and I cut him to pieces when I cast him out of the throne! I even placed his ashes in the extremely dangerous blood pond. I sent his spirit soul into the Unbroken Hell and he will never be able to be reincarnated! Now, even his corpse is gone! You want me to find his spirit core? How can I find it? How am I supposed to find him!?”

Xu Shuanglin was quiet for a while. After Nangong Liu finished his roar, he gradually began to despair, and his throat began to choke. Only then did he slowly say, “I have another method, but it’s very difficult. Do you want to hear it?”

“Speak… Speak, speak quickly!”

“Even though Luo Fenghua is dead, you should know that the ‘Record of the Dead’ has recorded that ghosts that fall into the Infernal Realm of the Unmatched may never be able to reincarnate, but they are able to combine the three souls and seven souls to give birth to a demon that looks just like it did before death. The more miserably it dies, the stronger it becomes, and some will even grow out a giant skeleton to protect the soul.”

“So what? I can’t possibly go to the Infernal Realm to retrieve his corpse…”

“You can’t go, but he can come.” The expression in the candle flame was very serene, as if they were discussing which friend’s dwelling place they would go to for tea tonight. “The Ghost World and the Yang World are separated by a barrier, and as long as the five spiritual energies are gathered into pure spiritual energy, they can tear open the gaps of the Unbroken Hell.”

“Rip…that is part of the Infernal Realm of the Seamless?”

Xu Shuanglin laughed, “That’s right, tear open that gap and bring out Luo Fenghua’s Ghost Embryo. That Ghost Embryo is exactly the same as the one before death, and it also has a spirit core. You can eat his flesh and then take out his spirit core without worrying about not being able to curse it.”

He paused for a moment and continued, “However, the five great spiritual energies are a little difficult to gather. The best would be if one needs a superior essence spirit body… Don’t be impatient, just allow me to think of a way.”

Nangong Liu opened his mouth as if he wanted to say something, but the only thing he could cry out was a terrifying wail. His tears and snot flowed as he lay on the bed, trembling violently.

“Is it really that painful?” Xu Shuanglin sighed, “That master of yours must also hate you for murdering your master, to actually place such a ruthless curse on the ring. Truly, the heavens have pity on you.”

“Woo…”

“Alright, just bear with it. It won’t hurt anymore when the sun rises.” As Xu Shuanglin said this, he sat down on the edge of the bed, his legs crossed, one hand on his cheek, the other on his foot. “I’ll accompany you. I’ll talk to you and distract you, so you won’t hurt so much.”

Nangong Liu was buried deep within the blanket, gasping for breath.

Xu Shuanglin said, “Ai, what should we talk about? Why don’t we talk about Si-er? He is also not an easy child. The Heaven’s Spirit Core is tyrannical and easily causes one’s cultivation to go berserk. This seems to be a chronic disease of the Nangong Family. I heard that his great-grandfather also has this disease?”

Nangong Liu hid under the blanket and swallowed his saliva: “En.”

“What are you going to do?”

“What should we do?” Nangong Liu’s voice was filled with a fighting tone, “His illness is better than mine, so it’s much easier to deal with. In the future, when he married his wife… All of them could suppress the flow of spirit through dual cultivation. It’s better to be more concerned about my curse…”

“Haven’t I always cared about your curse? But the more you think about it, the more it hurts.” Because of this, Xu Shuanglin changed the topic again, picking at his toes and giggling, “However, isn’t this dual cultivation a bit too good for a Dao-companion’s body? I heard that Nangong Si’s great-grandmother went there at a very young age.”

“Trash, nonsense.”

“Aiya, I was just casually asking, but I didn’t expect that she really died long ago due to dual cultivation.” Xu Shuanglin sighed, “The Rufeng Sect is truly deep, the Sect Leader actually wants to use the Madame’s life to help him through this tribulation.”

“Women’s lives… It was already… Useless.”

Xu Shuanglin laughed, “Why are you looking down on women so much?”

“It’s not like you don’t understand the Grand Sect Master’s teachings.”

“I don’t understand. What did the Grand Sect Master say?”

“The Rufeng Sect should be led by a gentleman.”

“That’s right.”

“What is a gentleman? It’s a man, do you understand?”

“… Pfft, that’s rude. Sect Leader, your misinterpretation might cause the Grand Sect Leader to come back to life from the Hero Tomb in anger.”

Nangong Liu trembled and said, “You have never married before. You don’t understand. Women… It’s no use, it’s just a family heirloom, it’s… It was their responsibility. Grandmother was willing to sacrifice her life for grandfather…”

“Willing?” Xu Shuanglin smiled. “Then do you also have to find a willing dual cultivation partner for the Young Master to sacrifice her life for him?”

“… I have already found it…”

Xu Shuanglin was stunned. “What? Who is it? Who?” He seemed very gossipy as he crawled deeper into the bed. He almost wanted to pull

Nangong Liu out of the quilt, “Sure, you actually have a candidate in mind for the Young Master’s wife of the Rufeng Sect. Quickly tell me about it.”

Nangong Liu wrapped himself in the blanket and dragged himself deeper into the bed. After enduring the pain for a while, he said hoarsely, “Your adopted daughter, Ye Wangxi.”

Ch. 168 Shizun, Someone Is Maligning The Corpse

In the middle of the screen, Xu Shuanglin's eyes suddenly widened, and at the same time, most of the people outside the screen stared blankly.

When Mo Ran saw this, he vaguely felt that something was wrong.

He was someone who had lived for two lifetimes. This conversation, combined with the events from his past life, allowed him to come up with some intriguing details.

He knew that Ye Wangxi's friendship with Nangong Si was more than that because of Ye Wangxi's request to be buried together with Nangong Si before her death. It was because in his previous life, Ye Wangxi's female identity had long been known to the world.

Let her marry Nangong Si…

From the looks of it, it seemed like his father was looking for a dual cultivation partner for his son. However, not long after the marriage agreement was set, Nangong suddenly died, while Ye Wangxi managed to survive… Mo Ran could not help but think about Nangong Si's death that year…

Was it really just a coincidence?

He didn't think so.

On the screen, Xu Shuanglin's fingers were clenched into a fist. Although he was still smiling, his tone was somewhat cold.

"You want Ye Wangxi to marry A-Si?"

“Yes, she’s the most suitable.”

“What’s ‘suitable’?” Xu Shuanglin couldn’t help but laugh. “You wanted to raise her up to be a leader of the Dark Guard, so you turned her into a virgin. Now that you’re saying you’re going to give her to your son, you aren’t afraid that he’ll despise her.”

“He was really unhappy, when I first saw how he often chatted and laughed with Ye Wangxi, and treated her well, I thought he would more or less accept it. However, when I told him about the marriage, he got angry and said that he didn’t like Ye Wangxi at all. The reason he took care of her was because she was a girl and didn’t have an easy time in the Dark City. He won’t accept this marriage.”

Xu Shuanglin: “…”

“How could I compromise? He had a huge quarrel with me. He said that I disrespected his decision and casually dealt with his life. He even avoided Ye Wangxi’s decision and kept a cold and distant relationship with her. The more I tell him about it, the worse his attitude will get. In the end, he even thought that I was biased towards Ye Wangxi and didn’t know what’s good for him.” Nangong Liu scolded, “Didn’t he just despise her because she isn’t good-looking?”

Xu Shuanglin was rather impartial. “If the previous Sect Leader suddenly asked you to marry a woman you didn’t like, would you be willing? I don’t think that’s a good question. You really don’t respect him.”

“He is shallow! To be able to take a wife, one has to marry someone useful and virtuous. If he likes pretty girls, won’t he be unable to take concubines when his body stabilizes?” Nangong Liu sighed, “Ai, I was also to blame for

that. Cough cough, did not… See the feelings Ye Wangxi has for Si-er in time. If she still looked the same as before, Si-er would like her."

"You're ridiculous." Xu Shuanglin said, "Si-er will not accept it."

"Unless he doesn't care for his life. It was extremely painful to dual cultivate with a tyrannical person like him. If he were to marry an ordinary woman… I'm afraid… I'm afraid I can't take it at all…" Nangong Liu panted, "Ye Wangxi loves him. If she is willing, she can bear it."

"How could she be willing?!"

"I asked her."

"… What?!"

"I've asked her. I've already told her about this." Nangong Liu said, "She was more afraid of him being hurt than of her own death."

"…" Xu Shuanglin said no more, lowering his head. It was unknown what he was thinking, but after a long while, he finally said, "She really is a fool."

Seeing this, Mo Ran was almost certain— in his previous life, when did Nangong Si suddenly die from an illness? There was a very high chance that Xu Shuanglin had personally killed him.

If Nangong Si died, Ye Wangxi would be able to live.

The reason why Nangong was still alive in this life was probably because of the incident with Song Qiutong. With her marrying Nangong Si, the father would naturally have nothing to say. He even felt that a pie had fallen from the sky and would not force Ye Wangxi to marry Nangong Si.

Since the marriage engagement between Ye Wangxi and Nangong Si had been annulled, and Xu Shuanglin would not harm Nangong Si for the rest of his life, it was completely reasonable. Xu Shuanglin looked like a crazy devil right now, but why did such a devil see Ye Wangxi as so important? She was obviously just an adopted daughter… What was he thinking about, that creepy, unreadable man?

What was he looking for?

This short period of time soon came to an end. When the illusion appeared again, it was much earlier than before.

Nangong Liu seemed to be younger and not fat yet. He was holding a small jade colored item in his hand, and upon closer inspection, it turned out to be the finger ring of the Sect Leader of the Rufeng Sect.

This ring could not be taken off once it was put on. Until the day it was taken off duty and Nangong Liu did not wear it on the screen, it proved that he had yet to become the true master of the Rufeng Sect.

One of the attendants came in and knelt down to pay his respects. The attendants' robes were still stained with blood; it seemed like a battle had just broken out. This period of recollection should've happened the night when Master Nangong Liu Shi Shi seized back the Sect Leader's ring.

"Sect Leader, what should we do with Luo Fenghua's corpse?"

Nangong Liu turned the ring around and thought for a while before saying, "Buried in the Hero Tomb. We are master and disciple after all. The least I can give him a decent home."

"Yes sir!"

The attendant left.

He felt that it was a bit strange. According to the memories he had seen, the Nangong brothers' Shizun, Luo Fenghua, had clearly been torn to shreds by Nangong Liu. He had sunk into a pool of blood and turned into an evil spirit.

But why did it say that Nangong Liu buried his Shizun safely in the Hero Tomb?

In the illusion, Nangong Liu rubbed the jade ring on his Sect Leader's finger. His eyes flashed with a complex and strange luster, as if he was afraid, but also full of desire.

His Adam's apple moved, and he slowly raised his hand to the candle flame. He solemnly put the ring on his thumb.

He stared at his hand and looked back and forth. The corner of his mouth slowly curled up, as if he was about to burst into a bright and happy smile.

Nangong Liu gave a loud shout and suddenly fell down from the Sect Leader's throne. His entire body was trembling from spasms.

"Leader!"

"Sect Leader, what happened to you?"

He hurriedly went to help him up, but Nangong Liu raised his head. His face was covered in blood, and his face, which was still fine a moment ago, suddenly had countless small wounds, which immediately healed after the wounds were torn. Once they were healed, they immediately began to bleed profusely from those mysterious wounds.

“What’s going on!” Nangong Liu panicked, “Pain… So painful… Why… How could this be? What’s going on?!”

Footsteps outside the door.

Facing the moonlight, a man with a pair of smooth bare feet stepped onto the ice-cold bricks. He arrived in front of Nangong Liu and lifted up his robe before half-kneeling.

This person was Xu Shuanglin, who was even younger than he was right now. He bent over and pinched Nangong Liu’s face to carefully examine him. Nangong Liu was constantly struggling, his tears, snot and blood mixing together. Xu Shuanglin seemed to be somewhat disgusted, creasing his brow. He then asked, “How did it suddenly turn out like this?”

“I don’t know. Dao… I don’t know. Mr. Shuang… Sir, please save me…”

At this time, Xu Shuanglin was only an advisor to Nangong Liu, so Nangong Liu called him Mister Shuang, not an elder.

After some investigation, Xu Shuanglin grabbed Nangong Liu’s right hand and looked at the brilliant ring. Suddenly, his expression changed. “There’s a Ten Thousand Tribulations Curse attached to this?”

Only Nangong Liu was still in a daze, not knowing what the curse of life and death was. He only raised his head in a daze as tears streamed down his face and his nose dripped with blood onto the brick floor.

“Ah, what is that?”

“Death Curse.”

Xu Shuanglin’s expression was very ugly.

“This ring has been cursed with a death curse by Luo Fenghua. If the person wearing the ring can see even the slightest bit of moonlight, their skin would be chapped, and they would rather die than live… It’s the same every night.”

“What?!”

“More than that. In the fifteenth moon, even if you don’t leave your home, with the four walls sealed and not even a hint of darkness penetrating, you will still feel the pain of a thousand cuts and no escape…”

He opened his eyes and looked at Nangong Liu, who was curled up on the ground with a miserable expression.

“Until you die.”

Under the thick stench of blood, Nangong Liu’s pupils suddenly contracted. His appearance was that of a panic-stricken rat, or a venomous snake that had sought its head in a black cave.

He gave a comical twitch and muttered, “Until death?”

“Yes.”

“Can, can’t break it?”

“It can’t be broken.” Xu Shuanglin said, “At least right now, I can’t think of any other way… It can only be in the future…”

Before he could say anything, Nangong Liu had already broken free of his grasp. Laughing hysterically, he climbed down the steps, dragging a crooked bloody mark on the cold, shiny floor. He was crying out in pain while laughing, his voice hoarse and distorted to the extreme.

“Hahahaha — curse me? You cursed me?”

“Luo Fenghua! You stole my Nangong Family’s seat, I threw you off the stage, leaving you with an intact corpse, it was already… It was a matter of course! You actually cursed me? How can you bear it — how can you have any face!”

“I read you… The favor of teaching… Buried you in. Buried in the Hero Tomb. Ha! Hero Tomb! Yet you want me to suffer through night after night, until my skin and flesh are lacerated… until I die!” He roared and moved inch by inch to the door of the hall, hiding in the dark shadow cast by the red copper heavy door of the hall. His fingers twitched ferociously as he smacked the ground, unable to stop himself from hitting the ground.

“Relax until you die! How can you be cruel! How can you be cruel — Bastard! Beast! You destroyed my life!”

“Sect Leader…” He could not bear it any longer and wanted to bring him back, but Nangong Liu roared and shouted like a madman.

This bloody face had always been weaker than any other color, but this time it was different. There was a deep-seated hatred on his face, dancing in his pupils like wildfire, burning his reason to the point that he couldn’t grow a single blade of grass.

Nangong Liu screamed hysterically, “Pass it to me…… The first path… The Sect Leader’s order…”

The attendants all knelt down to obey the order.

“The previous sect leader, Luo Fenghua, committed a heinous crime… Extreme Evil… Unforgivable! Order people to take his remains… A thousand

cuts… Shatter, death, ten thousand pieces —!”

Xu Shuanglin stood quietly at the side, his eyes lowered, not a hint of emotion on his face. “……”

At this time, a new round of tearing came about and Nangong Liu could not endure it anymore. He collapsed and started crying again, but as he was crying, he continued to give the first order for him to ascend to the throne of the Rufeng Sect. Each word was squeezed out of the back of his mouth, “Grave… The blood pool…”

You curse me to death.

I sink you into the Infernal Realm of the Seamless Purgatory, unable to reincarnate for all eternity.

At the end of the illusion, Nangong Liu opened his empty eyes and his voice was hoarse like a broken clay xun. He muttered, “Luo Fenghua, you beast… You beast…”

The memory shards started to collapse and reconstruct like snowflakes once again, the unveiling of the secret information of the Rufeng Sect caused everyone to be lost in thought. Some people, like Ye Wangxi and Nangong Si, were watching because of the matter that had happened, while many others were excited by the fact that they were lurking around others.

Jealousy was one of the ugliest feelings in the world, how many of the people invited to this marriage were sincere in their worship of the Rufeng Sect? How many of them had passed through the grand and magnificent Three Exclusions Gate, passed through the spirit stone of every inch of

land, and even looked upon the seventy-two cities of the Emperor, with only admiration and not a hint of jealousy in their hearts?

The higher one's tower reached into the clouds, the more collapsed it would collapse, which would attract more attention. The melon seeds were knocked all over the ground, and saliva was splattered everywhere.

The pain of others was always the best topic of conversation.

Mo Ran was not willing to watch any longer. However, this matter was a little doubtful and was of great importance. Although Xu Shuanglin's recollection seemed to have no problem at all, able to explain the changes in the Jincheng Lake and the Peach Blossom Springs, he still faintly felt that something was not right.

He had always felt that there was something wrong about this memory.

…… What is it?

He frowned, thinking sullenly.

However, from the corner of his eyes, he saw a strange light flashing in the distance. However, as the illusions were unfolding one after another, no one dared to look out of the woods, so they did not notice it.

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment. Then, his face suddenly changed as he shouted, "Tribulation Fire!"

Everyone turned their heads when they heard that. Where is the tribulation fire?"

"Over there — over there!"

“That’s not right! This way too!”

No one would have thought that when they looked at Xu Shuanglin’s memories, the surrounding area of the Rufeng Sect, as well as the seventy-two cities, would all be set ablaze with a scarlet flame. That light was still far away, and the dense forest they were in was too deep for them to see it clearly if they didn’t pay attention.

The fire tribulation was one of the fierce fires. Unless it was raining heavily and the dew was used to extinguish it, it would never stop unless the surrounding grass was burned to ashes.

Thick smoke rose up into the air, and the flames were like water poured on a piece of silk. They quickly spread out and covered the surroundings, and from afar, one could see bright meteors flying in all directions from the 72 cities. It was clear that they were the disciples of the Dojo of Limits who had escaped from the sea of fire and flown into the sky on their swords.

When the people in the forest saw this, quite a few of them paled and shouted loudly, “What happened?”

Some people immediately turned around and ran towards the Shi Le Hall, calling out the names of their companions. Xue Zhengyong’s face changed as well. With Madam Wang still there, she didn’t know how to control the sword…

“Mo Ran! Yuheng! I’ll leave Meng’er to you. I’ll go take a look at Madame…”

Mo Ran was also very anxious. He nodded and said, “Uncle, quickly go. Bring Aunt away first. With us here, I definitely won’t let anything happen to Xue Meng.”

Xue Zhengyong patted him on the shoulder and flew towards the music hall, which was now ablaze with flames.

Seeing this chaos that had suddenly erupted, Xu Shuanglin quietly stood where he was, suddenly revealing an extremely bright smiling face. He smiled and said, “What a scene of a tree falling and monkeys scattering.”

Mo Ran suddenly turned around and saw Xu Shuanglin snap his fingers, causing the colorful memory fragments to gather in his palm like millions of snowflakes.

Once again, the sea of flames returned to normal. In the sky, the Seamless Hell’s Heavenly Rift still did not close. It still continued to emit a golden-red flow, slowly spreading out into the forest.

Mo Ran stared at Xu Shuanglin and suddenly felt a chill run down his spine.

There was something wrong with the look in this person’s eyes. This look was too familiar…

In his previous life, he was at Sisheng Peak, he was at the empty Wushan Palace. After Chu Wanning died, he would look at himself in the mirror and see a pair of terrifying eyes.

The eyes that were suffused with madness and bloodlust, giving up on themselves, wanting everyone to die for their own sake.

“You want to destroy the Rufeng Sect?”

Hearing Mo Ran ask this, Xu Shuanglin’s reaction was only to rub his two toes against each other.

Then he smiled.

“So what if I am? I destroyed my own home, so how can you be in charge of it?”

“Your own home…”

Xu Shuanglin walked over to Nangong Liu and grabbed him by his collar. He pulled him up from the ground and said with raised eyelids, “That’s right, my own house.”

He forced Nangong Liu to face him. Then, he raised his other hand and slowly, inch by inch, from under his neck, he began to slowly tear, bit by bit…

Sssii.

In the end, with a light sound, an exquisite human skin made from the skin of a hundred-year-old serpent demon was ripped off, revealing the back of its face.

Nangong Liu’s body first trembled before he began shaking violently. His breathing was erratic, but he managed to drag out bits and pieces of his voice with great difficulty.

“You… It’s you…?! You. No… Die? You actually… You actually…”

“I’m not dead. You’re still alive. How could I possibly die before you?” Xu Shuanglin said with a smile, “I’m just too much stronger than you in every aspect, including my lifespan. You’re rotten to the ground, so I’ll live a good life. What? It has been a long time since we last met. Are you so happy that you can’t say anything else?”

He produced a flame and casually burned that human skin and mask. The flame spread all the way until it reached his fingertips, but he did not care

nor feel any pain. He shook his hand and pressed his burnt black fingertip to Nangong Liu's lips, then crooked his head and said with a smile.

"Sect Leader Immortal, long time no see… Or I should call you. 'Brother?'"

Ch. 169 Shizun, the First Forbidden Technique

“Nangong Xu!”

Amongst the crowd that had yet to leave, there were some older people who suddenly reacted and exclaimed, “It’s him?”

“It’s Nangong Xu…”

“Didn’t he die a long time ago?”

“Luo Fenghua personally killed him that year… How could he… How can he still be alive?”

Ye Wangxi was even more shocked. Her pretty face was pale and her lips were moving. After a while, she shook her head with tears in her eyes and stepped back, “Foster father…”

Xu Shuanglin stared at Ye Wangxi, then smiled at her. “Little Ye, come to father’s side. Father won’t hurt you.”

“Don’t you dare touch her again!” Suddenly, someone shouted, and Ye Wangxi’s wrist was grabbed. He turned around, and his eyes were filled with endless pain, dripping blood. “Ye Wangxi, get behind me.”

Xu Shuanglin smiled. “My good nephew, why is it that your temper is not like your father’s at all, only like your mother’s?”

“Shut up! You are not worthy of mentioning my mother!”

“Why am I not worthy?” Xu Shuanglin said slowly, “Did you know that the person your mother liked the most was not your father, but me?”

“AHHHH!”

Seeing the twisted fury and disgust on the young man’s face, and the crazed and painful look in his eyes, Xu Shuanglin actually enjoyed it. It was as if he was being nourished by such deep-seated hatred, and couldn’t help but laugh out loud.

“Your father destroyed my reputation and stole everything from me, but so what? The Door of the Noble Wind… The Rufeng Sect was still in his hands as they walked towards the end of the evening. Hate me, pay me back, hate me — Big Brother! Hahahaha — do you think that the pitiful Nangong Xu died that year? Do you think that I will obediently lie in the grave and watch you two roam freely and contentedly in this Yang World?”

His smile suddenly tightened as he spat.

“In your dreams!”

As he spoke, he walked around the dying Nangong Liu, who was still unbreakable, and grabbed the lapels of his big brother’s clothes, just like he was lifting a puddle of mud.

“What use would it be for such a waste to bring down the brilliant scholar of the Wind Sect? Sect Leader… Heh, what a joke! As the Sect Leader, I have been toying with him for so many years. If I say I want it, then I’ll just pout my butt like a dog and he’ll obediently find it for me.” He smilingly patted Nangong Liu’s bloody cheek. His smile was very intimate, but his eyes were shining with a sinister light. “Big Brother, you really are a lustful coward. A good-for-nothing snack.”

At the side, the Sect Leader, Jiang Xi, said, “Your Excellency’s goal is only to destroy the one hundred years old foundation of the Rufeng Sect?”

Xu Shuanglin turned around and blinked. “Hundred years of foundation? What did that matter? With their foundation destroyed, they could start over. Once the 72 cities were burnt down, they could start over again. Only when a person’s heart is dead will they be reduced to dust, and once the wind blows, they will scatter. That would be great.” He paused for a moment, smiled brightly, and said:

“I’m going to destroy all of your hearts.”

These words were said in an insidious manner. Coupled with his radiant face, it made people shudder in fear. The others had yet to react, but Nangong Si could no longer restrain himself.

His eyes burned with endless karmic flames, filled with despair and smoke. Those eyes contained only hatred and madness, not the slightest bit of lust. The sound of a jade flute, a three-meter-tall demon wolf cutting the wind and breaking the waves came out from the forest, leaping towards Nangong Si. Nangong Si jumped up onto his back, but before he could even sit still, his figure had already flashed by.

“Man Tuo, summon him!” With his shout, a shining Divine Martial Bow appeared in his palm. Nangong Si held the demon wolf tightly, mounted on the back of the wolf, his body straightened, and he brandished the Jade Bow Mantua, his face filled with crazy hatred. In an instant, he shot three arrows consecutively, aiming at Xu Shuanglin’s vitals.

Xu Shuanglin laughed, “My liege, you are very naughty.”

He dodged two arrows and saw that the third arrow was unable to pass. However, he was not in a hurry. He grabbed his brother’s limp body and blocked the first arrow.

After all, he was his own father. No matter how heartless the other party was, it was still a habit that was carved into his bones for him. He could not help but tighten his body as his temples throbbed.

“Do you still want to play with uncle?” Xu Shuanglin, however, was very friendly. Smiling, he said, “Uncle will accompany you.”

“Nangong Xu! I’ll kill you!”

“Kids, what’s the point of shouting for a fight?” His words were light, but Xu Shuanglin’s movements were not slow at all as he began to call out to his nephew.

In merely a few moves, his speed caused all of the surrounding cultivators to be dumbstruck. Some people could not help but think — no wonder when Nangong Liu took over the position of sect head, his attitude toward being a younger brother had to distort — the spirit energy of these two brothers was like heaven and earth. The difference was like the difference between clouds and mud.

“So powerful.”

“Didn’t Nangong Xu secretly learn his brother’s spell back then? How could he have such ability?”

“He is on par with the number one Grandmaster…”

There were a few people who wanted to help Nangong Si and attack him, but at this moment, all of them withdrew their attacks. There were also some who were more astute, thinking that the calamity that had befallen the Rufeng Sect could no longer be solved, they took advantage of the chaos to run away. This kind of mentality could be felt very quickly. In a

short moment, all of the cultivators that had left immediately ran away. They all disappeared without a care for the fellow disciples who had been turned into pawns and had yet to regain their senses.

In the blink of an eye, there were only a few people left in the hunting grounds. Mo Ran turned his head and saw that he, Chu Wanning and Ye Wangxi had not left.

No, there was also Jiang Xi.

This was something he did not expect. Jiang Xi was the richest man in the world, the leader of the Linling Flower Island, the world's most proficient merchant, and also the leader of the largest sect in the cultivation world, excluding the Rufeng Sect.

He didn't expect him to be willing to care about such a thankless stall.

"Sect Leader Jiang…"

A slightly trembling voice startled Mo Ran even more. He turned his head to look and did not notice that there was a person hiding behind the orange tree. Although his face was pale and his lips were trembling, he forced himself not to leave.

Li Wuxin?!

As the leader of one of the lowest ranked sects in the Upper Cultivation World, Li Wuxin swallowed his saliva. His yellow face was covered in sweat as he looked at the remaining people with uncertainty, "Are we going up together?"

Jiang Xi did not answer immediately. His gaze quickly swept across the remaining people before he spoke decisively, "Palace Master Li, come with

me. I'll go save those sleeping chess pieces. You'll be responsible for bringing them all to the complete location on the sword."

"Good, good, good."

"As for Chu-zongshi and Mo-zongshi…"

Chu Wanning said, "Mo Ran, go help Nangong Si. Once I fix the Heavenly Rift, I'll immediately come help you."

This Heavenly Rift was different from the ones in Butterfly Town, there were no hundreds of evil spirits surging around, only a golden red hell flowing around, so it was not dangerous, but the tear was huge, and it was more suitable for Chu Wanning to repair it.

The twenty-odd young cultivators that were used as chess pieces collapsed limply to the ground. With a flick of Jiang Xi's green sleeve, thousands of powder was scattered on the ground to stabilize their weak states. Then, he turned his head to Li Wuxin and said, "I'll have to trouble you."

Li Wuxin nodded his head, summoning a heavy sword shining with a dark green light. He chanted an incantation, and the heavy sword that could only carry two or three people suddenly expanded by dozens of feet, hanging in the air. Jiang Xi carried the people to his sword hilt one by one. It was Xue Meng's turn at the end, but Li Wuxin's weapon could not support him.

Li Wuxin said, "I can't carry it anymore. There are too many of us, let's talk after I return from this trip."

Jiang Xi glanced at the battle that was not far away. Fire was flying everywhere, and the spirit energy flow was becoming increasingly

terrifying. The surrounding orange trees were being destroyed one after another, and it was obvious that the battle would soon spread to this area.

There was nothing he could do. Lowering his head, he looked at Xue Meng in disgust and said, “Forget it. You go. I’ll take the rest of the trash.”

Once finished, he called out in a low voice: “Xuehuang, summon here.”

A silver sword covered in blue light suddenly appeared under his feet. “Xuehuang” was extremely luxurious and exquisite, the sword hilt was thin, and the decorations were exquisite beyond compare, but it was obviously not good at carrying weights. Jiang Xi held the unconscious Xue Meng in his arms. Thinking of how this person had talked back to him before, and how he was the son of Madam Wang and Xue Zhengyong, he couldn’t hide his disgust, and his disdain was written all over his face.

Li Wuxin: “…”

Seeing Sect Leader Jiang like this, shouldn’t the sword be halfway through, pick the highest point and throw the Young Master of Sisheng Peak down into mash?

“What are you looking at? Hurry up and leave. We need to send them out early and come back to help.” Jiang Xi said with a gloomy face, “We can’t just let the Rufeng Sect be wiped out like that.”

The two Divine Martial Weapons soared into the air, carrying the youths of the Spiritual Flow. Then, they flew into the distance.

At the same time, Chu Wanning had sealed the Hell Heavenly Rift Sundering to the last phase, and the fight between Mo Ran and Xu Shuanglin was reaching its climax. Mo Ran’s power was strong, and

Nangong Si's killing intent was even more resolute. Although Xu Shuanglin's Tao technique was powerful, he was still unable to defend himself when surrounded by the two of them.

As he was struggling to make ends meet, Xu Shuanglin shouted at Ye Wangxi, "Ye, what are you trying to do? Do you really want to see your foster father die at the hands of others? Hurry up and help me!"

Ye Wangxi clenched her fingers into a fist, her expression pained. Her entire body was trembling, but she did not move forward. Instead, she retreated step by step.

"Are you really going to stand by idly and watch? Do you forget who brought you back from the orange grove when you were a child, raised you, and gave you a name?"

"…No."

She was on the verge of collapsing, but because she had been strong since she was young, both the Sect Leader and the Elders treated her like a man and raised her. Now that she had met with such an unexpected situation, she still persisted.

However, it was as if her flesh and blood had already shattered. At this moment, it was as if when someone lightly touched her, and all the muscles in her body would peel off from her bones and crush into mud.

Seeing her like this, Xu Shuanglin silently cursed, but did not force her. Instead, he turned his head and began to fight even more ferociously with the other two.

"Clang!"

The saber in his hand suddenly emitted an ear-piercing metallic sound. The top-grade weapon from the Taxue Palace on Mount Kunlun could no longer hold on. It shattered into pieces under the force of the vine and fell to the ground.

Mo Ran said coldly, “What else can you use to fight?”

He suddenly raised his head and saw that Chu Wanning had completely filled up the crack in the sky. The night sky above the Hunting Forest returned to its normal state, and the hellish lava that had lost its spiritual flow of the underworld turned into a golden red, drifting about like fireflies in the forest.

The stars were all over the sky. Chu Wanning floated down from the night sky, his dark ceremonial robe fluttered in the wind, his face was as white as a porcelain plate, his face was handsome and unparalleled.

However, no matter how handsome he was, it could not conceal the killing intent emanating from him.

“Damn.” Xu Shuanglin gritted his teeth.

Just Mo-zongshi was more than enough for him. With another, such as Chu-zongshi, who in the entire cultivation world would be able to fight against them one on one?

Xu Shuanglin took a step back, then suddenly used the knife to cut open his palm, squeezing out some blood. He rubbed the curse mark on his forehead and softly said, “Still not coming to save me? How long will it drag on for?!”

Then, he grabbed at the air, his fingernail suddenly increasing by a few inches. With a “pu” sound, he tore apart Luo Fenghua’s body that was lying on the lake surface, pulling out his spirit core with blood dripping from his body, putting it into his bosom. Then, he quickly jumped back, grabbed his elder brother who was still half alive, removed the barrier around his feet, and jumped into the spring lake.

Mo Ran immediately came back to his senses — the godly martial blade, “Bu’gui”, which he used to open the Heavenly Rift, was stuck at the bottom of the lake!

Even though he was dragging a living corpse, he immediately grabbed the pitch-black blade floating in the lake. The moment he appeared, another rift suddenly appeared in the sky.

Chu Wanning frowned, “Heavenly Rift?”

What he said was not certain. The crack was very small and was only as tall as a person. It was different from the normal Heavenly Rift of the Infinite Hells, and there was no Yin Qi coming out of it.

Xu Shuanglin threw a splash and leapt into the air. He carried his brother in one hand, and with the Divine Martial Blade in the other, he slashed down with a stream of sword Qi, forcing the three people who were chasing after him to a halt. He took this opportunity to push himself upwards, and from the narrow crevice, an extremely beautiful hand suddenly extended and tightly gripped Xu Shuanglin’s arm.

“…The Time and Space Gate of Life and Death!”

His mind flashed like a flash of lightning, and Chu Wanning’s eyes widened. He had always been calm and collected, so even if he had seen a beautiful

chess match, he would not be this shocked. However, the color of his face faded in an instant, and his sleeves curled into a fist.

As for Mo Ran, he felt as if a bucket of cold water had been poured over him. He turned his head and asked, “What?!”

How was this possible?!

This was the strongest of the three forbidden techniques. Rumor has it that it can tear apart time and space, causing people who are not in the air to become unlucky and appear at the same time. This was a forbidden technique that had long been lost in the cultivation world.

The Time and Space Gates of Life and Death!

Ch. 170 Shizun, Don't Look, It's Dirty

In the blink of an eye, Xu Shuanglin was already dragged into another space by the hand that came out of the Gate of Life and Death. Although Nangong Si wanted to give chase, it was impossible to do so.

The door was shut.

There was nothing left in the night sky but a small piece of Xu Shuanglin's clothes that he had not brought in before the gate of life and death had closed. At this moment, they were floating in the dead silence, falling into the lake.

Slowly sinking into the lake…

"How is this possible? How can there be anyone in this world who can truly control the Space-Time Gate of Life and Death?"

As Taxian-Jun in his previous life, he was very clear that there were three forbidden techniques in this world: Zhenlong Chess, Secret Technique of Rebirth, and the Gate of Life and Death.

Although the first two forbidden techniques were difficult to learn, they weren't unheard-of in the cultivation world. For example, in his past life, there was always someone who could use these two techniques like master Huaizui.

There were very few records about the Life and Death School. The most recent one was thousands of years ago, when a Grandmaster died because he loved his daughter.

Thus, he opened this forbidden door, wanting to bring his daughter, who was living in another time and space, back to her own world.

However, his actions were caught by him in the air and time. As her father, how could the 'he' of that world allow his beloved daughter to be snatched away? In this desperate battle between the two, the spatial crack that had opened was twisted and deformed.

After the Grandmaster came back, he collapsed. From then on, he sealed the scroll in the Flame Emperor Divine Wood, and he became the last person in the endless river of time to completely master the 'Portal of Life and Death'.

During these past few years, more and more cultivators believed that there was no such thing as a space-time distortion spell. Instead, it was Mo Ran from his previous world. Because of the boundless Tao technique, he had actually used the remnant scroll in his hand to tear a similar crack open with his own strength…

Mo Ran had once tried to throw a rabbit inside, trying to move it to a location thousands of miles away. The rabbit had passed on the message, but because of the instability of the crack, the rabbit had turned upside down when it came out, its innards had turned upside down, its fur had turned inside out and became a bloody mess, and its heart was still thumping…

After that, he tried many more times, and there were at least five or six times that something went wrong. The moment something went wrong, it would be extremely disgusting; some parts of the body would split, some parts would be shattered, and some parts of the head would soon appear, but the body would be an hour late.

Almost everyone felt that Mo Ran had recovered and become proficient in the “Gate of Life and Death”, but he himself was not sure: he had not seen the first forbidden technique from thousands of years ago, but based on the historical records, he felt that the technique he had copied was far from the real Gate of Life and Death.

Chu Wanning rushed to the surface of the lake and picked up the piece of cloth Xu Shuanglin had left behind. He opened his eyes and carefully examined it, before letting out a sigh of relief. Soon after, he became even more depressed.

He shook his head and said, “It’s not a complete Portal. That person should have only grasped half of the remnant scroll. According to the spiritual energy that was left behind on this cloth, it should only be a Gate of Space and not a Gate of Time.”

“What do you mean?”

“In other words, this spell is very different from a real forbidden spell. I can only sense the remnant Spiritual Energy of Space. In other words, Nangong Xu was instantly dragged to another place by someone through this rift in space.”

Isn’t this similar to the Gate of Life and Death that he had restored in his previous life? If that was all, it wasn’t impossible.

However, a shadow still lingered in his heart. He asked, “What if it is the true Forbidden Technique? What will happen when it is used?”

Chu Wanning’s expression became more subtle for some reason. He paused for a moment and then said, “If it is the real Gate of Life and Death,

then it can do more than just tear apart space. It can even take Nangong Xu to another world."

However, upon hearing these words, Mo Ran's expression changed slightly. He then pursed his lips and did not say another word.

In his previous life, he didn't have much knowledge, and the documents he had gathered were quite believable. As for the rumor that the great Grandmaster had torn open the Heavenly Rift and brought back the daughter of another world, he didn't really think that it was reliable.

Now that the words had come out of Chu Wanning's mouth, Mo Ran was finally convinced. However, this sort of certainty brought a chill down his spine.

In the five years that Chu Wanning was gone, Mo Ran had read many classics. In fact, he was feeling weird about the mystery of his rebirth.

He had never seen true rebirth in his previous life. He had thought that the so-called "rebirth" would be similar to his own rebirth, going back to a certain month before death.

However, in his entire life, he had witnessed Master Huaizui casting this forbidden spell. There was a place in Mo Ran that he could not figure out: Shizun's rebirth technique was to bring back Chu Wanning's soul from the Underworld, back to that body that did not rot nor suffer any serious injuries, and then continue to live in this world.

This rebirth was different from what he had experienced.

In his previous life, if someone was to use the same method of rebirth as master Huaizui to save him, then he should have been reborn in the

Wushan Palace. These people should still be dead, and no one would be by his side.

Because of this, he guessed that there was more than one method of rebirth in this world, which resulted in him being reborn in a different way from Chu Wanning. However, at this moment, after Chu Wanning confirmed that the most unknown of the three forbidden techniques, the 'Gate of Life and Death', he had a very scary thought.

Could it be that not only had he been reborn, but he had also been affected by the Gate of Life and Death, tearing apart the space and time of his evil soul that should have been suffering in another time and space. That year when nothing had happened and he could still turn back in time?

If that was the case, then wouldn't all his actions be in the eyes of the person behind the scenes? Everything, including his rebirth, had been planned by that person and watched silently from behind the scenes.

Mo Ran felt a chill run down his spine.

However, before he could think about it, he suddenly heard an earth-shaking explosion from the distant land of tribulation and fire.

"Let's go take a look," Chu Wanning said.

Before he finished speaking, the burning 72 cities of the Rufeng Sect seemed to have been set on fire by Xu Shuanglin. Suddenly, the fire intensified as it soared dozens of feet into the sky, its light reaching into the heavens!

At this very moment, even if Mo Ran and the others did not rush over, even if they were several hundred miles away from the door, they would

still be able to see the raging inferno that would burn through the dark night.

Xue Zhengyong had already brought Madam Wang out of the sea of fire, but when he looked back, he saw the fire had coiled into two intertwined bodies, a man and a woman slowly taking shape. Xue Zhengyong was stunned, “This is… What’s going on?”

As a member of a distinguished family, Madam Wang had seen many precious artifacts. Her expression immediately changed as she said, “They are a kind of scroll that can be used to record memories. This kind of scroll does not need any magic to support it, it was laid down by the caster beforehand. As long as it is ignited by the Heaven Calamity Flame, the memories sealed inside will appear in the fire.”

“Continue to echo?” Xue Zhengyong couldn’t take it anymore. Looking at the door of the Rufeng Sect that was engulfed by the tribulation fire, a trace of pity was revealed in his eyes.

When others revealed the truth, they would find a few witnesses and pull them together to tell them a few words. Then, they would throw away a few pieces of evidence. This matter was about to come to an end.

As for Xu Shuanglin? He was a lunatic, making scrolls of all the memories he had been searching for and setting fire to the sky so that the whole world could see how dirty and filthy his home was. Using the grand sea of fire as a canvas, he magically expanded the shameful whispers of his temples into a thunderous roar, so loud that even deaf people would be able to hear it.

“Just what is this Xu Shuanglin up to?” Xue Zhengyong sat on the extended iron fan with Madam Wang in the middle of the air. His face was lit up by the blazing flames, and sometimes darkened by the flames. He mumbled, “Could it be that he hasn’t found out enough about the Rufeng Sect?”

Madam Wang, “…”

“Enough, this is really enough. The Rufeng Sect has already been torn apart by him to such an extent that they became the laughingstock of the cultivation world. Why is he still not letting this opportunity go…”

However, as the voice of a woman rumbled from the sea of fire, the cultivators who escaped from the Red Lotus Purgatory and watched the show in the air were all stunned.

Xue Zhengyong was also stunned.

“Brother Liu, we are already so old, why… why are you still not so serious…”

“Hmm…”

Along with this soft groan, the two blurry figures in the sea of fire gradually became clearer. The tribulation fire of the 72 cities of the Rufeng Sect spread out the two naked bodies, and just the five bats on the woman’s white arm were enlarged to the size of a building. The hair of the bats on them could be clearly seen.

Everyone was dumbfounded as they turned their heads to look at one of the ten great sects of the cultivation world, the Jiangdong Hall.

The disciples of the Jiangdong Hall were even more frightened. Their eyes were all as big as bells. They stared blankly at their Sect Leader, Qi Liangji.

This newly appointed Sect Leader's face was ashen. She stood on her sword like she was made out of wood, standing in the night wind.

On her arm, clearly, was the ornament of the pentathlon.

She had never thought that her private affair with Nangong Liu would be seen by others. Furthermore, they had even made a memory scroll for her. She was now naked, completely naked.

It was made public.

She was instantly stunned.

The same was true for Mo Ran. The moment he appeared in the air, he blinded Chu Wanning.

"Don't look."

Chu Wanning: "…"

This was almost a subconscious action. He was full of possessiveness towards Chu Wanning. He wanted to seize this person's body, their breathing, their moans, and the broken sound of their lips. Now, he wanted to possess a pure heart like Chu Wanning.

"Don't look, it's very dirty."

Wasn't it very dirty? Chu Wanning thought. So what if he covered his eyes? The ambiguous voices of a man and a woman's lovemaking still echoed clearly in his ears.

Chu Wanning kept silent, letting Mo Ran place both of his hands in front of him. He tried to maintain his composure, but his face unconsciously turned

a little hot.

“Ah… Quick, quick… Ah, ah. Mmm…”

Mo Ran: “…”

Chu Wanning: “…”

Perhaps it was because his eyes were covered, but the other senses were all the clearer. Sect Leader Qi’s voice was like a tiny fluffy claw, climbing up a person’s spine, causing a tingling sensation wherever it passed. It was unknown if it was on purpose, but her voice was filled with passion. To her, a man’s invasion was like the thick roots of a huge tree, deeply buried into the fertile soil. The gurgling spring water beneath the soil was drilled out, and the air was tainted with the fishy smell of a heavy rain.

This sound made Mo Ran very anxious and did not know what to do.

He wanted to continue covering Chu Wanning’s eyes, but he also wanted to cover his ears.

He wanted to cover his ears with his hands, but he didn’t want to take them away from him.

What was even worse was that in this suddenly alluring atmosphere, Mo Ran suddenly felt that the thing he longed for the most was neither to cover his ears nor to cover his eyes. There was a violent tiger wolf in his chest, growling and urging him on.

Although the timing was not right, he suddenly realized that what he wanted the most was to grab him from behind, hug him tightly, intimately rub his back, eagerly suck on his ears, and then pull his face over and fiercely hug and kiss him.

His eyes were dark as he stared at the nearby Chu Wanning. His breathing gradually became more uncomfortable.

Although Chu Wanning was strong and fierce, his physique was no longer his opponent. If he had any ulterior motives, then Chu Wanning would not have a chance to fight back. This stubborn man's accumulated strength could only be used to suppress the moan in his mouth.

He endured to the limit, but he could not escape the fate of being crushed into nothing.

The person in front of him did not know what was going through his mind. To ease the awkwardness, Chu Wanning cursed under his breath, "How outrageous."

"Yes." Mo Ran's throat was dry, but his eyes were very moist. He echoed in a low voice, "Indeed, very outrageous."

"That Qi Liangji was clearly a married woman. Her husband had just passed away and she had become the head of the Jiangdong Hall. Who would've thought that she would actually act in such a manner when she turned around?" Chu Wanning was extremely disdainful, as he simply said, "Ridiculous."

"Yes." Even though he knew it was not the right time to do so, he couldn't help but to crave for it. Mo Ran didn't even notice that his lips had gotten closer, almost at the back of Chu Wanning's neck. "It's ridiculous."

He indifferently swept the sky with his gaze. Nangong Liu and Qi Liangji's Spring Palace was still violently churning.

He vaguely recalled that Qi Liangji seemed to be even older than Nangong Liu. Her husband was Nangong Liu's sworn brother. According to seniority, Nangong Liu should be calling her sister-in-law.

He didn't know how these two seemingly innocent people managed to get together.

Just as he was thinking this, Nangong Liu's hoarse voice came from within the tribulation fire. He raised his eyes and saw that these two shameless people had changed into different positions to make love. Nangong Liu purposely seduced her and said, "If you still want, then call me big brother."

"?" Mo Ran was truly shocked.

Can you… Is that so?

But she was clearly so much older than him. How… how could she call him elder brother?

This cultivator had probably underestimated Nangong Liu's capabilities and also looked down on Qi Liangji's face. This woman must have gone crazy from all the work she had done, to the point she did not hesitate at all. She panted and moaned, "Big brother… Brother… Don't you dare torture me again… Ah…"

"…" Even Mo Ran, who was as thick as a city wall, couldn't help but blush.

At this moment, Chu Wanning's soft, long eyelashes slightly trembled on his palm, as if he knew the warmth and itch in his heart and wanted to use it to scratch the numbness in his bones.

However, those two eyelashes were too soft and light. They moved a little, but the itch did not dissipate. Instead, they became a little too light for him to stop. Mo Ran was stunned for a moment. He looked at the back of the man's neck, and his pale skin actually seemed to exude a faint pink glow in the darkness.

He blinked, and his heart pounded like a drum.

He did not dare to look again. Mo Ran lowered his eyelashes and his eyes were pitch black under them. They were like burnt ashes with a blazing temperature.

Under the darkness, there were layers of starfire, waiting for Chu Wanning to give him a gust of wind filled with love and desire. The starfire would burn out of the embers and the orange glow would set the prairie ablaze.

Mo Ran suddenly felt regret —

Why didn't he find out about Nangong Liu's perverted intentions in his previous life?

If he had seen this earlier, he would have forced Chu Wanning into a corner and let this man lie on top of him, gasping for breath and calling him 'Gege'.

Then, he recalled that in his entire life, Chu Wanning had actually called him brother before. Not only did he call him brother, he even called him "Shixiong".

However, at that time, he didn't know the real body of Xia Sini, and still thought that the youngest junior brother was the youngest junior brother. Now that he looked back, his heart was burning with passion.

He was bold and ambitious, and even though he knew it was impossible, he couldn't help but think about it.

Chu Wanning was lying on the bed with his forehead glowing with a few wisps of sweat on his hair, his phoenix eyes were opened slightly, leaving only a ray of gaze to look at him, there were grievances and stubbornness in his eyes, and then passion burned up, burned out the grievances and reservations, turned into a thin wet red at the corner of his eyes.

Chu Wanning's lips were half-lipped, he tried his best to bite him, but in the end, he opened his mouth again and called out to him, "Gege…"

Mo Ran: "…"

He didn't know when he let go of the other person, but he probably knew that if he continued to cover his eyes like this, he really wouldn't be able to hold back from doing something outrageous.

Love was originally an extremely difficult emotion to suppress, not to mention that Mo Ran had once tasted it before, he knew how it tasted like when one's soul was corroded.

Chu Wanning turned around to look at him, his cheeks were red, but his chin was slightly raised, his eyes were bright and clear, showing a little arrogance.

"What's the matter with you?"

Mo Ran glanced at his lips, then coughed lightly. He turned his head and said, "Nothing."

"Have you talked about that matter with the elders under your tutelage before?"

Nangong Liu lazily asked as he caressed Qi Liangji's hair.

Qi Liangji opened her soft eyes and asked, "What is it?"

"Look at you, even though you know what I'm doing, you still want to beat around the bush." Nangong Liu said, "What else could it be? Didn't you tell me that after you became the Sect Leader, you would start to incorporate Jiangdong Hall into the Rufeng Sect?"

"This one." Qi Liangji smiled and said, "Don't worry. I just succeeded the position not too long ago. The Sect Leader's ring hasn't even warmed up yet."

"You have to hurry. When our two sects become one, I will let you be the number one protector of the Rufeng Sect. When that happens, under one person, above tens of thousands of people…"

As Nangong Liu said this, he couldn't help but touch her waist.

However, Qi Liangji was unhappy. Although her face was flushed red, she raised her hand to stop him, "It was not easy to climb to the position of sect leader. You also didn't let me stay for long. You're not going to marry me properly and bring me home, so that I can become the wife of Rufeng Sect."

Nangong Liu said in embarrassment, "You also know my temper. If I want to continue, I definitely won't agree. Furthermore, with our current statuses, marriage is not a personal matter. If someone were to speak of it, who knows what kind of nasty words they would say."

"Awful?!" Qi Liangji's eyes were filled with anger as she raised her head and glared at him, "Are you afraid that I won't be scared of you? Don't you

remember how my husband died? Do you think I'm only here to take over as the head of this Jiangdong Hall? Nangong Liu, you should know how I've treated you since you were young!"

"Alright, alright, alright. Calm down, calm down."

"How can I not be angry at you? Back then, in order to make your damned father consider you a son of a bitch, you married that little bitch Rong Yan! I… I have no hope and married my senior brother. Now that I have finally killed both of them, do you really only want me to be your protector after the two sects merge?"

"Liangji…"

"I refuse! Whoever wants to be the protector, you have to marry me! That son of yours, Nangong Si is unruly and untamed, he is the same as that slut Rong Yan, do you really plan to let him succeed the position of sect leader?" Qi Liangji said arbitrarily, "I'm not afraid of the long term. So what if we're a widow and a widower? What if we get married? To whom? Not only will I marry you, I will also give birth to eight more Young Masters. Nangong Liu, do you want me to marry and have our children or be with that slut's child?"

Ch. 171 Shizun, Rufeng Sect Is Dead

Nangong Liu was backed into the corner by her, so she could only coax her: “Alright, of course I love you. However, this matter needs to be considered carefully. We should do as we agreed earlier. You should first use the Sect Leader’s order.

“Let the Jiangdong Hall be shaded by the Rufeng Sect, and after the two sects merge, we’ll…”

“No way!” Qi Liangji said with reddened eyes, “Back then, I… I believed you, so what? You turned around and married Rong Yan… Not this time! You have to give me an answer. Are you going to marry me or not?”

“…”

Seeing that he was hesitating, she became even more furious and shouted, “Nangong Liu, how long are you going to wait? I can kill my husband for you and me — and you? You don’t even dare to nod your head?!”

Everyone was shocked when they saw this.

Xue Zhengyong was also extremely shocked. He asked Madam Wang in a low voice, “The former Sect Leader of the Jiangdong Hall was actually killed by her?”

This time, the Jiangdong Hall was in deep trouble. Although the former sect head had died, there were still many of his old subordinates in the sect. Not to mention his two brothers.

“You were the one who killed him?”

“You, how can you bear it! He may be ten years older than you, but he treats you very well, you — you serpent woman! Return my big brother’s life!”

and there’s a fight going on here,

However, the fire didn’t stop there. A pair of frightening fragmented scrolls spread out. Under the boundless light, those smelly and unsightly memories appeared one after another in front of the people. These things were not only related to the Rufeng Sect. It was also related to almost all the sects in the Upper Cultivation World, as well as the countless famous cultivators that had come to visit the Rufeng Sect.

After the Jiangdong Hall, there was the Wubei Temple, the Fire Phoenix Pavilion, the Bitan Manor… Even the usually elegant and elegant Taxue Palace of Kunlun was lit up with the shameful deeds of high level disciples and elders. Apart from Nangong Xu’s own memories, all the memories he had gathered over the years were now displayed naked in front of everyone.

There were even records of the collusion between Nangong Liu and the former head of the Wubei Temple, Tian Chan, in the past.

“Shizun, tomorrow is the Spiritual Mountain Competition, winning or losing is extremely important for me. Father originally thought I was stupid, so if I lost to brother’s sword during the event, then I’m afraid… it is no longer fated with the position of Sect Leader.”

“Benefactor Nangong, there is no need to panic. You have memorized all the scrolls that this old monk has given to you?”

“I remember.”

“Then tomorrow, you don’t have to worry about winning or losing. As long as you put all your strength into using the techniques on the scroll, your little brother will naturally not be a match for you.”

Nangong Liu said in a puzzled manner, “Junior is slow-witted. Shizun, please enlighten me.”

“That spell scroll is an original secret technique created by your younger brother, Nangong Xu, who has been practicing diligently and is determined to make a mark in the Spiritual Mountain Competition.”

“Ah!” Nangong Liu was extremely shocked, “Since it was created by Brother Xu, then I…… Then how can I use his magic to defeat him?”

Master Tian Chan gave a slight smile. “Nangong Xu is a proud and aloof person. After learning this spell, he was never willing to interact with others. He would hide in the cave and improve himself day and night. He said that this spell was created by him, who would believe him?”

“…”

“You are different, Benefactor Nangong. With me and the Fourth Palace Master of the Taxue Palace as guarantors, as long as we have seen you execute this technique before, he will be killed in one bite. This technique is something you have studied with all your heart, and even if your brother has a brilliant tongue, he will still not be able to escape from the crime of ‘stealing brother’s unique immortal technique’.”

Grandmaster Tian Chan calmly said.

“Once his reputation is dirty, it will be pointed out by thousands of people, and he will never be able to rise again. What’s the use of winning the

competition?”

“So that’s how it is…” Nangong Liu suddenly opened his eyes wide and cupped his fists in thanks, “Thank you for your wise advice! After this junior succeeds in his position, he will not disappoint his Shizun’s covenant. After this matter is completed, the Rufeng Sect will form a good relationship with the Wubei Temple — a hundred years old!”

That scroll that covered the entire night tore apart every single person Xu Shuanglin hated, every single person who had offended him, and brought them to the eyes of the crowd. Whether it was the cultivators or the commoners near Rufeng Sect, they were all attracted by this flickering flame and saw all the ugly, stinky lice buried under the robes.

When they were were tearing the barrier of Ghost Realm, Xu Shuanglin said with a bright smile:

“I’m going to destroy all of your hearts.”

It was only at this moment that all the people finally understood what his sentence really meant.

With the name of Elder Shuanglin, Nangong Xu had hibernated the Rufeng Sect for so many years. His goal was not only to destroy the seventy-two cities, or even the hundred years of history.

What he wanted to destroy was all the people he hated.

All those who had betrayed him, all those who had slandered him, all those who, for public or private benefits, had forced him into a corner.

As for his elder brother, Nangong Liu, to have his head bitten off in this revenge scheme. Then one by one the Sect Leaders and Elders —

As long as they had done something that angered Xu Shuanglin, no matter who it was, no one would be able to escape this platform of fire.

In this night that was illuminated by the fire, Chu Wanning suddenly remembered a scene from Luo Xianxian's memory where a young man covered in blood laughed and said something.

From Linyi came a man, and at twenty years old his heart was already dead.

A talented youth with outstanding magic skills was never treated fairly. He was schemed against, murdered, and pushed aside by his own family. The spell that he had painstakingly created had been devoured, and those who had devoured his spell would end up pointing at him as a thief.

How ridiculous was this…

Heart dead at twenty…

On Jincheng Lake, in the midst of the peach blossoms, Xu Shuanglin's white piece had once laughed and said that it was a ghost that had crawled out of hell to take its life from a living person.

Looking around, all the sects and clans of the Upper Cultivation World were in a state of panic and chaos. The so-called 'tree falls and monkeys scatter' was not limited to the Rufeng Sect.

Xu Shuanglin had used the latter half of his life as dried wood to ignite this fire of vengeance.

He did it.

"Boom!"

Suddenly, there was an explosive sound. From the direction of the seventh city of the Rufeng Sect — Dark City, a beam of violet light pierced through the sky, causing everyone to be unable to open their eyes.

Ye Wangxi immediately frowned, “Not good!”

As she spoke and was about to ride her sword in the direction of the Dark City, Nangong Si grabbed her. That wild and untamed face of his had already looked extremely haggard and was on the verge of collapse in just a short night. However, he still gripped Ye Wangxi’s shoulder tightly and said hoarsely, “Don’t go over there.”

“But the evil spirits suppressed under the Golden Drum Tower are about to come out. The Rufeng Sect has imprisoned thousands of evil beings for hundreds of years. If they could break the seal and come to this world…” Ye Wangxi did not finish her sentence as she felt a chill run down her spine.

“What’s the use of you going?”

“I…”

“Ye Wangxi, you have done enough for the Rufeng Sect.” He raised his hand, and for a moment, it seemed as if he wanted to wipe off the dirt on Ye Wangxi’s face, but in the end, he only moved, not doing anything.

“Stop wasting your energy.” He said, “Golden Drum Tower requires the Sect Leader and the ten Elders to be able to stabilize themselves. If you go, you will only be sending yourself to your death.”

“I know that I am courting death, but even if I am courting death,” Ye Wangxi paused for a moment, her expression clearly showing that she was in great pain, “Even if I were courting death, I would also… I don’t want to

stand by and watch without doing anything. If the Golden Drum Tower was broken, the group of demons would descend, and the Rufeng Sect would… It had to be the target of thousands of attacks… You…"

"Do you think that if the Golden Drum Tower is not broken, the Rufeng Sect will not be targeted by so many people?" The corner of his mouth was stained with dried blood, and his smile became increasingly bleak.

"Don't be silly, the Rufeng Sect is already at the end of their road. Because I really…" Nangong Si closed his eyes, his eyelashes trembling and his throat choking, "I really don't want anyone else to die for this sect… It's not worth it…"

Before he could finish his sentence, he heard another rumbling from the direction of the Dark City. When he turned around, he saw thousands of bright white streams of light flying in all directions from the Golden Drum Tower and disappearing into the night.

Ye Wangxi lost all color in her eyes, "The Golden Drum Tower… It's going to fall…"

"Bang!"

The earth trembled and the ground beneath his feet began to crack. Along with the great demon that had been suppressed for over a hundred years in the pagoda and returned to the world, it turned into a powerful blood-red light, and that red light looked like a giant fish of amazing size, and its tail was like a blooming red lotus. The giant fish let out a earth-shattering roar, and the sound waves shook all of the leaves thousands of miles away, causing it to tremble, and it suddenly shot towards the East Sea, breaking the pagoda into thousands of broken bricks and rubble. Those with

imperial swords that were too close to the pagoda were fiercely overturned by the Great Demon's transformed wave and slapped into the burning fire, not even having time to scream before they were burnt into charred ash.

"What's that?"

"Gǔn"

The person next to him was upset, he held his sword tightly so as not to be thrown down by the sudden demon wind, and cursed: "Why do you run? Why do you want me to scram?"

"What the hell? I said it was a 'Gǔn'! One of the ancient vicious beasts! It was said that the first Sect Leader of the Rufeng Sect, Nangong Changying, had once subdued a beast in the East China Sea and imprisoned it in the Golden Drum Tower. I can't believe… I can't believe it's actually true!"

After the fierce beast appeared, even though its spiritual energy had not recovered, and it had been suppressed under the pagoda for a long time, it still had some lingering fear for the cultivators, so it did not stay for long before it fled towards the East Sea. However, the waves it created were not to be underestimated and burned. The calamity fire that was burning the Rufeng Sect was almost a few feet high by the wave of air, and the originally safe places were instantly scorched by the flames.

Xue Zhengyong had been in the battlefield for a long time, so he shouted immediately after seeing the situation: "Run! All of you, run!"

After he shouted, the steel fan flew off with Madam Wang in tow, and the rest of the cultivators started fleeing as well. However, there were also cultivators who were fighting with their lives on the line, such as Qi Liangji

and a few of the elders in their sect. They did not manage to escape, nor did they attempt to escape, and the moment they were engulfed by the tribulation fire, a deep hatred flashed in their eyes…

And so, it was completely annihilated.

Nangong Si leaped onto Naobaijin and extended his hand to Ye Wangxi, “Come up quickly!” He then turned around to look at Chu Wanning, “Grandmaster — you too —”

“If you can’t carry it, you can go first.”

“But…”

Mo Ran made a prompt decision, and said to Nangong Si: “Quickly go! I will bring Shizun out with me on the sword!”

Seeing that the fire was getting closer and closer to them, Nangong Si cursed under his breath and hugged Ye Wangxi from behind before disappearing into the darkness together with her on his demon wolf.

Trees were falling, the orange forest was burning with a crackling sound, and the wind was filled with the strange sounds of citrus. Without delay, Mo Ran began to draw his sword, and together with Chu Wanning, they headed towards the place where the fire had not yet reached.

Behind him, the Rufeng sect’s heavenly palace, glorious for a hundred years, just like that the ten thousand hectares of terraces and corridors and the majestic pastures, all in this billowing fire, vanished overnight.

Ch. 172 Shizun Does Not Eat Children

Because the storm raised by the Gǔn contributed to the fire, this catastrophe burned almost half of Linyi. Originally, the cultivators who were just there to attend the gathering had been fleeing in all directions on their flying swords, but the flames were still pressing down on them from behind.

It chased them relentlessly, and countless cultivators who could not endure the spiritual energy lost their lives in the battle against the raging flames.

Along the way, they flew past the Upper Cultivation World's villages and towns close to the Rufeng Sect. Those people didn't know what had happened, so when they saw the flames approaching from the direction of the Gate of Wind, they started to stumble and run away.

But how could their flesh and legs escape the tribulation fire?

"Father!"

"Abba — Abba!"

Everywhere they passed, there were wails and cries. Xue Zhengyong and his men had expanded their weapons to their maximum extent. The weapons were filled with the civilians of the Upper Cultivation World.

Madam Wang kept comforting him. "Don't cry, don't cry. Sit inside a bit. Be careful, hold onto each other and don't fall down again…"

However, no matter how big the iron fan was, it would only be this big. There were so many people in the town that could not be saved. Xue

Zhengyong knelt in front of the fan and tried to pull another crying child, but he failed.

The iron fan could not bear it and began to shake violently. He had no choice but to let go. He watched helplessly as the teary face full of hope was thrown far away.

Even though he was a tough guy, he couldn't help but bawl out, "Why? Why? Does a man who has been wronged need so many innocent people to be buried for him?" Xue Zhengyong was choked with sobs, his tears rolling down, "Is this not chaotic enough? So many dead… Isn't that enough…"

Madam Wang's eyes were also red. She held the two rescued children tightly in her arms on either side of her, but after those two children's parents lifted them up into the iron fan, they were unable to make it up in time. In the end, they were engulfed by the tribulation fire.

Many of them had already been caught up by the flames, and others had already escaped in other directions from the very beginning. Chu Wanning and Mo Ran were not here, and her eyes were filled with tears as she silently prayed for the two of them to be safe.

Not far away, the still unconscious Xue Meng was being carried by Jiang Xi. The light of the fire illuminated his face with all his senses. Jiang Xi's gorgeous sword was not heavy, it buzzed beneath his feet.

Jiang Xi glared at Xue Meng in disgust. He had already had the thought of throwing this brat down for a burn several times, but when he saw Madam Wang's pleading eyes on the iron fan, his face still darkened. He pursed his lips and didn't let go.

Xue Zhengyong cried as he tried to pull a child who was younger than him and might be able to carry him. However, despite his efforts, he was unable to do anything about it.

When he let go of another hand that was already in his grasp, Xue Zhengyong was on the verge of collapse. He knelt there, curled up his body, and cursed his body for his own weakness… However, at this moment, a silver red light flashed. Jiang Xi waved his hand and a bright light flashed from his sleeve, bringing the child Xue Zhengyong could not carry any more, to his sword.

That beautiful and resplendent longsword, Xuehuang's buzzing sound became even louder.

Jiang Xi did not have a good temper. He kicked it and said sternly, "What are you yelling for? If you have the guts, stand still and wait for the fire to come and burn you."

As expected, Xuehuang stopped ringing. It silently flew forward, carrying Jiang Xi and the other two people. However, the slender sword hilt seemed to be very strenuous, as if it could break at any time.

Jiang Xi flew to the side of Xue Zhengyong, gave him a look of disgust and scolded, "What is there to cry about as a man? If it can be saved, then it's saved. If it can't be saved, then so be it."

"Senior Brother…" Madam Wang stammered.

"What? Did I say something wrong?" Jiang Xi sneered, although he was extremely handsome, the smile on his face was extremely vicious, making him seem especially unreasonable, "If you had not followed him back then, and stayed with Guyue'ye, you would not have lost all your strength now,

to the point where you can't even use your own sword. If your place is vacated, your husband, the man who is so full of life, will be able to save one more person."

Madam Wang seemed to be stung. She abruptly lowered her face and slowly closed the curtain of her eyelashes, not saying another word.

In the opposite direction, far away from them, Mo Ran's sword had also expanded to its maximum size. Apart from Chu Wanning, the sword was also filled with ordinary citizens from the Upper Cultivation World.

Those people were trembling and crying as they stared blankly at their homes that had been swallowed up by the sea of fire, turning into flat land. The flames reflected the sparkling tears in their eyes. Closing their eyes, they began to wail.

Under such a solemn atmosphere, Mo Ran was silent and did not say a word. Unlike Xue Zhengyong, he didn't struggle any further. Knowing that it was impossible to burden more people, he stopped looking at the village and town below his feet.

"Up ahead is the sea. Shizun, where should we go?"

"Can you make it to the Flying Flower Island?"

Mo Ran nodded and said, "I can handle it, but I'm not familiar with the East Sea, so it will take a bit of effort to find it. Shizun, look after them, they are more clear-headed, their swords are too crowded, if they fall asleep, I'm afraid they will fall down."

Chu Wanning agreed, "Sure."

Mo Ran's imperial sword moved for more than two hours. When the sea level rose and the sun rose in the east, they broke through the clouds and saw a relatively small ring-shaped island on the clear blue sea surface.

He had finally arrived at the Flying Flower Island.

Although this island was under the command of the Rufeng Sect, it was in a desolate place with very few people. Most of them were fishermen who depended on the sea for a living, and there was only one large family. Across the raging sea, they all saw the great fire at the Rufeng Gate in the horizon. They all felt anxious, not knowing what had happened, so many residents looked around the courtyard, afraid that the sky might change and they wouldn't dare to fall asleep.

When dawn broke, the calamity did not affect them, but a long sword carried a group of people and they all landed on the wet beach. The person in the lead was a tall and handsome man. He looked like he had experienced a fierce battle with blood mottled on his face and stains on his clothes.

There were no cultivators on Flying Flower Island, only ordinary people. Thus, when they saw him, they were all somewhat afraid. They did not know whether he was good or evil, and why he had come.

"Aiya, why are their faces so dark…"

Someone whispered, sizing up the men, women, and children behind Mo Ran.

"It seems that he escaped from that great fire… Did you come from Linyi?"

A sturdy fisherman bravely approached and asked, “You guys… Are you people from the Rufeng Sect?”

“The Sisheng Peak.” Mo Ran handed the child in his arms over to Chu Wanning. The child was too young, so he couldn’t put him down. In order to prevent him from getting pushed down, Mo Ran had hugged him all the way when using Imperial Sword Technique. “Something happened to the Rufeng Sect, these… They are all residents of Linyi. It’s on fire, and the weight of our swords was limited. We really couldn’t save too many lives. I…”

He continued speaking without caring about his own business. When he raised his head and saw the fisherman’s blank look, he realized that he had spoken too quickly.

How could these people from the Flying Flower Island know about tribulation fire or Imperial Sword Technique?

Therefore, he pursed his lips and said gently, “I’m sorry. I’ll explain in detail to you later.” He turned around and looked at the listless and battered crowd behind him. “Can you get them something to eat and some water first?”

One of the children who had lost his parents was panic-stricken. He slowly rubbed his hand against the side of Mo Ran’s leg and helplessly grabbed the corner of his robe with his small hand.

Mo Ran lowered his head and lowered his eyes, stroking his hair, and said to the fisherman, “I’m really sorry, sorry to bother you.”

Most of the residents of Flying Flower Island were honest. Soon, someone brought them tea and snacks to eat. Mo Ran briefly explained the situation

to the islanders, who could not shut their mouths for a long time, staring blankly at the endless fire on the horizon.

“Rufeng Sect… It’s all burnt up?” Some people could not believe it.

“Sect Leader Nangong passed away?”

Mo Ran replied, “It’s not an immortal’s death. It’s a result of consuming the Lingzhi Fruit. He was taken to another place.”

“What is the Lingzhi fruit?”

“That’s right…”

Chu Wanning stood to the side, watching as Mo Ran explained to the fishermen slowly, but he did not step forward.

He looked somewhat uncomfortable, and his face was naturally tainted with the cold of frost. If he were to negotiate with the villagers, the result would not be any better than Mo Ran.

In his arms, the sleeping child woke up. Seeing that the one hugging him was a cold stranger, he couldn’t help but be stunned for a moment before immediately crying out loud. He wasn’t as obedient as when he was in Mo Ran’s arms.

Chu Wanning took a glance at Mo Ran, seeing that he was still surrounded by the villagers and couldn’t get out, he was helpless and said to the child with a stiff face, “Don’t cry.”

The child shrieked and cried even louder than before, shouting, “Father, Mother… I want father, I want mother.”

“Don’t cry.” Chu Wanning coaxed, “You, don’t cry.”

“Wah — Mother……Mother…”

Chu Wanning had no choice but to hug him with one hand and touch his hair with the other. Unexpectedly, the child didn’t want him to touch him, as he leaned her head back, his red face was covered in tears and snot, “I want my mother, I want my father, I want to go home…”

He didn’t know what to say, so he couldn’t help but think about what he should say to comfort this little guy. However, the moment he fell into deep thought, his eyebrows unconsciously wrinkled, making him look cold and cryptic.

The child was crying uncontrollably. When he saw Chu Wanning’s expression, he choked and was so scared that he stopped talking. He bit his lips as tears rolled down his face like beads of string.

Chu Wanning suddenly thought of something. He untied the Qiankun bag with one hand, took out a piece of glutinous rice candy, peeled off the paper, and passed it to him.

“…” The child sobbed with tears in his eyes as he looked at Chu Wanning and then at the candy in his hand.

His mother had told him a bunch of stories since he was young about coaxing small children into obedience. Among them was no lack of vicious and terrifying cultivators who wanted to make the disobedient children lose consciousness and capture them to refine immortal pills.

The child silently held back his tears. Staring at him, he suddenly became extremely terrified.

Chu Wanning didn't know what he meant by that. He stared at the child blankly, the glutinous rice candy still in his hand.

Although his eyes were pretty, when he wasn't smiling, he had a proud attitude. Even if he was smiling, his eyes would give him a bit of wild aura, like the thorns of a rose, filled with provocation and pride.

However, not everyone could endure such arrogance. Thus, although Chu Wanning had a handsome face, he was naturally unpopular with other people.

Not to the children's liking.

"Eat." On the sword, he had seen Mo Ran use candy to comfort the little fellows. He did as he was told, but he did not understand why it was impossible.

The child pursed his lips, hesitated, trembled, and then slowly shook his head.

…… He didn't want to be made into immortal pills…

"You…"

He hadn't even finished speaking when that child endured to the limit. He began to wail in fear, crying to the point that his heart was torn and his lungs were shaking. Everyone in the surrounding area raised their eyebrows.

Chu Wanning did not react, he was still holding the piece of glutinous rice candy and said softly, "… It's pretty sweet."

What he wanted to say was that sugar was sweet, but when a child connected half of the “you” he said before, it became “you’re pretty sweet.” After pondering for a while, he felt that this cultivator was definitely going to use him to concoct pills.

Chu Wanning froze, “…”

Ch. 173 Shizun, Someone Wants to Kick Us Out

He felt like he was hugging a hot potato. He didn't know what to do. Seeing more and more people looking at him, his ears couldn't help but turn red from embarrassment. At that moment, a pair of hands reached out and took the child from him.

Chu Wanning breathed a sigh of relief and turned around, "Mo Ran?"

"Yes." Mo Ran placed the child in the crook of one arm while holding him in the other. His other hand was empty as he ruffled Chu Wanning's hair. His expression was calm and collected.

When he saw the miserable scene of Linyi burning, he felt depressed. But when he looked at Chu Wanning, he wanted to smirk to prevent his expression from looking too ugly.

His appearance when he wanted to laugh or not was not as handsome as other times, but somehow it made people feel very warm.

"You've already spoken with the people on the island?"

"Yes, it's settled."

"I'm afraid that it won't be four or five days before the fire dies down. Before that, we all have to stay on Flying Flower Island. There aren't many houses on this island, and we've brought so many people with us…"

"After asking the Village Chief, he said that we can still squeeze in."

There was nothing wrong for Mo Ran to negotiate this sort of question. He was more clear on how he should communicate with others, how he

looked like and so on… Thinking back to the time when he helped to harvest the rice, the girls in the village looked at him, and they knew that he was a lot more pleasing than him.

Chu Wanning pondered in silence for a while, not knowing what to feel. He nodded and said, “Thank you for your hard work.”

“Just don’t work hard with me.” Mo Ran looked at the candy in his hand and understood. He turned his head and smiled as he coaxed the child in his arms. “And you? Why are you crying?”

“I want Mother… I want father…”

Seeing that he was still so young and his steps were still unsteady, Mo Ran felt sad that his parents had lost their lives and could never return. He rubbed his forehead against his face and comforted him in a low voice, “Father, Mother… There are some things that I have to wait a few days before I can come and accompany you. You have to be good, only when they see you will they be happy…”

After he hugged and coaxed her for a while, the child actually managed to calm down a lot. Although he was still sobbing, it was unlikely for him to cry out loud and wail again.

Mo Ran lowered his head to look at the child with tears in his eyes, while Chu Wanning stood quietly by the side, watching him with candy in his hand.

The man’s profile was very good-looking, his features were straight. If Mo Ran was placed in a case, his face would be like a willow leaf, his calligraphy strong, his calligraphy tall and straight, easily revealing his peerlessly handsome face.

His edges were very sharp, but his eyelashes and eyes were soft, like the spread of spring leaves.

Chu Wanning was lost in thought.

Thus, when Mo Ran stuck his head over and bit the candy on his finger, Chu Wanning abruptly retracted his hand. His eyes widened in shock as he asked, “What are you doing?”

With such a small amount of glutinous rice candy in his mouth, the man leaned his head over and quickly took it away. Naturally, his lips would touch the tips of his fingers, and his warm, moist tip of his tongue would accidentally lick his fingers, causing Chu Wanning to feel numb. That quick, tiny, intimate contact was enough to make his spine itch, just like a new bud breaking a seed.

Mo Ran smiled at him with candy in his mouth, then turned and winked at the boy.

He raised his head and rolled the candy into his mouth, his Adam’s apple rolling. Then he said to the child, “Look, it’s not some scary pill. It’s sugar.”

Chu Wanning: “…”

He had been in a trance and hadn’t been paying much attention to what the child and Mo Ran were saying.

Only then did his gaze fall back on the child. The child was timid, but still stared at Mo Ran for a while before whispering in surprise, “Ah, it’s really sugar…”

“Yeah.” Mo Ran said with a smile, “This big brother Chu Wanning is so good, why would he take you to refine pills?”

Chu Wanning was speechless again.

Due to the events of the previous night being too much and too terrifying, Mo Ran did not feel sleepy. After settling down, the men, women, and children that he had rescued all arrived at dawn. He walked to the edge of the beach on the Flying Flower Island alone, and the coastline in the morning would retreat to a faraway place, revealing a beach that could not be seen when the tide was rising.

When he was alone, many things would come to mind. They would become a layer of lingering haze in his eyes.

He took off his shoes and walked slowly along the wet coastline, his footprints leaving two twisted tracks on the wet sand behind him.

In fact, there were many things about Xu Shuanglin that he did not understand, such as why it was a cold day, but that guy did not like to wear shoes, and was always willing to walk around barefoot.

Mo Ran was a person who hid a lot of the past and was always treated badly by others.

Perhaps because of this, he could clearly understand that Xu Shuanglin did not care about anything, wanting to destroy the Rufeng Sect, the Jiangdong Hall, or even the entire state of mind of the Upper Cultivation World.

Being suppressed and excluded was not the most painful thing.

The thing that hurt the most was being betrayed by someone close to him, the thing that hurt the most was that he had clearly done nothing wrong, that he had clearly been hot-blooded and wanted to help him become a Grandmaster, yet at the most important “Spiritual Mountain Competition”

in the world of cultivation, he was pointed out by thousands of people, saying that the unique spell he had created with all his effort was stolen from his elder brother…

He would never be able to recover from the ridicule.

Mo Ran knew that after this calamity passed, the cultivation world would definitely face a reshuffle. For those sects that had suffered from severe injuries, be it in terms of face or body, they would all think: Xu Shuanglin is truly a madman.

Perhaps only Mo Weiyu, who had once grind his teeth and killed people as easily as grinding blood, would be unable to stop himself from thinking about it while quietly walking along this long and quiet coastline.

Just what sort of person was Xu Shuanglin?

Had this madman, in his youth, practiced his swordsmanship arduously in the orange grove until nightfall, returned tired and satisfied, with a fresh, sweet orange in his sleeve, to feed his brother, who had always been lazy?

At that time, he didn't know that even though his brother had achieved nothing, he was able to rely on only his tongue to make it so that he would no longer have a place to stand in in the cultivation world.

Did this madman once bury his head in a magic scroll and meditate? Did he seriously dip the brush into the ink, write down a passage of slightly green thoughts, then become dissatisfied, bite the brush shaft, and once again sink into deep thought?

At that time, he also didn't know that no matter how hard he tried, the end result would be his reputation being sullied and he would never have any

hope.

Mo Ran closed his eyes. The sea breeze blew against his face, and the sunlight fell on his eyelashes, coating them with a layer of gold.

He thought of the Three Lives Courtyard, drinking Mengpo's Water and forgetting about the Three Lives. Was Xu Shuanglin giving him this name just for whims?

Also, in his previous life, when Xu Shuanglin was hiding in the Rufeng Sect, he should have had the same goal as he did in his current life. However, that time, he died fighting for Ye Wangxi…

Ye Wangxi.

This name had also been given to her by Xu Shuanglin.

Forgot what?

Had he ever tried to forget the injustices and iniquity of the past, the hatred and glory of the past, the ugly faces?

There was also Xu Shuanglin's painstaking efforts to drag out the corpse from the Unbroken Hell, Luo Fenghua's corpse.

What did he want this corpse for?

In the illusion, Xu Shuanglin told Nangong Liu that only by obtaining the spirit core of the person who cast the curse would he be able to completely remove the curse from the ring. However, from the end of the story, Xu Shuanglin's true purpose was not to help Nangong Liu break the curse.

Spatial rift, Zhenlong chess, rebirth techniques…

And then there was the hand that had come out of the crack.

Mo Ran vaguely felt that something was very wrong. He furrowed his brows, deep in thought.

Suddenly, he opened his eyes.

He thought of one thing —

That year, at the edge of Jincheng Lake, when dragon Wangyue had died, he had once said, “That mysterious person practiced two secret arts with the Willow’s power at Jincheng Lake. One was the rebirth technique, and the other was the Zhenlong chess game.”

At that time, it did not mention the ‘Gate of Life and Death’.

In other words, to Xu Shuanglin, he only cared about the two magic spells, rebirth and Zhenlong. There was no need to mention Zhenlong, he only cared about manipulating the chess pieces for the sake of convenience.

What about rebirth?

Who did he want to be reborn?

Mo Ran thought about it and felt that there were two answers, one was Rong Yan and the other was Luo Fenghua.

Hearing the meaning of Xu Shuanglin’s words, the person that Rong Yan had once loved was actually him. Because of some unknown reason, she finally broke off with Xu Shuanglin and married his brother instead.

However, after some careful analysis, he felt that it wasn’t her after all.

If Xu Shuanglin really did love Rong Yan, to the point of thinking of a way to revive her, how could he have killed her only son in his previous life?

Most importantly, this fellow had long been hiding by Nangong Liu's side as 'Elder Shuanglin'. If he wanted to use the Rebirth Technique to revive Rong Yan, then why didn't he stop her from offering up a sacrifice at the Jincheng Lake?

It was not Rong Yan.

Mo Ran turned his head and looked at the sea dyed red by the rising sun. The fine, billowing waves continued to expand, and as the sun rose in the east, the tide was rising at a speed visible to the naked eye.

It was Luo Fenghua.

The person that Nangong Xu wanted to revive was Luo Fenghua.

The matter of the Rufeng Gate was not as simple as it seemed to be. It was just like the ebb and flow of the sea. The broken shells and the colorful and dangerous starfish were all covered by the surging waves at daybreak.

The sea water was rising quickly, and the small pieces of sand and rocks were being washed away by the waves, spreading to the beach where he was walking.

Suddenly, his feet felt a chill. Mo Ran lowered his head, the waves had already surged up and were slapping his feet.

"Whooosh."

He moved his toes and felt cold. He turned around and wanted to walk back to the beach to put on his shoes, but when he turned around, he saw

Chu Wanning walking towards him out of the red clouds. He was holding onto his socks and shoes, which he had casually thrown in the sand.

“Why are you barefooted? It’s such a cold day.”

Mo Ran followed him to the top of the sandy slope. He sat down on the rocky shore, shook off the mud on his feet, and put on his shoes again. He suddenly felt a sense of relief. Even though he was destined to never get the love he wanted in his life with Chu Wanning, he was still the best Shizun in the world. He would care for him and take care of him.

When he sees him walking around barefoot, he worries that he will catch a cold.

“What do you think about the matter of the Rufeng Sect?”

“It’s not that simple.”

“I suppose so.” Chu Wanning’s eyebrows hadn’t relaxed since last night. Even with the short period of peace and serenity, there was still a tinge of melancholy between his brows. He watched Mo Ran put on his shoes and socks before turning his gaze back to the vast ocean.

The rising sun blazed with a resplendent golden-red, interweaving with the unextinguished flames in the distance. It was hard to distinguish them.

“Where Xu Shuanglin was pulled away by that Heavenly Rift is truly too hard to find. If he didn’t want others to find out and disappear, then perhaps no one would be able to catch him within eight to ten years.”

Mo Ran shook his head and said, “He can’t hold it in for eight to ten years. After he recovers his energy, he should be able to make some moves.”

“What do you mean?”

Mo Ran told Chu Wanning about his guess and said, “Luo Fenghua’s corpse is not his real body, but a prosthetic limb rebuilt in the Unbroken Purgatory. Once it leaves the ghost realm, it will be decayed very soon due to the lack of yin energy. So I guess at most a year, even if he doesn’t have all of his preparations, there will still be new movements.”

Chu Wanning did not make a sound.

He was always careful when he did things or thought about them. For something as uncertain as this, he would not make such a bold hypothesis as Mo Ran. However, there was no harm in listening to Mo Ran’s hypothesis.

“What about that hand?” Chu Wanning asked, “In the end, what were your guesses about the hand that took Nangong Xu away?”

“…” Mo Ran shook his head, “I know too little about the first forbidden technique. I can’t say, I don’t know.”

This was not true. Although Mo Ran did not want to lie to Chu Wanning anymore, there were some things that he could not say openly to him.

He didn’t dare say.

Truly, ever since he could remember, the number of peaceful days he had had were pitifully few. If he were to add up his two lifetimes, it was likely that he wouldn’t have lived for more than a year.

A person who had been wandering for decades suddenly made him sit down and gave him a pot of hot tea and a bonfire. How could he bear to

get up and leave again? How could he bear to shatter this wonderful dream with his own hands.

Thus, he could only say that he didn't know.

However, his heart was restless and uneasy. He was almost certain that the owner of that hand was not that simple. Otherwise, why would Xu Shuanglin be able to gather the five spirits so quickly and slaughter them? If it weren't for the fact that he had been coaxed and bewitched by those who had come back to life, and according to the normal course of events, Xu Shuanglin probably wouldn't have thought of how to revive Luo Fenghua at this time…

What's more, back in the Jincheng Lake days, Xu Shuanglin's White Chess piece had told Chu Wanning, "If you think I'm the only one who knows these three forbidden techniques, then you won't be able to live much longer."

Mo Ran felt that Xu Shuanglin must have known that some people who should not have lived in this world had come to this world. But at the same time, he also felt that although Xu Shuanglin knew about Rebirthers, he didn't know that he had also been reborn.

Otherwise, why didn't he expose himself when the Rufeng Sect was fighting? That memory scroll of his, as long as he obtained some of Mo Ran's memories, then no matter how much better Chu Wanning treated him, he would not take his disciple. Then it would all be over. He would never have the chance to recover from this.

Why didn't Xu Shuanglin do this?

Two possibilities:

First, for some reason, he could not do so.

Secondly, he still didn't know his trump card.

However, no matter what the situation was, Mo Ran was at a disadvantage at the moment. He did not have many clues, and if the other party was careful and did not reveal any more clues, then he would probably have to stand in the light and wait for the blade to pierce his back.

Mo Ran pursed his lips, his thick eyelashes lightly trembling.

He couldn't care so much anymore. In his previous life, he had lived in hatred and had acted in self-interest. He had done all sorts of crazy things. In his entire life, regardless of the outcome, he wanted to do his best to live every day, to do his best to make up for those who owed him, and to do his best to protect his Shizun, Shi Mei, and Xue Meng, and protect the Sisheng Peak.

He tried his best to retain the warmth that he had once desired.

Just as he was lost in thought, a fisherman hurriedly ran over and shouted at Mo Ran and the rest, "This is bad! Two immortal lords, something has happened!"

Mo Ran was shocked. He propped himself up from the ground and immediately leaped up as he asked, "What's wrong?"

"The head of the island went out to sea a few days ago, and she just came back this morning. She, she heard what happened from the village head, and was very dissatisfied with what he had done. She's chased everyone out by now. The people you brought, they're all standing outside."

The fishermen were kind-hearted. As they spoke, tears began to form in their eyes.

“What a pity. In such a cold weather, you aren’t even willing to give me a piece of cloth or a blanket… The head of the household even said…”

Chu Wanning also stood up, his face was gloomy, “What else did she say?”

“She also said… Just now, these people from Linyi ate the rations of the Flying Flower Island and drank the water of the Flying Flower Island. They wanted to… If they didn’t pay up, he would… Just capture them and make them slaves. Stay on the island and command…”

Before he could finish his words, Chu Wanning had already become furious. His white robe fluttered as he quickly flew towards the heart of the island village.

Ch. 174 Shizun's Sachet

Although Flying Flower Island was poor, the head of the household was obviously rich and well off.

She was dressed in a bat-patterned gold satin gown, which looked like the finest chiffon from the Taxue Palace on Mount Kunlun. Her long black and white hair was tied very tightly together, and her hair was trimmed with emerald flowers.

Red on the lips. She wore a warm pearl chain around her neck, and two golden earrings, inlaid with rubies the size of pigeons' eggs, which were tugging at her earlobes.

She was over a hundred years old and youthfulness had long since left. She had a slightly bloated body and wrinkles all over her face. She would have been better off if she had purposely dressed up, but she clearly thought that the more extravagant her clothes were, the more extravagant her clothes would be.

The more beautiful you look, the more you sink into this glittering pile of emeralds, like an old turtle covered in red and green.

Old Turtle sat around half of the entire Flying Flower Island. When she spoke, not even the Village Chief dared to make a sound.

At this very moment, the sun rose and the old turtle, with red flowers and green leaves, came to the square. She sat in the red acid Bat Deer Master-Mentor chair that had been prepared for her for a long time, and looked around at the refugees that had come from Linyi.

“Why did you accept them?” She raised her heavy and greasy eyelids and gave the Village Head a shady look, “I didn’t even pay the silver taels, so what’s the point of giving them a room to stay in? Where’s the food? How much did you eat?”

“They didn’t eat much… They are all leftovers from the village and cannot be eaten.” muttered the village chief.

Old Turtle delicately snorted and said, “You still have to pay for that. This rice wheat, isn’t it all grown from my, Third Madam Sun’s, land? The harvest this year was not good, and I also opened up a warehouse to help out every household on the island with ten pounds of wheat flour and a pot of oil. It doesn’t matter if I give it to you guys to eat since we’re all on the same side, but it wouldn’t be too good for you to take out Third madam’s food to help the refugees in Linyi, right?”

“Third Young Madam is right.” The Village Head smiled apologetically, “But look at these little girls, these old men are so pitiful on such a cold day. You have a Buddha’s heart, why don’t we just forget about it?”

Old Turtle glared at him. “How can you let it go? Money, it’s all money.”

Village Head: “…”

“How much did each family give them to eat?” Old Turtle asked, “Did you guys manage to keep an account just now?”

The village head had no other choice but to say, “I’ve remembered it. I’ve figured it out.” As she spoke, she handed over a small booklet to Third Madam Sun. Third Madam Sun raised her right hand, and on her wrist, she wore nine bright and colorful bracelets, one of which was gold and the other was silver.

“Yes.” She lazily finished reading, took out a box of account books, counted with her fingers, and said, “You people are pigs, you really can eat. In such a short time, you actually ate twenty-six steamed buns on the island. You’ve also drank half a vat of fresh water, which I brought back from Linyi. Linyi sold me three gold for one vat, and I’ll sell it back to you four gold for one vat, two gold and ninety silver in total. Oh yeah, Sis Zhang.”

The woman who was called out trembled and quickly raised her head. “Ah, Third Madam.”

Third Madam Sun smiled and said, “Your family’s steamed buns are the most delicious. When it’s time for the noodles, even if there’s pork lard inside, you still have to settle the score.”

“This… Ten steamed buns are only the size of a pea, how can you count them in?”

“How is it not good? Ten steamed buns and a pea-sized lard of lard, after calculating, I’ll take one copper coin and it won’t be too much.”

“…”

“That would be two gold coins, ninety silver coins and one copper coin.” Third Madam Sun said, “Also, you all sleep in my room. Although the room isn’t mine, the floor is mine. You all slept for a total of one hour, so the fee for one hour is 70 coppers per person.”

“How many of them are there?”

“Answering Third Madame, a total of 49 people.”

“That’s not right. Didn’t we say fifty-one? What about the other two?”

Before she could finish his sentence, she suddenly heard a gloomy voice say:

“Here.”

Although Chu Wanning was not wearing a white robe, but a rather deep white robe, he still exuded the aura of frost and snow. His eyes were clear but cold and arrogant, like a sharp unsheathed knife.

Third Madam Sun was a normal person, but she wasn’t afraid of cultivators.

She had been working for most of her life, and although she was always critical, she did not do anything.

Therefore, she unhurriedly said, “So he is an cultivator. No wonder we don’t need to sleep. You saved all these people, didn’t you? It’s good that you’re here. Come quickly, give me the money.”

The village chief whispered, “Third Madam, these two are not from the Rufeng Sect, they are cultivators at Sisheng Peak, you don’t have to…”

“I don’t care which sect it is, I don’t know which money it is.”

Chu Wanning glanced at the refugees who were huddled up, shivering with cold. He raised his hand and a golden-red barrier was cast down to dispel the chill in their hearts. He then turned his head and asked, “How much do you want?”

“Two gold, ninety-three silver, and four hundred and thirty copper.”

Although Third Madam Sun was disgusting, they had nowhere else to go. Chu Wanning knew that if he offended her, it would implicate the group of

people he brought along. Even though his complexion was pale, he still took out his purse and threw it at her.

“There’s about eighty gold inside.” He had spent most of his money on Xue Zhengyong, and currently, he did not have much left over. “We are going to live here for about seven days. You can count and see if you have enough.”

“Not enough.”

Third Madam Sun would never personally hand the money pouch to her subordinates and let them count on the side.

“Eighty gold would only be enough for you to stay for three days at most. Moreover, you don’t even have enough to calculate the cost of food.”

“You-!”

“If the Immortal isn’t convinced, I can settle this debt with you. A businessman knows how to calculate money, and I can tell you the reason for every single one.”

At this time, Mo Ran also rushed over. He did not have much money with him, so together with Chu Wanning, it was barely enough for fifty-two people to eat and sleep for four days.

Third Madam Sun retracted her gaze and smiled with her bright red lips, “I’ll keep you two here for four days. If you don’t have any money, I won’t care if the Tribulation Fire has died down or not. All of you have to leave immediately.”

In order to save money, Chu Wanning did not eat that night. He threw the flower into the river and tried to get in touch with Xue Zhengyong. Then, he returned to his room.

This room was even more simple and crude than the rooms in the village. Since there were not many empty rooms on the island, everyone needed to squeeze in. Chu Wanning was not used to living in the same room with strangers, so he could only sleep with Mo Ran.

At this moment, the lights in the room were on, but Mo Ran wasn't there. No one knew where he had gone to.

Chu Wanning took off his outer robe. Although it was a luxurious robe, the material it was made from was not any better than the white shirt he usually wore. There were ashes from the tribulation fire and blood stains on it. He poured a bucket of hot water and was about to start cleaning when the door opened.

Chu Wanning glanced at him, "Where did you go? To come back so late."

He brought back a bamboo lunch box. It was windy and cold outside, so he put the lunch box in his arms, lifted his eyes, and said with a red nose, "I went to Third Madam's house to ask for food."

Chu Wanning was stunned, "You went to beg for food?"

"Just kidding. I brought something to eat."

"What food?"

"Steamed buns." Mo Ran felt a little embarrassed, "There's also a bowl of fish soup and a bowl of Red Braised Meat, but unfortunately there's no dessert. That Third Madam Sun has been keeping an eye on me for too long. Everyone in the village is afraid of her, and no one dares to give me any more things, so I went to her house to find her and trade for it with the silver dagger I brought with me."

Chu Wanning frowned, “She’s too black-hearted. I know that silver dagger of yours. It’s even embedded with spirit stones, how could she exchange it for such a small thing?”

“Not just that. I haggled with her and changed the price to fifty-two servings. Everyone had them, and they watched as they were sent out by the kitchen.” Mo Ran smiled and said, “Therefore, Shizun, you don’t have to worry about others. Just obediently eat them all.”

Chu Wanning was really hungry. He sat at the table and drank several mouthfuls of the hot fish soup. Then, he picked up a steamed bun and started to eat the Red Braised Meat. Third Madam Sun was a stingy person. She did not give him much meat and most of it was very fatty. Chu Wanning did not like eating, but the taste of the steamed buns was not bad. He ate one and went to eat the second one.

Mo Ran glanced at the steaming bucket and asked, “Is Shizun going to wash the clothes?”

“Yes.”

“It’s just a robe, I’ll help you wash it, Shizun.”

“No need, I’ll do it by myself.”

Mo Ran said, “It’s fine. I was just about to go wash myself, that’s all.”

As he spoke, he went to the bed and picked up the few pieces of clothing that he had previously thrown away. He then carried the wooden bucket and walked out.

The moonlight was bright in the courtyard. Mo Ran raised his head and looked around, wondering how Xue Meng, his uncle, and the others were.

Where did Ye Wangxi and Nangong Si go now. Looking at the tribulation fire on the sea side again, it still roiled like a tide of blood, burning day and night until smoke shot into the sky.

Song Qiutong, and… That man.

The person whom he hated to the bones in his previous life, the person for whom he slaughtered the entire Rufeng Sect.

He was probably already buried in the sea of fire.

Mo Ran sighed and stopped thinking about it. He put down the bucket, added some cold water to the water tank, rolled up his sleeves and began to wash his clothes.

Chu Wanning was a very methodical and meticulous fellow. Be it making mechs or writing scrolls, he was always a mess when it came to washing clothes or cooking.

For example, before completely immersing himself in the water, Mo Ran would habitually check the Qiankun bag and the secret bag to prevent anything important from entering the water. However, Chu Wanning did not remember to do this.

“…”

Facing the pile of junk that he took out from Chu Wanning’s robe, Mo Ran fell into silence.

What was all this?

Haitang handkerchief.

Fortunately, it was normal.

All kinds of pills.

There was nothing wrong with it.

A handful of sugar.

Mo Ran was speechless. He looked carefully, and it seemed to be the cow's milk that he had bought for him in the village.

Haven't you finished yet?

Turning it again, Mo Ran was shocked.

…… Explosive Talisman?

Mo Ran's face turned green. He held up the wet symbol parchment that was half soaked in water, almost frightened.

How generous was Chu Wanning? Could it be placed on one's body without any restriction? Although the possibility of igniting the self-detonation was very low, it was still too dangerous. Was this a joke?

With a frown on his face, Mo Ran went through his clothes once again. He then found that the little dragon's Ascending Dragon Talisman had also been carelessly dropped by Chu Wanning. He had taken out the detonation Talisman, the freezing Talisman, and the Soul Suppressing Talisman.

If he did not even take a look, most of the paper talismans would be useless, and a large portion of it would be useless.

Mo Ran helplessly shook his head, thinking to himself, from now on, I must not let my Shizun wash clothes by himself.

While he was thinking, a small, white lotus root suddenly fell out of the secret pocket. Mo Ran didn't care. He thought it was some sort of magical talisman. He casually picked it up and glanced at it.

With just that one glance, he was stunned.

It was an old brocade sack embroidered with acacia flowers. The petals had lost their color, and were no longer as bright as when they first appeared.

He had some doubts, but also some confusion. He vaguely felt that this thing was very familiar. He must have seen it somewhere before, but it had been so long that he couldn't recall where.

Mo Ran stroked the small silk bag, his pitch-black eyebrows were tightly locked, and his eyes flickered with an uncertain light. One by one, the past flew past him, and he tried to find the source of the blossoming flower in the rapids of time.

A light, cool cloth, the color of fading years.

He held it in his hand and examined it, turning it over and over, but he could not recall it. He was afraid it might contain something dangerous like a detonator, so he opened it a crack and took a look.

"…"

It was a strand of hair.

No, if he looked more carefully, there were only two.

Tied together, wrapped around each other, and sewed together tightly. In the rushed past, they had always been entwined and accompanying each

other. At first glance, they thought it was a bundle, but in reality, these two strands of ink had long been inseparable.

“Hair?”

Mo Ran was startled. A bright light flashed before his eyes.

He muttered, “The brocade sack… Joyous Union Sachet…”

Suddenly, he remembered something. The next thing that happened was like a flame exploding in his chest. His eyes instantly widened in shock.

Ghost Illusion.

He remembered.

The golden boy, the pretty girl, Butterfly Town, made a vow to form an alliance — he remembered.

From this day onwards, two lone souls accompanying one another, never separated whether in life or death, heaven or hell.

He… He remembered.

He remembered!

When he and Chu Wanning were getting married, the golden couple cut off two strands of their hair and placed them in the Joyous Union Pouch, placing them in Chu Wanning’s hands.

This was the brocade sack.

“How could that be?”

Mo Ran’s mind was buzzing as blood flowed. He was stunned in an instant.

“How is this possible…”

His hands trembled slightly as he clutched the bag, and his eyes flashed with surprise, horror, disbelief, bewilderment, ecstasy, and even sorrow.

Shizun… Chu Wanning…

He… Why did he… Why do you keep this?

Ch. 175 Shizun, Do You Like Me?

As Chu Wanning was eating his last bun, the door opened and Mo Ran walked in with a pile of food on the bed.

“Shizun, some of the charm papers in your outer robe that you haven’t taken out are scattered. I’ve put them all here for you.”

He went out again with his head down.

He was too embarrassed to take the silk sachet and ask Chu Wanning. He felt that no matter what the reply was, the atmosphere would be awkward. Moreover, Chu Wanning’s skin was thin and Mo Ran’s mouth was stupid. If he said anything wrong, it would make him unhappy.

Then what should he do.

Mo Ran pursed his lips, his black eyes shining. He looked distracted and confused.

He suddenly had an unimaginable thought.

Did he actually like him?

Mo Ran was shocked by his own audacious thoughts. He shook his head and murmured, “Impossible…”

They couldn’t see the forest for the trees.[159] That was more or less what they said.

If this brocade sack belonged to someone who didn’t care about Mo Ran, such as a female cultivator, once Mo Ran saw it, he would immediately know and be able to confirm the thoughts of the other party.

— If you don’t like it, who would hold a brocade bag with another person’ hair for so many years?

The matter had originally been so simple.

However, the moment he met Chu Wanning, Mo Ran flared up. People were always like this, the more concerned they were, the easier it was for them to think and become stupid, not even knowing where to put their hands and feet. The other side could look at them for a long time with a look, and the other side could silently dig out three feet from the silence and carefully dig out the hidden meaning behind the pause.

This way, no matter how simple the matter was, he would ponder over it and slowly swallow, savoring the taste of many twists and turns.

Was he mistaken?

Had he misunderstood?

Had Chu Wanning forgotten to throw it away?

This was a question that could be denied even by using his toes, yet he was still able to think about it worriedly for a long time. He was absent-mindedly washing the clothes in the bucket as he was lost in thought. The water was getting colder and colder, but he was getting hotter and hotter.

Mo Ran could not help raising his head and looking towards the house. In the old wooden window, which was wrapped in paper, there was a golden candle light. The candle light flickered, dim and bright, and even the tender sprout in the chest of Mo Ran trembled gently and fluttered.

If Chu Wanning really liked him…

He used to be that rough and thick skinned Immortal Taxian-Jun, but he had only thought half of this sentence before his face turned red.

Mo Ran felt a little hot and a little thirsty.

It was an insoluble thirst. Only the person in the room could quell the heat. Only the sweetness of that person's mouth could give him such great comfort and a moment of peace. Only that person, that man he had sworn to cherish, protect, and respect.

When he thought of "respect", he felt as if a cup of water had been poured over his chest. In the past, whenever he couldn't control himself and had a strong desire for Chu Wanning, he would always reprimand himself like this.

But tonight was different.

Tonight, that embroidered bag seemed as if it was giving him a burning feeling in his heart, adding a handful of dried wood soaked in pine oil to fuel his ambition.

Respect.

He kept saying to himself, "A cup of water is like a cup of water; it would always be extinguished in the past." But now, the thought of burning it was so overpowering that the cold water was instantly vaporized, leaving his eyes in a daze.

Mo Ran was shocked to find that the spell, "Respect", had finally, thoroughly, completely…

It failed.

Inside the room, Chu Wanning put down the last steamed bun. He wanted to wipe his fingers, so he walked over to the bed and took out a haitang handkerchief from the pile of junk.

He sighed, thinking that his memory was really bad. Before he washed the clothes, he did not know that he had taken everything out.

“Hmm?”

Before he could finish his thought, he suddenly saw a slender red rope under the cover of a pile of talisman paper.

Chu Wanning’s heart skipped a beat. He wanted to pull out the red rope to check it out, but his finger remained in the air. He did not dare to move forward. After a moment of hesitation, he withdrew his hand and reached into his shirt.

His expression suddenly changed.

He really didn’t have his Happy Flower Sachet with him!

Chu Wanning’s face turned extremely unsightly. He froze for a moment, then recalled something — he had always kept the bag from the Ghost mistress of ceremonies in it, but the gift robe from Xue Zhengyong had an hidden pocket which was slightly tilted and the robe was soft like silk. He was afraid that he would lose it if he wasn’t careful, so he put it away in the pocket of his coat.

If he were to carefully examine that pile of junk, he would feel as if he had been struck by lightning and would not be able to move an inch.

Tiny things like candies were placed at the very top, and below them were paper charms. Only the red string was trying to hide at the very bottom,

while the person who hid it seemed to blush and waved his hand, saying, “I didn’t see it, I didn’t see anything.”

“…”

After a while, Chu Wanning held his breath, hoping that the thread would pull it out of the messy paper talisman.

… Indeed.

The red thread of the brocade sack had been moved, and it was completely different from the way he was used to it.

No matter how calm he was, his fair cheeks were quickly flushed, and his ears were so red that it seemed as if blood was about to drip out. He opened the pouch tied with the red thread. Inside were two strands of inky black hair that had been entangled with him for many years, just like how he had secretly wrapped his mind around it for many years. Just like that, his naked body fell into the warm yellow candlelight, twisting his fingers.

Mo Ran looked at his brocade sack!

After he finished reading, he buried the brocade sack at the bottom of the pile of miscellaneous items!

This knowledge caused a loud bang in Chu Wanning’s head. Blood surged in his head, and his heart was unable to calm down. His entire face was burning hot like a burning fire.

What should he do?

Had Mo Ran realized the things that he had hidden in his heart?

…It’s over.

The person that the Mo Ran likes is Shi Mingjing. If he knew that he had feelings for him, he would definitely frighten him. Would the soft and gentle relationship between the two of them collapse just like that?

He hoped Mo Ran didn’t know.

Betting on his reputation as a man of few desires over the years, he hoped that Mo Ran would find out nothing — that a long crush would one day be known by his loved ones, that it would be the best thing to do, that it would be a release. However, this might not be the case for Chu Wanning.

He was thirty-two years old, and he was used to being alone.

When he was in the prime of his life, Chu Wanning had come alone. He had never thought that he would have the chance to spend time with his beloved at the age of 30. Putting on an act of love was undoubtedly the beginning of a relationship, but it was also possible that it would end in failure.

Chu Wanning put the bag away and paced back and forth in the room. Finally, he stopped in front of the bronze mirror.

He lifted his eyelids and looked inside. The mirror had not been used for a long time and was covered with a thick layer of dust. It could only give a rough picture. He raised his hand and wiped the surface of the mirror, revealing an imperfect face in the dust.

There was a scratch on the bronze mirror, unbiased, which fell right into the corner of his eye. Chu Wanning blinked and looked at himself.

“So ugly.”

He turned to the person in the mirror and was suddenly very angry and frustrated.

“How can I… You look like this?”

He knew that Mo Ran liked young men who were gentle, good-looking, and slim.

As for him, he couldn’t accomplish any of them.

Although he did not have wrinkles, he could not hide the heaviness that came from the passage of time on a person. Chu Wanning was an old and mature person, and now that he did not have a bit of warmth, how could he have the face to talk about love with a young person. Not to mention this person was his own disciple

If this news were to spread out, not to mention him, even Sisheng Peak would be shamed, let alone Mo Ran.

Not to mention that after five years of sleep, Shi Mingjing looked even more beautiful and elegant than ever. When he wasn’t smiling, his eyes looked like they were full of peaches falling from the sky. He looked again at the person in the mirror…

In his eyes, there was only hostility and arrogance that didn’t please him.

When the two competed, it was clear who was the superior one. Only a fool would choose himself.

Chu Wanning looked at the yellow bronze mirror. He thought that if he could turn back ten years and make this ugly guy in the mirror fall in love with someone when he was just over twenty, perhaps he would just use

his hot-bloodedness to boldly confess, even if he got beaten until his head bled, it wouldn't matter.

But he was not a young man.

He was no longer young, and all that was left was his sorry state, his vigilance, his harsh attitude, and that savage face that even a child would cry from if they saw it.

Mo Ran was at the peak of his splendor, and Shi Mei was a beauty capable of toppling empires.

And he was just an ugly guy who was no longer young. He didn't dare take anything and just wanted to hide.

He only wanted to be safe and steady like this. He didn't even dare to think about it. He wanted to allow him to fall in love with someone, to allow him to be righteous to that person in the name of his Shizun.

He felt that it was enough.

Quite satisfied.

At that moment, a creaking sound was heard from behind him. Chu Wanning did not turn around to look at the bronze mirror, he only saw Mo Ran carrying a wooden bucket into the house.

None of them spoke, the bronze mirror was still blurry. Chu Wanning could only see a tall figure standing at the door, but he could not see the expression on that figure's face, nor could he see the color flowing in his eyes.

Despite repeating this to himself a hundred times, Chu Wanning's heart was beating fast. He didn't want Mo Ran to see his embarrassment, so he took off his high ponytail, bit the ribbon between his lips and lowered his head, pretending to retie his hair in front of the mirror.

He felt that he was truly intelligent. Biting down on his hairband, he now had a reason not to greet the other party. Then —

Suddenly, a hand touched the back of his ear. Chu Wanning's body trembled. He suppressed it, but he could not help but tremble.

He was not used to physical contact, not to mention the fact that the person who touched his ear was Mo Ran. His rough and broad hands rubbed against the tender skin of his ear, and in a split-second, his waist and back were completely numb.

Chu Wanning's eyes were still downcast. He suspected that even if he raised his head now, even if the light was dim, even if the bronze mirror was dim, the person behind him could tell that his face was abnormally red.

He bit down on his hairband and tried to remain calm. "Are you done with your washing?"

"Yes."

The man's voice was low and hoarse.

Chu Wanning felt that he was so close. His body had the coolness of the cold night, but it could not cover up the man's vigorous and blazing aura. This aura made him dizzy, and his thoughts became blurry and slow, unable to turn back.

As Mo Ran brushed off the hair that had fallen, he said, “Shizun, just now, I…”

“…”

What did he want to say?

Chu Wanning bit his hair ribbon, lowered his eyes, and his heart stopped beating.

The question seemed to be too difficult to answer. Mo Ran paused, and finally changed the subject, “Forget it, it’s nothing. It’s so late, and you’re still tying up your hair?”

Chu Wanning didn’t answer, he only felt that the body behind him was too close.

So hot.

“Are you going out?”

“No, I’m just going out to wash the dishes,” Chu Wanning replied.

“I’ll help you.”

“I have hands and feet.”

Mo Ran, who was behind him, laughed awkwardly as if he was trying to find something to say. “It’s not bad to have hands and feet, but Shizun is also clumsy. I’m afraid he will break.”

Chu Wanning: “…”

Seeing that he didn’t say anything, Mo Ran thought that he was unhappy. He wiped away his smile and said seriously, “It’s cool outside. Remember to add some heat and take it out.”

Chu Wanning replied with a sound that was a bit like “En” and a bit like “Humph”. The sound was indistinct, but it was very pleasant to the ears and caused the tender bud on his chest to clench and brandish its claws even more. His Adam’s apple bobbed up and down, and his dark eyes fell on the pale neck that peeked out from under his clothes when Chu Wanning lowered his head.

He felt even more frustrated. He swallowed subconsciously, yet he tried his best to keep his voice as low as possible, so as not to let Chu Wanning hear him.

Mo Ran took a deep breath and said with a forced smile, “This mirror is really sticky.”

“It’s been too long since someone last used it.”

“Shizun, you can’t see clearly, right? Bring me a comb, I’ll comb your hair for you.”

Chu Wanning bit down on the snow-green ribbon, but before he could refuse, Mo Ran had already grasped the headband in his mouth. Since this was the case, he could only unclench his teeth and allow Mo Ran to tie his ponytail while he pretended to snort, “Do you know how to do it? I can do it myself.”

“Shizun, you forgot? In Peach Blossom Springs, it’s all because of me.”

Chu Wanning was suddenly speechless. Xia Sini was his disgraced past and he didn't want to bring it up again, so he closed his eyes and frowned, allowing Mo Ran to comb and tie it up.

However, his hot palm always brushed against his ear. He felt very uncomfortable. His scalp went numb, and his throat became slightly thirsty. Thus, his brows furrowed even more tightly.

"Why isn't it done yet?"

Mo Ran gave a low laugh, "You are always in such a hurry. Don't worry, it'll be soon."

His voice seemed to be closer than before, sticking to the back of his ear. Chu Wanning's hands, which were hanging between his sleeves, were tightly clenched.

He didn't know if it was just an illusion, but he always felt as if the breathing of Mo Ran was a bit heavy, the heavy feeling of a beast ready to pounce on him made him feel a kind of piercing pain. He even felt like there was a tiger and wolf coming from behind him, pressing him down in front of the bronze mirror, greedily crushing his throat, sucking the blood that was gurgling in his veins.

Sometimes, people's senses were accurate and surprising. It was just that Chu Wanning could feel it, but could not believe it because of his inferiority complex.

How could he have known that if he were to raise his head at this moment, he would only see a pair of eyes in the mirror that burned with darkness.

Mo Ran held the silky hair ribbon in his hand, his bright and clear body was helping Chu Wanning to tie his hair, while the other half of his spirit soul was fretting about something.

What was he doing?

A headband?

But this headband was clearly tied in the wrong place!

He felt that he should press Chu Wanning roughly against the old make-up counter, use his hair band to cover his eyes, use his other hand to grab his chin, and kiss him hungrily. The pressure was so thick that it sucked the sweetness from his mouth and sucked the soft tip of his tongue. He clearly should have been rubbing against Chu Wanning's ear and licking the mole behind his ear. He should have been panting heavily, sticking close to his ear and asking in a low voice…

"Chu Wanning, my good Shizun. Why did you hide that brocade sack?"

"Wanning… Wanning… Do you. Like me?"

His yearning heart felt like it was about to tear open. His blood was burning, and his eyes were hot and red.

Ch. 176 Shizun, Buy Me

Chu Wanning tied his ponytail and went out to wash the dishes. It was only three bowls but he didn't return for a long time.

Mo Ran sat on the bed. He was somewhat restless, his fingers subconsciously digging into the seams of the bed. From time to time, he would glance out of the window.

What to do he thought.

How should I sleep tonight?

This seemed simple, but it was actually a life-threatening question.

Mo Ran was not sure of Chu Wanning's intentions, but he was at war with the gods, fighting with his desires and intellect.

At this time, the warm curtain was lifted, and Chu Wanning returned to the house with a bowl in his hands, feeling the chill outside. He glanced at Mo Ran on the bed. The candle flame was crackling. His gaze seemed to be somewhat subtle, but at the next moment, his vision shifted.

Mo Ran no longer had the time to clearly see that he was sitting at the table with his back to him.

"Shizun, you're still not sleeping?"

As soon as the words left his mouth, he felt like he had misspoken. No matter how he listened to it, he felt like a man who couldn't be more thirsty and was eagerly inviting his lover to bed.

Chu Wanning didn't look back and just said lightly, "I still have some things to do. Sleep first if you're tired."

"I'm not sleepy either. Shizun, what are you planning to do? I'll help you."

"You won't be able to help, I want to make a few more Sound Condensing flowering blossoms tonight." As Chu Wanning spoke, he raised his hand and brought his fingertips together, forming a golden, tender haitang and placed it on the table.

This kind of flower was formed from Chu Wanning's spirit energy. It could store short words and use them to transmit messages. This was his special technique and no one else could do the same.

He pulled out a chair and sat down on the opposite side. His strong arm rested on the back of the chair, and his chin rested on his arm.

"Why is Shizun doing this?"

"I'll sell it."

"Hmm?"

Hearing the slight surprise in Mo Ran's voice, Chu Wanning opened his eyes and lightly glanced at him, "We don't have enough money to stay on Flying Flower Island for seven days. Didn't that Third Madam Sun want to do business? Then I'll do it with her, the sound condensing haitang flower will never disappear, the golden light is resplendent, look at her body covered in gold and silver jewelry, which one of them isn't glowing, I think she just likes shiny things. It's done. I'll sell it on the street tomorrow. I'll see if she wants it."

Mo Ran could not help but burst out laughing. "Shizun is… Selling flowers?"

Chu Wanning's facial expression changed slightly. He didn't want to put himself together with those brandy-selling girls in the alley, so he said stiffly, "Flowers made by magic, they can't be counted as flowers."

"Then I'll go with you to sell it tomorrow."

Chu Wanning did not utter a word. He lowered his head and quickly took another four or five flowers before saying in a low voice, "Up to you, as long as you don't feel ashamed."

"How would you embarrass me?" There was no fragrance, and the flowing light of the flower was very graceful and elegant. The golden light illuminated his handsome face, and with his pitch-black eyelashes, he smiled and said, "I'm afraid that Third Madam Sun is going to beg Shizun to sell them to her. How much money does Shizun intend to sell them for?"

"Even a hundred of them would not consume too much spiritual energy. How about selling them for three copper coins for one?"

Mo Ran: "…"

Chu Wanning looked at him again, frowned and asked hesitantly, "Too expensive?"

Mo Ran sighed, not saying too much or too little. He only said, "Shizun, don't ask for an offer tomorrow. I'll sell them."

"Why? I make the flowers and I set the price myself."

"Three coppers. Shizun, you are the Beidou Immortal, this is your Evening Haitang, something even the cultivation world can't ask for. You are selling it for three bronze coins?"

“No one asked me for it either. Other than looking good and being able to communicate, this thing has no other uses. I think this price is enough.”

Mo Ran was about to burst into laughter. “Then, can you sell all of them to me? I’ll give you the money right now.”

Chu Wanning stopped, a half condensed haitang lost its spirit energy support, a golden flower petal fell, he actually stretched out his palm, lightly said, “Deal.”

“…”

Mo Ran was speechless. He felt around for his purse and realized that both he and Chu Wanning had already used up all their money. He felt a little embarrassed.

When he looked up, he saw Chu Wanning staring at him with a smile that was not a smile. He felt even more embarrassed and muttered, “Shizun already knew I had no money, and…”

Chu Wanning found him to be funny, and said, “You boasted about it yourself, saying you wanted to buy it from me.”

“I…”

Halfway through his sentence, he silently swallowed his words.

He suddenly felt that Chu Wanning’s words were ambiguous.

Chu Wanning should have said, “Buy my flowers,” but he was too lazy to finish his sentence. He sounded like Mo Ran wanted to spend some silver to buy the man in front of him.

He did not look at Chu Wanning in the eyes, afraid that he would see through his wicked thoughts. However, after looking down at his hands for a while, he realized that the bowl that Chu Wanning had just washed himself in was now icy cold water, and his fingers were red from the cold.

Mo Ran did not have the time to think about it. Instead, he instinctively grabbed the five fingers that were stretched out on the table.

Chu Wanning was shocked. He was pretending to be calm and reached out his hand to ask for the money, but before the money could reach him, it fell into a pair of warm and thick palms. The palms were warm and just right.

“What are you doing?!”

“…”

Mo Ran did not have such dirty thoughts in his mind. He only wanted to warm Chu Wanning up and feel the pain in his heart.

However, he had never expected to encounter such a huge reaction. He was stunned for a moment.

The two of them looked at each other under the dim light of the candle flame. Suddenly, tears began to flow from his eyes as he let out an explosive sound, breaking the deathly silence.

Chu Wanning knew he was being overly sensitive, so he kept quiet. He pursed his lips, feeling a little awkward.

Seeing his silence, the tender seed in Mo Ran’s heart began to move outwards. It tried its best to stretch his small body, scratching his chest, making it itch even more.

“Shizun…”

Chu Wanning: “…”

“Are you…” He stopped mid-sentence. He did not know what was waiting for him in front of him. Logic finally forced him to stop. He did not continue to speak.

However, even though he did not finish his question, Chu Wanning still insisted, “No.”

Mo Ran was taken aback. “What do you mean by ‘no’?”

“Whatever you say, the answer is no.” Chu Wanning frowned and raised his sharp thorns, like a cat baring its teeth in defense of its territory, “Move your hands away.”

Mo Ran removed his hand and placed it on the back of the chair, looking very honest.

Chu Wanning continued to condense the flower, and finished condensing the flower petal that had fallen onto the flower. He was a little angry, and within his rage was more helplessness, and after a while, he said, “Shizun, actually, what I wanted to ask was, are you cold? I want to give you… Warmth in your hands.”

“I’m not cold.”

Liar, the hand I touched just now was clearly icy cold.

Feeling that it was really awkward for the two of them to be sitting like this, Chu Wanning said, “If there’s nothing else, just go to sleep. Tomorrow, I’ll take you to sell flowers.”

“…”

In the past, he would often say “I’ll take you to practice” or “I’ll take you to meditate” or “I’ll take you to read books.”

Take you to sell flowers or something.

Mo Ran wanted to restrain himself, but he did not do so. His black eyes held a smile, which reflected the person in the candle flame. He gave a faint “En” in his nose, but he could not bear to move.

“Go to sleep.”

Mo Ran glanced at the bed.

He decided that no matter what, he couldn’t sleep before Chu Wanning.

Since he wasn’t sure if he should sleep on the bed or on the floor, it all depended on Chu Wanning’s intentions. If he slept near the back and made room for him, he would sleep on the bed.

If Chu Wanning was lying in the middle, then… Ai, then he’d just be honest.

Mo Ran’s face turned red as he thought of something bad to do. “I won’t sleep for now.”

“What are you doing sitting there?” Chu Wanning frowned.

With a wave of his hand, Mo Ran brought his slender fingers together and formed a fiery red butterfly out of spirit energy in the air.

“…” Chu Wanning was at a loss for words.

“Selling money.” With a flick of his finger, that fiery red butterfly flew up into the air and landed on the flowering tree that Chu Wanning had placed on the side. It entered, flapping its fluorescent wings like pollination, and flew in and out of the heart of the flower, “This one is more expensive, I have a black heart, ten gold each.”

Chu Wanning watched as that eyesore butterfly flew back and forth before landing on his flowering blossom, licking its tender pink stamen.

Chu Wanning’s face turned black.

“Mo Weiyu!”

“… What’s wrong?”

He was so angry that he didn’t know what to do or say.

In the end, he suppressed it and said hoarsely without embarrassment, “Three copper coins for one, no more.”

Mo Ran laughed.

After laughing for a while, he took out another fiery red butterfly and handed it over to him. That butterfly gently landed on the flowering flower on Chu Wanning’s fingertip.

“If I sell it to someone else, it would be ten gold. I think this price is very suitable.”

“Then sell it to me!” Chu Wanning held his breath and said fiercely, “I’ll sell it for more, in short, it can’t be more expensive than my haitang.”

After thinking for a moment, he added, “But I don’t have any money on me. I’ll give it to you after I return to Sisheng Peak.”

Mo Ran smiled and took out the third butterfly. He blew lightly and the butterfly danced around Chu Wanning. Mo Ran laid on his wheat colored arm and said gently, “What are you talking about?”

“… Are you going to say that you don’t have credit?”

“No,” he said.

“No,” Chu Wanning raised his chin, his face still wet with anger and his expression haughty. He had already made up his mind. If Mo Ran really dared to refuse credit, then he would teach this arrogant man a lesson.

The man who didn’t know the height of the heavens and earth laughed even more brightly. His voice was deep and shallow as he said, “No, I want to say…”

What do you want to say?

Chu Wanning was waiting for him, and his power was dignified.

“Buy me.”

It was unknown if it was intentional or unintentional for the man to leave out the words ‘spiritual butterfly’, thus his speech became so vague and ambiguous. He rested his head on his arm and seriously looked at Chu Wanning, gently smiling, “I’ll sell it to you for no money.”

He hadn’t expected such an answer.

Chu Wanning was stunned, then his face turned red.

It was already very late in the night, so the Spirit Butterfly and Haitang already packed the room full of them. It was long enough for them to sell it. None of them got up to go to bed first.

There was no need to say anything more about Mo Ran's thoughts. He decided to wait and see how Chu Wanning slept before acting. Although Chu Wanning did not know what he was planning on doing, he was not stupid. He was not sure and wanted to know what would happen tonight.

He would sleep on the floor. Bed?

Although he felt that this man was getting more and more dangerous, if Mo Ran really did go and lay on the bed, he wouldn't be able to chase him away.

He could even sense the hidden hope in his heart, the hope of seeing Mo Ran rise wearily, say, "I'm sleepy," and lie down on the bed.

— Why isn't he asleep yet!

Chu Wanning and Mo Ran thought anxiously as they played with the flowers and butterflies.

Sleep, first lie down on the bed, then I'll…

"Shizun."

"Hmm?"

"Are you tired? It's too late. Why don't you rest first?"

"No need, I'm used to it."

Another two hours passed.

“Mo Ran.”

“Hmm?”

“Why are you still sitting?”

“I’ll make more butterflies. If Shizun is tired, then go to sleep.”

Chu Wanning did his best to suppress his desire to yawn. He gritted his teeth and said stubbornly, “I’m not sleepy yet.”

Mo Ran: “…”

After an unknown amount of time, the butterflies and haitang in the room were almost piled into an ocean. They intertwined with each other in a dazzling golden red.

Chu Wanning was too tired and fell asleep on the table.

At the tip of his finger was still a half unformed haitang flower. The petals trembled with his breathing as Mo Ran walked over and gently plucked the remaining half flower, placed it on the table, and then picked it up.

Ch. 177 Shizun Pretends to Sleep

Chu Wanning had not slept for two days. He slept soundly and the movements of Mo Ran were gentle. Thus, when he was carried to bed in the warm embrace of Mo Ran, he was still undisturbed.

Mo Ran placed him in the middle of the bed, resting his hand on the pillow and covering him with the blanket.

After doing all of this, he did not leave. Instead, he stared at that face with infatuation, from his pitch-black eyebrows to his thin lips, inch by inch.

Good.

How could his Shizun, his master, be so good-looking?

He was so beautiful that he could look at him twice. His heart went soft and his lower body turned stiff.

His scalp went numb, and his mind was strangling his neck. He knew it was wrong, but with Chu Wanning's face so close to his, the faint aura of a flame tore his clothes like countless soft claws, seduced him to get naked, and go to the warm bed with him.

Perhaps it was because the burning blood flowing in Mo Ran's vessels was like a surging tide, or perhaps it was because his heart was like a war drum that could not be stopped, or perhaps it was because his eyes were too hot, burning the people who slept soundly.

In short, Chu Wanning opened his eyes and woke up.

"…"

For a moment, no one made a sound, Mo Ran was just standing there stiffly. Chu Wanning's dazed state turned into shock, his phoenix-like eyes opened wide to meet the burning eyes of Mo Ran.

Chu Wanning was suddenly alerted, "What are you doing?"

The expression on the handsome young man's face was hard to see clearly. He slowly lowered his body, and was so shocked that Chu Wanning didn't dare to move.

"You…"

The closer they got.

His heart was thumping loudly.

"Sha!"

A light sound came from the bedside. Suddenly, the surrounding light dimmed, sinking into an even more ambiguous and hazy atmosphere.

Mo Ran bent over and pulled the curtain over the bed. He straightened his body and sat on the edge of the bed.

He lowered his head to look at the sleeping Chu Wanning and said in a low voice, "I saw that Shizun was asleep so I wanted to help you put down the curtains, but I didn't think that I would wake you up."

Chu Wanning did not say anything. He leaned against the pillow and turned his head to look at him.

The dark yellow curtain that had just been unhooked from the headboard fluttered behind Mo Ran. The candle flames outside became so dense and

blurred, like a mist that had been condensed on the windows in winter. It was too dark for the young man's handsome face to be seen. Only his eyes were bright in the darkness, like falling stars.

Mo Ran suddenly called out to him, "Shizun."

"Hmm?"

"There's something I want to ask you."

"…"

Taking advantage of the darkness, his courage to be a disciple seemed to grow.

Chu Wanning's heart tightened as he thought to himself, "Is he going to ask about that silk sachet?"

His face was unperturbed, but his chest was surging.

Was there still time to pretend to be asleep?

Mo Ran asked, "Where should I sleep?"

"…" Chu Wanning was speechless.

He struggled and tangled most of the night and Mo Ran finally fell on the floor.

"The bed is too small." In fact, he regretted it right after he asked. With his healthy body and strong blood energy, it would be better if he didn't collapse and sleep with Chu Wanning. It wasn't like he didn't know how terrible a man's desires could be.

“I’ll sleep on the floor.”

“… Is there any extra bedding?”

“There’s a bed.”

“Will it be cold?”

“No, I’ll just lay down more straw.”

After saying that, Mo Ran went outside to get the straw, carried a pile back, and neatly laid them on the ground. Having been tormented by him just now, Chu Wanning was temporarily out of sleep. He leaned his body to support his head, and lifted the curtains with one hand. He silently watched as the man busied himself and quickly made a single bed for himself.

“…”

“Yes, Shizun. Good night.”

The man put on his clothes and pulled up the blanket for himself. His dark eyes looked gently and steadily at Chu Wanning on the bed.

Chu Wanning acknowledged, “Yes.”

Seeing Mo Ran’s “I’m very honest” look, Chu Wanning was relieved. He put on a “I’m very cold” look and laid down the bed curtains casually.

Then Mo Ran sat up again.

“What for?”

“Turn off the lights.”

The man got up and blew out the candle.

The room fell into silence. Lying under the bed was Shizun and disciple, each with their own thoughts, looking at the flowers and butterflies that faintly glowed in the endless night.

“Shizun.”

“What now? Are you still not sleeping?”

“I’ll sleep.” The voice of Mo Ran was very gentle, especially soft in the night. “It’s just that I suddenly want to tell you something.”

Chu Wanning pursed his lips. Although his heart wasn’t beating as hard as it did when he first made wild guesses, he still couldn’t help but feel his throat go dry.

“I want to say… There’s no need to be so reserved when Shizun sleeps. You always sleep in a corner.”

There was a smile in his voice, low but pleasant.

Chu Wanning: “… I’m used to it.”

“Why?”

“The room is always too messy. I fell over before and was cut by a file on the floor.”

Mo Ran listened silently for a long time.

Chu Wanning waited. When there was no response, he asked, “What’s wrong?”

“Nothing.” Chu Wanning turned his head to the side, and under the dim and gentle curtain, he could see that he had pulled the floor closer to him by the light of the butterflies and the haitang blossoms.

Mo Ran lay back down and said smilingly, “When I’m around, Shizun doesn’t have to worry. If you fall, you won’t get stabbed.”

He paused for a moment and then casually said, “I am here.”

“…”

After a while, Mo Ran heard the man on the bed give a little snort and said faintly, “The flesh on your arm is so hard that it’s not much better than a file.”

Mo Ran smiled. “There is something even harder that Shizun has yet to see.”

He was about to say something about the muscles in his chest, but before he could finish, he was suddenly aware of the thick stench of blood that permeated his words. He was stunned and said quickly:

“I didn’t mean that.”

After hearing the second sentence, the atmosphere between the two of them became even more hopeless and sunk into the depths of the abyss.

Of course, he knew that Mo Ran had an even harder and hotter blade, one that made people shudder even more than the cold hilt of his mechanical armour. Putting aside the cultivation experience book that he had seen before, he himself had unconsciously felt it through his clothes. It was a terrifying passion that made people shiver and feel numb all over.

Chu Wanning replied impatiently, “I’m asleep.”

“… Right.”

But how could he sleep?

The lava of love gnawed at the two of them, licking their chapped chests. It was so quiet in the room that he could hear the faint sounds of the other person’s breathing and the tossing and turning.

Mo Ran put his hands behind his head and opened his eyes, looking at the room full of fluttering fiery-red butterflies. A spirit butterfly fluttered down and stopped on the bed curtain, causing the curtain to be filled with a gentle light red color.

In the midst of this silence, Mo Ran suddenly thought of something.

Back then in Jincheng Lake, the person who had saved him from the Awakening Heart Pavilion’s nightmare had faintly whispered a sentence into his ear.

At that moment, his spiritual sense was fuzzy, so he was not sure if he was hallucinating. But now that he thought about it, he suddenly felt that perhaps he hadn’t misheard.

Maybe it’s true.

He heard Chu Wanning say, “I like you too.”

Mo Ran’s heartbeat grew faster and faster. Some of the details he had never noticed before were all sprouting at this moment, turning into fresh and tender petals, which were then nourished by his wolf ambitions, forming lush, large trees that reached the sky.

His head was buzzing, and his vision was blurry. The more he thought about it, the more he felt that something was amiss…

“I like you too.”

I like you, too.

If he had misheard his words, then why was it that when he woke up, he was unwilling to admit that he was the one who had saved him?

Unless he hadn’t misheard!

Unless Chu Wanning did say that…

Mo Ran sat up abruptly. He was so excited that he could barely contain himself as he said hoarsely, “Shizun!”

“…”

Even though the person behind the curtain had not made any sound, Mo Ran still asked, “Today, when I was washing clothes, I picked up something. It was…”

The curtain was quiet.

“Do you know what it is?” The moment the words left his mouth, he suddenly turned timid. He actually foolishly asked Chu Wanning this question.

The other party didn’t reply for a long time.

Mo Ran hesitated, his eyes moist and pitch black. “Shizun, are you still awake?”

“Did you hear me…”

On the bed, which was covered by a light curtain, Chu Wanning was completely still as if he had fallen asleep. Mo Ran waited for a long time, unwilling to give up. He stretched out his hand several times to open the curtain, but stopped.

“Shizun.”

He mumbled and lay down again.

His voice was very soft.

“You pay attention to me.”

Of course, Chu Wanning would not bother with him.

His entire being was a mess, and the clear mind that he had always been proud of was already filled with smoke and miasma. He lay on the bed, staring at the dark curtain, thinking slowly and stiffly: What the hell is Mo Ran trying to do?

He thought of many things and made all sorts of inconceivable guesses. Only he didn’t dare to guess the most obvious answer, nor did he dare to guess that Mo Ran also liked him.

It was like a hungry person who had eaten a crispy meat pie and, because it was not easy to come by, was especially treasured. He ate all the crust on the cake but was reluctant to eat the last bit.

Chu Wanning listened to the gentle yet anxious murmur of the person outside the curtain.

He quietly pulled the blanket up over his chin and nose, exposing only a pair of bright eyes.

Then he covered his eyes as well and hid himself in the quilt.

Of course he heard it, but he didn't know how to answer.

His heart was pounding and his palms were covered with sweat.

He felt like he had been forced into a dead end, so he wanted to sit up and angrily shout, "Yes! I was just hiding that brocade bag! I like you! Scram! Stop asking and sleep!"

He was tormented and apprehensive, and his heart was itching badly.

"Shizun?"

"…"

"Have you really fallen asleep…"

After a while, Chu Wanning heard Mo Ran sigh softly.

He covered his head with the cloth. In the darkness, he was filled with regret, fear, nervousness, and sweetness. He had mixed feelings, both sour and bitter, and he tried to calm himself down, but in the end, his cheeks were burning and he could not help but secretly kick the blanket.

Ch. 178 Shizun Selling Flowers

The next morning, Chu Wanning got out of bed with dark circles under his eyes. He hadn't slept well at all last night, which was why he looked so gloomy. His originally cold face was covered with a thin layer of ice and there was no heat.

He pushed the door open and saw Mo Ran washing clothes.

…Why do you do laundry so early in the morning?

Didn't you wash it last night?

Seeing him come out of the house, Mo Ran felt a bit embarrassed. His face was covered in foam and he turned to greet Chu Wanning, "Shizun."

"Yes."

"Third Madam Sun kept her promise and accepted the money. She brought food from house to house in the morning. I have placed it on the small stone table in the courtyard. Shizun, quickly go and eat it."

"What about you?"

"I've eaten. When Shizun finishes breakfast, we can go and sell butterflies and flowers together."

Third Madam Sun's food was very monotonous, but the quantity was not small. There were actually three steamed buns.

He sat in the small courtyard, slowly nibbling on his buns. The sun was rising and shining through the dead vines that were crawling around the grape arbor above his head, cutting the table into mottled shadows.

He turned around and glanced at Mo Ran's tall figure. An indistinct feeling of warmth surged in his heart.

He took another big bite of the steamed bun.

The appearance of the golden haitang and the red butterfly caused a huge ruckus in the lazy market all year round on Flying Flower Island. All the fishermen on the island came over to watch, even those who didn't intend to go to the market today.

"Flowers!"

"What's so strange about flowers? Have you never seen flowers before?"

"Golden Haitang! It was made with spiritual energy! It's been open all year! You can even send a sound transmission!"

"Wah! Where is it?"

A large wave of people rushed over.

"Butterflies!"

"What's so interesting about butterflies? They're like a bunch of butterflies caught in the spring."

"Red! Spiritual force, can drive away small evil! And it's very pretty, very obedient, and won't run around, will keep flying around you!"

"AHHHH! Really? Where is it?"

Another wave of people rushed over.

Third Madam Sun, who was reclining high in her mansion, had also received the news in her leisure time. She could not help but bring a few of her subordinates to the market. Before she could even reach the door, she saw the dense stream of golden-red lights from the crowd in the distance, causing people to continuously click their tongues in admiration.

Her heart felt like it was being clawed by ants. She ignored the surrounding villagers and walked over to take a look.

She saw one of the two immortal lords from yesterday smiling brilliantly as he led a group of celebrities to perform a magic trick to attract a lot of customers. The other person remained expressionless as he stood under the tree with his arms crossed coldly. He did not say a word.

“Selling butterflies, selling butterflies —” The handsome man turned around and smiled at another man with a pale face. “Shizun, why aren’t you shouting?”

Yelling?

Chu Wanning harrumphed coldly in his heart.

He did not know how to write the word “yelling”. Could it be that he had to shamelessly act like the vulgar Mo Weiyu, shouting, “Sell the flowers, sell the haitang blossoms” in front of everyone’s eyes?

Don’t even think about it.

“How much are the butterflies?” Everyone felt that this immortal item must be very expensive, so they hesitated for a long time. Finally, someone bold enough to ask for a price came up.

Mo Ran said, “Ten gold for one.”

Chu Wanning coughed from behind him.

Mo Ran said, "… Three copper coins for one."

"So cheap?" The surrounding people were all shocked and came to buy one after another. Mo Ran passed a butterfly to the left and a flower to the right. As he was busy, he suddenly caught a glimpse of a ragged little girl with her fingers in the distance, looking at the bustling scene with a longing expression.

Mo Ran smiled and did not say anything else. He suddenly closed his fingers and formed an extremely beautiful phoenix tail butterfly. With a gentle blow, the butterfly floated to her side across the sea of people and landed on her braid.

The girl was stunned. She hesitated for a few steps before she stopped and shook her head.

She had no money.

Not to mention three copper coins, there wasn't even one.

He waved at her, mouthed, "For you," then winked, smiled, and turned his head away again, continuing his work.

Third Madam Sun watched as the beautiful golden items were bought. A beautiful lady directly put the haitang flower into her black hair bun. Instantly, her head was covered in sparkling black hair. It was surprisingly radiant and gave off an indescribably noble aura. She couldn't help it.

"I want all of these butterflies and flowers."

Mo Ran raised his eyes, his smile still lingering on his face. “I was wondering who could be so generous. So it’s Third Madam.”

“How many are left? Count them all, I will take them all back to the manor.”

“That won’t do.” Mo Ran laughed, “There has to be a first come first serve. The others came first. They haven’t finished buying yet, so I can’t just give them to you first.”

Third Madam Sun looked at the crowd of villagers and immediately became anxious. She was afraid that if she sold it all, she said, “Then I’ll raise the price.”

“I can’t make a decision. I’m just an assistant. As for the price, you have to ask my Shizun.”

Third Madam Sun went under the tree and found the aloof and cold flower selling Taoist Chu Wanning.

“Immortal, why don’t you sell all those flowers and butterflies to me? We’re all businessmen, the price is negotiable.”

Chu Wanning coldly said, “Ten gold for one.”

Mo Ran, who was at the side, could not help but laugh out loud. He turned his head to look at Chu Wanning’s pair of black phoenix eyes. It was funny and soft, but he scratched his head in amusement.

Third Madam Sun was extremely rich. To her, this amount of money was not much. Very soon, she commanded her servants to bring away the Night Haitang and the Phoenix-Tail Butterfly.

Back at the mansion, she happily combed her hair into a bun and inserted over fifty bright golden flowers, making those butterflies dance around her. When the servants saw her head full of golden light, looking like a melted and burning candle from afar, they couldn't help but find it funny.

Third Madam Sun was not happy for long as someone came to report that the two immortal lords had started to sell other things in the market. She was shocked when she heard this. She rushed to the market with a cloud bun that was flickering with a bright light, escorted by a flurry of bees and butterflies.

"Selling butterflies – selling butterflies –"

Third Madam Sun squeezed her way over, placed her hands on her hips, and angrily said, "Wasn't it all bought by me just now? Why is it happening again?"

Mo Ran blinked his eyes. "It's new."

"Since you can make them new, why did you sell them to me for ten gold each just now?!"

Mo Ran laughed, "Think about it, when you wake up in the morning, go to a fried bun house that has a lot of customers lining up and you want to buy some fried food before them. So you pay more. Right?"

Third Madam Sun said angrily, "You, you evil merchant, you…"

Just as she was thinking about how to refute this person's lecherous reasoning, she suddenly saw the silent cultivator walk over. A light flashed on the tip of Chu Wanning's finger, and a twin haitang actually appeared.

Although Third Madam Sun was angry, she was also attracted to it and asked, “What is this? Why is it different from before?”

“This kind of flower also uses the Art of Rejuvenation, placing it on the bed before sleeping can maintain the radiance of the next day, and its effect will last for around 15 days.” Chu Wanning carelessly handed the flowers to Mo Ran and said, “Go sell them, one hundred gold coins for one flower.”

“Wait a minute,” Third Madam Sun was afraid that these two would say something else later. Although she was furious, she still said, “Don’t take it, I’ll take this one. How many more can you make? I want them all!”

Chu Wanning said, “I don’t want to repeat the same spell too many times, I only want to make three.”

“Then three hundred gold, I’ll give it to you.”

“Mo Ran, collect the money.” As Chu Wanning spoke, he lowered his head to condense the other two flowers and handed them to Third Madam Sun. Then, he began to condense the fourth flower.

Third Madam Sun was unhappy, “Didn’t you say that you can only make three flowers?”

“This one adds the Art of Wonder’s Note.” Chu Wanning said faintly, “When combined with your body, it can make a woman’s voice more pleasing to the ear.”

“…” Even though Third Madam Sun was greedy for money, she was even more greedy for time. She could only look on helplessly as the Sisheng Peak cultivator formed one wondrous haitang flower after another. She

hated him so much that her teeth itched, but she could only say, “Okay, okay, okay, I’ll buy, I’ll buy.”

When they went back to close the door at night, the Shizun and disciple sat at the table and counted the money. When they found out that it was enough to feed and drink the entire group before the fire on the other side went out, Chu Wanning pushed half of his silver taels to Mo Ran and put it away before he said, “When we leave, return the rest to Third Madam Sun.”

Mo Ran was stunned. “Why?”

“Flying Flower Island is a long way from Linyi and its supplies are poor, so it is very inconvenient to eat and wear. However, look at the fishermen on the island, they should be able to get enough food, don’t you think that’s a little strange?”

“… Right.” As he said this, he carefully thought about it and indeed felt that it was the case.

Chu Wanning said, “Go and ask around. Today, when you were tidying up the stalls, I went to look for the Village Head and asked him some questions. Actually, this Third Madam Sun was originally a member of Linyi Rufeng Sect. Because her talent was not high, master did not control her much. Even after five years since she joined the sect, she still only knows how to display her sword arts.”

Mo Ran was surprised, “She is a member of the Rufeng Sect? Then has Shizun ever seen…”

“Nope. The Village Head said that when she was seventeen, she came to the Flying Flower Island with a cultivator from the Rufeng Sect to recruit a

new disciple. Those famous cultivators relied on the fact that they were far away and that the island was filled with mortals. Even if they were bullied, they wouldn't be able to travel thousands of miles to Rufeng Sect to denounce them for their crimes, so in that period of time, they did evil deeds to the island's citizens, freeloading, robbing money, and even…"

"Even?"

"Even sexually assaulting young men and women."

"…"

"Third Madam Sun was furious and began to argue with her senior brothers and sisters. Her body was light and her personality was fierce. She offended her fellow sect members and in the end, was stabbed by one of them and pushed off the cliff."

Mo Ran muttered, "So that's how it is? No wonder when he heard what the Village Head advised her to say, she wasn't a person from the Rufeng Sect, he didn't expect… Sigh…"

"Yes. She was lucky. Her sword had missed her vital points. After falling into the sea, she had been spotted by the fishermen fishing for her. The fisherman originally had two daughters, but they both left early. After saving her, he accepted her as his adopted daughter, teaching her how to fish and hunt, teaching her how to do business. After her foster father passed away, she took over his mantle and gradually became the largest family on the Flying Flower Island."

Chu Wanning paused for a moment before speaking.

“You heard, she said that the harvest on Flying Flower Island was not good this year and that she was the one in charge of every household. Although Third Madam Sun’s business is good, she would only strip money off cultivators. She would never take too much from the islanders and would even subsidize poverty.”

Mo Ran did not say anything, but he thought of that little girl in the market who yearned for the haitang blossoms.

She was dressed shabbily and had a dirty face. It was obvious that she had lost her parents.

However, she was not skinny. Her cheeks were bulging and her eyes shone with a clear and cold light. If it wasn’t for someone helping her, wouldn’t such a young child have lost her looks and skin if she were to beg for food for a living?

“Third Madam Sun goes out to sea more than 20 times a year. Every time she goes back and forth, it takes her seven to eight days to go back and forth. Look at her mansion, it’s extremely luxurious, why must she come and go in the wind and waves when she’s over a hundred years old? Every year, she would painstakingly take the things on the island to Linyi to sell, then go to Linyi to gather the materials and bring them back to Flying Flower Island? She clearly doesn’t lack money.”

“… I understand.” When Mo Ran heard this, his heart was in pain. He immediately picked up the half of the money and prepared to leave. Chu Wanning called out to him.

“Where to?”

“I’ll return what I earned back to her.”

“Sit down.”

Chu Wanning replied flatly.

“Why are you so stupid?”

“Hmm?”

“Look at a person like Third Madam Sun. She has an unyielding personality and she wants to be strong. What she hated the most were cultivators… Say, if you go over and give her the money like this, won’t she beat you up and send you out of the mansion?”

“…”

Mo Ran thought about it and suddenly felt pain in his spine. He could not help but sigh and ask, “Then what should we do?”

“I told the Village Head that before we leave, I will give him the rest of the money so that he can find an opportunity to pass it to Third Madam Sun. At that time, when we are all gone, money will eventually make the Flying Flower Island a little better off. She won’t refuse it.”

Mo Ran lowered his eyes to ponder for a moment before nodding his head.

“Shizun is right, we should do as Shizun says.”

Chu Wanning sighed and said, “There are many things in this world that cannot be decided just by looking at the surface. Sometimes, even the layer below the surface may not be the truth. I often tell myself that I need to calm down, judge people, things, and be very careful, but sometimes I can’t help it.”

Mo Ran that he had said was extremely unpleasant.

He made decisions just from looking at the surface, judged people's right and wrong, judged the right and wrong, wasn't this what he had done to Chu Wanning before?

Apart from him, it was extremely difficult for most people in the mortal world to maintain a pair of clear eyes and a calm heart in the face of intense emotions. They had to think and see the truth hidden beneath the dust and sand.

What he did to to Chu Wanning, and what Nangong Si did to his own mother — fooled by their emotions, blinded by appearances, they finally made mistakes causing hut and pain which couldn't be undone.

Perhaps only someone like Chu Wanning, who seemed cold and detached, but was determined to give everyone a chance to change their minds and try their best not to speculate everything with the greatest malice. Thus, the more Mo Ran tried to understand him, the more he would discover that this irritable Immortal Elder Beidou actually possessed a heart that was not tainted by hostility.

What this person hid behind his cold and arrogant face was actually a kind and forgiving spirit soul.

Because of such a spirit soul, he felt even more pity for Chu Wanning, and a strong desire to protect grew in his heart. Perhaps it was because he had been drenched in blood from the mountains of corpses and the seas of blood that he was able to understand that in this world, there was nothing more precious than the heart of a naked child.

It was a flute in the smoke, a flower in the trenches.

Thus, standing in front of such a spirit, the Immortal Taxian-Jun who once caused trouble for the entire world silently thought —

If there was a day that Shizun needed it, then even if he was covered in wounds and dried blood and tears, even if he died without a complete corpse, even if he was burnt to ashes, even if he had to sacrifice his head and broken soul.

He wanted to protect this clean and pure Beidou Immortal.

“What are you thinking about?”

“Oh, nothing.” Mo Ran smiled. “I’m just thinking about some small matters.”

“A small matter?”

Mo Ran pursed his lips. He suddenly remembered that when he went to the market in the morning, Chu Wanning told him that he wanted to learn the Imperial Sword Technique. He said, “Shizun, come with me.”

Ch. 179 Wanning

The two of them arrived at the edge of a cliff on Flying Flower Island. Below them was a rough sea, the waves crashed into the rocks and turned into thousands of snowflakes. There was nothing around them except the boundless sea, the sky and the crescent moon.

Mo Ran called for his sword, then turned to ask Chu Wanning, “Why don’t you know how to use the Imperial Sword Technique?”

“It’s not that I don’t know how to.” Chu Wanning said, “I’m not very good at it.”

“Why aren’t you adept at it?”

Chu Wanning waved his sleeves, his expression was haughty but his ears were red, “I can only fly not far from the ground.”

Mo Ran was surprised, things like the Imperial Sword Technique required the same amount of spiritual energy to fly an inch or a hundred meters away from the ground.

There was no reason not to soar into the sky, so he said, “Shizun, give it a try. Let me see.”

“…” Chu Wanning did not summon his sword. Instead, he calmly said, “I don’t want to use my sword, but I feel that it is inappropriate to use it when it needs to be respected and stepped on.”

“?”

He did not know why he suddenly started explaining, but Mo Ran still nodded his head.

“Shizun is right. But… We can’t lie down on our swords or hang ourselves on our swords, right?”

Chu Wanning was at a loss for words. When he looked up, he saw the man looking at him with a smile, and he could not help but feel annoyed. “Normally, if there’s an emergency, I fly with the Ascending Dragon’s Barrier.”

Mo Ran was a little taken aback. “That dragon?”

“It can grow.” Chu Wanning said. He seemed to have recovered some of his face, but soon felt a bit embarrassed. “But after the great fire at the Rufeng Sect, it was completely useless. He fears fire.”

Mo Ran suddenly understood. “So Shizun wants to learn the Imperial Sword Technique in order to —”

“In case of an emergency.”

Mo Ran fell silent. The thick smoke that billowed out from Linyi’s city was like a sea of flames, engulfing countless lives. At that time, Chu Wanning stood on his own sword, watching as the mortals were swallowed up by the fire and burnt into ashes, leaving not even a single bone behind. The exalted deity, on the other hand, was unable to do anything and could not ride a sword to carry anyone, what mood did the current Chu Wanning have?

No wonder this person, who would rather ride a horse carriage than ride a sword, would suddenly ask his disciple for such a request.

“I understand. Shizun, don’t worry, I’ll definitely teach you well.”

Hearing him say so, Chu Wanning did not say anything. He lowered his eyes, thinking about something. In the end, he sighed and raised his hand, “Huaisha, summon him.”

A ray of golden light suddenly condensed into existence as Mo Ran once again saw the godly weapon that had only appeared during his life-and-death duel in his previous life within this serene sea and sky moonlight.

Chu Wanning’s Blade of Killing.

Huaisha.

It was a longsword that Mo Ran obviously knew. There was probably no other person in this world who was more suitable to be its Sword master than Chu Wanning. Its decorations were light, and its entire body was flowing gold. Because the golden light was too glaring, it even had a hint of paleness to it. The radiance flowed down from the sword in an unhurried manner. It was like burning fireworks in the night sky, yet also like falling white sand.

“This is Huaisha.” Chu Wanning looked at it and said, “You have never seen it, it is very vicious, so I don’t use it often.”

After a long while, he nodded and said in a low voice, “It is a good sword.”

The night wind blew gently, and Mo Ran stepped onto his sword. With a slight movement of his toes, the sword obediently rose up a few inches off the ground.

“Let Shizun give it a try too.” Mo Ran turned around and said to Chu Wanning.

Chu Wanning also stood on the sword. Huaisha steadily rose a few inches higher, bringing Chu Wanning around in a circle.

“Isn’t this great? Try getting up a little more.” As he spoke, he controlled his sword and flew to a height of about five feet. He smiled at Chu Wanning and said, “Come up here.”

“…”

Chu Wanning pursed his lips, silently raising Huaisha to the same level as him.

Mo Ran replied, “No problem. Shizun, don’t you know how to do it? Then we’ll…”

He suddenly stopped talking. He noticed that Chu Wanning’s face was pale and his face was tense. His eyelashes were fluttering like grass in the wind, as if he was trying his best to hold back something.

Mo Ran looked down and saw that he was not even five feet away from the ground.

Then he raised his head and looked at Chu Wanning in disbelief.

He suddenly had a ridiculous thought.

Shizun could not control the sword, could it be because… he was afraid of heights?

Mo Ran: “…”

This was extremely awkward, and he also felt that it was inconceivable. Chu Wanning was a man of great lightness skills. He could go up and down

as he wished, and he could just touch the ground for several meters with his toes. How could such a person fear heights? However, when he observed the person standing on the sword, his expression was truly unsightly. His gaze wandered, and even though he tried his best to restrain himself, a thin layer of fear still appeared between his brows.

Mo Ran probed, “Shizun?”

Chu Wanning’s reaction was a bit intense. He suddenly raised his head, and the night wind ruffled his hair, but he did not raise his hand to sweep it away. His pair of phoenix eyes flashed with anger, and behind his messy forehead burst into flames, “Hmm?”

“Cough…Pfft.”

“What are you laughing for!”

“My throat is dry. Cough.”

Mo Ran did his best to hold back his laughter. He thought to himself, he’s not running anymore, so he’s really afraid of heights. No wonder he explained so much just now, he just wanted to save some face.

Since Shizun wanted to save face, as a disciple, he had to follow along with Shizun and step down the steps.

Mo Ran said, “The higher the level of the sword, the more difficult it is to practice. From the very beginning, I also could not go up more than five feet. You need to practice more.”

“You couldn’t go up there before?”

“Yes.”

The first time he rode the sword, Mo Weiyu, who was at the height of a thousand zhang, gently nodded.

“Maybe I don’t even have five feet, so I don’t dare to look at the ground. Three feet? In short, Xue Meng can easily kick me down.”

Chu Wanning felt slightly relieved.

He had never had the nerve to tell anyone about the fear of height, but now it seemed that there was nothing to lose face.

“Shizun, try your best not to look down.”

“Hmm?”

“Just look at me.” Mo Ran was suspended above him. He thought for a moment before lowering his body again, “Forget about how much you rose, just think of flying to the same position as me.”

Chu Wanning gritted his teeth and climbed even higher. The thin and smooth blade was stepped on. The originally warm night wind, to him, had also become as cold and wet as a snake, and it slithered into his clothes, crawling and hissing.

“Don’t look down, don’t look down. Come here and take my hand.”

Chu Wanning took his lessons seriously and focused, saying, “No need, I can do it myself.”

Mo Ran did not force him anymore. He knew Chu Wanning’s temperament. If this person wanted him to come, it would be better to let him be when it wasn’t a big deal.

A person who is used to being a towering tree is not accustomed to rely on other people.

Being by his side allowed him to be at ease and feel comfortable.

Although he really wants to turn Chu Wanning into soft spring water to wrap his fingers and rub it into his rough torso so that he can shatter in his arms and melt in his own blood. Like most men in the world, he always had an unrealistic and terrible possessive desire for someone he loved deeply.

This was natural instinct.

The male aggression made him long to lock Chu Wanning up, and spend endless days and nights entangled with him, swallowing all of his passion.

He longed for him to spend the rest of his life on a warm bed while embracing him, not to be seen by anyone but himself.

He longed to own him, for him to be under him for his entire life, forever wrapped around him.

The beast that thirsted for his body couldn't help but want to leave dark and purple marks all over that wouldn't fade. It wanted to make fierce love every night until his desires were sated.

However, love made Mo Ran's heart soft and compassionate.

Love made him want to respect Chu Wanning. He wanted to see him in high spirits, with light hooves and fast horses. He wanted to see him wielding his sword out in the world, snow falling on his sleeves.

He wanted to indulge him to grow arrogantly in the jungle to reach the heavens, to cast shade mercifully, connive his branches to flourish, but also

so to allow him to break and get hurt in the wind and rain.

And so love shackled his instincts, tied the bridle around his beasts, lowered his eyes, held his breath, and became a man of good manners.

In this life, he would rather keep his true nature locked in and pull out the fangs.

He was born to possess because of love, he became selfish, and now he is reborn to be forgiving because of love, he became selfless.

As a result, he would not be like his previous life, trying to imprison Chu Wanning, trying to change him.

This belated and pure love made the former Emperor Taxian-Jun willing to submit, willing to spend his entire life as Chu Wanning's companion.

His sword climbed higher and higher until it reached a certain height. Even though Chu Wanning didn't look at the ground, his fingertips still trembled under his wide sleeves.

His scalp went numb.

Mo Ran could see his nervousness, so he said, "Don't be afraid, this is the same as the qinggong."

"It's not the same. Qinggong is dependent on himself, while the Imperial Sword Technique is…"

"Even swordplay relies on one's own ability."

"Sword kinesis relies on the sword!" Chu Wanning retorted angrily.

Mo Ran: "…"

He finally understood why his Shizun was so skilled, but was also afraid when he was riding the sword. Chu Wanning never relied on anything, he always relied on himself, so only when he relied on himself could he feel at ease.

This knowledge made Mo Ran's heart ache. He felt very pained.

He said, "It's okay, Shizun. You have to believe in Huaisha."

However, even with his casual calmness, the anxiousness and panic in Chu Wanning's eyes could not be hidden. Seeing the beads of sweat on his forehead and the instability in his feet, Mo Weiyu knew he could not continue like this. If Chu Wanning fell off his sword at this moment, the shadow would be even deeper.

He immediately said: "Let's go down."

The two landed on the ground, he rested for a moment and then asked, "How high did we fly?"

Mo Ran had the intention of reporting more and said, "Over fifty feet."

Chu Wanning was taken aback. His eyes widened, "That high?"

"Yeah. Shizun is so powerful. The next time we fly, five hundred feet will be a piece of cake."

"…"

Upon hearing the word 'five hundred', Chu Wanning's already pale face turned even uglier. He waved his hand but didn't say anything, staring at Huaisha in a daze.

Mo Ran thought about it and said, “How about this, Shizun, I’ll fly you for a while before getting used to it.”

“You don’t need to bring me, it’s not like you haven’t brought me before.”

“But before, Shizun didn’t really look at the ground when he was on the way.”

That made him right. Every time he rode someone else’s sword, he would try to look at that person’s back, or at some other point, and try to think that he was still firmly on the ground.

Mo Ran summoned his sword again, deliberately making it wider. He stepped on it first, then turned to Chu Wanning and said gently, “Come, come up.”

Chu Wanning gritted his teeth and leaped up, landing lightly on the hilt of his sword.

Mo Ran said, “Stand firm.” With that, he tapped the tip of his foot, took the order, and instantly soared into the sky. Chu Wanning closed his eyes out of habit at first, but when he heard the laughter, he was jolted awake and looked down.

It was good that he wasn’t looking. When he did, Chu Wanning’s hairs stood on end.

The Flying Flower Island had been left far behind by a huge beast, becoming more and more distant. The howling of the wind was next to his ears, and his clothes were soaked in the cold night air, he had no one to rely on other than this sword, so they flew towards the sea. At night, the

blue-black seawater was like an ancient beast's huge black mouth, swallowing up all the living creatures.

His ice-cold eyelashes trembled. Chu Wanning subconsciously closed his eyes again, but he heard Mo Ran saying from behind, "Don't be afraid, it will be fine."

"I… I'm not afraid." Chu Wanning's face was as white as paper.

Mo Ran smiled. "Alright, then you won't be afraid. If you feel cold or bored, tell me and I'll take you back to the island."

Chu Wanning did not utter a word. He knew Mo Ran was giving him face.

After all, a cultivator who was freezing cold on his sword was much more imposing than a cultivator who was trembling on his sword.

Seeing that he was somewhat unable to bear it and stubbornly unwilling to speak, Mo Ran could not bear to do so. He said, "I will make the sword a bit larger."

He raised his hand and extended his sword by five or six times, which was enough for him to stand shoulder to shoulder with Chu Wanning.

"Shizun, in a few more days, Linyi's tribulation fire will be extinguished. We will return to Sisheng Peak, but what should we do with the people that we brought?" As he spoke, he tried to loosen the tension on the bowstring.

Chu Wanning was a man of his word, he could think, "Bring them to Shu."

"Hmm?"

“Let’s go to Shu first. After Linyi Calamity Fire, there will be scorched earth. No one can live there.”

Mo Ran said, “Alright.”

He looked at Chu Wanning’s pale face, and after a while, his heart ached. He asked, “Should we go back?”

“Wait a little longer.”

Mo Ran then expanded the circle of the sword a few times. He made Chu Wanning sit down, it would be much better to sit and watch than to stand. He opened the barrier, and Chu Wanning turned to ask, “What are you doing?”

“It’s just a cold barrier.” Mo Ran’s gaze was very gentle. “If it’s too high, it’ll be cold.”

Chu Wanning let this go.

The Spirit Formation was the same as his, and it was extremely similar. In fact, even the film formed from light was a haitang flower. However, his was gold, and Mo Ran’s was red.

With this translucent barrier, even though he knew it was useless to expel the cold, he suddenly felt that there was an additional layer of protection around him. Perhaps the sea he saw through the barrier was no longer frighteningly dark.

Mo Ran sat beside him and said, “Shizun, look over there.”

“What?”

“Did you see that?”

“…” Chu Wanning looked in the direction he was pointing at and frowned, “Other than the moon, there’s nothing else.”

“The moon.”

Chu Wanning was stunned, “What’s so good about it? It’s the same when you look at the ground.”

Mo Ran smiled. “This is the first time I’m sitting with Shizun to admire the moon.”

Chu Wanning did not reply. After a while, when Mo Ran thought that Chu Wanning would not say anything more, he suddenly said softly, “It’s not like we did not watch it together.”

“… What?”

Mo Ran was surprised and turned to look at him.

The moonlight shone down on Chu Wanning’s handsome face. His skin was like the white petals of a cold night, and under the two thick eyelashes, his eyes seemed to be reminiscing about something deeper than the sea.

“It’s been too long, you should have forgotten. Nothing,” Chu Wanning replied.

Mo Ran didn’t know what to say. He had lived longer than Chu Wanning, and much of his past was no longer clear. Even when Chu Wanning remembered his past, he didn’t think that he was still hiding it in his heart.

He looked at the side of Chu Wanning's face and felt guilty, but he could not help but feel a hint of sweetness. He couldn't help but think of that brocade sack and the questions he was going to ask yesterday. Chu Wanning had kept their hair tied, as well as many memories. Why…

Butterfly Town, Jincheng Lake……

During the Heavenly Rift, he had risked his life to save himself.

Why?

Previously, he didn't dare to speculate any further and thought that he was extremely bold and shameless.

However, in the past two days, every single discovery he made had been to fan the flames within his wolf ambitions.

— Why.

"Shizun."

"Hmm?"

The blood in his chest surged and surged. He was very thirsty, and his eyes were very bright as he stared at Chu Wanning. He suddenly had the urge to go over and kiss him on the cheek. He mustered the courage to ask him, Are you… Do you like me?

On the Imperial Sword, between heaven and earth, Mo Ran felt like he was immersed in an illusion.

It was as if the two of them no longer had any ties in this world, and no past love or hatred had occurred. Everything was as peaceful and pure as

the moonlight that passed through a light cloud.

He felt as if the tender seedling in his chest had finally turned into a tree, its thick veins peeling away the dead soil, revealing the deep, fishy smell of the earth.

Chu Wanning saw that he was silent for a long time, he turned his head and asked, “What’s wrong?”

Mo Ran did not answer. His mind was clouded, and he longed to possess him, embrace him, and kiss him.

He involuntarily leaned over.

Then, he suddenly realized that even though Chu Wanning had recovered a bit after he had activated the enchantment, his face was still pale and his lips were pursed. He crossed his arms, his slender fingers subconsciously clutching the cold cloth.

When Chu Wanning was scared, what he grabbed was not others but himself.

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment.

Following that, the aggressive light in his eyes was extinguished and turned into a fine and fragmented light. The sparkling light was like that of a fish fire.

Very gentle.

He originally wanted to kiss his lips, but then he slightly pursed his lips and revealed a soft and bitter smile.

The hand that had been about to embrace him suddenly stopped, and a moment later touched the cold back of his hand.

“You…” Chu Wanning was taken aback. His pale face blushed, but he remained alert and whispered, “What are you doing?”

He tried to pull his hand away, but Mo Ran caught it and refused to let it go. Chu Wanning only felt his fingers, which had been frozen into ice, land on a big, warm hand. From his palm to his fingertip, they were all tightly wrapped and pressed together.

“Don’t rely on yourself. If I’m here, you can rely on me.”

If Chu Wanning had been calm and collected just now, he would have been able to sense the emotions behind his words, no matter how slow or hesitant he was.

Besides, there were those dark, death-looking eyes, gazing at him with solemn, gentle, and loving eyes. Chu Wanning’s heartbeat was like a torrential downpour as it pounded against his spirit soul bit by bit.

He no longer dared to look at Mo Ran’s eyes. He abruptly turned his face away and lowered his head.

Too hot.

How could a hundred feet in the air feel so hot?

He was usually aloof and calm, but now it was as if he had suddenly stepped into a territory that he did not know about. The armor on his body had been stripped off, and his sharp claws and fingers had been cut off. In the face of Mo Ran’s sudden blunt blow, Chu Wanning’s usual counterattack seemed to be ineffective.

The man pried open his clam with a fervent effort and looked straight into the white, quivering flesh. Both the shiny pearl and the sweet mussel meat were completely exposed to the man's eyes.

This proud and easygoing man threw down his armor and suddenly felt anxious and helpless.

What to do…

What should he say?

He…

He realized that his hand was still being held by Mo Ran, closely fitting.

He did not know what to do. He was anxious and nervous. His eyes were a little red. Subconsciously, he wanted to pull his fingers away.

However, the moment he moved, Mo Ran immediately grabbed him.

The man's palms were wet with sweat.

"Don't take it away."

"…"

His strength was so great, yet he was so stubborn. For some reason, Chu Wanning suddenly felt that his words seemed to be filled with sadness.

After staring at him for a long time, he said in a low, hoarse voice, "Chu Wanning…"

"… What did you call me?"

"… I was wrong."

Chu Wanning's body was now even more tense than before. His heartbeat was faster than when he first used the Imperial Sword Technique. He was not used to it, he was not used to it.

He tried his best to clear his path and make one last desperate struggle before he fell into the abyss again.

He lowered his eyes and said, "Well, if it's not impossible for you to know that you've said then you're not so help…"

Mo Ran's heart was very hot. Finally, without any hesitation, he blurted out, "Wanning."

…less.

Chu Wanning had yet to utter the last word.

When he heard this soft voice with a sigh, his mind went blank.

He couldn't say the last word again.

Helpless.

After hesitating outside the quagmire of love for so long, they finally couldn't help but step into it. They were trapped within the inescapable net and could feel the pain seeping into their bones.

Mo Ran's voice was low and hoarse. He stared at him and said, "Wanning, actually, these past few days I've been wanting to ask you a question."

"…"

Feeling his heart burning, Mo Ran held onto Chu Wanning's hand tightly, his fingers trembling, "No, I won't ask you."

Chu Wanning had just let out a breath of relief when he heard Mo Ran's next words.

"I'm not asking you anything. I just want to tell you."

Mo Ran was resolute and decisive, never to turn back.

In one breath, he had expended all his courage.

"I love you."

His heart was trembling violently.

"I love you, not the way a disciple loves his Shizun, but… I'm being bold, I… I love you."

Chu Wanning closed his eyes. His fingers trembled under the man's warm and humid skin, and gradually, it stopped moving.

How could that be?

How could this be…

He must have heard wrong, he was so ugly, so fierce, so incapable of speech, so uninteresting, he was nothing but a fool. Who would like him?

"I love you."

He was actually feeling bitter and frightened. His mind was almost completely blank, and he wanted to act like how he used to. He wanted to say "ridiculous", but after thinking about it for a long time, he couldn't find the words to express it.

After a long pause, Chu Wanning finally said hoarsely, "… I have a bad temper."

"You're very nice to me."

"I, I'm old."

"You look younger than me."

Chu Wanning was almost anxious, he said helplessly, "I'm so ugly…"

This time, it was Mo Ran's turn to be stunned. His eyes widened as he stared at the extremely handsome man in front of him. He did not understand why such a good-looking person would feel ashamed of his own appearance.

Seeing that he did not make a sound, his heart became even more flustered. He lowered his head and said, "I'm not good-looking."

"…"

"Not as beautiful as you."

As he was mumbling this, his cheek was suddenly touched by a warm hand. He heard Mo Ran sigh, which was even gentler than the moonlight tonight. "Would you like to see my eyes?"

"Your eyes…?"

Mo Ran's gaze was gentle, reflecting the figure of a man in white. He said, "Did you see that? He's the most beautiful person in the world."

Chu Wanning glared at him. Although his heart was in turmoil, there was not much of an expression on his ice-cold face.

Mo Ran gripped his palm, sweating profusely.

He said softly, “I love you.”

Chu Wanning felt as if he was pricked, fingers trembling. After a while, he lowered his head. “I love you” was like a sharp knife stabbing into his heart. His blood was boiling, and he was unable to control it. Chu Wanning’s eyes turned red. He had been waiting for too long and he did not know what his reaction would be. He was so anxious that he almost cried. He said, “It’s not good for me. I didn’t… I’ve never been liked.”

I’ve never been liked.

No one has ever felt happy, proud, and lucky for having me.

Thirty-two years.

No one liked me.

Hearing these words, Mo Ran looked at the man in front of him who had his head lowered, unwilling to even lift his face. Suddenly, he felt so much pain, so much pain that his heart cracked and his bones were crushed.

He was his treasure, but it had been covered in dust for nearly half his life.

He was in so much pain that he didn’t know what to say.

In the end, he just awkwardly held onto Chu Wanning’s hand and kept saying, “Yes, yes.”

Some people like you. I like you.

You are what someone wants, someone wants you very much, stop being so self conscious, stop feeling inferior, stop being so stupid, and treat your

best self as worthless. Idiot.

Stupid Chu Wanning.

I love you.

After a long while, Mo Ran asked, “What about you?”

“… What?”

Mo Ran lowered his eyes, his eyelashes rustling. “I… I’m so stupid, so ignorant, so unreliable, I… And I’ve made a lot of unforgivable mistakes.”

He paused and whispered, “Will you like me?”

Chu Wanning had initially lifted his face up, but upon hearing his words, he suddenly met those gentle black eyes and became flustered. With strength that came from nowhere, he abruptly pulled his hand away and turned his face away.

He did not nod or shake his head.

There was no affirmation, nor was there any rejection.

However, he could clearly see that Chu Wanning’s ears had turned red, so much so that his neck was like a blooming flower.

“That pouch…”

“Don’t say it.” Chu Wanning suddenly said in a low voice, this time his whole face was red, “Don’t say it.”

Seeing Chu Wanning’s embarrassed and unwilling look, Mo Ran’s eyes glimmered with sadness and confusion as the moonlight lingered in them.

He sat down and once again reached out his hand to grab the tip of Chu Wanning's finger.

Chu Wanning was trembling. Even his fingers were trembling. He held onto his slender fingers and held them tightly, holding them in a way that he had never done before.

His ten fingers were intertwined tightly as his palms pressed together.

Chu Wanning's face was flushed red as he looked away.

This time, he didn't break away from him.

Thus, Mo Ran held Chu Wanning's hand, and it was only after some time that he realized the truth, and nervously confirmed it.

Chu Wanning… Likes him, too.

He finally understood.

Ch. 180 Shizun, Why?

For Chu Wanning, this was the first time that his palm and Mo Ran's fingers were interlocked.

He felt that it was enough, not too much. Fortunately, Mo Ran didn't make any more movements. Otherwise, he would have been able to jump down a hundred feet into the air and escape.

This was good.

For Mo Ran, this wasn't the first time he had pressed his palms together with Chu Wanning and locked his fingers together.

He felt that it was not enough, that it was too little, but fortunately, he did not do anything more. Otherwise, he would have wanted to hold hands and kiss him and then ask for more, want to know the taste of him.

This is bad.

Even so, Mo Ran could sense that Chu Wanning was on the run.

That day when they landed on the ground, Chu Wanning turned around and ran without a second word. After running two steps, he felt his steps had become more hurried and he immediately slowed down.

He had only walked two steps slowly when he heard that Mo Ran was following behind him. Feeling embarrassed and anxious, he quickly started to walk again.

"…"

Mo Ran watched him stride forward, his heart itching and aching, hot and soft.

Seeing Chu Wanning walking towards a big tree, Mo Ran immediately warned, “Be careful!”

“Bam!”

He still hit the tree.

He hurried over and asked, “Does it hurt? Let me see.”

Chu Wanning covered his forehead and did not say a word. After a while, he walked forward again.

Mo Ran wanted to follow, but he heard him say, “Don’t follow me.”

“I… I need to go back and rest.”

“First stand there and let the wind blow. After you’ve cooled down, come in.”

To cool down?

Mo Ran smiled. How could he cool down?

I held your hand, Wanning, my heart is warm.

However, he still obeyed and did not continue to follow. He stood under the cold moonlight and watched Chu Wanning walk away until he disappeared behind the wall. Then, he walked up to the tree Chu Wanning had accidentally hit. After a while, he rested his forehead against the tree trunk.

He closed his eyes.

Chu Wanning…

Likes him.

Flying flowers and flowing water, an island like spring.

The bright moon hung high in the sky as clear clouds covered the sun.

The tide was surging and the sky was brightening.

No matter how good the world was around him, it could not compare to the fact that Chu Wanning liked him.

Even though he was lacking in words and talent, at this moment, his heart was filled with a surge of emotions and thoughts. Love could turn a simple and straightforward piece of wood like Mo Ran into a poet. Chu Wanning likes him. Chu Wanning liked him!

He pressed his forehead against the bark, wanting to remain calm, wanting to endure, wanting to “cool down”, wanting to…

No, I can’t.

His closed eyes trembled slightly, his eyelashes were filled with tenderness and ecstasy. The corners of his mouth curled up, and the dimple on his cheek became deeper and deeper as the honey in his mouth overflowed.

Chu Wanning liked him.

Like him.

It was… It was the person he was infatuated with, the best person in the world, the person he wanted to hold in his arms for the rest of his life, Chu Wanning… It was Chu Wanning…

The exalted Taxian-Jun, a Mo-zongshi of the cultivation world, was standing in the middle of a desolate, white desert with leaves rustling in the wind. His eyes were closed and his head was lowered. His shoulders trembled as he laughed.

Because Chu Wanning liked him, the wind was sweet and the waves were sweet.

Chu Wanning liked him.

He lowered his eyes and laughed, but as he laughed, he began to cry.

He grinned like a madman, tears streaming down his face. It was sweet, but his heart ached.

Chu Wanning…

Liked him.

Ever since they left Butterfly Town, he had been secretly hiding their bagged hair.

Liked him.

He suddenly wanted to know, ever since then, Chu Wanning had been standing behind him, silently accompanying and waiting. Waiting for him to turn around, waiting for him to reach out his hand, waiting for him to turn around and see.

Chu Wanning, how long had he waited?

This life, the previous life.

Stacked together, twenty years?

Longer than twenty years.

He was Mo Weiyu that could see through dust and smoke. He knew that the most priceless object in the world was time.

With his power and influence, he had been nearly all powerful. Precious treasures, beauties, and flatteries had poured in endlessly. Only time, passing like rivers, could never be chased down and returned.

For a person to be willing to exchange 10,000 gold for you, that was lust.

A person who is willing to trade a promising future for you is love.

And a person is willing to use twenty years of age, the best years to exchange for you, to wait for you.

He did not ask for anything in return, nor did he ask for results.

That's stupid.

Really, really stupid.

Mo Ran's throat was astringent, bitterness overflowed his tongue, surging up into a tide, he thought —

Chu Wanning, you really… Too stupid.

Why is that so? How could this be?

How could I, Mo Ran… To make you do this.

You're the best man in the world, and what about me?

His hands were covered in blood, and his death was not to be regretted. Ten thousand people scolded him and he would never be reborn.

I bullied you, hated you, let you down, I killed you.

You have no idea what I've done.

You don't even know!

Mo Ran hugged the tree, his sobs falling into the howling sea breeze. What did he do.

Under Chu Wanning's gaze, he chased after another person.

Under Chu Wanning's dazed gaze, he waited for someone else to turn around.

In the dream space of Jincheng Lake, he said to Chu Wanning, "Shi Mei, I like you."

He used a knife to cut off Chu Wanning's heart!

But what about Chu Wanning?

He was as silent as a rock. The river did not move. The knife stabbed into his heart. He acted like nothing happened, taking care of him, forgiving him, accompanying him.

Until death.

…… Until death.

He laughed, he cried, he was the only one in the world, no one could see him, he was mad.

In his two lifetimes, he had never let Mo Ran know what he was thinking even to the point of death. The humblest thing this proud and resolute person had ever done in his entire life was to fall in love with another person.

He had done everything he could for that person, but he had already waited for a long time and clearly understood that there would never be a place for him in the eyes of the other party. Knowing that the other party would not like him, he chose not to disturb him, chose not to alarm him, and did not give any trouble to others.

He chose to leave behind his dignity.

In his previous life, to the point of death, he could only say one thing.

In his entire life, he had confessed to him. Chu Wanning was such a good person and such a proud person, yet he said, “I’m not good. I’ve never had anyone like me.”

Taxian-Jun… Mo Weiyu … What… What have you done.

What have you done!

Were you blind or was your mind muddled?

How can you not see through it? How can you let your Qing down?

Chu Wanning was lying on the bed, the curtain had already been drawn. He looked at the lights outside through the haze.

His face was very hot, and his heart was beating very fast. However, he was lost in his thoughts, and it flowed very slowly.

Compared to the person outside who was unable to experience the pure sweetness because of his evil past, Chu Wanning seemed so simple and clean.

He spread his fingers out in front of his eyes, and when he came to, he found that he had one hand on the back of his other hand, and that his palm and the back of his hand were folded, just as Mo Ran had been holding him.

"…"

Realizing what he was doing, Chu Wanning was stunned. He then became angry from embarrassment. He hated himself for being so preoccupied with that fellow's strength just now.

He had no future!

He released his hands and slapped his right hand with his left.

"Creak."

The door was suddenly pushed open, and Mo Ran was drawn in by the wind.

Chu Wanning turned around and pretended to be asleep. He heard the man enter the room and go to the bed. His tall figure covered the faint glow of the candle, and even through the curtain he could feel the light darken, and the shadow of Mo Ran cast itself over the bed, oppressing him and making him breathless.

“Shizun, you’ve fallen asleep?”

The voice of Mo Ran was very gentle. For some reason, it carried a hint of hoarseness, as if it was soaked in the bitter salt of the sea.

Chu Wanning did not answer.

Mo Ran stood in place for a while, then it began to rustle as if it was afraid of waking Chu Wanning up. It then obediently laid out the floor in the same place as yesterday and blew out the candle flame.

In an instant, the room was enveloped in darkness, even so much so that without the Spirit Butterflies and Haitang, the darkness was even deeper than last night. It made people’s senses tingle, they were oppressed, they were afraid of what would happen in the night, and also looked forward to what could happen in the night.

However, Mo Ran didn’t do anything. This person who had made a name for himself by going to a brothel had suddenly become so wooden, cautious, compassionate, and respectful.

He lay down, fully clothed.

Chu Wanning let out a sigh of relief, feeling a bit depressed at the same time. However, before he could feel ashamed for his melancholy, he heard Mo Ran rise from the ground again. Then, with a slight movement of the curtain, he lifted the curtain of his bed.

Chu Wanning’s heart leaped to his throat. He did not move at all. He was still curled up in sleep, trying his best to control his breathing, hoping that no one would notice anything amiss.

He did not know what Mo Ran wanted to do by suddenly getting up.

He had never had a cultivation partner, nor had he broken the Pure Ring. The only knowledge he had regarding sex came from those absurd dreams.

He was like a man who had never gone into the water before. He was more afraid of the surging waves than he wanted to be. He would rather find a small pool of water that reached his waist first. If he was suddenly asked to face the surging current head on, he was afraid that he would drown in the whirlpool.

As such, he was actually very afraid of more actions from Mo Ran.

However, he didn't know if it was because Mo Ran felt his slight tremble, or because he heard his disappointing heartbeat. Mo Ran stood there quietly for a while, then bent over…

He lowered his body a little, and Chu Wanning could almost feel his hot and vigorous aura. It was as if his hot chest was about to be pressed down.

However, after looking at him in this manner for a moment, he stroked a strand of hair on his temple behind his ear, and after a rustle of the bedding, he covered him with a warm blanket.

Chu Wanning felt a bit more at ease. He felt satisfied, but at the same time, dissatisfied. But from the looks of it, Mo Ran was still honest…

The word "man" was still in his mind, but the honest Mo Ran lowered his head again. Chu Wanning only had time to feel the warmth on his cheek before his head exploded with a roar, splashing thousands of snowflakes onto the rocks on the shore.

The smell of Mo Ran lingered around him, scorching him, tormenting him.

He kissed him on the cheek.

How many people can watch the sleeping face of their loved ones, just watch with arms folded, just cover them with a quilt, and say good night.

Mo Weiyu had exhausted all of his self-control and endurance. The chain was deeply embedded into the flesh of his desire, strangling everything else, but he had ultimately indulged in this gentle kiss.

His blood rumbled. Poor Yuheng of the Night Sky was a wise and powerful man. He was calm and collected throughout his whole life, valiant and graceful. However, under the hot and low breathing of Mo Weiyu, his face was burning and his palms were sweating.

His heart was beating so fast that it no longer seemed to belong to him. The world seemed boundless, as if nothing would remain, but also as if a hot fire had suddenly ignited in his stomach, and bright lights interweaved in front of his eyes. In the midst of his dizziness, he could only barely realize one thing:

Mo Ran was kissing him.

Although it was just a profile.

As for the other things, such as how long Mo Ran had been kissing, he didn't have the energy to think about them anymore. His fingers were tightly clenched under the bed, and sweat dripped down his body. His eyelids kept trembling and trembling…

Fortunately, the night was very dark, and he could not help but feel that his eyelashes had not been noticed by Mo Ran.

Fortunately, Chu Wanning's face was too hot, and he was in a daze, so he did not feel a warm tear rolling down his cheek from Mo Ran from his

cheek to his neck.

Ch. 181 Shizun’s Memories

On the morning of the second day of confession, Chu Wanning woke up very early.

But he did not get up, for he peeped out through the curtain and saw that Mo Ran was still asleep, a simple bunk bed next to the edge of the bed.

He couldn’t see it clearly through the curtain, so he held back for a moment. He reached out his hand to pull open the curtain, but before he could touch the curtain, he switched it to a finger, using his fingertip and only lifting a tiny bit.

It seems that as long as it is so little, it doesn't seem like peeking.

The clear light spilled in from the window paper. A bright red light with a hint of gold was cut into long and narrow silhouettes, shining on Mo Ran’s handsome face.

It had been a long time since Chu Wanning had seen his sleeping visage. He quietly observed, attentively gazing at it for a very long time.

Long to the point that he couldn’t help but think of the year when Mo Ran was brought back to Sisheng Peak by Xue Zhengyong. Some shy youth, when happy, can burst out a fire of brilliant passion, having nothing but love to stick to him, saying whatever he wanted, and also wanting to take him as his Shizun.

He couldn’t chase him away.

Seeing him in front of Heaven-Piercing Tower, Chu Wanning insisted on not accepting a disciple because he thought that the phrase “he looks the most

gentle, I like him the most" was ridiculous and unbelievable.

For this, he had avoided Mo Ran for fourteen days.

According to others, in order to find a way to become his disciple, Mo Ran had asked Xue Zhengyong's wife, Shi Mei, and even Xue Meng.

In the end, no one knew who gave him the bad idea to do as the snow in front of Cheng's door,[160] stand outside the Red Lotus Pavilion, and wait for him. In the morning when Chu Wanning went out, he greeted him and begged for him to be his Shizun. In the evening when Chu Wanning went back, he continued to pay his respects and beg for him to be his Shizun. Even a dripping drop of water could can manage to penetrate the stone.

Chu Wanning's reaction to this was, "Heh."

He ignored them and left.

He didn't like people chasing him so fiercely. As a person with few feelings, he was only willing to deal with emotions that were just as mild.

He didn't know if it was because of the environment he had been in since he was a child, but he could tell that Chu Wanning was acting cold. He would only pestered him for two days and never ask him to take him as his Shizun again.

However, as usual, he still came to the Red Lotus Pavilion and cleaned up the dead leaves in front of the courtyard door. When he saw Chu Wanning come out, he held onto a broom, scratched his head and smiled, "Elder Yuheng."

They did not wake up early in the morning, nor did they greet each other in the twilight.

Just that simple sentence, “Elder Yuheng”, and a smile.

Chu Wanning didn’t even look at him as he walked away. He didn’t even bother to look at the fallen leaves.

Ten days passed peacefully like this. One morning, about a dozen lotuses bloomed in the pavilion. The fragrant scent put Chu Wanning in a very good mood.

He pushed open the door and walked out onto the winding and clear mountain path. The teenager Mo Ran was currently walking with his head down, concentrating on climbing up the stairs and sweeping the leaves. A single leaf was stuck in the crevice of the rock, making it especially difficult to clean, so he bent over to pick it up and prepared to throw it into the grass and trees.

The moment he raised his head, he saw Chu Wanning standing in front of the mountain gate. He was stunned for a moment, but then he grinned and exposed his half-sleeved arms. He held up the dried up leaves that he hadn’t thrown away and waved to him.

“Elder Yuheng.”

The voice was clear and sweet with fresh fruits. It was clearly not loud, but it seemed to echo in the mountain ranges for a long time. A white cloud flowed, and sunlight poured down from the clouds, penetrating through the forest.

Chu Wanning stood in place for a while, his pupils were suddenly bathed in the dazzling morning light to turn amber. He slightly squinted his eyes, and suddenly felt that the dried up leaf in the boy’s hand was no longer as lifeless, becoming as dazzling as the smiling man.

He walked quietly down the stone steps.

Mo Ran was already used to his coldness so he didn't mind. As usual, he stood aside and waited for Chu Wanning to pass.

That day, Chu Wanning walked past him as usual.

Then, he suddenly turned his face slightly to the side and glanced at the youth. His voice was as clear as spring water and as calm as a lake.

"Thank you," he said.

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment before his eyes lit up. He hurriedly waved his hand and said, "No need, no need. This is what I should do."

Chu Wanning said, "… I don't intend to take you in as my disciple."

However, his tone and manner of speech were no longer as resolute as before.

After he finished speaking, he turned around and continued walking. At the end of the sentence, he seemed to find it unbearable. He turned around and glanced at Mo Ran.

However, when he saw that youth, he did not feel a bit stifled. Instead, he took a few steps with the help of a broom. His young face was filled with vigor and exuded endless light and heat.

…So this fellow didn't care about the latter half of the sentence. All he heard was 'thank you' and he became so happy?

A few more days passed, and one day it began to rain.

The rain was not too heavy. Chu Wanning was a person who was too lazy to take out an umbrella or to open a barrier. It would probably only take him an incense's time to get to the Platform of Sin and Virtue, so it would not matter if he got wet.

He pushed the door open.

Mo Ran was still there.

But today, he was not sweeping the floor, the broom was placed to the side by him, he was holding an oil-paper umbrella, squatting on the ground with his back facing Chu Wanning, engrossed in something, his shoulders slightly raised, he was short, squatting even smaller, the umbrella was big and dark brown, and it looked very funny, like a mushroom emerging from a spring rain.

Chu Wanning walked up behind him with a smile, coughed lightly and asked, "What are you doing?"

"Ah!" The youth was shocked and turned around to look at him.

The first sentence was "Elder Yuheng."

Before Chu Wanning could reply, he opened his eyes wide and said the second sentence, "How come you didn't use an umbrella?"

Without waiting for a reply, he stood up and tiptoed, trying his best to raise the oil-paper umbrella in his hands and said the third sentence, "This is for you."

However, he was still too short, standing a step lower than Chu Wanning. It took some effort for the umbrella to cover the top of Chu Wanning's head,

but the force was not as strong as Chu Wanning's. The wind blew, causing the umbrella to tilt and water droplets to flow into Chu Wanning's neck.

"I'm sorry, I'm sorry!" Mo Ran hurriedly said before Chu Wanning could respond.

Chu Wanning: "…"

When Mo Ran said the first sentence, he could answer "Yes."

When Mo Ran said the second sentence, he could answer, "No need."

When Mo Ran said the third sentence, he could answer, "Keep it for yourself."

However, after Mo Ran said the fourth sentence and apologized again and again, Chu Wanning was a bit speechless. He lowered his eyes, unable to tell if his expression was dull or gloomy.

He raised his eyes and looked at Mo Ran. After thinking for a moment, he went back to the original sentence.

"What are you doing?"

"Saving the earthworms."

Chu Wanning thought he misheard, he frowned and asked, "What?"

Mo Ran smiled. His dimples were deep and very cute. He scratched his head in embarrassment and stuttered, "Saving, saving the earthworms."

Chu Wanning lowered his eyes and his sight fell on the hand with Mo Ran hanging on it. He held a tree branch in his hand, which was dripping water.

He must have picked it up from the ground. Looking further up, there was indeed a stupid earthworm lying in the pool, slowly wiggling about.

“When the rain stops, these earthworms that have escaped from the soil will become dry. That’s why I wanted to take them all back into the grass.”

Chu Wanning asked flatly, “Using branches?”

“… Right.”

Seeing the other’s cold face, Mo Ran was afraid of being looked down on by Elder Yuheng so he anxiously said, “It’s not that I’m afraid of using my hands, but when I was young, I was told that earthworms cannot be caught with their hands and will rot away…”

Chu Wanning shook his head, “I’m not talking about that.”

He lifted his finger and pointed it in the air. A thin golden branch emerged from the cracks of the green stone. It wrapped around the earthworm lying in the pool and carried it back to the nearby pile of grass. Mo Ran widened his eyes in shock. “What is this?”

“Tianwen.”

“What is Tianwen?”[161]

Chu Wanning glared at him and said, “It’s my weapon.”

Mo Ran became even more surprised, “The elder’s weapon… This… This way…”

“So small?” Chu Wanning spoke up for him.

Mo Ran: “Heh heh.”

Chu Wanning brushed his sleeves, his expression indifferent, “Of course there are times when it can be fierce.”

“Can I see it?”

“Better to never see it.”

Mo Ran didn’t understand the meaning behind Chu Wanning’s words. He turned around to look at the vines, who were probing into the cracks in the stone steps. All the earthworms in the rain soaked mud were all rolled up. He then carried the muddled earthworms back to the moist soil, a look of envy gradually appearing on his face.

Chu Wanning suddenly asked, “Do you want to learn?”

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment. Then, he suddenly opened his eyes wide. He was so surprised that he didn’t know what to say. In the end, he could only nod his head. His handsome face was flushed red.

“Tomorrow morning, after you finish your cultivation, go to the bamboo forest behind the Platform of Sin and Virtue. I will wait there for you.”

After he finished speaking, his white silk shoes stepped on the wet stone steps, holding onto his oil-paper umbrella as he walked down the mountain. After he finished speaking, his white silk shoes stepped on the wet stone steps, holding onto his oil-paper umbrella as he walked down the mountain.

He no longer cared about the wet ground and immediately knelt and kowtowed. His still young voice was filled with enthusiasm and joy.

“Yes, Shizun!”

“…” This time, Chu Wanning did not acknowledge nor stop him. He only stood where he was for a moment, then continued walking. Rain began to fall, drop by drop, onto the umbrella.

It was only when his back disappeared that Mo Ran stood up from the ground, and it was also only at this moment that he realized that a golden, translucent barrier had unknowingly opened above his head.

Chu Wanning remembered that Xue Zhengyong was relieved and surprised when he heard about his decision. He asked, “Yuheng, why are you so willing to take him in now?”

At that time, he was sitting on a high seat on the Platform of Sin and Virtue, holding onto the oil-paper umbrella given to him by Mo Ran. His slender knuckles rubbed against the umbrella handle, and he finally said lightly: “He rescues earthworms.”

“Ah!” Xue Zhengyong exclaimed. The leopard’s eyes were wide open like a cat’s.

“Rescues what?”

Chu Wanning did not say anything else. He just looked down at the green bamboo umbrella framework, and a hint of a smile gradually appeared in his eyes.

In the blink of an eye, so much time had passed.

The young man that he took in as his disciple was originally a pure and honest man, but went astray for a while. In the end, fortunately, the young man still became a proper immortal that didn’t disappoint him.

A white fingertip poked out of the curtain, and Chu Wanning peeped through the tiny crack in the curtain, staring intently at Mo Ran's sleeping face.

That youth was now a handsome and tall man. His facial features were even more distinct than before, and between his brows and eyes, there was a steady, mature aura.

However, just like before, when Mo Ran fell asleep, his forehead would always slightly furrow. This was how he acted when he was small. Two rows of eyelashes hung down very low, as if they were about to be pressed by heavy matters and could no longer be lifted.

Chu Wanning found it funny. This person was so young, where did all these worries come from?

Just as he was thinking of this, he suddenly saw Mo Ran's long eyelashes slightly twitch as he slowly opened his eyes.

"…"

Chu Wanning's fingers stiffened. He wanted to withdraw his hand and pretend to be asleep.

But Mo Ran was a very strange person. He did not have a young, bedridden attitude, and instead had some of the manners of an older person. In other words, he was clear-headed very quickly.

For some baffling reason, he seemed to have a keen intuition towards the subtle changes occurring around his sleeping environment — it was as if he was always in danger of being assassinated, moving step by step, as if he was treading on thin ice.

Before Chu Wanning could pull his finger back from the crack, Mo Ran's sight fell on the tip of his finger.

Chu Wanning: "…"

This concerned the reputation and dignity of Elder Yuheng. At this crucial moment, Chu Wanning had an idea. He turned his body over and stretched out his hand to the side of the bed.

From the looks of it, he wasn't trying to steal the curtain at all. Instead, the sleeping person had turned over and stretched out his arms and had inadvertently poked his hand out of the curtain tent.

How could Mo Ran have known that Chu Wanning would come up with such an idea. He didn't want to wake Chu Wanning up, so he stood up slowly.

However, he did not leave immediately. Instead, he grabbed Chu Wanning's exposed wrist and carefully put it back between the blankets. After doing all this, it was only after a while that Chu Wanning heard the door creak open.

Mo Ran left.

Chu Wanning opened his eyes slightly and looked at the hazy sky. He was lost in thought for a long time.

Perhaps it was because he had never wished for himself to be together with Mo Ran, nor had he even imagined it specifically, so even after a night had passed, he still felt that all of this was like a dream.

In his impression of them, Mo Ran was obviously secretly admiring Shi Mei. All these years, he had been standing alone behind them and had seen

everything clearly.

Looking at Mo Ran laughing to Shi Mei, watching Mo Ran cooking the noodles for Shi Mei, watching Mo Ran secretly helping Shi Mei complete the assignment, smiling, thinking that no one knew.

Actually, Chu Wanning was clear on all of this.

For this reason, he had been envious, jealous, uncomfortable, and unwilling.

He also thought that he had been relieved.

In fact, how could he be so relaxed? Even though he knew it was impossible, he still held on to his neck and refused to look back. He braced himself and refused to leave.

All these years, Chu Wanning had asked himself whether this kind of futile wait was worth it, and whether this kind of stubborn, unrepentant vigil was cheap. However, after asking himself countless times, his answer had always come to nothing.

He was also a ruthless person who watched men and women with cold eyes. He could not understand why it hurt so much, why he forcefully hid a part of his feelings in his chest, and was full of wounds, unwilling to abandon them. He did not understand. Only with the burn of his heart was he able to understand —

This was probably the case for all the friendship and affection in the world.

They could be put down, but they would never be abandoned.

It was for this reason that Chu Wanning, who did not understand Mo Ran's true intentions towards Shi Mei, was somewhat confused and hesitant. He did not understand what caused Mo Ran to be willing to shift his gaze away from Shi Mingjing and focus it on his slightly embarrassed face.

Hmm… Because of gratitude?

Because of guilt?

You want to follow the ghost girl's example and repay his kindness with a demon, so you promised your body?

…… fuck, could it be that he was rejected by Shi Mei…

Chu Wanning was stunned, his mind was in a mess. All of a sudden, Chu Wanning got even angrier. He got up, and before anyone could see, he ruthlessly kicked the floorboard made by Mo Ran last night.

Ch. 182 Shizun's Little Candle Dragon

No matter how much he guessed, Chu Wanning didn't want to think too much into it in case he got himself into trouble.

However, he had some reservations regarding this sudden feeling. Thus, when the Heaven Smiting Flame was finally extinguished and the group of people prepared to leave on their flying swords, Chu Wanning did not plan to ride on Mo Ran's Sword anymore.

Of course, Elder Yuheng, who was barely able to fly twenty feet in the air, didn't intend to cross the vast ocean by stepping on Huaisha. Therefore, when everyone was standing on the rocky beach, one by one, Mo Ran pulled on their long swords.

Chu Wanning took out his Ascending Dragon Talisman.

Blood dripped from the tip of his finger onto the dragon's scale. The noisy little paper dragon suddenly came to life again. It soared into the air, somersaulted a few times, and then circled around its owner as it shouted loudly.

"Aiya, Chu Wanning, I haven't seen you in so many years, I really missed you. What did you ask me to do this time?"

"Take me to the other side."

"Tai! I am the first True Sovereign of Creation, the Dragon of Candles. How can I do the work of a mule or a donkey? I will not carry you, I will not carry you!"

Under the watchful eyes of everyone, this palm sized little paper dragon wagged its head, wagging its tail, creaking its tail. Although its body was weak, its voice was loud and clear. Some of the kids couldn't help but laugh when they heard its words.

Chu Wanning's face darkened. He raised his palm and a golden flame appeared. He said in a low voice, "Burn if you don't."

"…" The little dragon was so angry that he fell straight onto the beach, baring his fangs and brandishing his claws, blowing his beard and glaring at them, "How can you be like this, fierce, unreasonable, and shameless. No wonder you're alone every time I've seen you for so many years!"

Mo Ran turned his head as if he wanted to say something, but after thinking about it, since there were so many people around and Chu Wanning wanted to save face, he decided not to say it. He just smiled and shook his head.

Chu Wanning was angered, "You talk too much!"

As he said that, he swung the fire in his palm towards the small dragon on the ground, but Chu Wanning did not really want to burn it. The fireball was loud and powerful, but it grazed past the dragon's whiskers and landed on the reef.

"Where is This Venerable one's tail?! What about my whiskers! This Venerable One… This Venerable One's head! Are you still there? Is it still there?"

"If you keep nagging, then it's over." Chu Wanning gritted his teeth, his palms were once again covered with a golden glow, "Grow bigger."

“… Awoooooo…” The dragon was wailing for a long time. As it waved its claw in the air, tears that did not exist flew out. Suddenly, its green eyes caught a glimpse of Chu Wanning’s sharp eyes. It shivered, and then it let out a comical “burp!” The end.

It slowly got up from the ground. This time, it really looked like a dragon made of paper. Its body was boneless, and its whiskers were hanging down. It burped again and said with grievance, “Just this once, there won’t be a next time.”

“As you wish.”

Anyway, that’s what it said the last time it was mounted.

The paper dragon stretched out its four feet, as if stretching its limbs. Afterwards, it emitted a sharp cry from its throat, and a golden light suddenly spilled out from its young and thin body, spreading out to its surroundings. The golden light became stronger and stronger, and finally engulfed the paper dragon completely.

“Hou —!”

All of a sudden, the sharp and tiny sound of the paper dragon’s throat turned into a powerful and terrifying roar of anger. In an instant, the ball of golden light flashed with purple lightning and thunder.

Chu Wanning narrowed his eyes. His long ponytail and loose robes flapped in the wind. When the golden light was extinguished, everyone looked around and found that the little dragon had already disappeared. The beach was quiet, with nothing on it.

“Eh? It’s gone?”

Some bold kids were surprised, but before they could finish their words, they heard a loud roar from above their heads. The roar shook the heavens, causing the sea of anger to churn and the clouds to surge.

Suddenly, a mighty dragon rushed out from behind the thick clouds. Its eyes were wide open, its claws were strong, and just its dragon whiskers alone were as thick as a hundred-year-old tree. It rolled and circled in the clouds, like a tiger or a fierce wind, and suddenly it tilted its head upwards, and then it suddenly dove down from the ground —!

Astral winds rose in all directions!

“Ahhhhhhhhh!”

“Father!”

The child who had lost his parents was frightened, but still cried out for his father out of habit. Mo Ran hurriedly picked him up and comforted him softly.

Chu Wanning did not expect to scare a child like this. He was stunned for a moment before seeing the huge dragon rushing towards him. He immediately said, “Slow down.”

“Argh?”

The colossal dragon actually let out a dull groan when it heard this. It then landed on the rocky beach with a bang and slowly lowered its body.

The dragon was huge, so sitting on its body was not much different from sitting on land. It was no wonder that Chu Wanning was willing to ride a dragon while flying high in the sky instead of riding on a flying sword.

Mo Ran wanted to let Chu Wanning relax a little bit, so he held the child in his arms and said, “Do you want to sit with that brother here, on this Dragon of Candles Venerable One?”

However, the child was unwilling. He buried his face in Mo Ran’s shoulder and whispered, “I’ll tell you in hushed tones, I don’t like him…”

Mo Ran also said to him, “I’ll tell you in secret, I love him.”

“Huh?” The child froze for a moment, but then, innocent after all, whispered, “Really?”

“Shh, don’t tell anyone.”

The child immediately laughed, covered his mouth and nodded.

“What are you talking about? You’re still not leaving?” Chu Wanning did not plan to ride with the rest. He looked at them briefly, then he soared up on his dragon and disappeared into the clouds.

Due to the fact that they could not fly too fast with their swords, they finally arrived at the Wuchang Town in the evening. Chu Wanning landed before them and greeted the few rich families in the town.

The victims brought back from Linyi were all taken care of by the head of household. As for the child in Mo Ran’s arms, he reluctantly turned around and waved to him.

“Benefactor gege, see you in the future.”

“Yes, I’ll see you in the future.” Standing in the afterglow of the setting sun, he watched them go.

Chu Wanning was tired of this feeling of separation. He stood still for a while, then turned around and left. Mo Ran quickly followed him back to the sect.

The two of them silently walked to the front of the stone steps of the mountain gate. Step by step, they climbed up. The shadows of the trees swayed, and the twilight shone brilliantly. Mo Ran recalled the time when Chu Wanning crawled back to the top of the mountain with the heavily injured and unconscious him on his back when his spiritual power was running out. He could still see him standing beside him, so he couldn't help but have mixed feelings.

Amidst the bitterness and sweetness, he reached out his hand and gently held the tip of Chu Wanning's finger.

"…"

Even though he had already held his hand once, Chu Wanning still looked stiff, clumsy and uncomfortable. He tried to keep his face calm, to make himself look calm and at ease.

Unfortunately, the person he was facing was Mo Ran.

He was aware of his foundation, aware of his insides, aware of how sensitive the mole by his ear is, down to how cold his feet get.

None of them spoke first, but seeing that he did not take his finger away, Mo Ran wrapped his hand around his.

It was a long way, and he longed for it to be longer so that he could hold his hand for longer, longer time.

He wanted the path to be shorter. If it was shorter, then the suffering Chu Wanning had gone through when he carried him home would be less, just a little less.

Just like this, they arrived at the peak of the mountain, and the majestic mountain gates could already be clearly seen.

Suddenly, a tall figure wearing a white Silver Fox cloak appeared from the shadow of the tree. Before the two of them could see him clearly, they heard him call out.

“Shizun?!”

Chu Wanning was slightly surprised. He immediately pulled his hand out of Mo Ran Palm and hung it on his sleeve. Then, he stood still and raised his head.

When Shi Mei walked down the stairs, his face was as clear as a lotus under the setting sun. His face was bright and beautiful, and the brilliant rays of sunlight even overshadowed the red clouds in the sky.

He was really very handsome.

Shi Mei probably did not see the two of them holding hands just now. He was pleasantly surprised and laughed: “That’s great! You’re finally back!”

Mo Ran did not expect to meet him so suddenly. Feeling awkward, he asked, “Is Shi Mei going out?”

“Mm. I was about to go down the mountain and buy some things for the Sect Leader, but I didn’t expect to see Shizun and A-Ran first. A few days ago, the Sect Leader received a message from his Shizun’s haitang, but since he hasn’t seen anyone, he can’t be at ease…”

“I am fine with Mo Ran,” Chu said. “What about the others?”

“Nothing. Although the Young Lord was manipulated as the black chess piece, fortunately, he was not controlled for long and did not damage his heart. Elder Tanlang has been carefully treating him these past few days, and he was already able to get off the bed and walk around this morning.”

Chu Wanning sighed, “That’s good.”

Shi Mei smiled, glancing at Mo Ran, then gently lowered his eyes, bowing as he said, “Although I really want to chat for a little longer, if I don’t pick up the medicinal ingredients that Guyue’ye sent over now, I would let the person who delivers them wait for a long time. I need to go first. Shizun, I’ll see you tonight.”

“Mm, go ahead. We’ll talk about it later.”

Shi Mei walked down the road, his figure gradually faded. Chu Wanning turned his head, although he could feel that Mo Ran had not let go just now, and that he had pulled away first, he did not know why, but for some reason, he felt angry. His blade-like eyes fiercely gouged out Mo Ran, flicked his sleeves, and left.

Mo Ran: “…”

The two of them walked out of the Loyalty Hall and pushed the door open. However, they were stunned by the scene in front of them and were speechless.

Inside the main hall of the summit of the mountain of the dead, it was densely packed with gold and silver silk, precious corals, and magic tools and spirit stones. From the highest Venerable One at the end to the

entrance, Chu Wanning could only push open half of the door and the other half was blocked by a pile of shiny refining crystals, unable to move at all. Other than these things, it was fine, but for some strange reason, there were actually more than thirty unsettled peerless beauties standing in the hall.

As for Xue Zhengyong, he was at a loss of whether to laugh or cry as he tried to reason with a disciple from the Fire Phoenix Pavilion who was wearing light red clothes.

“No, this is really no good. We can accept the rest, but these singers should still be brought back to return to the Pavilion Master.” We really don’t listen to dances here, nor do we like to watch them dance.

Mo Ran followed Chu Wanning into the room. The thirty girls who were standing by the door immediately assaulted him with a strong fragrance. He was already sensitive to the scent and could not hold it in. Immediately, he sneezed four or five times.

Xue Zhengyong turned his head and was immediately overjoyed when he saw the two of them.

“A-Ran, Yuheng! You’re finally back! Hurry, hurry up and help me dissuade this… Uh… This envoy.”

Chu Wanning raised his eyebrows, “What kind of envoy?”

Without waiting for Xue Zhengyong’s reply, the disciple’s face was full of smiles. He turned his head and said eagerly: “I am the head disciple of the Fire Phoenix Pavilion, under the orders of the pavilion master, and have specially come to ally with Sisheng Peak.”

Chu Wanning: "…"

The three of them worked together to persuade that man for a long time before they finally sent him away. Looking at the envoy's departing back, Xue Zhengyong sighed heavily and wiped the sweat off his forehead, "Do you know that a lot of people from the large and small sects have come these days to create alliances with Sisheng Peak? I haven't interacted much with them in these past few years. In the past, only three or five people from the Taxue Palace on Mount Kunlun have been willing to pay attention to us. But now, they all crowded over to present us with gifts and suddenly become so enthusiastic that I don't even know how to respond."

Chu Wanning frowned and asked, "What's the situation in the cultivation world these days?"

Xue Zhengyong sighed, "The river flows east for thirty years, and west for thirty years."

"What do you mean?"

"What a mess." Xue Zhengyong said, "That crazy Xu Shuanglin has so many grudges and grudges in his memory scroll. Even if he knows that it's all because of his heart of revenge, what can it change? It goes without saying that the Rufeng Sect was destroyed in just a short amount of time. Guyue'ye and the Taxue Palace have completely become enemies. Now that enemies have met, there is also the Wubei Temple…"

At this point, he suddenly remembered that master Huaizui was Chu Wanning's Shizun, and he could not help but shut his mouth.

However, Chu Wanning only said lightly, "The Wubei Temple is an empty space, and the previous host was involved in the struggle for the position

of the next leader of the Rufeng Sect. With his sinister intentions, his reputation has naturally been ruined."

"Hmm…"

Hearing him talk about his own sect without any mercy, both Xue Zhengyong and Mo Ran looked at Chu Wanning in confusion.

Chu Wanning pursed his lips and did not say anything more. After a while, he asked again, "Where is Nangong Si?"

"I don't know, I haven't heard about him and Lord Ye… Miss Ye… since the Tribulation Fire went out."

Hearing this, Mo Ran could not help but mutter an "Ah" with a worried expression.

Could it be that even after two lifetimes, these two gentlemen were still unable to achieve a good end?

Seeing that his expression was strange and his gaze was obscure, Xue Zhengyong turned to look at him: "What's wrong with A-Ran?"

Mo Ran could not speak the truth, so he said, "I was just thinking that Xu Shuanglin's whereabouts have not been determined, and the two of them have a deep connection with him, so I'm worried that they might be implicated."

"Don't worry too much. All the sects have already sent people to thoroughly investigate the source of all the strange spells in the cultivation world." Xue Zhengyong said, "Unless Nangong Xu does not make any big movements, he will definitely be caught. Young Master Nangong and Miss

Ye might be trapped in the forest for the time being, so it would be inconvenient for them to contact each other from the outside."

Mo Ran said, "Yes, I hope so."

They continued to ask about the variables that had occurred in the past few days. Although Xue Zhengyong received a message from Haitang and knew that they were spending their days on Flying Flower Island, but he was unsure of what to do next. Thus, he asked them about the current situation. Chu Wanning had a few answers, two answers, two answers. When it came to matters related to Mo Ran, he would pause for a moment and purposefully turn his back on them.

As for Xue Zhengyong, even if he was beaten to death, he would never be able to imagine what could happen between Chu Wanning and Mo Ran.

This was because the two of them looked like they didn't match each other at all.

Age, identity, personality.

Even the color of the skin, the taste of eating, the sleeping posture, all of these were the opposite.

Throughout all these years, Elder Yuheng had always been lofty and unsullied, while the Beidou Immortal had always represented coldness. Chu-zongshi did not have much love and desires, and what he treasured the most was his own face. Why would he be together with his disciple?

Nobody would dare to write these most outrageous words. If there was a storyteller who could talk like that, he would probably be spat on the skin of a melon and thrown under the beechwood table.

However, love grew just like that.

In the dim light, in the corner where no one cared to look, a hidden delicate flower bloomed. Although it was not in full bloom, its fragrance was already very charming.

Since he had returned to Sisheng Peak, that night, Chu Wanning went to Mengpo Hall to eat.

Pushing open the door of the Red Lotus Pavilion, he suddenly saw a person standing quietly on the long bluestone steps in the desolate mountain path.

Hearing the commotion, the man turned his head around. The light directly behind him was unrestrainedly painting a golden line on his handsome face.

Mo Ran smiled and said, “Shizun.”

Chu Wanning’s silky white shoes paused as his present suddenly overlapped with his memories. It was as if he was once again back at the Sisheng Peak of the first year of Mo Ran’s arrival. Every day, he would stand by his door and watch his leave, waiting for his return.

However, the youth was no longer there. The Elder Yuheng back then had already become the Shizun that he called out thousands of times.

In the respect, there were a few traces of extremely restrained eagerness, as well as a gentleness that was not so restrained.

“What are you doing here?”

“Waiting to eat with you.”

Chu Wanning's gaze fell on a box in his hand and he said, "I want to go to Mengpo Hall today. I haven't been there for a long time, so I don't want to stay in the pavilion for food."

He then smiled, "Shizun is mistaken. This food box is empty. I just went to deliver some food to Xue Meng. His appetite is not good. I borrowed a small stove and cooked him a bowl of noodles."

He did not expect that Mo Ran would actually serve food to Xue Meng. In his memory, the two of them had always been at odds. Even though they were cousins, it didn't even take an incense stick of time for them to fight each other to the death.

It was unknown when it happened, either because they had been asleep for five years and had missed out on too many things, or because Mo Ran and Xue Meng were gradually growing old. In short, when their Shizun had not realized it, the relationship between the two of them had already begun to melt away, gradually becoming more and more peaceful.

Even though it was far from the respect of brothers and sisters, at the very least, Xue Meng would remember to pinch the clay figurine. He would also remember to pinch an ugly Mo Ran, which would personally cook a bowl of noodles and bring it to Xue Meng's bedside when he was sick.

Chu Wanning sighed, "How is he? He was still asleep when I went to see him."

"He's already awake. He ate the noodles and wanted to go out for a walk. I finally persuaded him to go back and lie down. Chess is not like other games. Those who fall into the black spot, even if their control isn't deep, should at least rest for a while."

“Yes.”

Although Chu Wanning agreed, he still had some doubts.

…… This understatement was unintentional. However, he suddenly felt uncomfortable. It was as if Mo Ran was too clear on the pros and cons of Zhenlong chess pieces and was too indifferent.

“Shizun?”

Chu Wanning came back to his senses and asked with a smile, “What are you thinking about?”

“… Nothing.” After all, Mo Ran was a Grandmaster now. It wasn’t strange for him to have some knowledge of forbidden techniques.

He changed the subject and said, “Where are we going to eat? I don’t want to be out there.”

“I don’t want to eat outside either.” Mo Ran rubbed his nose and laughed softly. His voice was gentle as he said, “I just want to go with you. We can go anywhere.”

Chu Wanning would never admit that he was moved, but he couldn’t help but look into those warm, dark eyes for a moment.

Those eyes were warm and bright, reflecting the morning light and his own reflection.

Simple and clean.

He couldn’t think of any reason to refuse such a pair of eyes, so he ended up in the bustling cafeteria with Mo Ran.

Perhaps the thin layer of paper in the window had finally been broken. In the past, Mo Ran would not hesitate to serve him food, and when he saw the soup stains on the corner of Chu Wanning's mouth, he would wipe it off with a smile. But now, the two of them had become solemn. Under the gazes of everyone present, they were even bashful to the point that their gazes intertwined with each other.

As they finished their meal, Chu Wanning was about to put away the tray when Mo Ran called to him, "Shizun, please wait."

"What's wrong?"

Mo Ran stretched out his hand and was about to touch Chu Wanning's face, but he stopped in his tracks.

He pulled back his hand and pointed to the corner of his mouth. He smiled and said, "You have a grain of rice here."

"…"

Chu Wanning froze for a moment, then put down the tray, seemingly very calm as he wiped the rice with a handkerchief. He pursed his lips and asked in a low voice, "Anything else?"

Mo Ran smiled and said, "No, it's very clean."

Only then did Chu Wanning pick up his plate and walk away. He was both embarrassed and flustered, but he also felt a sense of loss that he was reluctant to admit.

Mo Ran used to lift his hand directly before, but this man's sudden obedience made him feel uncomfortable.

It was the same for the following days.

He used to be so free and easy to deal with, but now he was like a boy who had just started a relationship. He was treating Chu Wanning well with all his effort, but he didn't do anything overly radical. It was as if Mo Ran was afraid of scaring him, so he was very careful with every step he took. Sometimes, Chu Wanning could clearly see the scorching heat in his eyes, but that man's eyelashes would quietly fall down, and then, his broad palm would wrap around Chu Wanning's ten fingers.

When he raised his eyes again, the desire in them had already been completely concealed by gentleness.

But that gentleness was too gentle, sometimes Chu Wanning had an illusion of indeterminacy.

It was as if Mo Ran was treating a clay figurine that had been torn to shreds and then stuck back together bit by bit. It was as if it was afraid that if he made a huge move, he would crush it into powder.

Chu Wanning felt that this was a good idea. The cooking oil was boiling in the pot in his dream, but this kind of thing was fine in his dreams. If it happened, he would not be able to take it anymore.

However, no matter how much you restrain yourself, no matter how much you follow the steps of love, there will still be an end to it.

On this day, he finished his dinner and prepared to leave with a peach. The peach had barely taken two bites when his hand was caught. Chu Wanning was shocked. He raised his head and saw that it was Mo Ran. He shouted in a low voice:

“What are you do-?”

Ch. 183 Shizun, I Quit Spicy Food

When there was no one around them, Mo Ran pulled him and took him to the lane behind Mengpo Hall, which was very narrow. He went in and stood close to Mo Ran again, leaving no more room.

Chu Wanning held the peach and stared at him.

It was almost a continuous restraint, which eventually made the man of high blood a little agitated. His chest fluctuated slightly, and his black eyes stared brightly at Chu Wanning. Suddenly, he reached out and held him in his arms.

“My peach —!”

It was too late. The fruit was knocked off and rolled into the corner.

“Shizun.” The man’s hot breath lingered in his ears, so tormented, so hot, but his tone was still clear, hot, floating with a sense of tolerance, his voice burned with desire, but he still did not do more.

He just hugged him, hugged him in his arms, silently.

“I feel terrible.”

Chu Wanning suddenly opened his eyes: “Why? What’s wrong?”

Mo Ran was stunned at first, then laughed. He grabbed Chu Wanning’s hand to probe the temperature of his forehead, huddled it on his lips and kissed it down.

Chu Wanning frowned anxiously and said, “If you are sick, you should go to see Elder Tanlang.”

“That winter pickle is useless.” Mo Ran said helplessly, “Only the small cabbage can.”

Chu Wanning responded, and his face turned tense in an instant. He became embarrassed and angry. “Who are you saying is a cabbage?”

Mo Ran laughed: “I was wrong.”

After a pause, he gazed at Chu Wanning with his wet dark eyes.

“But Shizun, I missed you.”

Chu Wanning was embraced by him and watched with such eyes. His anger of being called “cabbage” had nowhere to vent, so it turned into a pink tint on his ears. After a while, he said, “… We just ate at the same table.”

“None of that counts.”

“…”

“Shizun, I just want to stay with you for a little longer. Every time you finish your meal, you walk away by yourself and walk into the crowd. I can’t touch you…”

There was a weak grievance in the man’s voice.

“Stay with me longer, don’t go back.”

Chu Wanning’s cheeks became more and more hot and flustered by his words. Besides, his breath was so fierce, so magnificent and so hot as he was held tightly by him. In the end, he could not say a word.

“Shizun, let me hold you for a little longer…” murmured Mo Ran.

It’s not easy for them to be alone at Sisheng Peak. Especially in this period, the number of visits by various factions has increased significantly. Xue Zhengyong often dragged Chu Wanning to make suggestions, so the time for them to be together was less.

It was hard to sit close to each other while eating, they always had to worry about the crowds around them. If they weren’t careful, they’d let their disciples see what’s different. So since they confessed, they’ve hardly had a chance to hold hands.

It was no wonder that Mo Ran couldn’t bear it any longer. He has been restrained for so long.

The twilight gradually arrived, and more and more people came out from Mengpo Hall. A group of female practitioners who were joking and giggling walked past the alley, and accidentally touched the fire-breed rat, which was raised by the Xuanji Elder. The mice screamed, causing everyone to laugh, and Chu Wanning was upset in such a hustle and bustle, so he pushed Mo Ran slightly.

“Go out.”

“Just a little longer…”

“It’s time to come out or someone will come.”

In the end, Chu Wanning was a person who was used to being pure. He didn’t give him a real color to look at. He was not confused, he would not be fascinated. Mo Ran sighed. As he wished, he released him from the embrace. Chu Wanning immediately walked out of the dark and narrow alley, then looked back at him.

“What are you still doing there?”

Mo Ran coughed, looking awkward. He said: “Shizun should go first, I will stay here for a while.”

Chu Wanning was rather puzzled, and was about to question him, but then he noticed that Mo Ran’s tanned handsome face seemed to be a little red. His black eyes were also a little twinkling, like the stars in the clear night sky.

Suddenly he realized what was happening. His eyes moved downwards unconsciously. When he saw a part of it, his ears were buzzing. It was as if he had been stung by a scorpion. His face was red and his ears were too: “You… You’re just…” Without finishing his words, he suddenly flipped his sleeves and left angrily, as if the smoke was still shining on his head.

For ten days or so, even if the tamed wolf was gentle, the blood in his bones was also accumulating and increasing. Every morning and evening, he stared at the elder Yuheng on the high platform. The desire in his eyes could not be suppressed, and it became more and more obvious day by day.

When you are infatuated with someone, you can’t hide love even if you try your best to hide it.

Sometimes Xue Meng would be frightened when he saw Mo Ran’s eyes. He looked at him, and then at Chu Wanning. The son of the Phoenix had a one-track mind, he did not think on the wrong road. So the more he looked, the more confused he was, the more he did not know what emotion was flashing in Mo Ran’s eyes.

Xue Meng felt uncomfortable subconsciously, but he could not tell where he was uncomfortable.

One morning, Xue Meng took advantage of the absence of people around him, so he lowered his voice and said “Hello, I want to ask you something.”

“What’s the matter?”

“Is Shizun ill?”

Mo Ran looked at him in surprise: “Why do you ask that? What’s wrong with Shizun? Why wouldn’t I know?”

“You don’t know?” Xue Meng touched his chin. “It’s strange how you’ve been looking at him lately, in a thoughtful way.”

“…” Listening to Xue Meng’s words, Mo Ran was able to understand. He coughed softly and looked down. “What do you want, to curse Shizun?”

“I didn’t curse him.” After a pause, he muttered, “What do you keep looking at him for?”

“You’re wrong.”

“I’m not blind.”

“You’re blind.”

“I’m blind? Then you are a dog!”

Two older men in their twenties were arguing naively. Chu Wanning heard something strange on the high platform and looked at them coldly. They suddenly shut up and recited their herbal dossiers with their heads down, but their elbows were still against each other in a dark struggle. Mo Ran

pretended to struggle for a while, then suddenly relaxed, and without warning pulled his arm away.

Xue Meng exerted himself too hard and suddenly lost the hindrance of Mo Ran. He fell down on top of Mo Ran's body with a bang.

Mo Ran clapped his legs and laughed, "Ha-ha-ha."

Xue Meng was very angry, and did not care about the quiet atmosphere around him. He said in a loud voice, "You don't have a face! You shamed me!"

"Mo Weiyu, Xue Ziming." Seeing his disciples, Chu Wanning was a little angry. He raised his phoenix eyes, frowned with his sword eyebrows and said in a low voice, "Go out and quarrel. Don't disturb people who clean up here."

"Yes, Shizun." Mo Ran steadied himself at once.

Xue Meng also reluctantly shut up. But he was still a little angry. He felt that he had fallen a little bit. After thinking about it, he cut a small piece of paper and wrote some large words on it. He got up and threw them on Mo Ran's table.

"Clap."

Unexpectedly, the paper ball was thrown over, and a delicate white hand picked it up from the open pages. Shi Mei unfolded the crumpled paper in confusion and looked at the words written on it.

——

“You’re staring! Do you have any plans? Do you want to pass on your peculiar thoughts to Shizun?”

Next, he drew a dog and made a black cross on it.

Shi Mei: “……”

After the early morning students dispersed, Xue Zhengyong found Chu Wanning. He said that after several explorations in Linyi, he had determined that no one could live there for five years because of the fire calamity. Therefore, the refugees brought from the upper repair circle now need to be placed in the leading villages and towns at Sisheng Peak.

“The ones I brought back have already begun to be helped to settle down in Changchang Town, Fenghe Town and Baishui Village. And the ones that you and A-Ran brought back.” Xue Zhengyong said, “If there are so many people in Wuchang Town, it’s better to take half of them to Yuliang Village, where there is also a shortage of young people.”

Chu Wanning agreed: “It is indeed more appropriate to settle them in Yuliang Village.”

Xue Zhengyong nodded: “Yuliang is not far away. You go early, there are a lot of people to be settled. These firewood, rice, oil and salt cannot be figured out by Meng’er. I’ll also ask Shi Mei to go with you. He can help.”

Chu Wanning said: “… Okay.”

With the villagers of Yuliang Village, Chu Wanning and Mo Ran were old acquaintances. The village chief got the news of Xue Zhengyong two days ago, so he waited at the village gate early, waiting for the arrival of the immortals at Sisheng Peak. The Ling’er girl was also there. She hadn’t seen

them for a long time. She had become more beautiful. When she saw Mo Ran she came excitedly to greet him.

Mo Ran was a little surprised, but still laughed: “The girl did not go to the Upper Cultivation World?”

“No, fortunately not. If I had gone to Linyi, I’m afraid I would have lost my life.” Ling’er clapped her full chest with a lingering fear. “I’d better stay in the Lower Cultivation world first. The days in the village are getting better and better. Once upon a time, we were looking forward to going to the Upper Cultivation world. This is the first time that we saw people from the Upper Cultivation world coming to us. No, No.”

“Yes.” Someone heard her words and echoed, “Everything is a mountain without turning around. Lord Xue is here. Maybe in ten or twenty years, people in the upper circle will run to us with their eyes on it.”

Shi Mei said gently “The Lower Cultivation world has been suffering for a hundred years, but the so-called river has the other side, the other side of the sea, it is not only our side that has been suffering, and now it is time to live a good life.”

As he spoke, he shared the herbal ointment Madam Wang had ordered him to bring to the crowd. Mo Ran also took a can of it and looked closely. He was surprised to find that there was a serpent-shaped emblem on the Guyue’ye. “Cold Scale Sacred Hand-made drugs?”

“Well, a few days ago, Sect Leader Jiang sent someone here.”

Chu Wanning listened and said, “Jiang Xi will send better things than the Huohuang Pavilion will send things. There are many ghosts and evil spirits

in Shu, and the most lacking is the panacea. When you send these, the Lord will accept it with laughter."

"That's not true." Mo Ran muttered, "The dān medicine by Hua Binan, the Sacred Hand. They exaggerate a little. It doesn't really bring back the dead, alas…"

"Alas" and the second half of the sentence did not come out - alas, Jiang Xi is really rich ah.

In Xuanyuan Pavilion, Chu Wanning bought a few bottles of Tapir Fragrance Dew, asking for 2.5 million yuan. As a result, with a wave of Jiang Xi's hand, a whole carriage was delivered.

Mo Ran silently put the medicine pot back in his pocket, sighed to himself, and thought that Rufeng Sect was indeed finished, but the next outburst was obviously the Guyue'ye, which could not reach the Sisheng Peak. It would take a hundred years for the Lower Cultivation world to rise.

After a busy half day, in the evening, the old people in Linyi had their food and clothing allowances arranged, their houses were cleaned up, and the three, Master and apprentices, were ready to leave. However, the village chief insisted on leaving them to eat together. It was with great affection, they couldn't be impolite and leave. So they followed the village chief to the ancestral hall of Yuliang Village.

The ancestral temple in the village always holds some important red and white events such as New Year's Eve dinner and Lantern Festival opera. They are also in the ancestral temple or in the courtyard outside the ancestral temple. On this day, because many old people from the upper spiritual circles came to live in Yuliang Village from now on, the villagers

prepared more than 30 tables, cooked sheep, slaughtered cattle, steamed rice and boiled noodles to entertain everyone.

The head of the village remembered that Chu Wanning would rather not eat spicy food. He specially arranged a light dish to invite elder Yuheng and some people in Linyi who were not used to spicy food to take their seats.

Those people were rescued by Mo Ran and Chu Wanning. When Feihua Island was in the process of recognizing the cold immortal, but when it came to recognizing that, sitting with him for dinner, everyone at a table was very nervous. Because of etiquette, they couldn't get up and change their positions. Because of the embarrassment of the meal, the other tables were talking, laughing and drinking. The tables had silent chopsticks, and nobody spoke.

Mo Ran was a good workmanship. He helped in the kitchen. When the last dish came up, he came out of the back of the kitchen. His face was covered with fine sweat, his eyes were bright, his nose was straight, and his face was sharp and handsome.

"Soup stuffed buns are coming —!" The old lady held a large tray with small steamers piled on it and her voice roaring loudly. "Every table has twelve, six fresh meat of shepherd's purse and six fresh meat of mushrooms. You should eat them while they are hot!"

Mo Ran laughed and helped the aunt pass the soup dumplings in the small cage next to the table.

"Thank you, Mo Weiyu!"

"Thank you, Mo Weiyu!"

More familiar with Mo Ran, the children cried out: “Thank you, brother Weiyu!”

Ling’er’s eyes were not able to move around him. Although she knew that he did not like her and would not like her in the future, she still couldn’t help wanting to look at him.——

Well, it didn’t matter if she looked at him anyway.

“Thank you, Mo Weiyu.” Send her to this table, her lips were pink, she said thank you softly.

Mo Ran smiled at her, which was not hiding, nor with any ambiguous brilliant smile. Instead, Ling’er, who had just wanted to steal his eyes, was somewhat embarrassed and bowed her head unexpectedly.

The last two tables had yet to be served. One was Chu Wanning and the other was Shi Mei. They had different tastes, so they did not sit together. Mo Ran was sent to Chu Wanning first. Chu Wanning frowned and said, “Don’t work any more, the food will get cold.”

When Shi Mei sent the table to him again, Shi Mei laughed and said, “A-Ran is a skillful hand in the end. Thank you very much.”

“Ha-ha, it’s good to help my aunt a little bit.” Mo Ran said, turning around and turning back, Shi Mei thought he was going to get the bowl, so he vacated some empty seats on the bench and said, “Sit here, I just need one more bowl for this table. You don’t need to take it.”

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment, then scratched his head and laughed, “I will sit at Shizun’s table.”

“… When did you stop eating spicy food? There’s no spicy food there.”

“I quit.” Mo Ran said.

Shi Mei was silent for a long time, his eyes were dark, but he suddenly laughed: “I’ve heard of quitting drinking water, quitting tobacco leaves, but I haven’t heard of anyone quitting pepper.”

“In fact, it’s not quitting. If you don’t eat it for too long, you don’t wish to eat it anymore.” Mo Ran waved to Shi Mei, and ran to the kitchen with a smile saying, “Take the bowl, you sit and eat, and don’t eat the soup anymore. It’s already cold.”

Ch. 184 Shizun, I've Made You Wait a Long Time….

He returned very quickly. In addition to a full bowl of rice, he also carried a box with him and sat down next to Chu Wanning.

Chu Wanning was a little surprised and hesitated, "You… Aren't you going to Shi Mei's table?"

Mo Ran was stunned. "Why would I want to go to that table?"

Hearing his words, Chu Wanning's heart was filled with joy. He lowered his eyes and coughed, "I thought the dishes over there were just for your taste."

Looking at his slightly red ears, Mo Ran suddenly realized that Chu Wanning was… jealous, wasn't he? His heart throbbed as he smiled. He whispered in his ear, "Wherever you are, it suits my taste."

This time, Chu Wanning's ears were completely red.

He had been leaning his knee against Mo Ran's knee, but now he felt even more sensitive and wanted to move it away. However, Mo Ran was unwilling to do so. He used the cover from the table to touch Chu Wanning's legs.

"You-!"

The voice drew the attention of the onlookers. "What's wrong, cultivator?"

Chu Wanning was aware of his slip of the tongue, so he pretended to be calm and said, "It's nothing."

Mo Ran could not hold back his laughter. He felt that Chu Wanning was really interesting.

In reality, he did not want to do anything lecherous. After all, he didn't want to lose five hundred to kill a thousand. He just did not want Chu Wanning to be that far away from him.

Therefore, he grabbed Chu Wanning's leg and childishly pulled him back, telling him to lean on himself.

Chu Wanning moved away again and he pulled back.

In the end, Chu Wanning couldn't take it anymore. He kicked him under the table, but finally stopped pushing away.

Mo Ran laughed.

"You must be sick," Chu Wanning said.

The two of them ate afterwards.

Mo Ran first glanced at Chu Wanning's bowl, sure enough, there were only a few simple vegetables and a piece of tofu, and that soup dumpling had long been snatched up by the other ignorant children at the table.

Mo Ran handed him the small bamboo food box.

"What is it?"

Mo Ran said softly, "Steamed dumpling, six crab yolks and six shrimps, I made them for you… Hush, hush, eat quickly, I knew you were at the table and you could never beat anyone in grabbing food."

"…"

The fact that he was the only one eating in the kitchen was too obvious. Chu Wanning felt embarrassed and did not want to move. However, when he saw Mo Ran black eyes looking at him earnestly and sincerely, and that there was even some flour powder on his cheeks, he was unable to say anything further.

What's more, that phrase, made especially for you, sounded very touching.

Chu Wanning did not say anything. After a while, he quietly opened the box and put up the bamboo lid. He started to eat the crab meat that was very fragrant and hot.

"Is it delicious?" The man looked at him wistfully, hoping for approval.

Chu Wanning bit his chopsticks and said, "Not bad, you try one too."

"I'm not eating anymore. It's all for you." Mo Ran smiled, his black eyes were bright and warm, "It's good that you like it, let's have a look at it after you've eaten some shrimp."

The man's heart was unperturbed. The flour on his cheeks matched his bright black eyes, making him look pitiful and adorable.

Although Chu Wanning was still at a loss as to why he would abandon Shi Mei and turn to him, at this moment, his gaze was too pure and firm. He could not look at anyone else, and it was enough to reassure anyone who was stared at like that.

After dinner, the village chief invited everyone to go outside the ancestral hall to watch the show. The stage was set by the river, and with a clang of copper cymbals, Hu Qin began to play, and the students on the stage, the denizens of the stage, the denizens of the temple, the raw horns, the

flowery faces, and the ugly horns all appeared one by one, and the stage was brought to a lively place.

Chu Wanning didn't want to watch this kind of play. Firstly, it was because the mortal world's tricks were too clumsy and he could see through it with a single glance. Secondly, the people who were watching the play were busy and crowded around him.

He was not interested, nor did Shi Mei. The two of them were planning to leave, but Mo Ran did not say anything. He walked beside them and finally turned around to take a last look at the stage.

Shi Mei said gently, "Let's go. It's too late to go back. The Sect Leader should be worried."

"Yes."

Mo Ran did not say much as he followed with his head lowered. However, just as he walked a few steps, he heard Chu Wanning ask, "You want to see?"

"He's playing the part of Wang Kai and Shi Chong fighting for wealth. Interesting."

He did not say that he wanted to see it, nor did he say that he did not want to see it. However, Chu Wanning quietly listened to his words and said, "Then let's go back and watch it first."

Shi Mei was slightly startled: "Shizun, staying for dinner is already delaying the delivery of the mission. If you stay and watch the show…"

Chu Wanning said, "We'll just have to wait and see. Once we're done, we'll leave."

Shi Mei was very gentle as he smiled and said, “Alright, I’ll listen to Shizun.”

The three of them returned to the stage and squeezed into the bustling crowd. Many of the people who had left Linyi had not come to Chuanshu before, had not seen the play before. They were shocked by the flying sleeves and the dazzling transformation of their faces, but they were also shocked to the point of sighing. The short and short children could not see the stage.

“Wang Ci, that coral tree, my precious treasure —”

On the stage, ‘Wang Kai’ and ‘Shi Chong’ desperately clung on to the splendor of wealth and wealth, their faces and necks red, wanting to press their opponent down.

“Who can take the fifty li of road back with the purple silk cloth?”

“Good!” “Hahaha, let’s do it again!”

The eyes of the audience were all brimming with light. The children’s mouths were stuffed with pastries as they slapped their hands together with all their might along with the adults.

This was not a dignified scene, no one would stupidly sit and watch the show, coldly sipping a mouthful of jasmine tea, the servant pinching his back, the servant girl clapping his hands, and the cold air below the stage causing all the actors on the stage to lose interest.

These people were all simple and crude. They were in full swing, and they were all standing and applauding. They shouted loudly as they stood, and were extremely boorish and lively. Chu Wanning didn’t know how to respond even though he was standing in the middle of a wave with his

chest pressed against his back. A boring person like him would probably rather sit in the Upper Cultivation World and listen to Wang Ba's crickets than watch Wang Kai's Shi Chong from the crowd.

There was another person who did not like the intensity of his emotions any more than he did.

Shi Mei stood there for a while, as if shaken by the sound of the suona cymbals, but he still stood there good-naturedly, until one of the men beside him, his blood boiling with excitement, jumped up and slapped his face, and accidentally bumped into another man who was holding a cup of tea. The hot tea spilled all over him.

"Aiya! Sorry! I'm sorry!"

"Immortal, I'm truly sorry. Look at my clumsy hands and feet."

Shi Mei hurriedly said: "It's okay, it's fine."

However, his clothes were dirty and wet. He sighed and said helplessly to Chu Wanning, "Shizun, why don't I go back and change my clothes. I'll explain the results of the mission to the Sect Leader."

"Alright, be careful on your way."

Shi Mei smiled and said goodbye to Mo Ran before leaving. Chu Wanning felt that his escaping technique was not bad, should he find someone to run into? This way, he wouldn't have to be overwhelmed by the crowd. Just as he was thinking this, he suddenly heard a burst of cheers and cheers from all around him. He looked up at the stage, and saw that the corner where he had played Wang Kai was filled with anger.

"Boom —"

The river rippled and rippled until it was orange.

“Wah! Alright!”

“Spit again! Again!”

“…” Chu Wanning could not understand what was so interesting about it… If he asked Xue Meng to come over, he could burn it a hundred times even without a fire packet.

While he was lost in interest, he suddenly caught a glimpse of Mo Ran’s smile. That tall man didn’t even need to raise his feet off the ground. He just stood there calmly, and no one could block his line of sight. His handsome face was lit up by the fire, his dimples were deep, and his eyes were soft but deep.

Sensing Chu Wanning’s gaze, he turned around and smiled even more brightly. His black eyes looked moist, but it seemed like there was nothing there. It was just an illusion.

“When I was young, I used to go to the theater to listen to this. Every time I couldn’t wait until the show was over, I would be chased away by the manager.” Mo Ran’s tone was casual and calm, “This is the first time I’ve heard it all… Does Shizun like it?”

“…”

Chu Wanning looked at him in the eyes and said in the end.

“Mm, not bad.”

A smile bloomed on his face as the night seemed to brighten up. A faint chant suddenly came from the stage, one curtain fell, the other rose again.

His beautiful eyebrows were like smoke, his indigo feathers were quivering, his majesty was filled with vigor, he was nothing but a lowly concubine.

“Oh, goodbye tyrant.” Mo Ran turned his head to look and smiled, “Let’s go. Wealth is finished. We are satisfied. Let’s go back.”

“Let’s wait a bit longer.”

“Hmm?”

“It can’t be considered as boring. It’s fine to just watch a few more times.”

Mo Ran slightly raised his eyebrows, seemingly pleasantly surprised. He then smiled, “Alright.”

Bie Ji, Jin Shan Temple, judgment of double nail, sitting in a building to kill.

One after the other, no one left. As the hours went by, the people became even more elated and spirited.

A few grandpas followed old woman Yan and chanted, “A good word is always warm, but a bad word hurts the cold of June —”

The applause even overshadowed the singing of the actors on the stage. Chu Wanning was being pushed and shoved by the village villagers who were drunk, but there was nowhere for his to retreat to. It was precisely when he was in a difficult situation that a pair of warm hands rested on his shoulders.

He turned his head and Mo Ran’s gaze. At some point, this man had appeared behind him. Smiling, he brought him over and told him to lean on himself so that he would not be disturbed by the people around him.

Suddenly, the sounds of laughter, the gongs and drums became distant. Chu Wanning's ears started to burn. He looked at Mo Ran for a while and finally turned his face away, unwilling to look at him again.

It was just that the temperature behind him was so hot and the smell was so scorching. His chest was pressed against his back, and his big, gnarled hands were clasped around his shoulders. As the skin drums became tighter, the flames started to erupt again. Everyone's eyes were attracted to the drums. They began to whimper and drink, slapping their hands together.

Chu Wanning wanted to follow along and clap his hands, pretending to be calm.

However, before he could even raise his hand, he was enveloped by Mo Ran from behind. Perhaps it was because no one noticed, or perhaps it was because they were being pushed closer and closer, or perhaps it was because in such a grand atmosphere, they especially wanted to be closer, hated to be separated so much that he wanted to embrace the person and merge with his flesh and bones.

Anyways, Mo Ran lowered his eyes and hugged him from behind, hugging the person in his embrace with his strong arms. Then, he turned his face to the side and kissed on the ear at the moment the fire lit up the night.

Suddenly, a flame flared up, illuminating the playful face and burning into the heart of the spectator.

"Thank you for accompanying me." He said, "I know you don't like it."

"… you're thinking too much. I like it."

Mo Ran laughed softly and stopped talking. He hugged him tighter and pressed his chin against his neck.

The fire flickered. Chu Wanning suddenly wanted to ask something, so he said, “Mo Ran, why are you…”

“Hahaha, good!”

His voice was weak and was instantly swallowed up by the clamor.

“What?”

“… Nothing.” Chu Wanning’s face was slightly red, and his anger was slowly spreading. He didn’t want to ask him that question a second time, it used up all of his energy, and now he felt embarrassed and annoyed and didn’t want to speak again.

Mo Ran was quiet for a while. In truth, he did not hear clearly the question, but he suddenly said, “The person I love has always been you.”

“…”

His heart began to race.

“It has always been you. I was too stupid. I couldn’t differentiate my own thoughts before.”

Thump, thump, thump, his heart was beating like a drum, the sound of the cymbals on the stage was almost drowned out by the sound coming from his chest.

“I’m sorry.”

“…”

“I made you wait a long time.”

Everything in front of his eyes was filled with fireworks, and his ears were buzzing. He could not hear anything clearly, and his head was spinning; he did not know if his feet were on the ground or in the clouds, but only the person behind him was real. The wind used to be colorless and had no trace, but now it had become a burning breath of Mo Ran’s lingering at the tip of his nose.

Chu Wanning didn’t want to hear too many explanations. What he wanted was just a simple affirmation from the person he loved. With his dizziness, he felt that everything was colorful. He was unable to think or move, so he was immersed in the fierce and surging oil colors until he finally lost his five senses.

Ch. 185 Shizun's Private Meeting

When his consciousness returned, he was just barely able to figure out what he was doing. Chu Wanning had a vague feeling that they had somehow gotten out of the crowd and into the nearest forest that they could find.

They were kissing passionately, each breathing hot and fast.

So thirsty.

They were both people who yearned for each other for a very long time. The way they kissed was radical and impatient, and they were even a little crazy. Their Adam's apples rolled in their throats as they swallowed, their lips and teeth clattered so fast that they even bled a little, but no one could feel it, no one could stop it.

Mo Ran pressed him against a tree. The rough wooden patterns stuck to his trembling back. There seemed to be strings playing in the distance, but that was not important. All sounds, regardless of distance or strength, were broken apart.

The only thing intact was each other's breathing.

Her lips and tongue were moist and rough as they grind against each other without any shame.

Shameless…

Chu Wanning was not willing to admit defeat, but he had never been a person of abstinence, and the other party's desire to suddenly take out the

box was so fresh and terrifying that it was almost like a wild beast, wanting to tear his throat and eat his flesh.

He did not know why he became like this. After arriving at this step, he did not know whether he was right or wrong, and what would happen next.

It was as if the man who had been courteous, restrained, forbidding, and lonely, each step a hundred paces behind him, had been torn apart and destroyed at this moment.

He refused to show weakness. Even though his back was already numb and his spirit seemed to have run out of energy, he was still willing to take the initiative to not be a soft and fragile object in the palm of his hand.

Unfortunately, although he was full of ambition, his skills were extremely poor.

He bit the tip of his tongue so hard that it was covered in sweet and fishy blood. He was so close to the point where the more he breathed, the redder his face became and the more difficult it was to breathe.

In the end, even Mo Ran started laughing. He felt that the hardworking Chu Wanning who had no standards really attracted a lot of tender affection from others.

His heart that was once cold and hard had melted into sparkling spring water. A thousand li of lake water rippled with golden waves as they twirled around his fingers.

When they broke apart, there was fluid linking between their lips and tongue, lustful and sloppy. Their lips were wet and red, and their eyes were filled with lust and tenderness. Mo Ran’s voice was hoarse, and the

moisture on their skin was dense. He lowered his head to look into Chu Wanning's eyes, his rough fingers brushing against his cheeks.

Chu Wanning also knew that his level was outrageous, but he refused to admit it. He squinted his eyes and asked in a threatening tone, "What are you laughing at?"

Mo Ran didn't answer, but the smile deepened in his eyes, seeing this it made him more annoyed.

"Don't I… Is that right?"

He hugged him again, this time face to face. The same tall and straight man's body was held together, not as close as a man and woman, but it was filled with even more heat, even heavier, sparks.

"How can you do wrong? Absolutely right." Mo Ran intimately rubbed against the top of his hair, and then rubbed his ears and temples. "Shizun is the best…"

"Then why are you still laughing!"

Mo Ran let out a low laugh. His chest was burning hot and hard, but his heart was getting softer and softer.

"My reaction wasn't just to laugh."

Chu Wanning had yet to understand the deep meaning behind his words. As the distance between Mo Ran's body and his upper body became deeper, he suddenly felt Mo Ran's intense and vigorous zeal, followed by the slight movement of his breath. The feeling was so stimulating, so intense, so vivid, that it made his scalp tingle, caused his heart to stop

beating, caused him to shiver, and even though he was cold, his throat felt tight and dry.

This made Chu Wanning realize how aggressive, ferocious, and violent this seemingly gentle man was. He was so strong that even a drop of his blood could rip apart a person's internal organs.

His hair stood on end, and he was about to push him away, but before he could raise his hand, the full, Mo Ran's lips, moist and hot, kissed him again, clamped on his lips and licked them. The man was breathing heavily, and his ferocious body was sticking closely to the fabric of Chu Wanning's clothes. Chu Wanning was dazed by this terrifying eagerness. His tongue that was burning hot and thick had already invaded his mouth, greedily kissing him, rubbing against him. In the end, his mind went blank, his legs were soft and numb.

He was trembling slightly from the excitement, from the unfamiliar feeling of powerlessness, from the hard heat, from the burning passion.

Everything he did seemed stiff without any spiritual sense. The only thing he remembered was that when they parted ways in front of the Red Lotus Pavilion, they were panting and hugging each other in the dark. They had kissed each other for a long time, wishing that they could swallow their lovers, their desire and passion. How could it be not enough…Not enough.

Vaguely, he remembered Mo Ran whispering to him, asking for his permission to sleep in the Red Lotus Pavilion tonight. Chu Wanning probably used his last bit of clarity before gasping for air, forcing himself to regain some rationality and not agreeing.

He did not know why he did not agree. It could be because of his inexplicable self-esteem, or because he had been alone for too long and could not adapt, or it could be because he felt that it was all ridiculous, even if it was infinitely tempting, but he was caught off guard and too fast.

After struggling to break free from Mo Ran, Chu Wanning pushed open the door and entered the pavilion. For the first time in his life, he understood what it meant to not even dare to look back.

He knew that his strings had been stretched to the limit. If he were to turn around now, he was afraid he would fall short. His desires would have been broken, and he would no longer be able to push away the man in front of him.

They'll be burned to ashes, not even dregs.

When he went back to bathe and change his clothes, Chu Wanning discovered that his underwear was moist, the sweet and coquettish smell made his face flush red, and he was at a loss of what to do.

He stayed where he was for a long time, and he couldn't help but think, how could this be? How could it be like this?

He had never lost his composure like this in his life. He had never been so passive before.

Damn it, what should he do?

In the past, whenever Chu Wanning encountered a problem that was difficult to solve, his subconscious reaction would be to search for a solution in the books. As a result, ever since he was young, he had read a lot and his brain was filled with countless books.

This was the first time that he couldn't get an answer out of the sweaty, bull-filled file.

Therefore, he had been caught blind, and was completely at a loss as to what to do.

Luckily, Mo Ran seemed to understand him well. After being rejected once, he understood the confusion and anxiety in Chu Wanning's heart and stopped advancing.

But the intimacy between them no longer stopped at holding hands. They would passionately kiss in the alley behind Mengpo Hall, and after nightfall, they would go to some deserted forest. Mo Ran was a person who did not talk much, and sometimes he would even answer Chu Wanning's questions, but his eyes would speak, and there would be sweet words, sweet feelings, and thousands of sweet words in his eyes, but it was just that he was very stupid, not able to express, and not good at expressing himself.

There were many times when Mo Ran was more willing to do things directly than just keep his mouth shut.

Somehow, Chu Wanning felt that he could always sense what he was looking for. They had only just gotten together, but occasionally it felt like Mo Ran had been by his side for many years already.

As the days passed, the time they spent kissing and hugging grew longer and longer. However, the flames of desire were still burning in them. Almost every time they separated, they would only continue to kiss and hug each other.

After all, he had cultivated for many years, so his mental strength was still on par with others. However, Mo Ran was not the same type of mental cultivation method as Chu Wanning, not to mention that the young man's blood energy was strong and he had no way of getting up immediately after every reunion.

It was too obvious. If the clothes couldn't cover it, people would notice it.

He was enduring too much pain.

Today, after dinner, they hung around in a remote area near the back mountain for about an hour. But there was still an elder gathering at night, so after calculating the time, Chu Wanning decided that it was about time to leave and told Mo Ran that he had to go. However, after calculating the time, Mo Ran felt that there was still time, so he was unwilling to let him go.

The way he refused was rather crude. He didn't say it out loud, but directly kissed him again.

Mo Ran sat on one of the rocks in the abandoned garden. He hugged Chu Wanning and asked him to face him, while sitting on his lap. Normally, the person sitting below would be shorter than the person sitting on his lap, but Mo Ran was tall and straight, which meant he was on the same level as Chu Wanning and he did not have any disadvantages.

He kissed for a long time, wet and sodden. From his lips to his neck, between his teeth was the Adam's apple. Hearing the other party's low and heavy breathing, Mo Ran felt even worse. His heart felt like it was on fire.

Chu Wanning could not stand it either. He wanted to escape, he wanted to leave, but his waist was too soft and his legs were too weak to obey his

commands. Mo Ran had been enjoying this hug very much. It was so close to him that it made his whole body tingle. Chu Wanning could even imagine what it would be like if he didn't have his clothes on.

Perhaps he was truly on the verge of a crisis. No matter how intense the kiss was, it was unable to release his desire. Instead, it only added oil to the fire and burned even hotter.

When Mo Ran released his wet red lips, his eyes were moist. He panted deeply, his Adam's apple rolling up and down in a sexy voice. He looked like he wanted to say something, but in the end, he just bit down fiercely.

If he really bit into it, Chu Wanning would feel pain, but it was very exciting. It was as if needles were stabbing into his body, causing his to tremble in pain.

He embraced the person in his arms and caressed that pitch-black hair. He felt that his Shizun was so good that it would make people want to take pity on him from the bottom of their hearts, and he also felt that his Shizun was so enticing that it made people want to bully him ruthlessly…

In the tranquil air, the original scent was getting stronger and stronger. Chu Wanning raised his head and closed his trembling eyes, it was very uncomfortable. Such a hug and kiss was very stimulating. He already felt uncomfortable, let alone the young man that was hugging him.

The eyes and tails of Mo Ran were red and slightly moist.

He opened his mouth and spoke in a low and hoarse voice. He seemed to be enduring something, but he also felt wronged. "Shizun…"

"…"

“Please, I can’t take it anymore…”

What do you want to do if you can’t take it? Chu Wanning thought of his shattered and fuzzy dreams, and a shiver ran down his spine. He did not make a sound, and his ears were so red that he could not bear it any longer. What was he supposed to do…

When Mo Ran once again covered his moist and swollen lips, Chu Wanning spoke softly, almost inaudibly, “Then… Not here.”

Not here, but there could be more, somewhere else.

Mo Ran looked up abruptly, almost pleasantly, and then kissed him hard, trying to get him to his feet like that.

Chu Wanning felt humiliated to the extreme and shouted in uncontrollable rage, “Let me down!”

Mo Ran put him down, but did not forget to kiss him. “Where does Shizun want to go?”

Before Chu Wanning could say anything, he heard a strange rustling sound coming from the nearby haystack. He was shocked, his mind cleared, and he pushed Mo Ran out of the way.

The two of them had just separated when they saw a person walking over from the shadows of the bamboo forest. In his hand was a faintly swaying wind lamp and his clothes fluttered in the wind.

That person was silent for a long time. Then, his voice rang out. Even though he was being repressed, his voice was still filled with astonishment and bewilderment.

“You all… Why are you here?”

Ch. 186 Shizun, Xue Meng Is So Gullible

The man was wild and handsome, his black and white eyes wide open, his face illuminated by the wind lamps.

Xue Meng.

Chu Wanning was speechless. He did not know how much Xue Meng saw or heard. After a few moments of silence, Mo Ran broke the silence.

“I have something to discuss with Shizun.”

Xue Meng slightly narrowed his eyes. He had just walked over when he faintly heard a low gasp in the forest. He thought it was a pair of ungrateful disciples secretly meeting in the important areas of the rear mountains.

Normally speaking, Xue Meng didn’t have the qualifications to care about this sort of thing. Besides the Wubei Temple and the Clearsky Hall, no one from the top ten sects was forbidden from talking about love and dual cultivation. Although there is a so-called “abstinence from lust” at Sisheng Peak.

But it only means “don’t go to the brothel” and “don’t go against the rules of nature”.

But who was Xue Meng?

He was Chu Wanning’s disciple, the head disciple.

For so many years, Xue Meng had been recounting the words spoken by Chu Wanning.

What he had done was like a benchmark for himself. Since Chu Wanning didn't like to see others privately giving and pulling at each other, then he wouldn't care about anything else. He would rather despise this pair of beloved and hate them for holding hands.

The back of the mountain was an important place where the boundary of the ghost realm was easy to break. Xue Meng was immediately displeased and came to find the source of trouble with the lanterns.

He never would have thought that under the flickering light of the lantern, these two people would be illuminated.

Xue Meng was stunned and stupefied. So he didn't even greet his as per the rules. Instead, he just blurted out, "Why are you here?"

The boundary of this place had not been broken, so there was no need to repair it.

No vanilla flowers, no scenery.

The place was remote and one couldn't come here by loitering around.

If he had asked Xue Meng in normal times, "There are two people, dark and silent. They don't walk the path of the Yang Pass, nor take a seat in the beautiful back garden. They must go to an extremely secluded place to talk. Young Master, what do you think?"

Xue Meng would definitely sneer and say, "What else can you say in that place? A word of love?"

If he were asked again, "The two of them are both men, and they have known each other for a long time. They are both unmarried, and their

appearances and statuses are equal, what does Young Master think of their relationship?”

Xue Meng would definitely roll his eyes and say, “What else could it be? Long Yang’s fetishism[162] and cutsleeve’s behavior makes people feel nauseous.”

He then said to him, “Haha, what Young Lord said is incorrect. In fact, these two are a pair of Shizun and disciple. Young Master, please do not be arrogant —”

Xue Meng would probably clap the table in anger and say, “Preposterous! What is this? Which pair of beasts were they? I will immediately expel them from the sect, and expel them from Sisheng Peak!”

However, as long as he told him that this pair of Shizun and disciple, one was called Mo Ran and the other was called Chu Wanning, then Xue Meng would definitely, definitely, definitely be startled. His face flashed with all sorts of colors like a lantern, and he finally supported his forehead as he sat down, saying, “About that, the things before do not count. I think there must be a second possibility.”

— That was it.

Xue Meng definitely wouldn’t, and he really couldn’t, involve Chu Wanning in any sort of chaotic, irregular, and reckless business, so he immediately felt like he had misheard.

However, he still felt his mind was in a mess as he muttered to himself, “What words do you have to say here?”

Chu Wanning was about to open his mouth to explain, but Mo Ran, under the cover of his wide sleeves, lightly squeezed his hand, signaling him not to speak.

If Shizun tried to lie, even a three year old child would not be fooled. It would be better if he could do it himself.

Thus, Mo Ran said, “Before the evening, I found a osmanthus candy year cake here.”

Chu Wanning: “…”

Xue Meng was stupefied. “What thing?”

“A New Year’s cake made from osmanthus candy that has been cultivated to perfection. It’s only about ten inches tall, with a lotus leaf on its head and a tail with a blue lamp burning at the tip.”

“What monster is this? I’ve never seen it in a atlas.”

Mo Ran laughed, “I have also not seen it before, so I was thinking, maybe a few days ago the Demon Suppressing Pagoda of the Rufeng Sect was destroyed and some extinct demonic beasts were brought here for Shizun to see.”

Hearing him say this, Xue Meng immediately let out a breath of relief. For some reason, he felt extremely relieved in his heart. His face that had been tightly tightened from just a moment ago finally became lively once more. He carried a lantern and walked over. Looking around, he asked, “Have you found the Monster New Year’s Cake?”

“Nope.”

Xue Meng glared at him. “It’s not like I’m asking you. I’m asking Shizun.”

Chu Wanning said, “… We couldn’t find it.”

Mo Ran laughed, “I’m afraid that once he saw Shizun and was afraid that Shizun would eat it as a snack, he immediately went into hiding.”

Chu Wanning was stunned before reprimanding angrily, “Mo Ran! Are you thinking of going to the Compendium Pavilion to copy books again?”

After making such a ruckus, Xue Meng’s initial unease gradually disappeared. He sighed to himself, “Damn it, just now, I had a vague feeling that Shizun had some unclear connections with Mo Ran…” How ridiculous, how could this be?

His Shizun was the coldest bunch of holy water in the world, and no one was allowed to touch him, much less stain him.

At this moment, Mo Ran asked him, “After talking so much, at least talk about you. What are you doing here?”

Xue Meng mumbled, “I’m here to find Veggie Bun for my mother.”

Mo Ran raised his eyebrows. “Is that the new fat cat?”

“Yes.”

“Orange in color, with a ‘King’ pattern on the head, the one that only eats fish and not meat?”

“Yes, did you see it?” Xue Meng sighed, appearing very helpless. “It is so fat, but it can run very fast. I have gone to every place that I can find in the back mountain of the previous mountain, but there is no sign of it…” He

suddenly thought of something and opened his eyes wide, exclaiming, “Ah! Do you think the New Year Cake will eat it?”

“…”

He turned into a light cough and said, “About this, I can see that the Sugar Year Cake is so small. Although it’s a monster, it’s useless. If Veggie Bun meets it, the thing that should be worrying is not the tangerine cat, but the Sugar Year Cake.”

Xue Meng touched his chin, thought about the size of Veggie Bun, and agreed, “Not bad… You’re right…”

“The back of the mountain is dangerous, so don’t go any further. I’ll help you find it.”

Xue Meng hurriedly waved his hand. “How could I dare to trouble you, Shizun?”

Chu Wanning said, “Since you have nothing to do, I’ll look for you for a while. After that, I’ll have to go to the Loyalty Hall to attend the Elders Guild. Let’s bring Mo Ran and search quickly.”

Mo Ran: “…”

He was really convinced that Chu Wanning felt like his body was a fire; burning when he wanted him to, extinguished when he wanted to. And now he was actually asked to stand up and look for a cat? He still hadn’t come down.

Xue Meng saw that he did not move and his expression was strange, so he asked, “What happened to you?”

Mo Ran said, “Nothing much. I’ve been feeling a bit uncomfortable since just now. You guys go ahead and look for it. I’ll be coming over very soon.”

Chu Wanning glanced at him, then suddenly realized that Mo Ran was wearing a different outfit from his. He was usually dressed in black and gold, which made him look very aggressive and suitable for combat, but his weakness was obvious. If he didn’t wear a cloak, his lower body would react very strongly.

“…” Chu Wanning did not say anything else. In the darkness, the face of a man with a cold face suddenly turned red, like the sunset shining on a clear surface of ice.

Ever since that day, Chu Wanning was unwilling to have a private meeting with Mo Ran no matter what.

It just so happened that during that period of time, they had gotten busy. The various sects felt that if Xu Shuanglin lived a single day more, they would not be able to sleep soundly. They turned to the “Tianyin Pavilion” — an organization independent of the ten great sects. It was an organization specialized in investigating difficult situations, but Xu Shuanglin was too ruthless and did not leave behind any clues.

At the end of the month, Li Wuxin could no longer hold it in and sent a Hero thread inviting the Sect Leaders of various sects and clans to the Spiritual Mountain to discuss the matter.

Chu Wanning and Xue Zhengyong naturally went as well.

The last time the heroes had gathered at the Spiritual Mountain was when Xue Meng, Nangong Si, and the others were in the sword competition. In the blink of an eye, the structure of the cultivation world underwent a

drastic change, and the seats belonging to the Rufeng Sect were empty, while the Fire Phoenix Pavilion was also in a state of collapse. The newly appointed sect leader was a stuttering youth who shrank into the crown and refused to talk. The masters of the Wubei Temple exercised their words and deeds, and never said that they would preside over the scandal…

When Xue Zhengyong recalled the scene of the heroes arriving together with the harmonious and harmonious atmosphere, he actually felt that it had been a lifetime. He couldn't help but lament deeply.

Sitting up, Jiang Xi had been promoted to the position of the first Sect Leader and would be in charge of the investigation of Nangong Xu. This person was completely different from the first Sect Leader Nangong Liu. Nangong Liu was all smiles. Regardless of whether or not he had a high or low status, he was still very polite and did not love to offend people.

What about Jiang Xi?

The Sect Leaders had just announced the results of the singing and asked him to host it when he calmly sat down on the seat of honor that Nangong Liu had previously occupied.

Before Nangong Liu sat in this position, he had rejected him with all his might, but after three times, he had made enough of the humble and respectful act. After sitting in this position, he had even sincerely said words of praise for an hour.

Jiang Xi only had two words.

"Of course."

He actually said that this seat should be his.

Sect Leader Jiang was rich, truly rich, truly arrogant, truly bad temper, and truly thick skin.

Xue Zhengyong suddenly remembered something as he mumbled to Chu Wanning in a low voice, “He didn’t come to the Spiritual Mountain Competition. More than once.”

Chu Wanning was not familiar with these disputes, he frowned and asked, “What do you mean?”

“I mean, ever since Nangong Liu became the First Sect Leader and the Rufeng Sect was recognized as the number one sect, Jiang Xi never came to the Sect Leader Meeting…”

Chu Wanning looked at Jiang Xi for a while and said, “He is a proud and arrogant man. I can see that he does not wish to be beneath trash.”

Xue Zhengyong felt wronged, “I don’t want to be under trash either.”

Chu Wanning smiled faintly, “The Sect Leader is patient, he can’t be considered to be condescending.”

As they were talking, one of Guyue’ye’s attendants suddenly came, stopping beside their table, giving a salute, before taking out a brocade case.

Xue Zhengyong turned around and asked, “What’s wrong?”

The attendant shook his head, pointed to his ears, pointed to his mouth, and turned out to be a deaf and dumb servant who could neither speak nor hear.

Chu Wanning looked at him back and forth, and realized that this person was different from the other ordinary disciples of Guyue'ye, with a silver snake-shaped collar around his neck.

"Cold Scale Sacred Hand…?"

The mute servant noticed that Chu Wanning was looking at his collar, nodding, bowing again, raising the box above his head and handing it to him.

The box also had an exquisite snake-shaped emblem on it. Xue Zhengyong looked at it and said, "He should be under the Cold Scale Sacred Hand."

As he said that, he looked towards Guyue'ye's direction, and indeed saw the greatest Grandmaster of the medical sect, the Cold Scale Sacred Hand Hua Binan, wearing a straw hat and eyes, silently gazing in their direction.

Ch. 187 Shizun, You Are My Lantern. Shizun, You Are My Light

Seeing Chu Wanning turn his head, there seemed to be a trace of a smile in Hua Binan's eyes. He stretched out a white hand from under his broad green silk robe and gently waved towards the box in front of Chu Wanning.

Chu Wanning nodded and said to the mute, "Thank you."

When the mute servant saw that he had put away the box, he bowed again and returned to his master.

Xue Zhengyong asked in surprise, "Yuheng, you know the Cold Scale Sacred Hand?"

"I don't know him." Chu Wanning looked at the box in front of him, "Since you know me, you don't need to spend 2.5 million gold in Xuanyuan to buy his Tapir Fragrance dew."

"Then why did he give you this?"

"I don't know either." Chu Wanning said, "Open it and take a look."

The embroidered box was opened. Inside, it was actually neatly packed with five bottles of warm colored Tapir Fragrance dew as well as a letter.

Chu Wanning opened the letter and saw that the contents were quite simple. He said that he knew Chu-zongshi had spent a high price on dew in Xuanyuan Pavilion and felt that the Tapir Fragrance dew's price was not worth it. He had been wanting to offer another five bottles.

However, he had never been able to meet the Grandmaster by chance. Now that he had obtained such a good opportunity in the Spiritual

Mountain, he could only hope for the immortal to accept it.

Xue Zhengyong immediately said, “I think he wants to befriend you.”

“…”

If he did not accept this gift, it would be disrespectful to the other party. Chu Wanning thanked Hua Binan from a distance and gave the embroidered box to Xue Zhengyong.

Xue Zhengyong said happily, “Give it to me?”

“… To Elder Tanlang.” Chu Wanning said, “I always felt that this Hua Binan was a little strange. Every year, Xuanyuan Pavilion would auction off so many expensive medicines for him, but every time, they would always be of high value. Could it be that he’s paying us back one by one?”

Xue Zhengyong muttered, “I don’t think it’s strange. After all, there are high prices. This is the first time I’ve heard of someone as high up as you being so ridiculous.”

Chu Wanning was slightly angered as he said, “But if there’s anything you need, it’s nothing out of the ordinary. In short, you should give all five bottles to Tanlang. I believe there’s no poison here, but it’s not a waste for Tanlang to learn how to concoct the Tapir Fragrance dew.”

“You don’t need it?”

“I…”

It was strange to think that the number of absurd and realistic dreams had decreased recently. Other than the few days he had spent outside the

gates of the Rufeng sect and the occasional fragmented dream scene, the rest of the night was a good dream.

Drinking more of the Tapir Fragrance dew would be a waste of heaven's treasure. Chu Wanning felt that there was no need for him to keep such a good medicine.

He stayed at the Spiritual Mountain for two or three days. When he returned to Sisheng Peak, Mo Ran was no longer there.

Xue Meng said, "He went to exterminate the monsters."

A thin frown line appeared on Chu Wanning's forehead, "Another monster? It's the nineteenth this month."

"They all came from the Golden Drum Tower of the Rufeng Sect." Xue Meng sighed, "I captured a lot of things and locked them up in our Heaven-Piercing Tower, but Heaven-Piercing Tower is not as small as the Golden Drum Tower, and the spirit stone talismans inlaid there are not as powerful as the Rufeng Sect. If this goes on, I'm afraid the tower won't be able to withstand it first."

Xue Zhengyong said, "Next time, Li Wuxin will come again. Let him bring some to Bitan Manor and stay in his Holy Spirit Tower."

Xue Meng laughed. "That is a good idea."

Xue Zhengyong replied, "Guyue'ye can also get a bit of it. I heard that their Star Plucking Tower is even larger than the Golden Drum Tower of the Rufeng Sect…"

This time, Xue Meng was unwilling. Raising his pitch-black brows, he angrily said, "No!"

“What’s wrong?”

“I don’t like that Jiang Gou. He hates it. Even if Heaven-Piercing Tower explodes, I’m not willing to give him the demons my sect has captured!”

Chu Wanning shook his head. He didn’t want to hear any more of the father and son duo’s chatter, so he left first.

He returned to the pavilion and slept. As expected, it was a good night’s sleep, and there was no longer any old dreams that disturbed him. When he woke up, the sun had already set, and the sky was half filled with the color of blood.

At this time, Mengpo Hall didn’t have any food left, but he was a bit hungry. He tidied up his clothes and pushed open the door, preparing to take a walk around Wuchang Town and have some snacks.

As a result, he coincidentally saw Mo Ran walking on the bluestone staircase leading to the Red Lotus Pavilion.

Upon seeing him, Mo Ran smiled. “Shizun, I heard uncle say that you were sleeping and wanted to wake you up.”

“What’s the matter?”

“I’m fine. I just wanted to see you, to walk with you.”

Coincidentally, Chu Wanning felt a bit of joy from their coincidences. In his heart, he felt that even the tiniest bit of happiness was worth it.

“Where to?”

They asked at the same time.

Chu Wanning was taken aback, as was Mo Ran.

Then he said, “I’ll listen to you.”

They all said the same thing.

Chu Wanning’s ten fingers were tightly clenched in his sleeves. Sweat was seeping through the gaps of his fingers. His eyes were dark and hot, yet he watched Mo Ran calmly and steadily.

Mo Ran could not help but grin.

“Everywhere.”

Chu Wanning was actually very happy, but he was still used to being indifferent, even if his happiness was not light. It was very rich, like the crimson red of a haitang.

He said, “Let’s go to the town and have a bite to eat.”

He did not even ask how Mo Ran was doing, nor ask if exorcising demons went smoothly. They were now connected by fate and had a very tacit understanding, and when he stood outside the bamboo door and watched Mo Ran’s black clothes flutter about, the dark golden curling grass edge rippling in the night light, he understood that everything was fine, there was no need to say anything more.

Together they went to the town.

For the past few years, Wuchang Town had been getting better and better. It had expanded from the original three-way street into the current five-way street, which was almost a full circle bigger than the previous three-way street.

“When I first arrived at Sisheng Peak, the household doors used to be already closed before nightfall. Incense furnace ashes were scattered all over the courtyard. The Eight Trigrams Mirror was hung on the door, and the Soul Suppressing Bell was tied under the eaves.” Chu Wanning looked at the people walking past his and said, “Other than the name of the town which hasn’t changed, I almost can’t recognize anything anymore.”

Mo Ran laughed, “With Sisheng Peak, it will only be better in the future.”

The two of them walked along the green stone main street that had been rebuilt in the town. Along the way, there were people who blew candy, people who played hide and seek, people who sold food and barbecued food from stalls, people who ate from pot to pot. The streets were filled with a myriad of lights, lighting up the bustling night market.

Seeing the pot in the stall, Mo Ran remembered that he, Xue Meng, and Xia Sini had eaten here before. He smiled and pulled at Chu Wanning, “Shizun, eat this. This restaurant has your favorite drink soy milk.”

They sat in the squeaky little bamboo chair. The sky was very cold, but the head chef who cooked with the side dishes was extremely hot. He was bare-chested and wiping his sweat, walked over and asked, “Two immortals, what do I need?”

“The mandarin duck pot,” Chu Wanning replied.

Mo Ran said, “Mushroom Clear Soup Pot.”

“… Aren’t you going to eat spicy food?”

Mo Ran lowered his eyes and smiled, his voice gentle and slow. “I want to quit.”

Chu Wanning was stunned for a moment. He finally understood why Mo Ran suddenly stopped eating spicy food. It seemed like there was a fish swimming in the lake, bubbling in the pond.

“You don’t have to…”

Mo Ran said, “No, I just like it.”

“…”

“I like it, I want it.” He looked at Chu Wanning and smiled. The thick eyelashes fluttered and landed on his slightly red ears.

He did not finish the second part of his sentence.

If I want to be like you, when you eat hot pot, two pairs of chopsticks can be inserted into a lively pot, no longer red and white, clearly separated.

Mo Ran ordered some more dishes, but unfortunately, the stall didn’t have exquisite desserts. He ordered three cans of soy milk from the fat porcelain pot and sat in the back, waiting for the dishes to arrive.

There were people eating nearby, men, women, old and young, black hair, white frost, steam rising from the soup pot, flames rising from the wok, shouts and punches, laughter and selfish desires, all gathered together in this boiling and steaming hot smoke, a lake and a sea of gentleness from the fragrance of vegetables and wine.

The human world was so ordinary, and the mortal world was so lively.

Before Mo Ran turned fifteen, he was starving and couldn’t eat any of these good wines or dishes.

Even after becoming an Immortal Emperor, there was still no peace above the thousands of people.

It's all there now.

Suddenly, a flame rose in the air. It turned out to be a man holding a spoon in his hand. The fire came rolling up from the big pot in clusters, causing the bare-chested man's entire body to be covered in a layer of fine copper oil. Under the light of oil, salt, and vinegar, his strong arms and muscles shook, and a plate of fried meat was sent out of the pot in an instant.

It was the perfect time to heat it up and bring it to the table.

"Oil Burst Double Crisp!" The waiter shouted.

Taxian Jun in the previous life was unpleasant with all kinds of delicacies, but for some reason, he was actually made to laugh by this "oil burst double crisp". His slender fingers overlapped and rested on the smooth chin, deep dimples appearing. His eyelashes moved slightly, and the brilliance from all over the world gathered on the two curtains of ink at this moment, dyeing the darkness very brightly.

Chu Wanning asked, "What are you laughing about?"

"I don't know. I'm just very happy."

Chu Wanning stopped talking, but the charming smile of the handsome man in front of his had brightened his heart.

After eating, he raised his head to look at the sky. He felt that it was about to rain, but the people below did not seem to care and continued to methodically enjoy the brilliant night.

As they passed a lantern shop, Mo Ran suddenly stopped and stood watching.

Chu Wanning followed his gaze. It turned out that the old craftsman was carefully putting on a pagoda lantern. Another similar lantern had been prepared, and it was a river lamp.

“Uncle, please give me this pagoda lamp.”

He did not ask for the price, nor did he ask for Mo Ran’s liking.

Chu Wanning walked over and handed the golden leaf to the elderly man, who was bent over making the lamp. Then, he casually passed the lamp to his disciple who was standing behind him.

“Take it.”

Mo Ran was pleasantly surprised and at a loss. “For me?”

Chu Wanning didn’t say anything. He picked up the half-empty pot of wine from the meal and looked around. When his sight fell on the river bank, he started walking towards it.

Lights flashed on and off, and were once again resplendent. The lights were resplendent, winning over the majesty of the Buddha.

“Since young, I’ve always wanted to put it on, but I’ve never had the money to do so every year.”

“Yeah.” Chu Wanning looked at him blandly, “You are the poorest.”

Mo Ran smiled.

He was lazy, so he leisurely leaned against the bridge with his arms crossed. The white-robed Taoist leaned against the dark black pillar of the bridge, holding a jug of wine with bright red tassels in it, he raised his head and took a sip, then turned his face a little, the red light of the lanterns on the corner of his nose shone on his exquisite porcelain face. His expression was indifferent, but it was hard to conceal the temperature of his gaze.

Idiot, what's so fun about that?

However, his eyes were still unblinking as he watched Mo Ran walk to the river bank. He chatted with the pagoda lamp for a long time, and at last, he gently placed it on the surface of the river. A streak of golden red reflected in the sparkling water, Mo Ran paddled the surface of the water twice, sending the pagoda away.

That day, Mo Ran stood next to the dark river for a long time.

It was not a holiday. No one else on the river had a light on.

Only the small pagoda lantern emitted a weak but stubborn glow. It wandered around in the endless cold night, turned into a small spark, and finally was swallowed up by the darkness, disappearing without a trace.

Mo Ran stood there silently, no one knew what he was thinking.

He saw the end.

On the surface of the river, there was no more light.

It's raining, it's raining.

The rain beat down on duckweed and knocked on the powder wall.

The peddlers fought to cover the pots, pans, and utensils they used to make their living with brown tarpaulins. They pushed their carts in a hurry to escape the heavy rain.

Chu Wanning froze for a moment. Although it was not far from being stung, it was still early in the winter and the rain was getting heavier.

He stood under the bridge, wet from the rain and the wind, his clothes only a little wet, but Mo Ran was hurrying up from the bottom of the beach, his clothes wet, his face wet, his eyes wet and dark.

He looked at him with a bit of gentleness but also a bit of embarrassment as he smiled.

“Start the spell and dry yourself.”

“Yes.”

The heavy rain did not hinder the cultivators from traveling, especially for masters like Mo Ran and Chu Wanning. They would be able to return to Sisheng Peak with a small enchantment.

However, none of them opened the barrier. Instead, they stood side by side under the pillar, waiting for the rain to stop.

After waiting for a long time, the rain did not show any signs of weakening. The world was filled with mist and the surging tides. The bustling night market instantly dissipated like a watercolor washed away by the cold rain and a painting soaked in ink.

Mo Ran said, “This rain doesn’t seem to be stopping.”

Chu Wanning said flatly, “It’s raining so hard, I must be sick.”

Mo Ran laughed out loud. After laughing for a while, he turned his head to Chu Wanning and said, “What do we do now? We can’t go back.”

“…”

Chu Wanning knew he should answer him, “Are you not a cultivator? Don’t you know how to open a barrier? Why can’t I go back?”

But he was silent for a while, and for some reason did not say anything, but he also did not respond. He only raised his head like this and looked at the vast night rain.

The palm of his hand was slightly hot, and his fingers were curled up in a ball of sweat.

Just as he was thinking about how to reply, his hand was gripped by Mo Ran. His slight tremble, heat, and sweat all fell onto Mo Ran’s hand without any cover.

Mo Ran looked at him for a while, his Adam’s apple bobbing in his throat. “Shizun, I, I want to follow you…”

The words were on the tip of his tongue, but he couldn’t say it. However, his heart was palpitating with numbness and he couldn’t swallow it down.

At the end, his dark eyes were wet and hot. He said a few words with an intense and reserved tone, which was obscure yet seductive. He said in a low voice, “I mean… It’s raining too hard, don’t go back to the sect tonight. It’s such a long way, you’ll catch a cold.”

Chu Wanning did not manage to react. He was stunned for a moment before he said, “I’m not cold.”

“Are you hot?”

“I’m not hot either…”

Mo Ran’s breathing was hot and his chest was heaving. Without waiting for a reply, he held his hand against his chest and whispered, “I’m hot.”

Rain beats duckweed.

But Chu Wanning could see the fire in his eyes. He could see the melting stream and the midsummer.

The young man was almost pitifully fretful and cute.

His voice was somewhat hoarse. “Let’s go to the nearest inn, okay? Now.”

Ch. 188 Shizun, I Really Love You

>>sexual content

Chu Wanning's heart suddenly tightened.

Why was there such a heavy rain? What was so cold and hot? They could have gone back, but he used this kind of lame excuse to bring him to the inn.

No matter how silly he was, Chu Wanning understood the meaning behind his words.

Mo Ran was reading his pulse and reading his mind.

If he shook his head, Mo Ran would not force him. However, if he agreed to it, then Mo Ran would agree to it…

What with him?

Chu Wanning did not know, and even if he did, he did not want to think about it.

He only felt that his face was burning, the heat of the pouring rain.

He was so nervous that he didn't know what to say, so he held the flask by its narrow neck and tried to take another sip, but it was nearly empty.

The last trace of the slightly cold and thick pear blossom went down his throat. He lowered his head, and the bright red tassel made his fingers even more slender and white.

He did not say anything and the atmosphere became awkward.

Mo Ran was a person who did not like to drink alcohol. At this time, watching him raise his head and drink, he suddenly asked him: “Anything left?”

“There’s nothing left.”

“… You’re so impatient, you drink so fast.” As he spoke, he lowered his head and gently kissed his lips. “Then, I can only have a taste.”

The taste of white pear flowers is mellow, with a faint fragrance of osmanthus flowers.

However, when he was thirty years old, Chu Wanning passed away. After a whole night of drinking on the roof, he could not taste anything. It was bitter.

After that, and after his rebirth, Mo Ran didn’t want to touch wine anymore.

Too bitter.

He kissed Chu Wanning’s cool lips. He pecked it lightly at first, but then he opened it and kissed it again carefully.

The rumbling of rain filled the air.

There was no one in the courtyard, the rain had become a natural curtain, and at some point they had embraced each other, kissing and tangling, their lips and tongues rubbing wet, the sound of the intense kiss drowned out by the pounding of the rain on the beams, Chu Wanning could not hear any more, the sound of the rain was deafening, like the roar of drums.

Unlike the raindrops that were splashed by the ice, Mo Ran's breathing was very hot. His kiss moved from his lips all the way to his nose, eyes, forehead, and then to his temples. The rough and moist tongue reached out to lick his ear. Chu Wanning couldn't stand the stimulation on his ears, his body was tight, hands clenched into fists, but he was unwilling to make any sound.

He rubbed the back of his neck, caught his ears and rubbed against the tiny mole mark behind his ear…

Chu Wanning trembled in his arms.

Mo Ran hugged him even tighter, wanting to crush his entire body. He wanted to crush him into his own flesh and blood.

His voice was low and hoarse, as he whispered in Chu Wanning's ear, "Shizun…"

The young man's suppressed eagerness was finally overflowing. The boiling water was boiling and bubbling, the water was about to burn out, the wood was growing hotter and hotter, and it was tormenting him.

It tormented them.

"Come with me…"

Perhaps he was possessed by a ghost, but he held his hand tightly by Mo Ran, and ran eagerly in the rain. It was so absurd.

None of them opened a barrier, nor did they buy any umbrellas. They seemed to have lost their magic power, like the most ordinary of mortals, allowing the wind and rain to blow on them. They hurriedly followed the swaying red lanterns in the rain and ran into an inn.

The waiter was yawning, thinking that with the rain coming down so late, there would no longer be any travelers staying the night. Thus, he was shocked to see the two of them barging in wet.

Mo Ran tightly held onto Chu Wanning's wrist. His palms were so hot, it seemed as if the water was going to be evaporated.

He wiped the water droplets that dripped down his handsome face and said somewhat impatiently, "We need a room."

"Ah, good, good. Here are the keys to the two best rooms, a total of…"

"What?" Hearing that, Mo Ran had become even more anxious, his throat moved. His slender fingers curled up as he knocked on the table, "No, we only want one."

The waiter was stunned. He looked at Mo Ran and then looked at Chu Wanning.

Chu Wanning abruptly turned his face away, his face was burning fiercely. Without batting an eyelid, he removed his hand from Mo Ran's palm and said, "Two."

The second brother hesitated for a moment and said with understanding, "If you don't have enough money, one is fine too."

"Two." Chu Wanning was resolute and decisive, his gaze sharp as a bayonet. He had no idea where he had gotten in the way of the white-robed Immortal. He quickly handed over the two keys and accepted the silver taels for the price.

Chu Wanning tried his best to look as calm as he usually did, but unfortunately, his body was still dripping wet, and there were even beads

of rain dripping down his pitch-black eyebrows. When they fell into his eyes, he blinked and his eyelashes became moist.

“I’ll go to sleep first. Buy some ginger tea towels and come back later.”

Chu Wanning was serious and solemn. He even took the key from Mo Ran’s hand and went upstairs alone.

He looked innocent.

Mo Ran didn’t say anything else, he just felt funny. He knew that Chu Wanning was very thin-skinned, no matter what, he had to show his to others.

Chu Wanning entered a single room with a narrow bed.

He glanced at the bed and felt his throat dry up. His face was so hot that he did not dare to look at it again. He stood in the middle of the bedroom without even lighting a candle. He did not know what to do.

His mind was still in a daze. He felt that it was all so ridiculous, so sudden, and so caught off guard.

How could this be…

Why did I stand here, how did I come here in the rain to mess around, how did I…

Before he could finish his thought, the door behind him opened and Mo Ran walked in.

Chu Wanning’s body tensed up, his fingers forming a fist under his wide sleeves. He tried his best to do it, but he could not do it.

It was the first time in his life that he had been so dazed and helpless as to place the lead of the kite in the hands of someone else.

It was unknown whether it was rain or sweat, but his palms were very moist.

With a ‘ka da’ sound, the bolt on the door fell down. It was clearly audible, and made one’s hair stand on end. It was like a blade that was placed on the neck of an executioner, releasing a fishy smell. Its sharp teeth were like those of a tiger, leopard or wolf, ready to bite its prey. The smell of blood.

Chu Wanning suddenly felt the urge to flee before the battle.

Fortunately, his face did not show it.

Mo Ran opened his mouth to speak. His voice was still considered gentle and he was not overly aggressive. He restrained himself and asked somewhat hoarsely, “Why don’t you light a candle?”

“… I forgot.”

Mo Ran placed the wooden tray on the table and passed a small bowl of hot bamboo hat to Chu Wanning, “Jiang tea, you want it, drink it while it’s hot.”

He went to the window and lit the candlestick by the west window.

It was windy and slanting outside, and the room was dark, but the grapevine windows were open, and the lights of the other houses were dimly lit and dimly lit.

Mo Ran stood in front of the open window, beside the slender bronze candlestick of the crane bird. The white curtain of rain framed his tall

figure, and the silhouette of the shadow stood tall and straight, elegant and distinct, its slender eyelashes as distinct as two black butterflies as it fiddled with the flint of a flint knife.

If he were to light a fire, it would originally not be that troublesome, but he was actually willing to be the most ordinary person, to use the most ordinary method, to firmly and quietly light that wisp of light, to make his heart light up, to make the wax torches soft for tears.

The firestone was lit up, and just as he was about to move to the lampshade, Chu Wanning suddenly said.

“Don’t light the lamp.”

Mo Ran’s hand hung in the air, but he had yet to reach it. He turned his head to look at him and asked, “What is it?”

Chu Wanning did not know what to say, so he repeated stiffly, “Do not light the lamp.”

For a moment, Mo Ran felt somewhat sleepy. Then, as he looked at the person standing stiffly in the darkness, he slowly came to a realization.

Even if it was Yuheng in the middle of the night, there would still be times when he would be afraid. There would be times when he would feel fear. There would also be domains that he would not know about.

In his previous life, those people that he had slept with before, be it men or women, were all willing to show more of their faces to the Emperor Taxian-Jun. No one had ever brought up the request to extinguish the lights; they would rather have the red candle shine brightly through the

night, to use all sorts of skills to please, to be infinitely flirtatious, and to have half an inch of love for the Emperor.

Mo Ran did not miss it.

Whether it was Rong Jiu at the beginning, or Song Qiutong later, he had doted on both of them because he stubbornly felt that they were like Shi Mei, thus keeping them by his side was almost like a playful infatuation.

But in bed he never liked to see their faces.

He just let them turn their backs on him, didn't kiss them, and didn't like to touch. His mind was even clear in the dull and repetitive motions.

He would even suddenly feel that it was very boring.

Really boring.

He couldn’t remember the charming, greedy, flushed, high-spirited faces under the candlelight.

Now that he thought about it, those pleasures had nothing to do with ‘happiness’ or ‘love’. Instead, it was as if he had sunk into a quagmire and fallen into it, making himself even dirtier, deeper, and more self-destructive, wishing that his bones could be dyed black.

At its darkest point, it would no longer desire light or hope for salvation. It would no longer dare to try and hold the final ball of fire in the world.

Great.

But why hadn’t he given up yet?

No matter how he told himself not to linger, not to linger, to tell himself that life was hopeless, that the world was as dark as it could be, and that he would still stretch out his trembling claws and strangle Chu Wanning's neck in the midst of torment and struggle, and press his down onto the cold golden stone bricks, on the blue stone platform in the desolate courtyard, between the messy bedding on the pillow, in the snow, in the hot springs, even in the high seats of the imperial court, in the temple's ancestral hall, in the most solemn and respectful places.

Taint him.

Looking at his face, kissing his neck, his cheeks, his lips, calling his name.

Tear him.

Actually, at that time, Chu Wanning wanted the darkness to go out as well.

He didn't want any light at all.

However, at that time, Chu Wanning did not want to say anything. He did not want to bring up any requests.

Thinking about it, he had been under house arrest for eight whole years. Chu Wanning had only begged him for two things at the beginning and the end.

The first was to beg him to let Xue Meng go when he stepped into the Wushan Palace.

The second was to ask him to forgive himself before he passed away.

If not for his disappointment and coldness, how could he have ended up like this?

Mo Ran put down the fire knife and the fire stone. He did not speak for a long time.

It was so long that Chu Wanning finally relaxed his tensed body and asked softly, “What’s wrong?”

Mo Ran said. “Nothing.”

His voice was gentle, moist, and salty.

He walked over and hugged the man who was still standing in the darkness. Both of them were still wet from the rain, so Mo Ran hugged him and said, “Wanning.”

“…”

For a moment he was tempted to tell him the past, but his throat was choked and he could not speak.

Really, really couldn’t speak.

It was not easy to get this kind of warmth. It was too difficult for him and it was also too difficult for Chu Wanning. Even though he was extremely guilty, he couldn’t say it out loud. He didn’t want to say it out loud.

He didn’t want to wake up.

I just want to have a good dream.

Until dawn.

There was no light, no fire, and in the darkness, Mo Ran embraced him and kissed him.

It was very quiet in the room. The rain could not disturb the silence. They could hear each other's breathing, their heartbeats, the touch of their lips, and the faint sound of wetness as they changed their angles.

Chu Wanning tried his best to keep his breathing the same as usual, but it was to no avail. Under the caress of Mo Ran's kiss, the rise and fall of his chest gradually became more rapid. He was a tall, well-proportioned man, but Mo Ran could easily trap him, cover him, and he was as tall as a mountain. The man held him in his hot arms and kissed him lightly at first, then asked for more.

He forced open Chu Wanning's lips, and his hot, wet, coarse tongue stuck out into the fire, rubbing against it like a thirsty person drinking sweet dew. He was like a person who was burning with fire and trying to put out the fire, but to him, Chu Wanning's breath was not cool water, it was soft oil, pouring into the fire, burning endlessly, like a beacon of smoke.

They didn't know who took off the other party's clothes first, their breathing in the dark was mixed with throat gathering, low swallowing voice, perhaps because of hasty waist closure clothes, action intense pain, or perhaps long drought and sweet throb, occasionally there are irresistible small whispers in the room, but more is the male's desire to come to the excitement of heavy breathing.

The fabric of the obscene clothes were torn apart, Chu Wanning had not yet adapted to the slight coolness, so he felt Mo Ran going down, kissing his neck, then his clavicle, and then his lips sucked his chest, humid and hot…

Chu Wanning gave a low gasp, back arching, shame and excitement.

He blushed, but fortunately the surroundings were dark. He wanted to lose sight of the heat on his face, but he whispered, “Window…”

“What?”

Mo Ran looked up vaguely, with wet eyes hanging over Chu Wanning.

He had wanted to hear what Chu Wanning tried to say, but at one glance, his scalp was numb and blood gushed in his brain. He could not contain his fierce passion. He kissed him, rubbed him, and kissed him for a long time. Then he gasped for breath, released Chu Wanning’s lips slightly. He gave up again and pecked his lips again and muttered, “What?”

“… Window…” Chu’s heart beat so fast that he didn’t know how to breathe in the long kiss, so his head was dizzy. “You haven’t closed the window yet.”

Mo Ran walked over the window and closed it.

The last bit of shimmering light was also separated from the outside. In the bedroom, there was darkness. The desire for fire is arbitrary cage, Mo Ran only felt that his whole body was hot.

They bumped and rolled into the bed, which was in disrepair and made a heavy creak. Mo Ran did not give Chu Wanning the opportunity to respond, his body pressing Chu Wanning’s, his hands made quick work of removing the rest of his white robes.

He felt Chu Wanning trembling under him, just as he had done when they had sex for the first time in their previous lives. Even if he wasn’t restrained like back then, Chu Wanning was still trembling, shuddering slightly, and he couldn’t control it.

Mo Ran felt pity and heartache. He held Chu Wanning's face, kissed him, his eyes, his lips, his chin.

He muttered hoarsely in his ear, "Don't be afraid…"

"I'm not… I'm not afraid…"

Mo Ran took hold of his weak trembling hands, clasped with his ten fingers, and his burning and vigorous breath sprayed on Chu Wanning's earlobes. He soothed him: "Give it to me… Good… It's all right…"

Chu Wanning wanted to say a word, a few words or two or three words, but he could not say anything. His brain was almost numb.

He could only feel Mo Ran's tall and thick body pressing on him, the hands rubbing his waist and back, he could not stand the stimulation, slightly bowed up, but he unintentionally clung to Mo Ran's chest. Mo Ran's clothes had been removed long ago, showing a strong naked upper body, amazing heat and strength, causing his whole body to melt and soften.

The slightly wet and sweaty bodies are entangled together, every inch of skin rubbing each other, burning heat. The loud gasps in the room were more and more heavy with desire and thirst.

No matter how close you are or how hard you suck, you're still thirsty, and you can't stop your thirst if you don't have enough to feed.

Somehow, in Chu Wanning's brain, there were some dim and shattered scenes, stirring bodies, feeble legs, bright red curtains and mattresses.

It was his dream that suddenly became clear in his mind.

In the dream, Mo Ran held him fiercely, pulled him in, held his waist, hit his crotch fiercely, inserting himself extremely deep and savagely. He don't know whether it's because of the dream or the surroundings. Mo Ran in the dream, though handsome, appeared to have fierce, beastly eyes.

Chu Wanning did not doubt that he didn't know anything about it, but he thought that it was human nature. When desire came, he should have dreamed of such a real scene.

But Mo Ran didn't know, he just felt that Chu Wanning didn't know anything, he didn't have experience with either men or women, and he didn't know how was the love between men. He was afraid to frighten him and hurt him for the first time. So he caressed Chu Wanning and did enough foreplay. He didn't want to let Chu Wanning suffer so much in this life.

Touching, dawdling and tangling with each other, the desire was getting heavier and heavier. Where Chu Wanning had experienced such stimulation, he couldn't bear it gradually. He still clung to Mo Ran's hand in one hand and holds the mattress in the other. He wanted to go down to touch and relieve himself, but his face was red and he didn't want to do such embarrassing things in front of his loved one.

But his lower body was so swollen and hot that it was held up by sweater pants as a spectacular hard object.

Chu Wanning only felt that his face had been swept away and that he was in great pain.

He wanted, wanted, wanted to vent, wanted to make himself feel good, but he was unwilling, stubborn, cruel, his phoenix eyes became gradually

foggy, gradually confused…

He didn’t know. Gradually, he didn’t know anything.

In his heart, he seemed to know what to do, how to make a man feel good. He had desire and love in his chest. He loved the man on top of his body very much. He wanted to go to the sea with him and sink into the abyss with him.

In front of him, there are scenes flashing, shaking and strange.

Strange… How can it be at Sisheng Peak? In Loyalty Hall…

He had a fleeting thought in his mind and was instantly drowned out.

He saw Mo Ran sitting on the grand seat of Loyalty Hall, which was supposed to be the solemn place for welcoming guests. Mo Ran sat there, but he himself was on Mo Ran himself and was held face to face by him. He was naked and ashamed. Mo Ran was almost completely well dressed, except for some of his obscene trousers, which had been covered by his drooping legs.

Mo Ran kissed him and touched him up. His eyes were fixed on his face without blinking.

He asked him, “How does it feel?”

He seemed to see himself shaking his head in pain.

Mo Ran’s finger reached into his mouth and pried it open as if to pry his moan.

“Just scream, scream out.”

He refused. There was only a small whimper in his throat.

Mo Ran no longer pushed, he buried in his body, holding his waist, leading him, slowly sliding down, holding his buttocks, crushing his hair out of the way, hoarsely and fiercely he said: “Shout ah.”

“No…”

He grabbed his waist and buttocks and allowed him to fall slowly and deeply on his crotch. Watching Chu Wanning with wet eyes, seeing him endure, tremble, but still silent, he began to grasp the narrow waist and grope him slightly from bottom to top, because the range is small, so the insertion is fast and compact. Chu Wanning only felt that he was going to be driven mad by the terrible friction. His whole person seemed to be penetrated again and again: “No… Don’t…”

“Where else do you want it?” The man on the seat sneered. He didn’t move any more, but his hot and erect penis was already deep inside, beating along with his heartbeat. “What’s more, aren’t you feeling good? You see, you’re hard.”

These words and influences are blurred, fragmented and muddy, like the illusion of oneself caused by excessive stimulation.

Chu Wanning laid blankly on the bed of the inn, trembling, his lower body hard, painfully so.

What’s wrong? How to do…

The picture became more and more blurred, but it was dim to see that Mo Ran was sitting on the pedestal suddenly plunged in fiercely from top to bottom, pulling out and thrusting in.

Too much stimulation…

At last he could not help but collapse, leaning over the man and groaning, “Ah… Ah…”

The man was panting, intruding and manipulating him.

“You can’t be heard if you don’t shout.”

“Look at you being pitiful. You are not afraid of being heard.”

“Damn… Do you want me to fuck you?”

It was getting more and more blurry…

Until he couldn’t see it.

It was an illusion. It was an illusion. If it was fake, then it was fake.

It was the superposition of the dream, a nightmare that would not disperse.

However, the feeling of being forcefully occupied by something that defied the heavens was extremely clear.

It should be… Is that what he should be doing?

Chu Wanning’s eyes were half closed as he said in a low voice, “Come in…”

Mo Ran was shocked!

Chu Wanning knew what to do?

How could he know?

How could this person, who hadn't even seen any erotic pictures before, a clean piece of white paper know about it?

"Yes… Is it supposed to be… this way?"

His face was so red that it seemed as if blood would drip out at any moment. He mumbled like this to the man on top of him.

"Where are you from?! Where did you learn that?"

"…"

Of course, it would be embarrassing for Chu Wanning to say that he had dreamed it. It was like he was in a bad mood and didn't know his shame at all. He mumbled, "I saw it in the Compendium Pavilion…"

He quickly added, "Someone put the wrong book."

Naturally, Mo Ran didn't suspect him. He felt slightly relieved, but he was also slightly moved.

He kissed the corner of Chu Wanning's lips and the tip of his nose, then said, "Too early."

"…!"

Urgent.

Who was it that was called impatient?!

His blood and Qi immediately surged. He was both angry and humiliated. But Mo Ran leaned over and hugged him, his chest touching his.

He stroked Chu Wanning's hair and said gently, "It will hurt."

“… Then no.” Chu Wanning wanted to save face.

Mo Ran chuckled softly. His deep and slightly hoarse voice was very rich and pleasant to listen to.

He said, “Don’t worry about me, tonight…” His voice gradually grew softer.

Chu Wanning blinked his eyes.

What about tonight?

But he saw Mo Ran’s strong arms propping up, staring at him from above, then slowly sitting up and moving down.

This was something he had never dreamed of. What was he going to do?

“Tonight, I just want to make you feel good.”

He said, leaning down, and when Chu Wanning did not respond, he untied his underwear and saw Chu Wanning’s erection. His eyes were deep and hot, and then he opened his mouth…

“Ah-!”

He felt a spinal tremor and Chu Wanning gasped heavily. What is this feeling?

Why… How can it be like this? How dirty this is…

But it was so refreshing to be wrapped in the warm mouth of his beloved one and sucked. His teeth were carefully folded. He was sucked by Mo Ran. He heard him breathe and gasp, raised their eyes, looked at him gently and even indulgently.

Taxian-Jun never did such a thing, ever, never thought that he would do such a thing.

But now he is willing, obsessed and even happy to do so.

“You don’t want to… How can you… Quick, quick spit out.” Chu Wanning’s face turned red to the extreme. He bit his lips and shook his head. His eyes were like bayonets in the past. At this moment, there was only spring feeling and panic.

So cute.

Mo Ran deeply sucked, deepthroating him, stimulated Chu Wanning, who was unable to support himself, lying on the bed, hardly breathing, eyes scattered, gradually losing focus.

He sucked, went back and forth several times, withdrew, his lips hung with a silk of lust, his eyes moist, and asked, “Baby, does it feel good?”

Chu Wanning felt that there were fireworks flowing in his brain, and the whole people were drowsy, but he still whimpered Mo Ran’s name. He felt ashamed and sweet, sweet and extremely ashamed, and his bones were sour and soft. How can he…

He is his Shizun. He is so old. He is the Yuheng immortal. He is… “Ah…”

The mute voice resounded in the quiet dark bedroom.

Mo Ran licked his plump and round stem, the tip of his tongue was clever and rough, rubbed through the place where Chu Wanning seldom touched himself. Chu Wanning’s was so stimulated he began to shed tears, with the same precaution, rejection and resistance of his previous life. Although he restrained himself, he was still willing to do it with Mo Ran, and he could

not resist it. Therefore, his throat knotted and rolled, and there was a rusty breath leaking out.

He unconsciously closed his vapor-covered eyes, sucked him in again, and imitated the rhythm of the pull back and forth to please him. Chu Wanning could only put out his hand impatiently, with five slender fingers submerged in the black top of Mo Ran's hair, unable to push back.

"Don't… Don't do that… It's dirty… Ah…"

But Mo Ran only raised his wet eyelashes, looked at him with his lustful black eyes and said, "I love you, I would like to treat you like this, want you to feel good… How could it be dirty?" He gently kissed the head, which has visible veins, and gently said, "Everywhere I touch, it's the best."

He said before he buried his head and continued to lick, sucking. Chu Wanning was so pure and extremely lacking in experience and thus he couldn't withstand the stimulation under such an attack for the first time. He soon released, when the passion seemed to be uncontrollably pumped through, against Mo Ran's throat.

Mo Ran… Shouldn't it be very disgusting?

There is a vast space between heaven and earth, everything is scattered, only when ejaculation is good, he never thought, never had a strong pleasure.

Even in this overwhelming pleasure, he still vaguely realized what he had done in the end. He wanted to get up and wipe Mo Ran's lips, wanted to caress him, kiss him and thank him.

But his waist felt soft and the legs and feet were weak.

He could not get up.

When eyelashes trembled and looked past, Mo Ran swallowed up the turbid liquid he had sprayed. This left Chu Wanning's mind blank. A muscle behind his head and neck was tingling and twitching.

Finally, Mo Ran covered his body and caressed his face. The man's eyes were somewhat red, with a bit of the aura of a wild beast, but they were still blazing as he gently stared at him.

"I love you."

Really, really, really love you.

It was the ambition of a wolf. It was also the ambition of a prodigal son who would turn around and bear the guilt and sin. However, even so, he was unwilling to give up. It was something that was selfish, despairing, passionate, and desired.

Love you.

Ch. 189 Shizun, You're So Nice

>>sexual content

The room was very quiet. The sounds of heartbeats and gasps were very distinct. The slightly fishy smell that permeated the air was actually very sweet.

Lying on the bed, Mo Ran changed his posture and hugged him from behind. He gently pecked at his eyelids, his neck.

Their bodies were covered in sweat, and the temperature of their bodies was shockingly hot. They were stuck close together, wet and entangled. Chu Wanning's mind was still dizzy. He didn't even dare to think about what they had done just now. Everything was so ridiculous.

However, the heart was warm and fiery.

Warm water was churning under his chest, trying to break out of the earth.

Suddenly, he heard the person in his embrace whisper, "What about you?"

Mo Ran was stunned. "What?"

Chu Wanning coughed lightly, "You…"

He did not continue speaking. He turned around in the dark, and his bright eyes slowly looked into the eyes of Mo Ran. Even though he was in a daze, Mo Ran still felt like he saw Chu Wanning blushing.

"You still…" Chu Wanning hesitated for a while, but he could not say anything. Finally, he lowered his gaze and said, "Let me help you."

Mo Ran suddenly understood and felt sad and sweet. He embraced him and said, “Why are you so stupid? It doesn’t matter, we’ll talk about it later.”

“… I’m not stupid.” He was unwilling to be called stupid, “Aren’t you the silly one? You… Isn’t it uncomfortable?”

“Cough, I’ll wait for you to fall asleep, then go take a shower…”

However, Chu Wanning insisted, “I will help you.”

“There’s no need!” Mo Ran hurriedly stopped him.

“…” Chu Wanning didn’t say anything else, he felt embarrassed by his clumsiness in bed. He probably wouldn’t let Mo Ran feel comfortable, so he said something about taking a shower, but it was just to save his face. The meaning of his words was probably that his technique was better than his own.

As he pondered, his face gradually turned cold. Finally, he said, “If you don’t want it, then forget it.”

Mo Ran was slightly startled. Because of his emotions, Chu Wanning’s voice was not as impeccable as usual. It was not as happy, angry, and sorrowful as usual. The feeling of indignation was so strong that it could be clearly seen.

Why was this person so stupid?

How could he not want to? to wish that this night would never end, that this rainstorm would never stop, wishing to be drunk and dreaming with Chu Wanning in this inn. He wished to turn the person in his arms inside

and out into the so that he have him to his heart's content, merge with his body, and integrate with his spirit.

He even wanted to see Chu Wanning choking on his tears because of his bullying. He wanted to see his aura and his mark in Chu Wanning's body.

But it will be hard.

In his previous life, he had done it with Chu Wanning. He knew how long he had had a fever after that incident, and he would never forget that pale face with chapped lips.

He just wanted to take his time. It didn't matter if he endured the hardships. He wanted Chu Wanning to be comfortable for the first time. From then on, he would enjoy the thrill, taste and indulge in the depravity of his life.

However, Chu Wanning clearly misunderstood something.

Mo Ran kissed his forehead and said softly, "Why don't I want it anymore? What are you thinking about?"

"…"

"Why don't you take a look at what I'm like now?" The man's heavy breath was by his ears and his voice was moist, "What have you done to me? You actually think that I don't want you… Idiot."

Chu Wanning flew into a rage, "If you call me idiot one more time, I will cut off your head! You — uh…"

However, Mo Ran caught his hand and carried his somewhere. Chu Wanning was shocked to the point where he couldn't say any more

threatening words. He felt as if steam was rising from his head.

“It’s all because of you.”

In the night, he kissed his eyelids again, then lowered his lips, sucking, licking, and rubbing his lips in fascination and intoxication.

After kissing for a while, the two of them couldn’t restrain themselves. The lust in the room became more and more intense. Their lips were attracted to each other, the legs and feet could not be entangled underneath, and they couldn’t help but rub against each other, and their desire was naked. In the midst of their passion, Mo Ran heard Chu Wanning mumbling something, and he was a bit unwilling, but also a bit embarrassed, and he still said in a stubborn voice, “I want to as well… I’ll make you feel good…”

The last words were almost trembling. Shame washed over him.

Mo Ran’s heart was about to melt, and the desire was even more swollen to the point of cruelty. Chu Wanning’s hand was still holding his cock, so that the fierce sword stretches all the way from the palm to the back. He can clearly feel the ferocious state of the blade depicted on the Xiuzhen Ranking List when it is vigorous and hot, it is rough, it is hard, it is boiling, barely separated by clothes. The top is very fierce, and he feels that he could never contain it.

Sex with this man is life-threatening.

At this time, Chu Wanning eventually realized that the “pain” mentioned by Mo Ran was not a plain and unreasonable worry. Where would it hurt, it was clear that it would be torn apart, cut apart, flesh and blood, and strangle.

But thinking of how Mo Ran treated him, Chu Wanning did not know where the courage came from, or perhaps he was originally a ruthless person who was willing to bow down and try.

Mo Ran panicked, it was not easy to maintain reason. If Chu Wanning really wanted to take him in, he feared that all his remaining warmth would be burnt to ashes.

A man who is totally controlled by lust is a beast. He has no reason and no sense. He only wants to pleasure and to possess madly, he knows.

He pressed Chu Wanning back and hoarsely said, “Don’t do that, Wanning, you… You…”

“Never mind, I’ll just learn from what you did.”

“No.” Mo Ran’s voice was like boiling water. His throat was swollen and astringent. “I can’t hold back.”

Chu Wanning did not understand what he meant. He was shocked. “What is it?”

Mo Ran cursed, and could not bear it any more. Chu Wanning’s peaceful breath, voice, body, taking him inch by inch, losing the shackles on his own, burning him.

He lowered his breath for a moment, suddenly got up, put Chu Wanning on the bed instead, and before Chu Wanning could respond, he felt himself pressed into the mattress in an irrevocable fierce way, and Mo Ran down his strong body, wrapped him in the back.

Almost at that moment, he felt the horrible size of the giant crashing into his buttocks across Mo Ran’s thin clothing.

Suddenly, Chu Wanning shouted out in a low voice “ah”. The voice was prosaic and soft, which he had never thought of. Chu Wanning’s face turned red instantly, his fingers clutched the bedding tightly, his lips clenched tightly, and he did not want to pant or shout any more.

What can’t he hold back?

He had a vague understanding of the sentence now. He heard Mo Ran rubbing against his clothes behind him, and then he said a hoarse and abundant sentence: “I can’t help wanting to get in, wanting to do you, why don’t you understand…”

The hot breath sprayed on the back of his ear. The man’s strong arms were propped up on the bed, one was pinching his waist tightly, his lower body moved forward incessantly, and his throat gave out a heavy, low gasp. So after scratching his boots for a while, Mo Ran suddenly patted his buttocks and said, “Keep your legs together.”

Chu Wanning did what he said at a loss, but did not see his movements. He was about to turn around. Suddenly, between his hips and legs, he squeezed in a very hot, very hard, thick and big weapon, which stimulated him to gasp in his throat, his eyes were open, and his scalp was numb.

Mo Ran took away his underwear, and then the huge unshielded head was angry and cardiac. The head was deep bloodshot and dark. The round head of the penis secreted a shy and glittering liquid, which was inserted between Chu Wanning’s legs. The heat was wrapped in the inside of his warm and tender thighs. He uttered a sigh of pleasure, held Chu Wanning’s waist, imitated the action of genuine sexual intercourse, and pulled it in and out.

“Ah…”

How did Chu Wanning not think that it could be like this? The thick head rubbed against him, rubbed out the liquid, stirred up fiercely and vividly, rubbed between his hips and legs, his waist was soft, his spine was crisp, his eyes were covered with a layer of water mist, and he felt very confused and could not feel anything except the strong stimulation of rubbing done by his beloved. He gasped low, silently, and his cheeks were slightly pink. Side, resting in the pillow and mattress, hair scattered…

Mo Ran’s penis was rubbed into the hole several times. He kept pounded into it, thrusting completely into his Shizun, into the man beneath him. Chu Wanning was pounded repeatedly. He was urged by the terrible feeling and stimulation of the thrust, and his vented desire would rise in this increasingly urgent agitation.

The man’s crotch hit his hip, fierce and hot, crazy and hungry.

There was slapping noises in the room, the smokey hair of his abdomen and crotch rubbed against his skin and it became more and more frantic.

“Shizun, clamp up… Ah…”

The man’s appeal is so low and full of passion that he can’t help but follow his words.

“T… That’s it… More tightly… Fuck…”

The desire was getting higher, and the mind was gradually growing dim. The beast and animal desire gradually engulfed the man who had been leading the sexual intercourse. Mo Ran snuggled against his neck slightly, swallowing, Adam’s apple rolling in a sexy way.

“Shizun… Baby… It’s so hot inside you… Ah… Um…”

It refers to between the thighs, but it sounds so erotic, those deep and devoted thrusts, the dirty and rude language. But it didn’t feel dirty. Chu Wanning rather felt that he was probably mad. Listening to his breathing, he would feel more and more hot and uncontrolled. He asked softly, “Are you feeling good?”

“Good…” Mo Ran slightly opened his closed eyes, which were moist, bright and confused.

He bent over, wrapped him in his broad shoulders, held him in his arms and laid him on the bed. His upper body was close to the other’s, so as to withstand the lingering and violent impact of his lower body, which made him more and more damp and crazy.

He went to look for Chu Wanning’s lips. He took Chu Wanning’s chin with one hand and kissed him hungrily and thirstily. Their tongues tangled with each other, which was sticky and moist.

His dick was stirred between the thighs, pushing forward, crotching, shaking the bed, trying to go deeper, his toes on the mattress white because of the hard twisting, Chu Wanning was in such a state, even gave place to a real illusion of being penetrated.

He kissed Mo Ran fiercely with his head up. In the dark, shameless and abandoned, full of instinctual desire and love. The gesture was erotic and attractive, irrational.

Because of the intense kiss, his heart beating fast, the hard breathing, Chu Wanning was dizzy, as if he was about to see a broken scene again.——

He didn’t know where, but it was also in a bed. That bed was wide, covered with bright red bed sheets.

Intertwined legs and feet, wheezing appeals, hot sweat, and desires.

The same gesture, thrusting into him from behind, holding his face and kissing him. But he had been stretched out inside, an inflated and fierce penis thrusting in and out of his body fiercely, he did not know how long it had been inserted, as if with lube, not so painful. It was very hot and wet, and a rip in it was stimulated, and it stood there shaking vigorously.

“Ah… Ah…”

He heard someone screaming, gasping, groaning, with a soft, muddled voice.

Who was it?

Himself?

Mo Ran had been playing with him, endlessly, increasingly fierce, his body full of desire to death, as if to be penetrated, but somehow feeling refreshed, addicted, as if it had been taught to him, Mo Ran’s thrusting made his legs weak, but vaguely, boiling and moving backwards, rubbing, to be penetrated deeper.

It’s so sad that there seems to be an insatiable need in the body, which can only be solved by sex.

It’s like the strongest love drug in the world, destroying the most resolute person.

He’s falling, catering, humming.

Who is…

What a strange sight… What a strange dream… Phantom… Reality… What is it?

“Chu Wanning, I’m fucking you. Are you feeling good?”

“Look at how humble you are.”

“Relax, why do you suck me in so tightly…”

“I’ll come inside you, I’ll come inside you… Ah…”

It’s messy, inaudible, inaccurate, but it seems like this.

What’s the matter?

Mo Ran’s voice. Similar, but not quite the same.

Mo Ran has never spoken in such a distorted voice, never…

I can’t hear you clearly… It should be false…

It’s a mess.

A confusing mess.

The back of the bed was hit more and more brutally and wildly by Mo Ran. His toes were against the mattress, and the pillow on the bed was completely moved. They gasped, stirred, and puffed fiercely and lingered for a long time, finally holding him tightly. They were like sexual beasts, eager for intense kisses on top, and eager for a wet, clingy and urgent sex below.

“Wanning… Shizun…”

He was panting, calling, and lusting for him.

“Baobei…”

Mo Ran held Chu Wanning’s waist tightly, groping and rubbing, full buttocks fiercely stirring and his throat dry. He had reached the critical point, and his eyes were almost fierce. After the most crazy pull-in, which almost crushed Chu Wanning, he grabbed a man in his arms and kissed and gnawed at his earlobe and neck.

His rushing chest was attached to his hot and humid back, and Mo Ran’s reason was almost destroyed. His other hand, holding the hard and angry sex organ, which could not bear the stimulation, reaching Chu Wanning’s climax.

Seeing how fierce and wild he was, Chu Wanning really panicked. His spine was numb. He struggled: “You can’t say you want to come in, you wait a minute.”

Mo Ran gasped and kissed his neck, swallowed his own saliva, and then turned to his cheek, which had been affectionate to Wanning.

“Don’t be afraid, I won’t go in, but… I want to come here.”

Mo Ran could hardly restrain himself. The round head of his cock was at the slightly contracted opening. He cursed and stopped talking. He only rubbed fiercely and eagerly between Chu Wanning’s stocks to accumulate the pleasure of climax. At last, he moved himself, pressed the tip tightly against Chu Wanning’s entrance, growled as he shoot a stream of semen into the opening of the hole. Flowing to the inside of the thigh, rubbed onto the mattress, chaotic, fishy.

Chu Wanning's whole body was trembling and convulsing.

Mo Ran involuntarily put his hand in front of him, grasped Chu Wanning's dick, and touched him warmly and enthusiastically.

Chu Wanning was almost overwhelmed by shame. His cheeks burned and his voice whispered, "No… Stop touching… I've just…"

In the burning eyes of Mo Ran, he muttered obsessively, "Well, I know you've come."

Chu Wanning felt severely humiliated and humid, but he said, with wet eyes, fiercely: "You… Don't say that word."

"Which one?"

"…"

"Oh," Mo Ran's black eyebrow raised sensibly, and then he smiled heavily, "Alright."

He kissed him, but his movements were not rude: "But Shizun, I want to see your climax again."

"Hmm…"

This young man's work was really too good. Chu Wanning is completely helpless, and soon was stimulated to come for the second time. Where can he stand such pressure, such indulgence? Besides, his brain seemed to be dizzy, there were always some blurred shadows in front of his eyes, dim voices in his ears, he felt very sleepy, very tired…

"Wanning."

He heard Mo Ran calling to him from behind him, so soft, so entangled, so loving.

After the two of them had vented their desires, they calmed their breathing and panted. Mo Ran caressed him, kissed him, and thanked him. He encircled him in his arms, protecting him like a treasure.

Chu Wanning was unconscious, sweat trickling down his back. He leaned against Mo Ran on his chest, feeling dizzy for a while. Finally, he closed his eyes and fell asleep.

The next morning, Chu Wanning woke up. The daylight was shining through a crack in the window, and he heard the sound of rain hitting on Dewar. The rain was heavy, and it did not stop.

His head ached, and the fragments of the night before were like fish scales rolling in the sink, mottled and sticky, floating.

He wanted to recall the memories, but the scales only sunk deeper and deeper until they eventually disappeared into the darkness.

Then, he recalled what he did with Mo Ran last night. His entire body suddenly stiffened, and his face quickly flushed red. He tried to get up, but Mo Ran's strong arms still clung to him from behind, his chest still rising and falling evenly against his back.

Mo Ran had not woken up yet.

He waited like this for who knows how long. The hour was not very clear in this dark bedroom, but it should have been very long.

It was so long that his arms were numb.

The pounding of his heart slowed down.

It was so long that it was no longer awkward.

Chu Wanning finally turned around and faced Mo Ran's sleeping face.

He was extremely handsome. Regardless of whether it was his facial features, the bridge of his nose, or his lips, they were all the best in the world.

He was frowning slightly, as if there was something on his mind that couldn't be removed. It felt heavy.

Chu Wanning stared silently at his face for a long time.

After a long time, he finally could not hold it in anymore, and gently, for the first time, took the initiative to kiss Mo Ran's face.

Then he gently removed his arms arms, sat down on the edge of the bed, put on his underpants, and went to get his white undershirt. There were countless creases on his clothes. Chu Wanning tried to smooth them out, but it was to no avail.

He could only put them on like this, hoping that no one at Sisheng Peak would notice anything unusual. As he thought this, he began to fold up his clothes.

Suddenly, someone hugged him from behind.

Chu Wanning was shocked, although it was just a slight pause in his movements.

At some point, Mo Ran had already woken up. He stood up, hugged him, and kissed his ears.

“Shizun…”

For the first time in his life, since he met Chu Wanning he didn’t know what to say and he couldn’t look him directly in the eyes. Mo Ran’s feelings also gave birth to some newlywed-like embarrassment and after a long time he said softly…

“Morning…”

“Early what? Too late.” Chu Wanning didn’t even turn around as he continued to dress himself.

Mo Ran smiled, and with a light nasal tone, he reached out his hand to help arrange the pendant hanging around Chu Wanning’s neck.

“You have to keep it close to your body to ward off the cold. Otherwise, it won’t be effective.”

Chu Wanning seemed to have thought of something and turned to look at him.

Last night, when they were making love, he had felt something tied around his neck, but at that time, he had been dazzled and had not taken a second look. At this time, he realized that it was actually a Dragon Blood Crystal Pendant.

“You…” Chu Wanning was stunned, “When you were in the Rufeng Sect, didn’t you say that there was only one pendant? Why…”

He shut up.

Because he saw Mo Ran smiling at him, his eyes were soft.

He suddenly understood Mo Ran's selfishness. Suddenly, he felt a little hot and dry. He turned his face away and remained silent. He was completely immersed in arranging his clothes.

"Let's head back earlier." In the end, not even daring to look at Mo Ran, he could only say, "If I'm late, someone might see something."

Mo Ran tamed him, "I'll listen to Shizun."

However, after a short period of silence, his ambition remained unshakable and his blood was boiling. Pulling over Chu Wanning, who was getting ready to stand up after putting on his boots, he leaned over and kissed him on his lips.

"Don't be angry, you'll have to endure it once you get back. I want to keep my thoughts to myself." Mo Ran smiled and tapped Chu Wanning's lips with his fingertips. "Shizun, you're so nice."

It was good to hear that. Chu Wanning was still in a trance when they reached the gate.

He felt that what was good was not himself, but Mo Ran.

This young man was handsome, gentle, and focused on loving him. Sometimes, it would even seem unreal to Chu Wanning that this man was too perfect. How could he belong to such a dull person like him?

He belonged to the kind of person who wouldn't even say a proper word of love.

But when Mo Ran stared at him, his expression was very serious, not the least bit fake. When Mo Ran kissed him, his emotions were stirred up, his breathing seemed to be controlled by Chu Wanning, everything was handed over to him.

Even though his actions last night were clumsy, his speech was boring, and he was sometimes absent-minded…

But Mo Ran did not feel disheartened. When he woke up in the morning, he was willing to kiss his lips and say, It's good of you.

"…"

"Shizun."

"Hmm?"

Suddenly, he recovered his wits and saw that under the red flower blossom enchantment, Mo Ran was waving at him with a smile: "Where are you going? This way ah, over there is the Red Lotus Pavilion. Let's go to Mengpo Hall to eat first, then you can go back."

Inside Mengpo Hall, Mo Ran was still sitting in front of him. However, people were coming and going around him, making a lot of noise. They were not as calm as before, and their heads were lowered as they ate the food in the bowl.

The group of disciples who liked to bet with Chu Wanning could not help but start whispering to each other.

"Why isn't Elder Yuheng talking to Senior Brother Mo today?"

"Not only did he not speak, he didn't even look at him."

“How strange, Senior Brother Mo isn’t giving food to Elder Yuheng anymore, isn’t he usually rather obsequious… What happened to them? Did they quarrel?”

“… Will you still be sitting at the same table as your Shizun after the fight?”

“Haha, that’s true.”

As they were whispering to each other, they suddenly saw Chu Wanning stand up, carry a bowl of porridge, and pass by them with his white clothes fluttering in the wind. The group of busybodies stopped talking and obediently nibbled on their steamed buns.

After Chu Wanning returned to his seat, they started to discuss among themselves.

“Do any of you think that Elder Yuheng is acting a little strange today?”

Immediately, someone nodded: “Yes! That means it’s not weird, but it looks like clothes?”

Five or six pairs of eyes peeked around for a while. Suddenly, a young disciple clicked his tongue and said, “It seems to be a little too wrinkled. It’s not as meticulous as usual.”

When he said this, everyone realized that it was true. However, no one thought about it. After muttering to themselves for a long time, everyone felt that Elder Yuheng should have gone to the back of the mountain last night to fill in some small gaps in the forbidden area.

Looking up at him, these disciples would at most find him interesting, but no one had ever treated him as someone with flesh and blood, or as if he was someone with desires. So, even if what Mo Ran and Chu Wanning did

was not without a trace, even if there were a lot of clues, they did not pay attention to it.

When a person was carried onto the altar by the crowd, he had no choice but to remain silent, to remain motionless, to break off emotion and desire, and to remain cold. Otherwise, it would be a mistake to miss a single step.

Later, when the relationship between Mo Ran and Chu Wanning was announced to the world, many people felt that their gods had collapsed. They felt disgusted and angry, and they found it unacceptable.

But they had all forgotten that it was a cruel and difficult thing to force a man to bow to them from a height, to force him to walk with every step according to their expectations, to make him live from head to toe for the sake of their pleas and not allow him to have the slightest bit of selfish desire.

Ch. 190 Shizun Again in Seclusion

After that day, Chu Wanning and Mo Ran did not have the chance to meet in private.

The rain continued to pour down in a demonic manner. A large number of dead fish and shrimp appeared in the billowing river outside White Emperor City. There were also a lot of vicious aquatic beasts.

Due to the powerful spiritual energy of both Chu Wanning and Mo Ran, they were not scheduled to waste any strength at this time. One of them went to the Three Gorges Port while the other went to Yizhou.

In the hundreds of years of history of the Rufeng Sect, countless demon beasts were being held in the Golden Drum Tower.

In addition to Shu, the peaceful areas of Yangzhou, Laizhou, and Xuzhou, which originally belonged to the Upper Cultivation World, also produced many disasters by demon beasts, eating people and killing civilians. For a time, they distributed a lot of manpower and energy of the various sects to it. So the investigation of the whereabouts of Xu Shuanglin was even slower.

It only took him four days to quickly settle Yizhou down and return to Sisheng Peak. When he heard that Chu Wanning had come back, he was overjoyed and wanted to go to the Red Lotus Pavilion to find him, not caring about rest.

In the end, the water pavilion's door was shut tight. After asking again, Xue Zhengyong asked in a curious tone, "Seclusion? Didn't Yuheng tell you?"

“Going into seclusion again?” Mo Ran was shocked. “Is Shizun injured?”

“What kind of injury? Isn’t it due to the mental cultivation method? Every seven years, he has to retreat. The last time he trained in seclusion, you went to take care of him, so how did you forget?”

As Xue Zhengyong said this, Mo Ran suddenly remembered something. He had just taken Chu Wanning as his Shizun, and it had only been half a year since then, and Chu Wanning had already mentioned that he had advanced in his cultivation. Although he was fine, he had to train in seclusion once every seven years.

In ten days, Chu-zongshi’s cultivation base had declined, almost as if he were a mortal. He needed to meditate and cultivate in order for his body to recover. During this period of time, he only had one hour a day to recover his soul consciousness, drink some water, and eat a little food but not to be disturbed or injured by others. Therefore, Chu Wanning would place the strongest barrier around the Red Lotus Water Pavilion in advance. Only four people, Xue Zhengyong, Xue Meng, Shi Mei, and Mo Ran, were allowed to enter in case of a disaster.

Last time, not long ago, when he was in closed-door cultivation, he had a conflict with Chu Wanning over the matter of “picking flowers”.

Thinking back to that time, Mo Ran felt uneasy. He immediately said, “I’ll go and see him.”

“You don’t need to go. Before he entered, he said that he would do the same thing as last time. He would ask Xue Meng to guard the first three days, Shi Mei for the three days, and the last four days you accompany him.”

“I just wanted to take a look at him…”

“What’s there to see?” Xue Zhengyong laughed, “Last time you crossed this hurdle, wasn’t it also because of Meng’er? What else do you have to worry about? Moreover, you have already passed. Once Meng’er sees you, he will have to speak to you. It would not be good if you were to argue with Yuheng.”

That night, he did not fall asleep. When he thought of Xue Meng in the Red Lotus Pavilion alone with Chu Wanning, he felt a sour feeling in his heart.

Of course, he knew that Xue Meng was pure and did not have any interest in men, but he just felt uncomfortable. After tossing and turning for half a night, he finally managed to sleep for one or two hours at dawn.

After waking up, Mo Ran felt that it was no good.

He still couldn’t help himself. He wanted to see Chu Wanning, even if it meant taking a look at him from afar.

Although the door of the pavilion was closed and there were enchantments everywhere, Mo Ran was Chu Wanning’s disciple. The enchantment did not obstruct him, and as for the wooden door made of green jade bamboo, it was just a decoration. Every time Chu Wanning cultivated in seclusion, he would get used to staying in a bamboo pavilion in the depths of the lotus pond. This time, it should be the same.

Indeed, from far away, he could see the elegant bamboo pavilion’s veil fluttering in the lotus leaves on the Smoke Pond. Chu Wanning sat quietly on the ground, his white clothes covering the ground.

Xue Meng stood next to him. He seemed to think that the sun was shining outside. Thus, he tied up a snowy veil so that his Shizun would be able to bask in the warmth of the sun. The winter sunlight flowed into the pavilion, illuminating Chu Wanning's slightly pale face. He seemed to have felt the warmth during his meditation, and his face gradually turned a bit pale.

After a while, due to the circulation of the qi in his body, sweat started dripping from his forehead. Xue Meng used a snow-white towel to wipe it off for him. After wiping it off, he couldn't help but raise his head and look left and right, muttering, "How strange, why do I feel like someone is staring at me…"

Mo Ran was not staring, but staring.

His expression looked calm, but in reality, his heart was in turmoil.

He felt that Xue Meng had taken too long to wipe Chu Wanning's forehead with a handkerchief. He got closer and his eyes became ambiguous. In short, Xue Meng was being thrown all sorts of crimes at him. He just felt annoyed and frustrated.

He felt that he could not take it anymore. He was unwilling to stay here and suffer any longer, so he decided to leave.

However, he was unable to control himself and the sound of his feet became louder. Xue Meng immediately threw out a Plum Blossom Darts that were brimming with spirit energy and shouted, "Who is it?!"

The Plum Blossom Darts were a small matter. He caught them with his bare hands, but when he heard his voice, Mo Weiyu almost jumped out of the bamboo forest and into the pavilion.

Xue Meng's eyes widened as he said in astonishment, "How did you…"

"Lighter." Mo Ran immediately covered his mouth and said in a low voice, "Why are you shouting so loudly?"

"Uuuuuuuu — uuuu!" Xue Meng struggled for a long time before he suddenly pulled himself out of Mo Ran's hands. His face was flushed red as he angrily stroked his messy hair and said, "You're still talking about me? What are you looking at from under the bushes like a thief?"

"… I'm just afraid you're going to be as noisy as you are now."

"I said Shizun can't hear me!" Xue Meng said angrily, "Oh, the Curse of Soundlessness, didn't you see that Shizun had already cast the Curse of Soundlessness on himself? Unless you break his curse, he won't be able to hear what you're saying even if you shout in his ear…"

He grumbled, but Mo Ran was stunned for a moment. "Curse of Soundlessness? Then why did Uncle say he was afraid that I would come over and disturb you?"

"My dad must have felt that you just came back from Yizhou and was too tired. He wants you to rest first. You also believe his words. I don't know if you should think about it, but Shizun, when did he not first go into seclusion and cast that incantation on himself, making it easier for us to be more comfortable by his side. You didn't even use your brain. You truly are extremely stupid."

Mo Ran: "…"

Seeing that Mo Ran was about to sit down in the pavilion, Xue Meng hurriedly pulled him back. "Hey, what are you doing?"

Mo Ran said, “Since that’s the case, I’ll keep watch as well.”

Xue Meng said, “Who asked you to keep it? I was the one who guarded him for the first three days, and now you have to behave with master again. Let’s go, go. Don’t snatch my job.”

“Can you take care of him alone?”

“Why can’t I take care of him? It’s not like this is the first time I’m taking care of Shizun in closed door cultivation.”

Seeing Xue Meng’s anger, Mo Ran did not know what to say. After hesitating for a while, just as he was about to leave, he suddenly saw a tea set on the table. It had a wide leaf, dark color, and a light fragrance. Seeing this he asked: “Is this Cold Fragrant Snow tea from Kunlun?”

“Eh? How do you know?”

“…” How could he not know that this tea was Xue Meng’s favorite drink? Xue Meng was always willing to offer his most beloved things to his Shizun, but he did not think over whether these things suited Chu Wanning or not.

“Cold Fragrant Snow tea is cold, and Shizun already has a cold constitution. If you give him more tea like this, will he feel comfortable?”

Xue Meng stared blankly for a moment. His face was a little red as he explained in embarrassment, “I didn’t think too much either. I only know that the Cold Fragrant Snow is good tea, I…”

“Go exchange for some fragrant rose tea, add two spoonfuls of honey, and when he wakes up, boil some water for him to drink. I’ll make some snacks and bring them to you later.”

Thinking that he would be able to save some face, Xue Meng hurriedly said, “He can’t eat snacks. He has to fast for the next ten days.”[163]

“I know, but uncle said he can eat a little.” As Mo Ran spoke, he waved his hand and walked out of the bamboo pavilion, heading out of the pavilion. “See you later.”

Xue Meng watched his back. He was lost in thought for a while.

When Mo Ran had gone far away, he lowered his head and could not help but look at the side of his Shizun’s neck — the faint bruise that he had inadvertently caught sight of yesterday.

Under the sunlight, it was even clearer. It didn’t look like the bite marks of a mosquito, nor was it a wound. Xue Meng was no longer a 14 or 15 year old person. Although he had not experienced some things, it did not mean that he was completely ignorant. The little mark on Chu Wanning’s neck made him very restless.

He thought of all the details, especially what he had heard that day in the back mountains.

He kept telling himself that it was the wind, the wind.

However, the vague fog in his heart seemed to have shrouded him again. Under the dense fog, there seemed to be something strange that was gradually revealing its original appearance.

Under the warm sun, for some reason, Xue Meng suddenly felt very uncomfortable. He couldn’t help but shiver and frown.

Because of this restlessness, on the sixth day of Chu Wanning’s closed door cultivation, Xue Meng made a decision.

He planned to secretly follow Mo Ran to take a look.

This was the last day of service for Chu Wanning. It was supposed to be midnight, but Mo Ran had dinner at Mengpo Hall early on that day. He picked up a box of snacks and headed straight for the Red Lotus Pavilion. Xue Meng did not expect him to actually plan to change Shi Mei at this hour and stop eating the rest of the food as well. He bent his waist and chased after him, following outside the Red Lotus Pavilion and walking through the main door. He rested for a moment, then followed Mo Ran's example and jumped over the wall and entered the house.

At this time, before the sun set, the crescent moon had already appeared. The sky had been stripped of its colorful makeup, and only the tinge of red could be seen in the end. The magnificent sunset had already faded away, and the stars were like water, swallowed up by the dark night.

Mo Ran carried his food box and saw Shi Mei walking into the bamboo pavilion with his back towards him. He did not seem to have heard Mo Ran's approach and stopped right in front of Chu Wanning.

Mo Ran smiled and was about to greet him when he saw a cold ray of light flash across Shi Mei's hand. He pointed it at Chu Wanning, who was sitting in the middle of his meditation.

"Shi Mei!"

His back felt cold and his hair stood on end.

In his two lifetimes, he had experienced too many life and death situations, to the point that even the slightest movement could cause him to become a common person. As the saying goes, once bitten by a snake, this Red

Lotus Pavilion held the corpse of Chu Wanning for two whole years, until the day he died.

In truth, he didn't really like it here. Stepping into the pavilion, he could always think of the last few years of his previous life when Chu Wanning was lying in the middle of a lotus flower with his eyes closed forever, lifeless.

Therefore, he subconsciously felt that the Red Lotus Pavilion was a calamity with a bottomless throat that would devour the final fire in this world.

Shi Mei turned his head and looked down. The silver light was hidden in his sleeves: "Mo Ran?… Why are you here?"

"I —"

Mo Ran's heart was beating wildly. He could not catch a breath. Ignoring everything, he frowned and said, "In your hands…"

"My hand?"

Shi Mei paused for a moment, and then raised his hand again. In his hand was a comb made of pure silver, with spirit stone slags embedded into the back of the comb.

Mo Ran was at a loss for words. After a long while, he said, "You… are you combing Shizun's hair?"

"… Hmm, what's wrong?" Shi Mei looked him up and down, then slightly frowned, "Such an ugly expression, could something have happened outside?"

“No, I’m just…”

Halfway through his sentence, he could not continue on, but his face turned from pale to slightly red. Fortunately, the darkness of the night made it difficult for people to see him clearly. After pausing for a moment, Mo Ran tilted his face and lightly coughed. “Nothing.”

Shi Mei continued to look at him in silence. Then, he seemed to have understood something. His expression turned slightly blank as he hesitantly said: “Don’t tell me that you think…”

Mo Ran hurriedly replied, “I don’t think anything.”

After all, Shi Mei was also someone who treated him extremely well, someone he treated like family. Mo Ran was also shocked by his misunderstanding of Shi Mei and felt that he had let him down, so he blurted out the words “I didn’t”.

Shi Mei didn’t say anything. After a long while, he said: “A-Ran.”

“Hmm?”

“I haven’t even said the last part.” Shi Mei sighed, “Why are you so anxious to deny it?”

With these words, it was no doubt clear that Shi Mei understood that in that instant, Mo Ran had mistakenly recognized the silver brush in his hand as a ferocious blade.

Even though this fear came from the death of Chu Wanning in his two lifetimes, no matter who it was that stood with their back facing Mo Ran, whether it was Xue Meng or Xue Zhengyong, they would all probably

tremble for a moment. However, facing Shi Mei, Mo Ran calmed down, and his heart was still in pain.

He lowered his eyes and said, "… I'm sorry."

In his memory, Shi Mei was always gentle and kind when encountering people, rarely was there a moment when he was cold or blaming others. But that night, by the Lotus Pond, he looked at Mo Ran and didn't say anything for a long time.

The wind was blowing, the lotus leaves in the pond tumbled, and the red lotus flowers danced lightly.

Shi Mei said: "It's one thing if people are not as good as the old one, but A-Ran, we've known each other for almost ten years. In your heart, how could I be so weak?"

His voice was soft and calm, without much anger or grievance. Mo Ran looked at his eyes. The two pools of cold spring water seemed to have seen through everything, but he did not care about anything and did not want to say anything more.

Shi Mei handed the silver comb to Mo Ran and said, "Before Shizun closes his eyes to meditate, ask me to help him tie his braids. Since you've come, I'll give it to you."

"Shi Mei…"

However, the tall and extremely beautiful man had already walked past him by mistake. His footsteps were gentle, but he did not turn back as he left the bleak Red Lotus Pavilion on his own.

Ch. 191 Shizun, Xue Meng and I…

The most important person to Mo Ran in this world, other than Chu Wanning, was Shi Mei.

Once, Mo Ran thought that it was love that he felt for Shi Mei, but later on, he realized that he was not. However, his feelings for him, who treated him well and cherished him, had never changed.

Even though he would gradually feel that Shi Mei had become a stranger, and that this tall and charming man seemed like another person. Even though the original bowl of wontons was only sent by Shi Mei on behalf of Chu Wanning,

But no matter what, Shi Mingjing was the same Shi Mingjing from before.

It was his companion, smiling and reaching out to him in the darkness and the darkness.

When he was lonely and unwilling, he was the senior brother who accompanied him and was willing to comfort him.

In this world, Shi Mei was an orphan, he no longer had family members, and Xue Meng was very proud and arrogant. Although he was on good terms with Shi Mei, in all these years, Shi Mei had never called Xue Meng by his name. Instead, he respectfully called him Young Master.

The only person who Shi Mei could truly call “friend” was most likely himself.

As a result, he had also hurt his heart.

Xue Meng was hiding in the bamboo forest. He crossed his arms and observed for a long time. He saw Mo Ran standing there motionlessly, playing with his silver brush as if he had something on his mind.

After waiting for less than an hour and seeing no signs of movement, Xue Meng started to feel like an idiot.

What was he thinking? Why did he feel that Shizun had something to do with Mo Ran? Is his brain damaged… The more he stood, the more embarrassed he became, the more he felt that he was even more baffled. At the end of the fight, Xue Meng turned around and was about to leave, but he was indeed from the same sect.

He relaxed for a moment and was unable to control his footsteps.

Mo Ran stood up and asked in a low voice through the curtain, “Who is it?”

“…”

Under the moonlight, Xue Meng walked out unwillingly, neither embarrassed nor flustered. His eyes avoided the gaze as he gave a light cough.

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment. “What are you doing here?”

“Only the state officials are allowed to set fire, and people are forbidden to light lamps?”[164] Xue Meng did not dare to look at Mo Ran’s eyes. His gaze was fleeting, and although he sounded reasonable and calm, his face was red. “I also just wanted to come and see Shizun.”

With a thought from Mo Ran, he vaguely understood the possibility of Xue Meng following him. He could not help but freeze, but he quickly adjusted his expression and regained his composure before Xue Meng realized it.

“Since you’ve come, let’s sit for a while.”

Xue Meng did not refuse and followed him into the bamboo pavilion.

“Would you like some tea or wine?”

“Tea. Drinking makes you drunk.”

There was wine and tea on the table, and a small stove by Mo Ran. Flames lit up in the darkness, illuminating his distinctive features. He boiled the Eight Treasures Tea on top of the stove, and the two brothers sat on a bamboo bench, leaning against a pillar, waiting for the tea to boil.

Xue Meng asked him, “Why are you so early? Originally, it should have been worth another half a night.”

“I have nothing to do, so I’m here.” Mo Ran smiled, “Aren’t you the same?”

Xue Meng thought about it, it seemed to be true.

After all, after the battle of the Heavenly Rift World, Mo Ran had gradually changed. Now that so many years had passed, he was vastly different from that arrogant youth from back then. The disciple that Chu Wanning had saved with his life had finally grown into a righteous man.

Lowering his eyelashes, Xue Meng pondered for a moment before suddenly smiling.

Mo Ran asked, “Why?”

“No, I remember the last time he went into seclusion. At that time, you still weren’t convinced by Shizun. After ten full days, you came to see him, then said that you weren’t capable enough and that you probably wouldn’t be

able to serve him and that you ran over to Daddy's to organize the books. At that time, you were still sulking in your heart. I never thought that after seven years, you would become like this."

Mo Ran was quiet for a while, then said, "People change."

Xue Meng asked, "I want to give you another chance. I want you to return to seven years ago. Do you still want to run away?"

"What do you think?"

Xue Meng seriously pondered this question, then said, "I'm afraid I'll need to spend ten days and ten nights by Shizun's side."

Mo Ran lowered his eyes and laughed.

"Hmph, why are you laughing?" Xue Meng changed his position and put one foot on the bamboo pavilion's bench. His elbow was resting comfortably, his head and neck slightly tilted back, his gaze moving to his eyes and tail, and he looked at his own cousin. "Our feelings for Shizun are the same now.

Mo Ran lowered his eyes. "Yes."

Xue Meng narrowed his eyes, then looked towards him at the corner of the pavilion and said, "Very good. Back then, when Shizun died, I resented him for exchanging his life for yours. But today, it would seem that you are not completely heartless."

Mo Ran did not know what to say, so he replied with an "En."

The bell tinkled in the wind.

After a few moments of silence, Xue Meng couldn’t help but turn his head. With a burning gaze and a slight crease between his eyebrows, he suddenly asked, “Cough, actually, there’s something I want to ask you.”

“Go ahead.”

“Tell me the truth, that day at the back of the mountain, you guys……”

Mo Ran actually knew that Xue Meng had always wanted to ask this question.

After all these twists and turns, he still couldn't escape the question. He waited for him to continue.

However, Xue Meng stammered for a long time, his face was pale and red, red and white. In the end, he was still unable to say those words. “Are you looking for a osmanthus cake?”

The water was boiling, and the wisps of steam that had gathered in the cold night were fading away.

Their gazes met. Xue Meng’s eyes were filled with anxiety, flickering with flames. Mo Ran’s eyes were devoid of any emotions, and so deep that one could not see the bottom of it.

“We can drink tea now.”

Xue Meng suddenly grabbed his arm and stared at him. “Are you guys really looking for the osmanthus candy New Year cake?!”

“…”

Mo Ran paused for a moment, then he opened his hand and went to the table to pick up the black cast iron pot. Each person had a cup, filling it to the brim.

Only then did he raise his eyes and say, “If we weren’t looking for the osmanthus candy, what else could we be doing?”

“You…”

“Shizun wouldn’t lie to you so easily. If you don’t believe me, you have to trust him.”

Xue Meng was like a small snake that had been pinched around seven inches. His hand that was placed on his knee was slightly spasming as he suddenly lowered his head and said, “I don’t doubt him.”

“Drink your tea, then.” Mo Ran sighed, “What are you thinking about all day long? It’s all useless.” He lowered his head and blew on the steaming hot air. In the dense mist, his face appeared so handsome, yet it was also somewhat blurry. It was like a reflection of the moon in a mirror, making it difficult to see clearly.

The Eight Treasures Tea was warm. Xue Meng slowly drank a few mouthfuls as he felt the gurgling heat from it caused his frantic heart to gradually calm down. He finished the tea, but the warmth still lingered in the cup.

Xue Meng lowered his head. He suddenly stared blankly, as if he was talking to Mo Ran, and also as if he was talking to himself. “I really care about him too much, that’s why I think so much. Even a little bit of trouble…”

“I know.” He said, “Me too.”

Xue Meng turned his face to the side, looking at him.

Mo Ran leaned against the pavilion pillar. Before he finished his tea, he took another sip and then said, “Just now, because of this, I misunderstood Shi Mei. You are at least better than me, so you don’t have to be so impulsive.”

“No wonder he left after just a few words. What did you misunderstand about him?”

“… It’s fine if you don’t want to say it.” Mo Ran smiled bitterly, “I can even think more nonsense than you.”

Xue Meng wrinkled his nose, “He is a pitiful person. During the famine, people would easily become food for others. If not for father saving him, he would have become the meat of a hungry people. Shi Mei has always been good to you, don’t bully him.”

Mo Ran replied, “Yes, I know. It was just a moment of rush earlier, but it won’t happen again.”

The two of them stood guard in the pavilion, talking to each other in a nonchalant manner.

This feeling was very strange. Under the moonlight, Xue Meng’s handsome and somewhat arrogant face belonged to a person who had left a hole in his chest in his previous life. Every time he saw him afterward, it was accompanied by tears and blood.

Who would have thought that they would still be able to speak in such a calm manner? Under the moon in the lotus pond, brewing tea and cooking wine.

Yes, wine.

After the tea was finished, Xue Meng had no intention of leaving.

After Mo Ran heated up another pot of wine and drank a few cups. As long as he wasn't drunk, it would be harmless.

However, he seemed to overestimate Xue Meng's alcohol tolerance.

Amongst the four of them, the one who didn't fall out of the thousand cups was Chu Wanning. While his own tolerance for alcohol was quite good, Shi Mei's alcohol tolerance was very poor. However, the most hopeless one was Xue Meng.

Two small glasses of pear blossom white, this person is a bit dizzy, speech also big tongue.

Mo Ran was worried that he would cause trouble so he quickly kept the wine and did not give it to him to drink.

Although Xue Meng's consciousness was muddled, he still hadn't lost it completely. He still understood clearly, his face was bright red as he smiled and said, "It's good to keep it, I… I can't drink anymore."

"Yes." Mo Ran said, "Quickly go back and rest. Can you walk by yourself? You can't leave. I'll send a mental message for uncle to come over."

"Oh, no need for him to come over. No need for him to come over." Xue Meng smilingly waved his hand. "I can walk back myself, and I even recognize the way."

He stretched out a finger and placed it in front of him. "What is this?"

“One.”

He then pointed at Chu Wanning, “Who is this?”

Xue Meng laughed. “Big brother Immortal.”

“… Speak properly.”

“Haha, Shizun, I recognize you.” Holding the pillar, Xue Meng laughed.

He scolded Xue Meng on how this guy’s alcohol tolerance was getting worse every year, but he was still worried. He pointed to himself and asked, “Then what about me? Look at me, don’t joke with me. Who am I?”

Xue Meng was stunned for a moment.

Time seemed to overlap with the past. On the New Year’s Eve in Mengpo Hall, Xue Meng was also drunk. He recognized the face of Shi Mei, said that Chu Wanning was the Immortal Brother. He then looked at Mo Ran and laughed, saying that he was a dog.

Mo Ran calmly looked at him, prepared that if he were to speak another word, he would secretly press Xue Meng down and beat him up. Then, he would call Xue Zhengyong to come over and take the little drunkard back.

But Xue Meng stared at him blankly for a while. He did not know what strange expression he had on his face, but in the end, his lips opened and he slightly pouted, as if he was going to utter the word ‘dog’.

Mo Ran was going to cover his mouth.

“Brother……”

But his hand froze. Xue Meng's hazy eyes stared at him. Slowly, quietly, he called out, "Brother."

Mo Ran froze for a moment. It was as if he had been stung by a bee sting. The sting turned into pain, which was numbed by the poison. His throat was blocked, and he could not say a single word. He could only stare blankly at Xue Meng's face, his young, arrogant, high-spirited facial features.

Mo Ran's face was used to seeing hatred, anger, and contempt.

However, he had never seen his current expression.

Xue Meng rubbed the Longcheng saber hanging on his waist. This saber was made from Mo Ran, who had cut down the great demoness with great difficulty and seized the top grade spirit stones, sending them over for him to embed.

Without this saber, he might not have been able to take first place in the Spiritual Mountain Competition. Without this saber, he might have been reduced to a nameless cultivator, bearing the injury of Zhong Yong.[165]

When he was awake, for reasons like this, and out of pride and face, he had never properly expressed his thanks to Mo Ran, but he was in pain — every day he would wipe the Longcheng with mixed emotions.

Especially after he came back from Rufeng Sect, when he got to know that Mo Ran rescued him from Xu Shuanglin, Xue Meng was even more tormented. After he woke up, and heard that Mo Ran and Chu Wanning were still missing, he broke down in tears. Everyone thought that he was just crying because of his Shizun, and only Xue Meng himself knew that

that night, he hugged the saber Longcheng's as he lay on his sickbed, looking into the darkness, and said hoarsely:

"Brother, I'm sorry."

Where are you. You and Shizun… Are you all right…

Mo Ran could not speak, nor could he move his feet. It was as if his entire body was frozen, and he just stood there motionlessly.

Yesterday, all sorts of emotions flashed across his eyes.

He thought back to the Sisheng Peak in his previous life. Xue Meng climbed up the mountain by himself and stood in the desolate Wushan Palace. His eyes were red as he asked for Chu Wanning's whereabouts.

Xue Meng said, "Mo Ran, turn around and look…"

He thought of how Xue Meng and Mei Hanxue had ambushed and assassinated him after he became the Emperor, and how Mei Hanxue had blocked his path in the clear sky.

Xue Meng said, "Mo Weiyu, no one can save you. This world will not tolerate you!"

He thought of hatred after hatred, angry, hot, dancing dragons and serpents.

He thought of the day that Chu Wanning died in his life, Xue Meng suddenly leapt up and roared as he pressed him against the wall. His carotid artery suddenly burst out, and he howled like a trapped beast, "How can you say that he didn't save you… How can you say that he didn't save you!"

Suddenly, a thought flashed in his mind, and a faint light seemed to light up in front of his eyes.

Perhaps it was because Mo Ran had stood so stiffly for so long that he reminded him of the earliest, earliest, most vague memory.

He seemed to have seen two youths, one of them was extremely thin, looking anxious and terrified. Like a abandoned dog that was used to being whipped, he squatted uneasily at the small table in the disciple's room, squatted on a stool, and clenched his hands tightly in his lap.

There was also a young man with a face as white as snow and a face pretty and adorable, like a young pheasant whose wings were bright and proud. He stood there with a beautiful scimitar at his waist, stepping on the chair with one foot, looking at him with his round, pitch-black eyes unblinkingly.

"My mother told me to come and see you." The youth, Xue Meng, snorted. "I heard you're my cousin?… It's a shame."

Mo Ran did not say a word and lowered his head. He was not used to being stared intently at like that.

Xue Meng asked, "Hey, what's your name? Mo… That Mo… What? Tell me, I don't remember."

"…"

"I'm asking you a question, why aren't you saying anything?"

"…"

"Are you a mute?!"

After the third time, the young man, Xue Meng, was so angry that he started laughing. “I already said you’re my cousin, but you’re so submissive and so small. How could I have such a shameful brother when the wind blows? What a joke.”

Mo Ran lowered his head, increasingly unwilling to pay any attention to him.

Just like that, there was silence. Suddenly, a flash of red appeared in front of his eyes. The person who passed it to him was too rough, almost piercing the tip of his nose.

“For you.” Xue Meng said.

“I can’t eat anyway.”

He brought a box of pastries and casually threw it on the table. His attitude was one of charity, but as Mo Ran stared at it, he only felt that he was very generous. Before this, no one had ever been willing to give him so many things.

“I… This… is mine?”

“What?” Xue Meng frowned. “What do you mean ‘this is mine’? What do you want to say?”

“Can I eat all these?”

“Huh?”

“Actually, one is more than enough… If you can’t eat it, then I’ll…”

“Are you sick? Are you a dog? Eating the leftovers of others?” Xue Meng’s eyes widened in disbelief as he said, “Of course it’s all yours! This whole bunch, this whole box, they’re all yours!”

The lacquered wooden dim sum box was beautifully crafted, and on it was a golden powder drawing of the Immortal Crane Xiangyun. It was an imposing style that Mo Ran had never seen before.

He did not dare to reach out his hand, but kept staring at the box with his black eyes, which gave Xue Meng goosebumps. He lifted his hand to open the box of snacks, and the rich fragrance of milk, fruit, fruit, and bean, as well as the mixed aroma of the sand and mud filled the box. There were nine of them in total, some were golden and crisp, some were pink and tender, others weak, and fragile.

The youth, Xue Meng, didn’t even look at it. He pushed the entire box of dim sum towards him and impatiently said, “Eat it. If it’s not enough, I still have more. There’s no way to finish it. I’ll just give it to you.”

This Young Master’s attitude was rude and his tone was rude. His black and white round eyes were still rolling up, as if he was looking down on people with his nose in the sky.

But the fruit was sweet and soft.

After two lifetimes of bitterness, blood, and that distant sweet taste, it seemed to have returned to his tongue just like that. Mo Ran looked at Xue Meng’s drunk face under the moonlight. Xue Meng narrowed his eyes and stared at him. After a while, Xue Meng smiled. He seemed to be drunk, but it was unknown what he was laughing about.

He let go of the pillar in his arms as if he wanted to go over and pat Mo Ran's shoulder, but his steps were unsteady. He staggered and fell into Mo Ran's arms.

"Ugh…Brother…"

He lightly patted Xue Meng's back. The night wind blew, causing his hair to cover half his handsome face, and no one knew what kind of expression Mo Ran had. After a long time, Xue Meng, who was too weak in alcohol, fell asleep in his arms.

"Xue Meng, I'm sorry, I'm not worthy to be your brother…"

Ch. 192 Shizun Gave Me My Life

On the day that Chu Wanning finished his closed door cultivation, an unexpected guest arrived at his peak.

Knock, knock, knock.

Early in the morning, the door to the Red Lotus Pavilion was being knocked on anxiously.

Mo Ran was in the midst of attending to Chu Wanning when he heard the knock on the door. He was still in a daze from the ten days of meditation and had just finished his training when he heard a knock on the door. He said coldly, “Come in.”

Mo Ran: “Pfft.”

“… What are you laughing at?”

“Shizun set up a barrier at the door. Other than me and Xue Meng, who else can enter?”

Only then did Chu Wanning remember. He lifted his hand to remove the barrier. A messenger disciple hurriedly came in from outside. He reeked of alcohol and acted like a fly without a head, “Elder Yuheng, this isn’t good. A great demon has come to our Loyalty Hall!”

The two of them looked at each other and immediately rushed to the Loyalty Hall.

From far away, Mo Ran saw a huge gourd swirling around the entire plaza. A group of elders and disciples were watching from the side, not knowing

whether to laugh or cry.

Mo Ran: “… Diremonster?”

Fat Gourd: “Gulp, gulp, gulp.”

Seeing that Chu Wanning and Mo Ran had arrived, Xue Zhengyong’s eyes lit up and slapped his thighs, “Ah! Yuheng! He woke up at the right time! There’s hope, there’s hope!”

Chu Wanning was still in a daze, but his days were cold. Even though he was still in a daze, his face was still unfathomable. “Hmm?”

“Another monster that escaped from the Golden Drum Tower.” Xue Zhengyong’s face was bitter, angry, and amused at the same time. “Stay here and don’t go — wine lustful gourd!”

Chu Wanning raised his head to look at the huge gourd on the ground. The two were about the height of a person and they emitted a mother-of-pearl luster. Peach red smoke was drifting from the mouth of the gourd and wine was spewing out from the mouth of the gourd.

“This demon doesn’t hurt people,” Chu Wanning replied.

“But it’s filled with wine!”

His words were true. The wine gourd was chasing a group of young disciples as they ran. As long as one of them caught up to them, a hole would be opened in their mouths and they would start spewing alcohol into their mouths.

Chu Wanning: “…”

“I heard that it only accepts good alcohol.” Xue Zhengyong said eagerly, “Yuheng, look…”

Chu Wanning felt a headache coming on as he ran down the stage, summoning Tianwen and placing it right in front of the wine gourd.

“Don’t run. I’ll drink with you.”

The fat gourd was overjoyed as it shook back and forth. Their opening immediately expanded and a mouthful of wine shot out like an arrow towards Chu Wanning’s face. Unexpectedly, Chu Wanning dodged it and calmly avoided the wine, only to see a golden light shine, and the fat gourd was tightly restrained by Tianwen.

“In other words, do you have a cup?”

“Gulp!” A small gourd ladle was spat out from the opening of the fat gourd, it was filled with wine, “Po!”

Under the watchful eyes of the crowd, Chu Wanning sat on the ground and started drinking with the wine gourd.

“Gulp, boom, boom!”

“Not bad, one more.”

“Bo!”

“Did Pear Blossom Bai do it?”

“Pop, pop, pop!”

Xue Zhengyong asked in astonishment, “Yuheng, you seem to understand what it’s saying?”

“Yes. This kind of monster can always be understood a little bit.”

The wine gourd: “Pop pop pop!”

Mo Ran laughed, “Shizun, what did he say this time?”

“He’s talking to me, saying that he hasn’t been exposed to the sun for a long time.”

The wine gourd was very happy. For some reason, it seemed to have understood Chu Wanning’s words as well. It then intimately went over and poured him a big jug of wine.

“This time, it’s Pear Blossom Bai?”

“Bo!”

“I don’t like Nu Er Hong.”

“Pop…” The wine gourd immediately poured out the wine and changed to another one.

Everyone was shocked speechless.

Seeing the man and the demon drinking from the morning till noon, the man and the demon were overjoyed. Everyone was flabbergasted as more and more people gathered at the Loyalty Hall’s entrance.

Xue Meng and Shi Mei also came.

Seeing Shi Mei, Mo Ran recalled the misunderstanding and felt guilty. He wanted to apologize to him, but the moment he caught sight of him, he turned and left.

Seeing the way out, Xue Meng prodded Mo Ran with his elbow. “He seems to still be angry at you for misunderstanding him last time.”

“Then what should we do?”

“Let’s chat with him. You guys do it like this, even if I’m stuck in the middle, I still won’t be able to be a person inside or out. Hurry up. Anyway, this place has nothing to do with you.”

Mo Ran glanced at Chu Wanning, who was drinking with a wine gourd, and felt that nothing bad would happen soon. He said to Xue Meng, “Then I’ll go find him first. Stay here and keep an eye on Shizun. If anything happens, let me know immediately.”

Catching up to Shi Mei did not take much time. Mo Ran called out to him from in front of the sword dance plateau: “Shi Mei!”

“…”

“Shi Mei!”

Shi Mei stopped and turned around. He looked at him quietly and asked, “Is there anything I can help you with?”

“No…” Mo Ran waved his hand and frowned. “I came here to tell you that I was in the wrong with the previous matter.”

“What did you say?”

Mo Ran was stunned and his eyes widened. “What?”

Shi Mei’s expression was still light and gentle, and the wind was blowing. He stroked his hair, “It’s the Red Lotus Pavilion. You misunderstood me.

What would I do to Shizun? When we were eating together in the village, none of you would sit at the same table as me. Or perhaps it was earlier, when Shizun woke up, I went to bring you guys some wine, but you didn't say anything to me from start to finish. Which one?"

It was completely unexpected that he would actually bring up the matter from before. Mo Ran was at a loss for a moment, and only after a long time did he say, "You… Are you angry with me so early?"

Shi Mei shook his head: "Being angry is not necessarily true, but it doesn't matter."

"…"

"A-Ran, ever since I respected you, you have been deliberately distancing yourself from me."

Mo Ran fell silent. He was indeed deliberately distancing himself from Shi Mei. The two of them had been so close in the past that even Chu Wanning could see them clearly.

It was just that because they always felt that something was missing, when they were young, the layer of window paper between them did not break. Later, when Mo Ran realized his intentions, he did not know how to deal with the relationship between him and Shi Mei.

He had thought of saying this to Shi Mei, but felt that it wasn't appropriate.

He had never confessed to Shi Mei, so he didn't know what kind of feelings he had towards him. It would be too sudden and presumptuous for him to run over and say that he wanted to cut off their relationship.

Thus, the last thing he thought of was to slowly fade away.

Shi Mei quietly stared at him. After a while, he said, “When you first came to the Sisheng Peak, I told you that I had no parents and no friends. From then on, we were family.”

“… Right.”

“Then why did you change?”

Mo Ran felt very sad. He suddenly felt a little lost in his heart as well, not knowing why he had to be so estranged from Shi Mei.

Ever since he came back from the ghost realm, did he exchange more than a hundred sentences with Shi Mei?

The two who used to be inseparable were now walking further and further away. Mo Ran could not help but hesitate if he had done too much.

He said, “I’m sorry.”

“… There’s nothing to be sorry about.” Shi Mei looked away, “Forget it, that’s all.”

“Don’t be angry. You’re angry, I. You’ve always been good to me.”

Shi Mei finally smiled faintly: “I treat you very well, then what about compared to Shizun?”

Mo Ran said, “That’s different.”

“I remember that you told me before that I treated you well because it gave you a lot of warmth,” he said. “Then what about Shizun?”

Mo Ran said, “He gave me his life.”

For a long time, Shi Mei didn't answer. Finally, he sighed: "I can't compare."

Seeing this, Mo Ran's heart felt even worse. "There's nothing to compare to. People are different. You —"

Without waiting for him to finish speaking, Shi Mei turned his face to the side and slapped Mo Ran's chest against the wind, "Alright, you don't need to say anymore. I know what you mean. Actually, I am not a person who would care too much about others' opinions. However, I am truly sad that you misunderstood me like this before."

"Hmm…"

"I think it's already over. No one can think about it anymore."

Mo Ran's black eyes were warm as he nodded after a while. He said almost gratefully, "Alright."

Shi Mei was tall and slender. Leaning against the jade fence of the Sword Discourse Arena, he looked down at the rustling leaves. After a while —

"Go back."

"What did you want to say that year?"

At the same time, Mo Ran was stunned. "Which year?"

Shi Mei said: "The year of the Heavenly Rift."

Only then did Mo Ran remember the scene from the Heavenly Rift, where he was frozen in place for a moment with his unspoken confession.

Shi Mei said, "Back then, you didn't finish your sentence with me. I don't know what you want to say, but can I ask you now?"

Mo Ran was about to reply when he suddenly heard a loud sound from the Loyalty Hall behind him.

Both his and Shi Mei's expressions changed as they replied, "It's Shizun's side!"

Shi Mei did not have the time to chat and said, "Quickly go back and have a look."

The two of them turned around and rushed back to the main hall. When they arrived at the entrance of the Loyalty Hall, they discovered that there was actually a second fat gourd on the large plaza.

Mo Ran exclaimed, "What is this?!"

Xue Zhengyong covered his face and said, "Wine Lust Gourd."

"How many are there?!"

"Two, one wine, one color. They are twins." Xue Zhengyong's head was about to explode. "The one fighting with Yuheng is only the little brother. This is the big brother."

Mo Ran's heart twitched. It was only after a while did he come to his senses. "Wine gourds like to compete with others. That colored gourd…" He turned around, blue in the face, and looked at the fat, twirling peach gourd.

Xue Zhengyong said awkwardly, "The perverted gourd can do the most alluring things in the world. It only obeys the orders of the purest of people."

Mo Ran turned his head and said, "Xue Meng!"

Shi Mei exclaimed, and said: “Why isn’t Xue Meng here? Where did he go?”

Xue Zhengyong pointed at the colored gourd. “He has already gone through the trial in the bottle gourd, he said that he will help to share his worries.”

Mo Ran let out a sigh of relief. “Then it’s alright. If even Xue Meng was not pure, then there would be no pure people in this world.”

Right after he said those words, ‘peng’, an explosive sound was heard.

Xue Meng was blown out of the gourd and landed heavily in the middle of the crowd. The commotion was so loud that everyone turned to look at him. Even Chu Wanning, who was drinking with the wine gourd, turned his head around.

Shi Mei was stunned, “What’s wrong?”

Another person exclaimed in astonishment, “Could it be that even Young Master…”

“Cough, cough, cough.” Xue Meng’s face swelled red as he stood up shakily from the ground. His eyes were filled with anger and shame as he roared at the perverted gourd, “You — you demon! You, you, you, are you shameless!”

Mo Ran looked around and saw that Xue Meng had at some point changed to a golden-red robe. He felt that it was both funny and curious. “What’s going on?”

Xue Zhengyong only held his forehead, unable to say a word.

“I have heard of this before. The Lust is not lustful, but infatuated; it wants to find the cleanest, most infatuated person in the world and no one in its heart to marry it. It is said that those who are sucked into the gourd will find themselves in a new room.”

“… And then?”

“After that, the primordial spirit of the perverted gourd will turn into the appearance of a bride and groom. However, regardless of whether the bride and groom are married or not, their faces are covered. They have to wait for the other party to personally uncover them.”

Mo Ran said, “Is that the perverted gourd itself you uncover?”

“Of course not, the things that you uncover will vary depending on the person. If you have someone you love, you will see the appearance of the person you love. If you don’t have someone you love, but you are lustful, it is said that what you see will be…” Shi Mei coughed lightly, a bit embarrassed, “An unblemished beauty. Only the purest of people will be able to see the original appearance of the colored gourd.”

Mo Ran turned his head in disbelief to look at the fuming Xue Meng on the spot. “What did that Xue Meng see?”

He truly did not believe that Xue Meng had a lover, but he also did not believe that Xue Meng could see some naked beauty or beauty in his eyes.

However, Xue Meng was actually thrown out by the colorful gourd. Moreover, seeing the colorful gourd rolling around on the spot, it was obvious that he was extremely happy. He even looked at Xue Meng and laughed.

Shi Mei could not bear to see this, so he tried to smooth things over for Xue Meng. He said, “It might be a mistake on the part of a pervert…”

Before he could finish, Xue Meng unsheathed his sword and pointed at the perverted gourd as he roared, “You actually changed into my own fucking illusion to confuse me! You even made me dress like a woman in the illusion! You, your dog’s broken gourd! How dare you humiliate me!”

“…” The disciples at Sisheng Peak, including Mo Ran, were all silent for a moment. They wanted to endure it, but they couldn’t. All of them started laughing out loud.

The most narcissistic was Xue Ziming, the peacock spreading the tail of the water fairy, and the newlyweds made out of perverted gourds. When Xue Meng lifted his head, what he saw was actually his own heavily made-up face.

“That’s reasonable.” Mo Ran tried his best to restrain himself from laughing too exaggeratedly. He nodded his head and said, “Xue Meng should be very pretty when he’s a girl.”

Before he could finish laughing, Xue Zhengyong heard a headache coming on as he shouted, “Yuheng, why don’t you treat this perverted gourd after we settle it?”

Ch. 193 Shizun, Did You Marry Me?

There were three people at the Sisheng Peak who were the most aloof and innocent.

Xue Meng.

Elder Tanlang.

Chu Wanning.

Xue Meng had already been thrown out by the perverted gourd. Elder Tanlang was not a virgin; he had once married a wife. However, that girl's body was weak and died soon after.

It was said that Elder Tanlang was studying medicine because he didn't want to see people leave because of illness.

Thus, the only one left was Chu Wanning.

"Elder Yuheng will surely be able to take care of it."

"Yeah, even the Young Master can't do that. We can only rely on the Young Master's Shizun."

Mo Ran was listening full of anger, but there was nothing he could do. He could only stand there.

With nothing to do, Mo Ran was in a hurry to seek medical treatment. He said to Xue Zhengyong, "How about I try it?"

Xue Zhengyong looked him up and down and spoke in a rather euphemistic tone, "Yang-er, the first requirement is that there has never been a history

of love.”

Mo Ran: “…”

On the other side, the wine gourd was completely disoriented by Chu Wanning. Finally, it fell to the ground with a plop. The green smoke dissipated and became a small jade gourd lying quietly on the ground. Xue Zhengyong walked forward and put the wine gourd into his Qiankun bag and said happily, “Haha.

“As expected of Yuheng. Come, colored gourd.”

Chu Wanning’s expression remained the same, but his eyelashes fluttered, and he refused to look directly into Xue Zhengyong’s eyes, “No.”

Xue Zhengyong was stunned, not to mention him, even the surrounding disciples and elders were stunned.

“Wh-why?”

“… I drank too much. I’m tired.”

Xue Zhengyong was not an idiot. He did not want to get drunk with Chu Wanning, so he was not lying.

He stared at the man in white, staring at Chu Wanning impatiently. He flicked his sleeves and turned around. Xue Zhengyong suddenly realized something. He was stunned for a moment and blurted out, “Yuheng, don’t tell me you can’t —”

Chu Wanning’s ears suddenly turned red. He looked back angrily, his eyes flashing like lightning. “What nonsense are you spouting?”

Before he could even finish his sentence, he felt like he couldn't take it anymore. He thought to himself, "How is this possible? Who is Chu Wanning?"

Xue Zhengyong slapped his leg in anxiousness. "Then you, then you give it a try. Otherwise, if this gourd keeps wandering here, although it won't hurt anyone, it'll be troublesome to death. Furthermore, this wine gourd's skin is so tough that even if you spend three to five years, you probably won't be able to cut off a single layer of its skin."

"…" Chu Wanning's gaze swept across the crowd. All the disciples were looking at him eagerly. Only Mo Ran felt ashamed and could not hide the burning sensation in his heart.

Chu Wanning cursed in his heart. However, he was currently stuck in a dilemma. If he were to just leave like this, then he was afraid that he would have more complaints in the future. After thinking for a moment, he said, "Then I'll try."

The colorful gourd quickly sucked Chu Wanning into its stomach, then it began to spin on the spot. None of the disciples were suspicious of Chu Wanning's strength. They were confident that he would be able to tame the perverted calabash even if Chu Wanning were to enter. Only Mo Ran knew what he was capable of.

In this world, the most innocent immortal elder had already, on that rainy night not too long ago in the dark inn of Wuchang Town, been lying on the bed with his lips touching his skin.

He had dirtied it with his own hands.

Chu Wanning opened his eyes.

This gourd had its own world. It was like a dream.

It was just as the legends said. The bright gourd was lit up by red candles, and the wedding veil hung low in the air. Go forward, but see a big bed of red acid branches thick quilt, sprinkle peanut red jujube, felt the curtains are all ready.

An old woman with long green hair and a smile, looking like a gourd, stood at the door of the greenhouse. She had a wide grin on her face, and even her teeth were emerald green.

Chu Wanning knew that it was impossible for him to tame the gourd, so he didn't bother to say anything else. He walked up to the old woman and said, "Grandma, just send me out. Don't make me turn my head."

The old woman said pleasantly, "Hmm, hum, hum."

"…"

He did not expect that this old woman did not know human speech and was not as sharp as the wine gourd. He did not understand what Chu Wanning meant by that. Chu Wanning had no other choice but to sigh and grit his teeth as he walked towards the bed.

On the bed sat a man, with a dark dragon pattern embroidered on his robes and phoenix feathers embroidered on his lower body. His feet were bare and his head was covered, making it difficult to see his face.

The old lady walked over unhurriedly. Smoke rose from his hand, and a jade ruyi appeared. He handed it over to Chu Wanning and gestured for him to come over.

Although Chu Wanning could not accept the fact that Mo Ran was wearing a bridal dress, thinking about it made him feel slightly disgusted. However, thinking about how he had once played the role of the bridegroom in Butterfly Town, he also felt that Mo Ran was making a fool of himself.

"…"

Yes, that's right. Being disgusted was one thing, if he didn't want to see it, it was useless.

Chu Wanning stood for a moment with an ashen face, took a deep breath and walked forward.

The old woman urged, "Hmm, hum, hum."

"Understood, don't be anxious."

The red silk fell to the ground as the ruyi appeared.

Chu Wanning opened his eyes wide, "You are…"

A man wearing a crown on his head opened his eyes in between the candles. Light flowed across his pale and handsome face, and his black eyes were filled with mockery. He raised his chin slightly and smiled at Chu Wanning.

Chu Wanning was stunned.

This person was indeed Mo Ran, but his face was a bit sickly and fair, and his eyes looked very sickly. He had a very strange expression on his face.

"Hmm, it seems that in Wanning's heart, he still can't forget this Venerable One." Seeing him in a daze, the man stretched out his hand and grabbed

Chu Wanning's wrist. His fingers were cold as he stared into Chu Wanning's eyes, ruthless and fierce like a vulture.

Mo Ran grinned. He smiled, but it was not a warm smile. Instead, it was a smile filled with dense white teeth.

"I am very pleased."

… What nonsense!

Chu Wanning was both angry and amused. He thought to himself that this lecherous gourd must have gone silly in the Golden Drum Tower. Anyone who came out of it would be baffled.

"Let go."

Mo Ran did not let go.

Chu Wanning turned around and said to the green-haired old lady, "Tell him to let go."

Before he finished his sentence, "bride" Mo Ran stood up abruptly. Chu Wanning only had enough time to see the crown on his head swaying before his waist tightened and his world spun. When he regained his senses, he was already pushed onto the gold-red bed.

"It seems that you really enjoyed the taste I gave you?" The man's breath was hot on the side of his neck. "So much so that you can't forget me…"

Chu Wanning frowned as he tried to avoid the topic. He cursed in his heart for being too ridiculous.

Mo Ran had always been gentle, polite, and well-behaved to him. How could he possibly speak to him like this? He was embarrassed and amused at the same time. Annoyed and helpless, he kept hiding like this for a while until the pillow area became a mess.

Suddenly, in the time it took for a spark to fly off of a piece of flint, Chu Wanning narrowed his eyes as he looked at the golden red cloth. He suddenly thought of something.

A dream.

He was stunned for a moment.

Then, his face suddenly turned red.

This… this was a dream that he had.

This was how Mo Ran acted in his dreams. He spoke harsh and stimulating words, and his actions were very unrestrained.

So, this was not an illusion randomly born from a perverted gourd, but his own shameful thoughts deep within his heart? This thought was too shameful, causing Chu Wanning to be embarrassed for a moment he was so embarrassed that even the tips of his ears were burning.

“Darling…”

Suddenly, a wave of heat and wetness came over Chu Wanning. As his mind drifted away, Mo Ran kissed his ear. Greedy and sinister, he stuck his tongue into his eardrum.

“Ahh…”

Chu Wanning was caught off guard by this sudden burst of excitement, his voice was hoarse and moist, filled with moisture.

Since the voice had already been spoken, it was even more humiliating.

However, for some reason, the scene before his eyes was too real. It was as if he had kissed and pestered his like this a long time ago. Chu Wanning was trapped on the bed by him as Mo Ran kept kissing his neck, cheeks, ears, and his movements were extremely rough and quick.

He was anxious and angry, and even his eyes were red. He wanted to struggle, but he could not do so, until this “Mo Ran’s” lips was about to land on his own.

“Bam!”

Suddenly, ‘Mo Ran’ seemed to have sensed something. He was stunned for a moment as he stared at Chu Wanning in disbelief.

Taking advantage of the opening, Chu Wanning pushed him away. The golden light in his hands glowed and Tianwen was lit up. He then chopped down at the “Mo Ran” in the illusion.

Upon seeing the Heaven Seeking Light, “Mo Ran” became even more astonished and blurted out, “You actually… You are actually…”

The willow vine descended, and flowers of fire splashed everywhere.

“Mo Ran” was in pain, but he did not resist. Instead, he widened his eyes in astonishment. After a few moments, a thin cloud of smoke rose.

The old woman with the green hair disappeared, as did Mo Ran.

Inside the warm room, there was an unfamiliar young man with green hair and sharp ears. He looked extremely handsome.

Chu Wanning was still fuming, he got up from the bed and grabbed his open shirt, glaring at the man with his maddened phoenix eyes. His voice was low and dangerous, like a tiger or leopard that had been angered.

He gritted his teeth and said, “Evil creature.”

This young man was the primordial spirit of the “perverted gourd”. It stared at Chu Wanning, its face was pale, shocked and fearful, “It’s you…”

Chu Wanning was angry, he turned his head and stared at him: “What do you mean?”

The colored gourd was already trembling in fear. With a ‘putong’ sound, it knelt on the ground and kowtowed. “I don’t know who this junior is…” It was as if he was afraid to even say Chu Wanning’s name. He trembled and kowtowed again, “Please forgive me, Sir Immortal. Please forgive me.”

“…”

Back in time, Chu Wanning beheaded and exterminated demons, taming demons and ghosts. “Tianwen” was a well-known existence among those demons and devils, even small demons wouldn’t dare to move when they saw him.

However, he didn’t expect that this perverted gourd was of the same moral character.

Chu Wanning kept his Tianwen. With a gloomy face, he got up and stared at the young man who was kowtowing. After a moment of silence, he said, “Take me out.”

“Yes, yes!”

He immediately chanted an incantation and a “peng” sound rang out. Smoke rose up from the ground, and Chu Wanning was completely blinded by the fog. When the fog dissipated and he could see clearly, he had already returned to the plaza in front of the Loyalty Hall.

A few people immediately surrounded him.

“Shizun, are you alright?”

“Yuheng, you did too well!”

“Shizun, Shizun, are you hurt?”

The smoke had the smell of rotting gourds, Chu Wanning felt dizzy from the smoke. It took him a while to notice that the colored gourd had also disappeared. On the stone floor in front of him lay a small, peach-colored bottle gourd.

Chu Wanning thought about the illusion and felt ashamed. He didn’t want to say anything more and just said, “Take these two gourds and let them stay in the Demon Suppressing Pagoda.”

Xue Zhengyong said, “Okay… Hmm…”

However, his gaze was fixated on Chu Wanning, going back and forth with some hesitation.

Chu Wanning was scared out of his wits by his stare, “What’s wrong?”

“… Nothing.”

However, Xue Zhengyong's expression was definitely not saying "nothing." Chu Wanning suddenly realized that other than him, the rest of the people around him were also sneaking glances at him, full of curiosity and amusement. Chu Wanning turned around, and even Mo Ran looked at him awkwardly, his face red.

"Why…"

This time, before he could ask, Chu Wanning already knew the reason.

He looked down and saw his clothes.

It was unknown when he had first entered the belly of the colored gourd, but the clothes he wore had been replaced by a golden robe similar to the one Xue Meng wore.

Chu Wanning: "…"

The matter of Elder Yuheng accepting the matter of defeating the demon quickly became a topic that the people at Sisheng Peak discussed with great interest.

"I wonder who exactly Elder Yuheng is married to in the belly of the gourd."

Some people did not mind that their lives were short. They said in high spirits, "They must definitely be a beauty like a fairy."

Some felt that they had a long life ahead of them, so they winked and said, "Maybe he's a god-like man?"

One treasured his life very much, so he said seriously, "When the Elder lifted the cover, what he saw should be the bottle gourd itself. If he saw

something else, the bottle gourd would not be happy and he would not be able to subdue this demon."

Everyone despised this coward who treasured his life and felt that he was uninteresting, so they shook their heads and scattered.

However, at the Sisheng Peak, there was still the bravest warrior who was unafraid of death…

On this day, the weather was dark and the morning cultivation was suspended. Mo Ran brought snacks early in the morning, and when no one was looking, he sneaked over to the Red Lotus Pavilion to eat with Chu Wanning.

After the two of them had their meal, this "Heavenly Immortal beauties" and "Heavenly God beauties", who everyone was talking about, pulled on Chu Wanning's hand and asked, "Shizun, did you marry me in the lustful gourd?"

Ch. 194 Shizun, Am I Not the Little Sister You Love?

Chu Wanning ate until he was full and then angrily said, “Marry what? You’re a man, you don’t even have to be ashamed to say such words…”

“Then, since it’s not you marrying me, then is it me marrying you?”

Chu Wanning got even angrier. Not only was he angry, he was also ashamed.

He could not tell Mo Ran even if he was beaten to death. The appearance of the colored gourd was exactly the same as the one he had dreamt of in his dreams, Mo Ran with somewhat pale skin.

Nor would he tell Mo Ran how they had been entangled in each other in that dream, making love so fiercely and sweetly.

One of the most important things in this world was the face of Elder Yuheng.

Thus, Chu Wanning brushed his sleeves and said, “If you continue babbling such nonsense, leave now. I won’t allow you to stay here any longer.”

He pursed his lips as if he felt wronged, but at least he was obedient. He looked at Chu Wanning with his shiny black eyes and rubbed his cheeks with the tip of his nose, saying gently, “Oh, then I won’t ask anything.”

“Dear Shizun, don’t chase me away.”

“Shizun is enough, don’t add to it.” Chu Wanning felt his heart go soft upon hearing his words. Even though he could not resist, he pushed him against his head and said with a straight face, “Don’t scream.”

“But if I only call you Shizun, then it’s not intimate at all.”

“Is it?”

“Look, I’ll call you Shizun in public, but if I call you Shizun in private, it’ll be tedious and passionless, right?”

Chu Wanning was not fooled, “No, that’s not right.”

“…” If one move was not enough, then another would be done. Mo Ran pulled Chu Wanning and kept calling out, “Shizun, Shizun, Shizun.” Every form of summoning was sweet and greasy, giving Chu Wanning goosebumps. In the end, Chu Wanning could not take it anymore and threw a book beside him onto Mo Ran’s face.

“Shut up.”

The book was very thick, but it was very light when it came down. It didn’t hurt.

Mo Ran laughed as he took down the book, revealing his handsome and peerless face at the back, “I’m afraid that if I keep calling you Shizun like this, you might accidentally call me Shizun. So, let’s think of a way to address you.”

Chu Wanning frowned, “Since you’ve called me by another name, can’t you get used to it by running over to someone else to call that?”

Mo Ran sighed. “Why don’t you bite the hook?”

“…” Being stung by this description made Chu Wanning even more displeased. He lowered his head to tidy up his books, ignoring his disciple who was lying on the table blowing on his hair.

After living in peace for a while, Mo Ran said in disappointment, “I want to get some good stuff from Shizun.”

“Hmm?”

“Shi Mei and Xue Meng call you Shizun. I also call you Shizun, but there’s no difference at all. I, I actually don’t want much, I just want to ask for something different… something only I can call you.”

Chu Wanning stopped what he was doing and straightened up to look at him.

“I won’t do it often.” Mo Ran’s dense and long eyelashes droop, casting fragmented shadows on the tip of his nose. “Occasionally… Is that also not possible?”

“…”

“You really can’t.” Mo Ran looked even more disappointed, “If you don’t want to, then don’t.”

In the end, Chu Wanning gave way.

He had probably grown ten years older than he was, but he would still be unable to resist the young man’s coaxing and pleading.

He looked at the handsome man who was smiling brilliantly after he nodded to himself. Suddenly, he felt like he had been cheated.

He always seemed to be ferocious, bared his fangs and brandished his claws. But in the end, he was always the one who compromised and was always obedient to Mo Ran.

This fish had wandered around for so long that it finally bit the hook called Mo Ran in a fit of dizziness.

“What should I call you?” he asked.

Chu Wanning looked dispirited, “It’s up to you.”

“How could I be careless? This is a very important matter.”

Mo Ran thought hard for a long time, but his brain was still lacking. He even had some vulgarity, so he could only ask, “Darling?”

Chu Wanning immediately thought of that dream, unable to bear it any longer, “Don’t.”

“Chuchu?”

Chu Wanning felt disgusted and asked with a dark face, “… Do you need me to call you A-Ran?”

“Hahaha, it really isn’t that good.” Mo Ran scratched his head and laughed for a while before he frowned and thought again. However, his thoughts were still a bit too strong, so it was still very bad. “Darling Chuchu?”

After saying so, he could no longer take it anymore. Holding his forehead, he felt some despair.

Seeing him like this, Chu Wanning could not help but laugh, “It’s better not to think too much. What’s the point of thinking so hard? On the contrary, it’s quite awkward.”

Mo Ran felt that what he said was reasonable, but he was not willing to accept it. In the end, he smiled and said, “In the future, I will definitely

think about it and think of the most suitable nickname to give to you."

Pausing for a moment, he pulled Chu Wanning over, who was standing by the side, and let him sit on his lap. He stared at him for a while.

Chu Wanning felt uneasy, "What is it…"

Mo Ran sighed and muttered, "No matter how many times I see you, I won't be able to hold it in."

"What a mess… Ugh…"

Before he could finish his words, his lips were already covered. Mo Ran had warm and slightly moist lips, and it was sweet and fragrant. He hugged the person on his leg, and the two of them kissed tightly in the chair. It was raining outside, and the sound of the rain masked the sticky, shy sound of lips and tongue.

When they split up, Chu Wanning slowly opened his moist eyes. He wanted to see Mo Ran, but he didn't dare to.

Mo Ran smiled. Knowing that he was thin faced, he couldn't help but pull him into his arms and caress him, his heart thumping.

"Actually, I can call you anything."

"Hmm?"

"Nothing." In the end, he only said, "Shizun is the best."

Chu Wanning leaned on his shoulder. This kind of feeling was very sweet, but it also made him at a loss of what to do.

Sitting on his legs, he could clearly feel the hard, hot thing, and he felt his head start to burn.

After a while, he said softly, “Why are you…”

“Cough, I’m fine.”

“… Let me help you…” After saying that, Chu Wanning’s face was burning.

Mo Ran hurriedly said, “There’s no need. Shizun still needs to go to the Elders meeting in a little while.”

Chu Wanning looked at the dripping liquid, “There is still about ten minutes left, it should be…”

Mo Ran said embarrassedly, “It’s not enough.”

“Hmm?”

“… I can’t get it out.”

Chu Wanning was stunned for a moment before reacting, his face turning even redder.

He quickly got up from Mo Ran’s body and took a step back.

After he had finished retreating, he felt somewhat vexed. He seemed to think that his behavior was one of cowardice, so he took another step forward.

Mo Ran found this funny. He sat on the chair and did not try to hide it. Even though his clothes were covering it, the place of his desire was still ferocious. It could take a person’s life.

“I won’t tease you anymore.” At last, Mo Ran grabbed his wrist. He wanted to pull him over and kiss his lips, but the taste of Chu Wanning was too seductive. He was afraid that he would be indulged if he touched him, so he just held his hand.

He brought his hand to his lips and looked at Chu Wanning. Then, he lowered the curtain and kissed him. Very pious.

Finally, he licked the back of Chu Wanning’s hand.

“Shizun, you’re so sweet.”

It had rained for half a month. Finally, the day was clear and the sun was shining.

Mo Ran walked between the bamboo forests while stepping on the shallow and deep pool of water. He had resumed his morning cultivation today, but Chu Wanning did not come. People said that he had gone to the back of the mountain to teach Xuanji’s foolish disciples how to throw Plum Blossom Darts.

“Relax your hand, the Plum Blossom Darts is stuck between your index and ring fingers. The spiritual energy is emitted from the tip of your finger, causing it to scatter at the tip. Wait for the edge to emit a golden light before throwing it at the target.”

“Rustle…”

Just from the sound alone, Mo Ran knew that his disciples had failed once again. Each and every one of them began to lament.

“Oh my god, it’s really difficult.”

“Elder, can you demonstrate it to us again?”

“When the golden light is released, the Plum Blossom darts will feel slightly warm. Feel it carefully and don’t use your eyes to look.”

“You can aim even when you don’t see it?”

Before Chu Wanning could reply, a laughing voice came from behind him, “Of course we can aim.”

Chu Wanning turned around, “Why are you here?”

The group of new disciples said, “Senior Brother Mo.”

Among them was an extremely cute and adorable female disciple. Upon seeing Mo Ran’s face, her face immediately turned red as she hurriedly cupped her hands together.

Mo Ran did not pay any more attention to Xun Ji’s apprentice. Instead, he walked up to Chu Wanning and said, “Shizun, why don’t you cover your eyes and throw it at them?”

“… Alright.”

With permission, Mo Ran took off the snow-green headband on his head. It was as wide as three fingers and wrapped around Chu Wanning’s eyes. The headband was tightly tied, but it didn’t tighten.

“Plum Blossom Darts.”

A disciple of Elder Xuanji stepped forward and handed his Plum Blossom Darts to Chu Wanning.

Chu Wanning said, “Three.”

“Huh?” Although the disciple was puzzled, he still took out two more from his hidden weapon bag and handed them over to him. Chu Wanning’s slender white fingers stroked the cold metal texture of the Plum Blossom Darts. He pursed his lips and didn’t say a word. He didn’t stay any longer. He could only see the dart fly out from between his fingers in a split-second.

“Clang! Clang! Clang!”

A buzzing sound rang out.

“Oh, it hit! Red in the bull’s eye! But there’s only one.”

Chu Wanning did not utter a word. Mo Ran said flatly, “There are two more on the target behind you.”

When the new disciples heard this, they didn’t believe it and turned their heads to look. However, when they looked, they were filled with fear. The two remaining darts, one on the left and one on the right, were embedded in a target in the complete opposite direction, right in the center of the heart.

In the bamboo forest, the morning sun was flowing. The Xuanji disciples were shocked speechless. Chu Wanning lifted his hand to pick up the blue ribbon covering his eyes. His phoenix-like eyes slightly raised, and his eyelashes fluttered.

He handed the hairband back to Mo Ran and said, “The first sound just now was the sound of the three plum blossom darts colliding in the air.

All the disciples looked at each other, when suddenly, a young one with a face full of longing shouted: “Elder, this, this, how should we train? Is there

a trick to it?”

Chu Wanning said, “Mo Ran, show them your hand.”

The younger disciples surrounded him in an attempt to see what kind of tricks he was holding, but after looking for a long time, they could not find anything. On the other hand, the female cultivator was looking, her heart was beating wildly, and her eyes were filled with emotions.

She and her sisters had just entered the school, so they were still restless. They would often go down the mountain to buy some random books, and they had secretly read the book that Chu Wanning had read before. When the girls saw the rankings, they were shy and surprised, laughing and laughing at each other, but they had also discussed the matter in whispers in the disciple’s room.

“I heard that the longer a man’s finger, the more majestic that place becomes.” A bold senior sister said, “If there is a chance next time, I will go to Mengpo Hall for dinner and then squeeze behind Brother Mo to take a look. I would like to see how big his hand is.”

Later on, the senior sister really did squeeze in. In order to line up behind Mo Ran, she hurriedly ran. She even accidentally overturned the bowl of soup and poured half of the hot soup on him.

The girl’s small mouth slightly opened, sluggish and embarrassed. She didn’t know what to do, but she saw a long, well-proportioned hand carry away the bowl in his bowl that was still bubbling with hot soup, put it back on the counter, and then replace it with a new bowl.

“Don’t knock it over again, it’s not good to waste it.”

Hearing his low and magnetic voice, that Senior Sister did not even dare to raise her head. His face immediately flushed red, and her head began to emit steam like soup from a bowl.

From beginning to end, she only dared to secretly glance at Mo Ran, at his waist, his powerful figure, at his clothes, his broad chest, of course, he would most often glance at those two hands…

“Exquisite.”

After he came back, there were all sorts of unspeakable praises. In the end, only these two words could describe him.

At that time, all of the Junior Sisters in the room had stopped talking. They pursed their lips and felt their hearts warm up, filled with reverie and romantic fantasies.

Suddenly, a cold voice interrupted his memory —

“What do you see?”

One of the disciples said, “Elder, please forgive us. This disciple is too stupid to tell.”

“Senior brother Mo’s hands seem to be particularly strong?”

Everyone was talking at once, it was her turn. His face was red as she nervously said, “his fingers are very long.”

“?”

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment. He did not know what they were looking at, so he retracted his hand and scratched his head. Then, he

turned his head to look at Chu Wanning.

Although Chu Wanning did not know what the finger length represented, he was not a slow person. He glanced at the shy appearance of the female disciple and knew that it must not be a good thing. His face darkened as he said coldly, “What are you looking at?”

Seeing that there was a hint of anger between his brows, the disciples jumped in fright and couldn’t help but lower their heads.

Mo Ran felt the tense atmosphere, he did not want Chu Wanning to be called unreasonable again, so he smiled and said, “It’s just a callus.”

After he finished this sentence, he looked at Chu Wanning and said:

“The fingertip is broken, the cocoon is formed, and if it is broken again and again a hundred times, it will be able to accurately control the spirit energy. There are no shortcuts.”

After practicing with them until noon, most of the disciples were able to grasp the gist of the technique, so Chu Wanning did not stay any longer. For other people’s disciples, it didn’t matter if they were given some pointers or not, but if they were taught too carefully, it might actually make Elder Xun Ji feel comfortable. Chu Wanning was no longer 15 or 16 years old, he had just emerged from the mountains. He finally understood a little about the ways of the world.

He and Mo Ran walked out of the bamboo forest and arrived at the Naihe Bridge.

They walked very close, side by side, the sleeves hanging down, the backs of their hands always grind against each other, so that each other’s hearts

were soft and numb, like the sprouting of spring.

No one was around, Mo Ran finally reached out and grabbed Chu Wanning's finger. Although it was released very quickly, both of their ears were slightly red and their throats were hot from thirst.

Speaking of which, since the last time the two of them had been intimate, the chances of the two of them being alone was pitifully small.

Occasionally, he would pester him after closing the door of the Red Lotus Pavilion, worrying about whether Xue Zhengyong would suddenly pay him a visit.

Actually, up till now, it was just a short time of touching his fingers, but it already caused a fire to burn in Mo Ran's chest. He softly said, "Shizun, tonight, can we go……"

Before he could finish his words, a person suddenly ran over from the front. Mo Ran immediately stood up straight and pursed his lips, standing to the side without saying anything. The man did not notice anything amiss as he walked over and bowed, "Elder Yuheng, there's an urgent matter. The Sect Leader would like to invite you to the Loyalty Hall as soon as possible."

Chu Wanning asked, "What's wrong?"

"A guest came, bringing important news related to Xu Shuanglin. Sect Leader Xue couldn't make up his mind by himself, so he called all the elders over early in the morning to discuss with them. All that's left is for you."

After Chu Wanning heard the two words 'Xu Shuanglin', he immediately ran towards the Loyalty Hall without caring about warmth.

Mo Ran followed closely, saying, “Wait for me. I’ve fought with Xu Shuanglin, so maybe I can help.”

The two of them swiftly used their lightness skills and arrived in front of the Loyalty Hall in a few moments.

Pushing the door open and entering the hall, the entire hall was silent. Apart from Xue Zhengyong and the elders, two other men covered in blood were standing in the hall.

Mo Ran’s gaze fell on the sword case on the back of one of the men and found it somewhat familiar. After a moment, he suddenly opened his eyes wide as his expression changed, “Ye Wangxi?”

Ch. 195 Shizun Is Best

Hearing someone call her, Ye Wangxi turned around. Although her expression was haggard, her spirit was not as bad as Mo Ran had imagined.

Seeing Mo Ran, Ye Wangxi lowered her eyes and bowed to him as a man would. She could not change this habit and said, “Young Master Mo.”

Mo Ran looked at her, then at the man beside her.

He could not help but ask, “You guys… Where did this come from? Why is your body covered in blood…”

Ye Wangxi said, “We started off from Linyi and encountered many evil spirits along the way. It’s hard to avoid being disheveled. My apologies.”

Mo Ran was about to ask again, but Xue Zhengyong said, “You’re here? Sure, come in and talk.”

Once Chu Wanning entered the room, he stopped looking at Mo Ran and sat in his seat. He tidied up his clothes and looked at Nangong Si.

Although he and Nangong Si did not have the title of Shizun and disciple, they did have the grace to be enlightened. He looked at Nangong Si for a moment and could not help but feel sad in his heart, but he merely said a simple sentence, “… Are you all okay?”

This was the first time someone had seen them and asked them if they were doing well since the death of the Rufeng Sect.

He closed his eyes for a long time before suppressing the urge to cry in front of Chu Wanning. He said hoarsely, “No, it’s fine, it’s alright.”

Chu Wanning sighed softly and lowered his eyes, not saying another word.

He did not believe Nangong Si's words. Linyi Road was far away, how could the two young men not suffer?

Xue Zhengyong's heart ached and he helped to explain, "Yuheng, you did not come. It's like this. Young Master Nangong and Miss Ye found some clues and came to inform us."

"I heard that it's related to Xu Shuanglin?"

"Yes."

"Sit down and let's talk."

Mo Ran went to bring a chair over, but both Nangong Si and Ye Wangxi felt that their bodies were dirty and smelly, and they were unwilling to sit down. Chu Wanning didn't force them. He paused for a while before asking, "When we parted ways that day, where did you go?"

"Ye Wangxi and I are forced to stay in Mount Wei which is separated by a river because of the calamity fire." After pausing for a moment, he continued, "The terrain of the Wei Mountain is desolate and inaccessible. Ye Wangxi was also injured, so after the fire was extinguished, we rested for a while before we returned… We have returned to the Rufeng Sect."

Now, he heard Nangong Si mention the sect that he had joined when he first entered the world, it was already very different. Chu Wanning couldn't explain how he felt. After a while, he sighed, "There should be nothing growing there anymore."

"Grandmaster is right. It's true that not even an inch of grass has grown. However, something has crawled out from the rubble."

Chu Wanning raised his eyes and asked, “What?”

“These bugs.”

He opened a bloodstained sack in front of him, half open and half concealed. The bag was filled with buzzing worms, black spots on their green shells, five spots on three, two, and a faint smell of blood coming from their tails. Most of these bugs were still inside the bag, seemingly afraid of the light. However, a few of them had already flown out and stopped on the walls of the Loyalty Hall.

Mo Ran recognized this worm, the Soul Devourer.

This kind of insect only lived in the blood pools near Linyi Rufeng Gate. It was a type of insect that could not live or die, and relied on eating human flesh and soul to survive.

Almost all the elders felt that this insect was extremely disgusting. Lucun even directly covered his mouth and nose with a handkerchief. He could not stand this stench.

“We found these Soul Devouring Insects in the ruins. I thought some of the insects in the nearby blood pool were attracted and flew here, but then I realized it wasn’t.”

“What do you mean?”

“There are too many bugs. Ye Wangxi and I have been through the 72 cities of the Rufeng Sect. In the cracks in the bricks, in the mud, and in the ashes, there are countless of these Soul Devouring Insects. We thought something was wrong, but when we looked carefully, we found not only adults, but larvae as well. Grandmaster should understand what I mean.”

Chu Wanning did not know much about Soul Devouring Insects. At first, he was a little confused, but after some thought, he understood.

The blood pool was next to Mount Wei, separated from Linyi by a large river. The Soul Devouring Insect's wings were weak, and the adults could smell the scent of the dead, so it made sense. But what about the larvae?

How could the larva be able to cross the river on its own legs, cross the mountains, or land itself on the scorched earth of the Door of Doom?

Chu Wanning frowned, "Someone placed it here in advance?"

"Well, I think so."

When Elder Tanlang heard this, he suddenly realized, "This Soul Devouring Insect can store spirit energy. After the disaster, vengeful spirits could be found all over the place, and there are a lot of cultivators around. When the insects eat the spirit souls of cultivators, they become seeds that can store spirit energy of different attributes. With these tens of thousands of seeds, even if you do not need to use your own magic, you can still drive the majority of the formations."

Then who would be the one to release the bugs? Who could foresee this catastrophe? Who needs external spiritual energy?

No one answered, but the answer was obvious.

Only the instigator, Xu Shuanglin, or should be called his original name, Nangong Xu.

Xue Zhengyong said, "So in this period of time, he relied on magic to find Xu Shuanglin. In the end, he didn't use his own strength at all, but the insect's?"

Nangong Si replied, “Yes, that is indeed the case.”

Xue Zhengyong muttered, “Hmm… Detection techniques had only ever detected humans, and were indeed unable to detect the traces of beast-like monsters. If Xu Shuanglin had used this method, it would truly be able to hide for a very long time.”

He then asked Tanlang, “Can we rely on tracking bugs to find Xu Shuanglin’s whereabouts?”

Tanlang said, “Impossible, the Soul Devouring Insects can clear the netherworld. After they’ve eaten enough soul fragments, they’ll all go underground. There’s no way to find their whereabouts.”

Hearing this, Xue Zhengyong suddenly thought of something and said, “Since we are going to the Netherworld, why not ask master Huaizui about it? He should be able to know about the matters of the ghost realm.”

However, Chu Wanning immediately said, “No need to ask him.”

“Why?”

“It’s useless to look for him. He doesn’t want to interfere in the affairs of the mortal world, so he won’t say anything.”

Chu Wanning was once a direct disciple of him. Now that he said those words so decisively, even though everyone was puzzled, they could not say anything more. The entire hall fell silent once again.

After a long while, Xue Zhengyong murmured, “Then what should we do? Since Xu Shuanglin can use the spirit energy of the Soul Devouring Insect to hide from us, no matter how we investigate, it’s useless.

Chu Wanning suggested, “How about we change the way we search?”

“What do you mean?”

“Sect Leader, when Xu Shuanglin left, he took three items with him. Do you remember which three items he took?”

Xue Zhengyong began to count: “Luo Fenghua’s spirit core, Nangong…” He looked at Nangong Si and sighed in his heart. Then, he lowered his voice and said, “Sect Leader Nangong and a godly weapon.”

Chu Wanning said, “Good, he always has his own reasons for doing things. Even when he’s in a hurry to escape, he still insists on taking these three things with him. He definitely won’t be bored just because of this. Then according to the Sect Leader, why would Xu Shuanglin take his older brother away?”

“Um… Revenge?”

“Then why did he take away the godly weapon?”

Xue Zhengyong thought for a moment, “Relying on five types of pure spirit energy to tear open the ghost realm.”

“The reason why the ghost realm is being torn apart is to obtain Luo Fenghua’s spirit core. There is no need for him to tear it apart a second time.”

“Then why?”

“I think there’s one possibility,” Chu Wanning said. “He’s doing it for the Rebirth Technique.”

Xue Zhengyong was startled, “But the Rebirth Technique… Master Huaizui didn’t even need five types of pure spiritual energy to display it.”

Chu Wanning shook his head, “Huaizui said that the method of rebirth isn’t the same in the world, so Sect Leader doesn’t need to use his technique as a reference.”

When Tanlang heard this, he sneered, “Elder Yuheng has no proof, so how could he have the audacity to speculate. Is Xu Shuanglin doing all this for the sake of cultivating the Forbidden Technique for Rebirth?”

Chu Wanning replied, “With the last thing he took away, it was Luo Fenghua’s spiritual core.”

In the main hall, Chu Wanning’s voice was steady and steady.

“Many years ago, I once interrogated a dead girl in Butterfly Town. When that girl was young, she met a madman covered in blood who stuffed her with an orange. He said that her eyes looked very much like an old friend of his, and that madman even said one last sentence — Linyi has a man whose heart was already dead at twenty.”

Twenty years old, that was the age where Nangong Xu had been framed and criticized by the crowd for never being able to stand up again.

That year at the Spiritual Mountain Competition, he had been high-spirited and proud, and felt that as long as he relied on his own talent and lifelong efforts, he would be fair and have everything that he deserved.

However, after exhausting all his efforts, all he received was a lifetime of infamy.

The sharp blade in his hand and the ambition in his heart. He couldn't defeat his brother, who was always flattering him.

He hated it.

Everyone hated him to the depths of their hearts, so there was no place for them to declare their grievances. They all laughed at him, denounced him, and despised him.

In the end, the living became the dead, and the dead became the ghouls.

The evil ghost crawled out from the blood of the broken mountain and wanted to get back the justice it deserved from all the righteous men and women in this world.

"There's no need to mention this madman. If he's Xu Shuanglin, then who's his old friend? Who do you think his eyes look like?"

"They all look alike, but their surnames are Luo…" Xue Zhengyong said in shock, "Could it be Luo Fenghua?"

Chu Wanning said, "I think it should be Luo Fenghua. At the bottom of Jincheng Lake, Xu Shuanglin had tried two techniques, Zhenlong Chess and Rebirth. Zhenlong Chess was to control others, but who was it for when he was reborn? He has only brought two corpses with him in total, Luo Fenghua's and the head of Nangong,and Rebirth is unlikely for the head of Nangong."

Xue Zhengyong muttered: "But why did he revive Luo Fenghua? Wasn't Luo Fenghua the one who framed him before?"

"It's hard to predict what will happen, so you can't speak carelessly." Chu Wanning said, "But he took away Luo Fenghua's corpse. Other than

reviving it, I can't think of any other use for him."

Everyone was silent. After some careful consideration, they all felt that Chu Wanning's analysis was not bad, but he had no proof. In the end, these were only their deductions. The answer to this question could probably only be answered by Xu Shuanglin who was currently hiding somewhere.

After the meeting ended, Mo Ran pondered for a long time. That night, he went to the Warm Pavilion to find Xue Zhengyong.

Xue Zhengyong was reading some ancient books and reading some information related to the "Soul Devouring Insects", hoping to obtain some clues regarding Xu Shuanglin's whereabouts.

"Uncle."

"A-Ran? Why aren't you going to bed at this time of the night?"

"I can't sleep, there's something I want to ask uncle."

Xue raised his chin and gestured for him to take a seat. Mo Ran did not beat around the bush and went straight to the point: "Does Uncle know that Luo Fenghua… In other words, the Shizun of Xu Shuanglin, just what sort of person was he?"

"Luo Fenghua." Xue Zhengyong frowned and thought hard for a while before he shook his head, "I haven't interacted much with him, so I can't tell you the specifics. It's probably… Righteous, resolute, impartial, and taciturn, but he actually has a very good temperament and does things with courage. When he was the leader of the Rufeng Sect, he even sent his disciple to cultivate and exterminate demons."

Mo Ran continued, “So in short, other than trying to take over the position of Sect Shizun of the Nangong Family, he didn’t criticize anyone else, right?”

Xue Zhengyong sighed. “That’s right. He’s more than just not criticizing. He’s a good person. I don’t understand why someone like him would curse his disciple so harshly.”

Mo Ran pondered for a moment and suddenly said, “Uncle, did you feel that your description of Luo Fenghua just now was a bit like a person?”

Xue Zhengyong was stunned, “You mean Yuheng? Come on, how could Yuheng’s temper be good?”

“No, it’s someone else.”

“Who is it?”

Mo Ran said, “Ye Wangxi.”

“Ahh…” Slowly, Xue Zhengyong’s tiger-like eyes widened, and three words came out between his lips, “Ye Wangxi…”

This person was benevolent and resolute, tenacious and unyielding. He was indeed very similar to the person in his memory, Luo Fenghua, who had only been Sect Leader for around a year.

“You think so?”

“… Yes.” Xue Zhengyong was gradually surprised, because Ye Wangxi and Luo Fenghua were of different genders and ages, and they were also of different positions in the Rufeng Sect, he had never placed them together

before. Now that he was reminded by Mo Ran, he was shocked to realize that the two of them were of the same kind, carved out of the same mold.

The more Xue Zhengyong thought about it, the more surprised he was. Memories that had been sealed for a long time surfaced one by one, he could even vaguely remember that when Luo Fenghua was still a guest of Rufeng Clan, the clothes he wore were extremely similar to the ones Ye Wangxi was used to.

There was also the way the two of them talked and their tone of voice.

Even the way he pulled the bow…

When he was young, he had seen Luo Fenghua draw his bow, it was to celebrate Nangong Liu Shengchen's victory. At that time, Rufeng Sect also invited the Xue brothers, and Xue Zhengyong remembered that in the midst of the flying snow, Luo Fenghua only had three fingers holding his bowstring tightly, his pinky finger was stretched taut, and an arrow shot out through the air, slicing through the white cotton, causing a Snow Demon Rabbit a hundred steps away to fall to the ground.

The surrounding people were all praising his amazing archery skills. Luo Fenghua only smiled gently and casually retracted his bow and arrow, placing it on his left arm. His fingertips subconsciously caressed the bowstring.

It was a set of movements as natural as the clouds and flowing water, carefree and unrestrained. The final conclusion was also different from the others' awe-inspiring might and mighty voice.

Xue Zhengyong watched from the side and was shocked. He then remembered it in his heart.

At this moment, he suddenly recalled that during the Heavenly Rift War, Ye Wangxi and Nangong Si had used arrows together, but Xue Zhengyong did not have much of an impression of them. On the other hand, Ye Wangxi, who had used up all of his arrows, would habitually place his arrows on his left arm, pull back his hands, and subconsciously stroke his fingers on the bowstring.

At that time, he couldn't help but take a few more glances. He felt that the gentle and smooth, relaxed and composed posture was very similar to someone's.

He slapped his forehead and said, "Aiya, really. It was real! It's practically the same!"

Mo Ran raised his eyebrows and asked, "What do you mean by 'exactly the same'?"

"Luo Fenghua looks exactly like Ye Wangxi when he shot an arrow, exactly the same, exactly the same!"

Looking at Xue Zhengyong's shocked expression, Mo Ran couldn't help but laugh, but he said, "Uncle's words are wrong."

"Ah? What's wrong?"

Mo Ran said, "Causality is wrong."

"Causality?"

"Mmm, it's not that Luo Fenghua is like Ye Wangxi." Mo Ran sighed, "It's Ye Wangxi, she's very similar to Luo Fenghua."

When he said this, his eyes shone brightly. He felt that he could finally confirm that Xu Shuanglin's rebirth technique was to revive Luo Fenghua.

Although he did not know how many secrets were hidden within the past events of the Rufeng Sect, but he had experienced two lifetimes. In his previous life, Xu Shuanglin could have died for Ye Wangxi.

He did not believe that Xu Shuanglin was simply unwilling to act because Ye Wangxi was his adopted daughter.

Xu Shuanglin looked very free and at ease, saying, "Linyi has a man, twenty hearts are already dead. He gave his place of residence the name 'Three Lives Courtyard.' He seemed to want to forget everything that had happened in the past, and even gave his adopted daughter a name."

Forgotten.

Forget your old self, old friends, forget past hatred, kindness.

But Xu Shuanglin had unconsciously nurtured Ye Wangxi into that unforgettable reflection, this orphan abandoned by others, into the appearance of another person.

This person who fervently wished for him to forget all the memories of the past, might still be living in the mud of his memories from beginning to end.

At this point, Mo Ran already had a faint guess in his heart. It was probably because he himself had also once gone mad in the darkness, but he felt that his prediction of Xu Shuanglin's behavior was a bit more accurate than the others. However, it was not convenient for him to share his thoughts

with others, so he could only first assess the situation and wait to see what would happen.

The next day, Xue Zhengyong, who had gone through all the ancient books to no avail, called over the group of people and said, “The poisonous insects and strange beasts are Guyue’ye’s strong points. We found the Soul Devouring Insect at the old location of the Rufeng Sect. Why don’t we inform Jiang Xi first?”

Xun Ji agreed. “The world’s number one medicine master, the Cold Scale Sacred Hand, is under Jiang Xi. He should be able to find a way to investigate it.”

However, Chu Wanning frowned and asked Ye Wangxi, “Miss Ye, ever since you were young, have you seen your foster father raise any poisonous insects or beasts?”

“Never.”

“What about medicine and beast taming? Have you ever gone hunting?”

“He… He has only raised one parrot, and the rest are monsters and monsters. Even an ordinary puppy doesn’t have the mood to take them in, and his medical skills are even weaker.”

After Chu Wanning heard this, he turned to Xue Zhengyong, “Don’t tell Guyue’ye about the Soul Devouring Insect.”

“Why?”

“Since Xu Shuanglin is not good at medicine, nor is he good at beast taming, it is not necessarily him who is being fed the Gu, but most likely the hand that stuck out from the final crack.”

“You suspect Guyue’ye…”

“You mustn’t jump to conclusions. But caution is always right.”

Ch. 196 Shizun, Do You Want to Take a Bath?

In this way, he couldn't rely on Guyue'ye. After the meeting was over, Xue asked Tanlang to go with him to the flower room to find Madam Wang and discuss how to follow them. This was the so-called specialized in martial arts. At this point, Chu Wanning could not help much and could finally take a break.

In the evening, he stood by the pontoon bridge watching the fish. When the door was knocked, Chu Wanning said, "Come in."

The moonlight illuminated the youth's face. The one who came was Nangong.

"Grandmaster, you called me?"

Chu Wanning said, "I heard that you and Ye Wangxi will be leaving the Sisheng Peak the day after tomorrow. Where are you planning to go?"

Nangong Si lowered his eyelashes. "We plan to go to Mount Jiao."

Mount Jiao was a stronghold of the Rufeng Sect outside of Linyi. To the Rufeng Sect, it was an extremely important place. According to legend, the first generation leader of the Rufeng Sect, once established a contract with a flood dragon. After the death of the flood dragon, he transformed into a mountain of bones.

From then on, all the heroes of the Rufeng Sect were buried here. This mountain range protected the heroic souls of the Rufeng Sect. If there were intruders or presumptuous people, they would all be killed within the mountain.

Not a complete corpse. Every year during the Qingming winter solstice, the Sect Leader of the Rufeng Sect would also go there to offer sacrifices. Therefore, it was said that Mount Jiao was the ancestral hall of the Rufeng Sect.

“My father…” Nangong Si’s eyes dimmed for a moment, then he said, “My father told me that the temple contains the savings left by the previous heads, in case there is a need for future generations. I think it’s time to get them out.”

He did not have any reservations and precautions towards Chu Wanning, so he naturally told him the location of the treasure. Unlike Xue Meng and the others, he was not that close to Chu Wanning. However, they were inextricably linked. It was just a coincidence that he did not become Chu Wanning’s disciple in the end.

Sometimes, Nangong Si would think that if his mother had not died, if Jincheng Lake had not used his wife to exchange weapons, would he have now called Chu Wanning his “Shizun”?

Chu Wanning said, “Mount Jiao is a long distance, and I heard that it is a sign of respect. We must fast for ten days before we can enter the mountain successfully, or else we will be rejected by the dragon spirit. Since we have to go, we might as well finish the fast on the Sisheng Peak and then move out.”

Nangong Si shook his head, “At present, everyone in the Upper Cultivation World bears a grudge against me and Ye Wangxi, and they all wish that we could get rid of them as soon as possible. We will only implicate Sect Leader Xue if people find out that we have been here for too long.

“What nonsense are you talking about?”

“…”

“Ten days is too dangerous. What if the Chou family finds us outside?” Chu Wanning said, “Besides, Sect Leader Xue is a kind-hearted person, I won’t let the two of you leave just like that. Listen to me, don’t go yet.”

After days of fatigue, when he heard Chu Wanning say this, he could not help but feel a bitter pain in his heart, as if tears were about to fall.

He lowered his head abruptly and said, “I dare not forget the great kindness that Grandmaster has shown me.”

“I’ve only lived here for a few days, what favor are you talking about? Also, there’s another reason why I called you over.”

“Grandmaster, please speak.”

“Previously, I heard Xu Shuanglin say that the spiritual core in your body is tyrannical, making it easy for you to go berserk. You can take a look at Madam Wang for this condition.”

Nangong Si was stunned for a moment, and then he laughed bitterly, “The disease of the Nangong Family has been a problem for generations. Before, father invited Guyue’ye’s Cold Scale Sacred Hand to show me, saying that there is no way to suppress it and that I can only let it develop. Even the number one Saint doesn’t think much of it, so how could Madam Wang have such a good method?”

“The Cold Scale Sacred Hand might not be a bad doctor, maybe it’s because he doesn’t want to be a doctor. There are too many sect grudges and benefits, so it’s normal for him to hold back. As for Madam Wang… she has

a deep understanding of suppressing the explosive Spiritual Cores, and might be able to help you."

"Why would she want to study this?"

"… It was just a coincidence. Don't ask too many questions, go ahead."

After repeatedly thanking him, Nangong Si left the Red Lotus Pavilion. Chu Wanning looked in the direction he left and couldn't help but sigh.

He thought, Nangong Si was originally such a high-spirited person, arrogant, proud, when in a good mood, he also liked to smile, when he smiled, his eyes would shine, like the light of the morning sun.

He didn't know when he would be able to see it again.

Just as he was about to return to his room, there was a knock on the water pavilion's door. Chu Wanning thought that there was something wrong with Nangong Si and returned. He then said, "Come in."

The door opened, but the person outside was not Nangong Si. Instead, he was Mo Ran, who was holding onto a wooden basin. He was a little hesitant, as if not wanting to make himself seem too reckless, he lightly coughed and said, "Shizun."

Chu Wanning was a little surprised, "Is there something you need?"

"Nothing, I just came to ask you if you want to take a bath together."

Chu Wanning almost choked on his words. With wide eyes, he coughed lightly and asked, "Where are we going?"

Mo Ran hesitated for a moment before saying, "The Miaoyin Springs."

“…”

The Miaoyin Springs was full of twists and turns. It was hard to tell one’s fingers from the other. No matter what one did, it would be hard to find in a secluded place.

Chu Wanning didn’t expect Mo Ran to invite him to take a bath there. He felt a little scared and thought to himself, “This guy is really shameless.”

Shameless, Mo Ran said, “Xue Meng just came back from a bath and said that there weren’t many people in the Miaoyin Springs…” As he spoke, his face turned a bit red. He felt that his words were too naked, so he said, “It’s too cold. I think that if Shizun washes in the pavilion, he might catch a cold…”

Of course he would not catch a cold. If Chu Wanning was willing, he could open a barrier to warm up the surroundings.

He knew it, but he still invited Chu Wanning to bathe in the Miaoyin Springs. This was clearly a sign of his sincerity, yet he dared to say that he was afraid of Chu Wanning’s cold and was too shameless.

The shameless Mo Ran stared at him with his pitch-black eyes. “Shizun, are you going?”

“…”

Chu Wanning was clear that if he nodded, it would mean telling Mo Ran that he knew of his wolfish ambitions, but he was willing to join him.

Upon entering…

As he thought of this, he suddenly thought of that night in the inn. Mo Ran did not hesitate to kneel down, giving him a sense of impending doom that he had never experienced before.

Those eyes were warm and gentle, the water vapor of love was hazy, and when he looked at himself, his heart was soft and scattered.

“Stay with me.”

“… Are you five years old?”

The man with ill intentions smiled and said gently, “Well, it’s getting dark, and I’m afraid of ghosts. If Brother Ning had brought him, he would have dared to walk at night.”

Pui, how shameless.

However, Chu Wanning still went.

Most of the disciples at the summit of the Sisheng Peak had bathed after the late stage of cultivation. At this time, there weren’t many people at the Miaoyin Springs.

Mo Ran lifted the soft curtain and stepped onto the rainbow-stone road with his bare feet. In the midst of the steam, he turned his head to smile at Chu Wanning, pointed at the distance and walked over first.

Chu Wanning sneered in his heart, Weren’t you afraid of ghosts? Why are you walking faster than me?

Most of the disciples loved to take baths in these two ponds, but there were also some nameless ponds, which were very common in those

places, and no one would want to take a bath there, except for when the baths were crowded and there was nowhere else to go.

From the corner of his eyes, he caught a glimpse of a few blurry shadows in the middle of the hot spring. However, he could not see their facial features, and could only hear the voices of the disciples, some of which were just idle chatter.

Up ahead, close to the Plum Pond, the fog thickened, making it almost impossible to see.

Suddenly, a large hand reached out and wrapped around him from behind. Chu Wanning's back was pressed against his hot and sturdy chest. Perhaps it was because he was too close and wore very few clothes, but he could clearly feel Mo Ran's desire.

Chu Wanning was shocked, "What are you doing? Don't mess around."

Mo Ran smiled and whispered, "Brother Wanning, don't go any further. There's a ghost up ahead."

"…"

Chu Wanning hesitated between "Ghost your head" and "Brother your head" before reprimanding in a low voice, "Let go!"

Mo Ran did not release them, but instead gently smiled and said, "Letting go is so difficult, I can't do it."

"Are you sick?"

"Yes, I'm really sick. If you don't believe me, look at me."

Chu Wanning was resolute and decisive, even though his ears were already red, “I don’t want to watch.”

Mo Ran laughed, his voice somewhat hoarse. “That’s fine too, we’ll do as you say.”

However, the man’s words were so pleasant to hear that his hands were a completely different story. His rough fingers grazed Chu Wanning’s throat and slowly slid up, grabbing his chin.

“Don’t… Nonsense!”

Although the vision in the fog was gone, the other senses were clearer than usual. Chu Wanning felt Mo Ran’s face and his hot breath on his neck. It made him tremble involuntarily.

“Why are you trembling? Is it because you’re afraid of ghosts?”

“Don’t shout!”

Mo Ran gently smiled and hugged him from behind. He kissed the side of his neck and respectfully said, “I’ll listen to you, stop shouting. Then… Shizun, let this disciple help you bathe and change your clothes, okay?”

“…”

It seemed even worse.

Chu Wanning could not take it anymore. The steam from the hot spring had burned his body and mind. He felt embarrassed and humiliated. His eyes reddened as he said, “I’m not going to take a bath, I’m leaving.”

Mo Ran knew that he was thin faced, but he also felt that this person's appearance of retreating before the battle was both cute and funny. He asked, "Shizun is now like this, do you want to leave? What if we get run into by someone?"

Chu Wanning's face was dark, "If you run into someone, you run into someone. It's better to be bitten by a dog than fooling around with you."

"Bite by a dog?"

"… What's wrong?"

Mo Ran smiled. Because of his burning desire, his eyes were dim and he was not as gentle as usual. He revealed a mouthful of white teeth, leaned over and pressed his body against the back of Chu Wanning's ear.

Chu Wanning thought he was going to say something vulgar, but just as he was about to get angry, he heard the man whisper in his ear, "…Woof."

"… What are you doing?"

"Doesn't it sound like it? I used to have a pup with blue eyes and three flames, that's what it said."

Chu Wanning was speechless, "Never heard of it. And why did you imitate a dog?"

"What do you think?"

"…" Chu Wanning did not know how to react.

As Mo Ran kissed the back of his ear and buried his head into his neck to lick it, he said in a low voice, "You've already cried for it. Shizun said it

himself. He would rather be bitten by a dog."

Chu Wanning froze for a moment as his blood boiled.

That person had to add, "Can I bite you now, Shizun?"

Before he could answer, a heavy, urgent kiss fell on him.

Intense entanglement, grinding at the ears and temples. Mo Ran wanted to taste the medicine first, but he didn't expect it to be a poison used to quench his thirst. Chu Wanning was his poison that could destroy his rationality and stir his desire to set the prairie ablaze.

It was as if he wanted to stop, and he wanted to stop.

Unable to stop himself, he began to breathe heavily.

When they parted, Chu Wanning's eyes lost focus, but he did not forget his business, "I'm here to take a bath, first…"

"En!" Mo Ran replied. It sounded a bit like an "en" but also a bit like a "hmph", a very sexy and hoarse voice. At such a close distance, it sounded like Chu Wanning was trying his best to resist, but he knew that his spine was being struck by lightning and his eyes were burning.

His wrist landed on the palm of Mo Ran, and the man led him into the hot water. The sound of the waterfall hid their hurried breathing.

Chu Wanning could not take it anymore. When Mo Ran hugged him and was about to kiss him again, he stopped him with difficulty and asked in a low voice, "Is there really no one here?"

“No, I’ve seen it all. Shizun, do you think I’m really sick?” Mo Ran’s voice was low and boiling as he answered. It was even hotter than the spring water around his legs and even hotter than the temperature of the stomach. “Why is it so hot… This… Hard.”

“…”

Chu Wanning’s face immediately flushed red. This was too shameful. He wanted to withdraw, but the strength of Mo Ran’s hold of his hand was too great, causing his palm to hurt, as if it was about to shatter within the palm of his hand.

The young man’s breathing was quick, hot, and almost lovable, and the smoke was thick around him, making it impossible to see anything, except for his handsome face, which was very near at hand, and his dark eyes were moist with love and burning with it.

Mo Ran’s Adam’s apple bobbed, he stared at Chu Wanning’s face and whispered, “Shizun, help me…”

Once again, he covered his slightly opened lips.

Passion is the flame that burns the oil, and the water cannot extinguish it, the heat wave is churning, and ten thousand pieces of wood become ashes under it.

Meeting half-way in a kiss, their lips and tongues are intertwined, the tongue goes in to absorb each other’s breath, but like scratching between boots, it just feels insufficient and wants more wind.

Mo Ran brings Chu Wanning to the deep of the hot spring. The spring water doesn’t pass the waist. He puts Chu Wanning on the slippery rock

wall and kisses him passionately, eagerly and obsessively. He tears Chu Wanning's last thin bathrobe without taking it off completely.

The torrential water splashed on the rocks, and the rain curtain was filamentary. The sound of the waterfall was in their ears, and they could not hear anything.

Chu Wanning was kissed by him in front of the stone wall, his robes were wide open, and dropped to the elbow, which was used to tie his arms.

"You… Don't you…"

But the shame and stimulation of being bound made him more sensitive. He gasped under the comfort of Mo Ran. Suddenly, the pale red on his chest was licked by his disciple's rough tongue. He frowned at him. His solemn face gradually became confused because of lust, and his struggle between indulgence and reason was maddening.

"Gentle, gentler…"

Hoarse throat, Chu Wanning raised his head, and couldn't help but gasp roughly.

The mist escaped and covered everything.

Chu Wanning was turned over and felt thick legs pressed against his and his face was pressed against the cool stone wall. The heat was more and more striking. His eyelids were closed. How could he have imagined that one day he would go to this point with his disciple, that somebody would come to do such erotic things in the Miaoyin Springs with him.

Shame, vacancy, longing, excitement, which made his eyes scatter.

Suddenly there was a thick, long, hot, lively, angry thing between his legs, rubbing between his hips, he was surprised for a moment and he could not help but gasp out: “Ah…”

The man behind him gave a groan, and then seemed to be stimulated by his heavy breathing. He put his big hands around his waist and thrust hard against him underwater.

Although he didn’t go in, he just thrust between his legs, Mo Ran was very passionate. The person under him was Chu Wanning, the strongest aphrodisiac for him.

He leaned over him, and from the surface of the water it seemed that he only stirred up the spray, but under the hot spring his cock was thick and long, rubbing hard against the inner wall of Chu Wanning’s thighs, rubbing into him several times. He was so dizzy that he almost wanted to lift Chu Wanning’s thighs, push himself in and fuck him in regardless of how many times he had gone in and out of him in his previous life. He craved to hug and suck him, hold Chu Wanning’s legs around his waist, groan and come inside him.

“Wanning…”

His throat was moist and dumb, full of sparks.

Mo Ran’s eyes were dark, and the sound of the water was like the rhythm of the intercourse of previous generations. The warmth of the hot spring combined with the touch between Chu Wanning’s legs, which made him realize that he would soon lose his mind.

He gasped, and before he had done something more crazy, he turned Chu Wanning around, with his chest close to his chest, the waterfall confused

their eyes, the hot water splashed on their confused faces, Mo Ran fiercely kissed him. He was a little anxious, and he kissed him on the chin, but soon hungrily and thirstily squeezed his lips, which was almost done in a violent way.

His other hand reached down and grasped Chu Wanning's cock, which had also risen to a painful degree, against his own.

Chu Wanning did not expect him to do so. The stimulation of direct rubbing each other and the desire made him close his eyes and hum softly with his neck up: "Mo… Mo Ran…"

He only had time to call his name vaguely before the other's voice was sealed between his lips and teeth with Mo Ran, who rubbed his cock and Chu Wanning's together. Rubbing and stimulating, he hugged his Shizun tightly and felt his slight tremor in his arms. His tremor made him feel love, admiration, madness and obsession.

At the end of the kiss, their lips and teeth were wet and sticky. Chu Wanning opened his eyes subconsciously and looked down where their desires were pleasured together.

At one glance, his scalp went suddenly numb.

For the first time, he saw Mo Ran's cock so clearly that it was really a flesh-and-blood blade. It was rough and full and aggressive. At this time, because of the pleasure, the thing was angry and heavy, and the muscles were clear. The tip was wet and sticky, secreting body fluid and rubbing smoothly against Chu Wanning's abdomen in rhythm.

Chu Wanning closed his eyes suddenly. His whole body was trembling and his mind was in chaos.

How can it be so big? How will we get it inside? I'm afraid I can't even hold it in my mouth. I'll gag. How can it be like this?

He was so ashamed that his eyes burned like fire.

If such a thing comes inside him, will he die?

So those dreams that he had were all unrealistic illusions. Chu Wanning's cheeks were burning red. Otherwise, how is it possible?

How could I possibly kneel on my knees to withstand such fierce intrusion, how could I have accepted such a penis, gasping and groaning shamelessly, like an estrous beast begging for more and more violent interaction?

How can you feel pleasure by being thrusted and ejaculated into?

How is it possible?

The more he thought about it, the more incredible it was, the more humiliating it was and the more aggrieved it was. He even felt a sense of self-contempt, but fortunately Mo Ran did not give him more time to think about it.

Mo Ran's big hand held himself, and also held Chu Wanning, knowing how to touch them.

Desire gradually folded high, the veins of their necks were protruding and shaking because of the pleasure. Chu Wanning rather could not stand it, almost leaking out his voice.

"Don't shout. It's foggy here. You can't see people, but you can hear them." Said Mo Ran bringing another hand to cover Chu Wanning's mouth and nose.

In such a tight and warm fog, Chu Wanning almost produced a kind of suffocating and terrible boiling. His hands were still tied back by his clothes, and his voice was covered. The feeling of being bound by and covered was so painful and exciting.

“Mmm…”

The bullying is too miserable, and the eye tail drips through the tears involuntarily.

Like a dying crane, he leans back slightly, reveals his fragile neck and shakes his head. No, really no. Instead of letting go, Mo Ran went over and gnawed at his throat. Then he raised his eyes quietly and looked at Chu Wanning’s painful and enduring appearance, and at his frowning, almost dying appearance.

“Shizun…”

He muttered and could not help it any longer. He took off his hand covering Chu Wanning and kissed him violently.

The sound of the water was stirring and the waterfall was turbulent.

Chu Wanning was kissed by Mo Ran and could no longer breathe. His lips were slightly swollen, panting, and his eyes were not focused.

Mo Ran embraced him and buried him in his neck. The desire and breathing in the secret place of the hot spring lasted for a long time. By the time they were finally going to climax, both of them were soaked, sweaty and hot, like necked beasts, entangling madly for each other. They only hated that they could not hold each other more tightly, and could not be completely rubbed into each other’s flesh and blood.

“No… I really don’t want to…” Chu Wanning was almost struggling, and the thrill of desire made him shudder. “Don’t do it anymore, I won’t do it…”

Hearing Chu Wanning’s murmur in a low voice, his eyes grew darker and darker. He kissed him on the cheek and gasped, “Baobei, wait a minute, join me…”

The speed of the hand grew faster, and the crotch even unconsciously began to thrust as well. Gradually, the two men had no other thoughts, only desire and love in their eyes.

“Ah… Ah…”

Release time was too pleasurable, perhaps because there was the stimulation of hiding in the Miaoyin Springs, it becomes more and more intense, distracted, Chu Wanning did not endure for long, ejaculating, he hoarsely gasped out, and even forgot to suppress the voice.

Both men were sighing, rough and affectionate, dirty and pure, with only the face of each other at orgasm and the face of the other… Kiss again, lingering, moist, lingering.

“You let out a lot…” Mo Ran murmurs, and the voice is muddy.

His hands were full of their love liquid, his eyes darkened, he leaned over, gently wiped it on Chu Wanning’s abdomen, along the compact and symmetrical abdominal muscles, all the way up, wiped it on his chest.

Chu Wanning was trembling in Mo Ran’s embrace. This kind of trembling caused by pleasure and excitement was not something he could control. Mo Ran hugged him, caressed him, and whispered into his ear, “Did it feel good?”

“…”

“Next time… If you are ready…” With his sweaty skin pressed against his, Mo Ran kissed him, “Then we’ll be serious, alright?”

Although he was prepared for it, hearing the words coming out of his mouth along with the terrible anger he witnessed just now caused his back to feel numb and his entire body tensed up.

Mo Ran, sensing his tiny muscles, kissed him more tenderly.

“I won’t let you feel any pain. I will make you feel good…”

Their passion had not yet subsided, and they were rubbing their temples in the depths of the waterfall.

Mo Ran’s voice was filled with love and lust as he said in a low voice, “You’ll like it, really… At the beginning, it might hurt a little, but I will still be able to control it…”

Chu Wanning felt ashamed. He wanted to run away, but his legs were numb.

“Don’t say anymore…”

It was probably because he knew that he was not really disgusted by him, but because of his rare disobedience, he did not listen to him. His moist lips were still pressed against his ears, as if he was trying his best to seduce him, “I will do it well… Shizun, if you’re afraid of pain, just use some medicine, I’ll go buy… Believe me, once you get used to it, you’ll feel very good.”

I’ve seen how you were screwed to the point of losing your soul in your previous life.

But at that time, it was all because of hatred and punishment.

In this life, I just want you to hug me, become one with your spirit body, and never be separated from me again. I want you to like me, I want you to feel good, and I want you to never forget me.

He kissed him, his eyes like wet wood on fire. These words were said with both gentleness, shame and sincerity, coquettishly and ferociously.

The first part was respectful, while the second part was unsatisfactory.

“My Shizun, next time, can you let me in?”

Ch. 197 Shizun Is Not a Vixen

Because of Mo Ran's words, Chu Wanning felt extremely ashamed. After exiting the Miaoyin Springs, he did not want to bother with Mo Ran anymore, so he left without looking back.

I want face, I want skin. I am even so angry that I don't even have the face to say such shameful words… Did Mo Ran really think that he would nod in agreement?

It was enough for him to do such a thing, there was no need to ask him!

On the second day, when the Elder who taught History was sick, Xue Zhengyong sent Chu Wanning to monitor the students' recitation. History was a big lesson with many disciples, and he couldn't manage it alone, so he asked Mo Ran and the others to help him with his inspection and answer questions.

Of the four masters, Shi Mei and Mo Ran were the busiest. The reason was very simple. Shi Mei was gentle and beautiful, and Mo Ran was kind and heroic. All of these things were very popular with the junior brothers and sisters, especially Shi Mei, whose narrow legs and picturesque eyes made him lose the immaturity of his youth.

He was a completely elegant and beautiful man. He had a good temperament and his voice was pleasant to listen to. Regardless of gender, it was very easy to have a good impression of him.

As for Mo Ran, he was trapped within the group of female disciples and couldn't come out.

“Mo-shixiong, I don’t understand this, can you take a look for me?”

“Mo-shixiong, I can’t really understand the difference between these two incantations. Can shixiong teach me?”

“Mo-shixiong…”

After Mo Ran explained to the ninth shimei why the “Ten Thousand Waves Reversal” had to look exactly like the original one to work, Chu Wanning finally lost his patience. He frowned and coldly looked at Mo Ran from several rows of disciples.

Mo Ran had been ignored by him since yesterday. In fact, he felt somewhat wronged.

He was used to being rough in his past life, and he treasured him even more in this life. Thus, every step he took, he wanted to see if Chu Wanning was happy or not. He didn’t know what he had done wrong. Was he not supposed to ask that question?

He shouldn’t have asked, “My good Shizun, can I go in next time?” Instead, he should ask, “My darling, can I go in next time?”

Having suffered a day’s worth of cold treatment, he suddenly felt Chu Wanning’s gaze. Even though it was glaring at him fiercely, Mo Ran was still like a cabbage that had been watered with water. He immediately perked up and gave him a big smile.

“…”

This person didn’t know where all those girls had come from, nor did he understand why they had so many questions.

Do they not understand? If he really didn't understand, then why did he not ask Chu Wanning about the creation of the Wave Reversal Spell and instead go around the corner to call them "Mo-shixiong"?

Chu Wanning was displeased, but he did not say anything. He only looked coldly and silently at Mo Ran.

As he watched, Mo Ran felt that something was amiss. At this moment, the tenth shimei waved at him eagerly. "Mo-shige ~"

"I'm sorry, I have something to do." Mo Ran smiled and pointed at Xue Meng. "Ask your Xue-shixiong."

As he finished speaking, he walked towards Chu Wanning, leaving the little shimei with a disappointed expression. He bit his pen and sighed deeply.

"Shizun, what's wrong? You don't seem very happy?"

Chu Wanning pursed his lips but didn't say anything directly. After a moment of silence, he said, "I'm a bit tired, let Xue Meng patrol the area. Help me watch over this area."

Mo Ran did not suspect him, nodded his head, and followed Chu Wanning as if he was doing his duty. Strangely, as he walked beside Chu Wanning, he suddenly felt that there were fewer people asking questions. Could it be that this group of disciples was smarter than the rest?

He could not hear the annoying "Mo-shixiong" or the even more annoying "Mo-shige". Chu Wanning finally felt better, but his face remained expressionless as he paced around the crowd of elementary disciples who were reciting scriptures. As he walked, he suddenly heard a conversation between two junior disciples.

“Shixiong, shixiong, let me tell you, there is a fox spirit in the Miaoyin Springs.”

“Ah? What do you mean?”

“Yesterday, after I finished bathing at Plum Blossom House and was about to go back, I heard a faint sound of something in the distance… Uh… There was such a commotion…”

The shixiong seemed very surprised. After opening his mouth for a while, he hesitantly said, “Could it be that some fellow sect member is acting so boldly?”

“Who has the guts to do so? It’s impossible. If Elder Yuheng or Elder Tanlang were to see it, they would have broken their legs! It’s definitely impossible for him to be a disciple of the sect!”

“That’s true.”

“It must be the fox spirit gathering to replenish his yin energy. Tonight, I’ll call some of my fellow brothers to take a look and see if we can capture that little fox. That would count as a meritorious deed, it wouldn’t be good to let his seduce our fellow sect members, right?”

“That’s true, but have you seen who the fellow sect member he seduced yesterday was?”

“… The Miaoyin Springs is so foggy, I don’t want to go even if I have to walk in front of their eyes. I’m still a kid, what if that fox spirit catches my eyes, what will I do?” The little disciple muttered to one another. Suddenly, he noticed that his senior brother’s expression was strange. He reached out

his hand and scratched it, “What’s wrong?” His expression suddenly changed.

“…”

The little disciple finally felt the chill behind his back. He faintly turned his head and saw Elder Yuheng standing behind him with an unfathomable expression and an extremely cold aura. He was so frightened that he cried out, “Elder, please forgive me!”

“To recite a scripture is like reciting a scripture, what is so clever about it? Also, dual cultivation.” Chu Wanning’s face was gloomy, “You’re thinking quite well. If you continue to blabber nonsense, you’ll be punished.” With that, he flicked his sleeves and left.

Mo Ran also heard the conversation. He wanted to laugh, but he didn’t dare to. His eyes were chasing after Chu Wanning’s back. He thought to himself, “How could this serious person love me so much?” Why would he be willing to be with him…

He felt warm and bitter in his chest, mixed with sweet and sour. After the lesson was over, he couldn’t help but hug and kiss Chu Wanning, who was busy cleaning up the ancestral scripts, lovingly in his arms.

Chu Wanning was furious, he hit him on the head with the bamboo slip, knocking on his head as he said, “It’s all your good idea, Miaoyin Springs… This is great, what did I become?”

He rubbed the tip of his nose against his ear and asked with a gentle and soft voice, “What has Shizun become?”

Chu Wanning did not expect him to be so shameless and could only stare with wide open eyes, “You…!”

Dimples about to drip into honey, Mo Ran kissed him again and laughed, “Those shidis are really bullshitty, fox spirit? Harvesting… What… Haha, Yang Recovery to complement your Yin?”

“Say it again, I’ll kill you.” Chu Wanning almost stuffed the bamboo block into his mouth.

Mo Ran smiled, “Ugh… Then could he choose the method of death? It’s also a good thing that to be killed by the Miaoyin Springs’s fox spirit Zaiyang…”

“Mo Weiyu!”

From then on, Chu Wanning refused to take a bath at the Miaoyin Springs with Mo Ran anymore.

A few days later, Madam Wang called Mo Ran to the table and asked him a question.

“A-Ran, when you were wandering around a few years ago, did you see a strange girl in the Snow Valley?”

“What girl? What’s so strange about that?”

“She should be very white. There isn’t much blood on her face. She likes wearing red and always carries a basket in her arms. She would chat with passersby in the Snow Valley…”

Mo Ran laughed, “Oh, aunt is talking about Xue Qianjin, right?”

Madam Wang was surprised at first, but was soon overjoyed. “You know of Xue Qianjin? I thought that you had never read about such a monster before, and specifically wanted to describe it to you… I didn’t expect that…”

“Shizun’s bets were on, I just happened to see it. Aunt asked me what does Xue Qianjin do?”

“It’s like this. Young Master Nangong came by a few days ago and I checked his pulse. I feel that the Scorching Sun Aura in his body is not uncontrollable, it’s just that the materials required are extremely rare. The hardest thing to find is the Ice Shilling Fish in Xue Qianjin’s basket. However, that Xue Qianjin is extremely difficult to meet. Twenty years ago, someone had met her in the Snow Valley, and if you were to look back on her now, you must know that it was recorded in the Taxue Palace on Mount Kunlun a hundred years ago. Therefore, I wanted to ask you if you are lucky.”

Hearing this, Mo Ran was both happy and worried. He was happy because if Nangong Si could be cured, he would be an ordinary person. Ye Wangxi was deeply in love with him and might eventually become a good family member.

With a mixture of joy and sorrow, he said to Madam Wang, “After Xu Shuanglin’s matter is settled, I will personally go to the Snow Valley and search from the foot of the mountain to the perilous peak. Perhaps I can find some clues.”

After Mo Ran finished speaking, because he was happy, he immediately went to inform Nangong Si. Madam Wang said from behind: “Aiya, A-Ran,

don’t leave so quickly. I’ve already told Young Master Nangong, you don’t need to…”

However, Mo Ran did not hear anything and was already far away.

He looked around and found that Nangong Si was at the end of the Bridge of Helplessness. As he was about to go over, he saw a person walking over from the other side of the bridge. Mo Ran looked over and realized it was Ye Wangxi. His heart skipped a beat and he stopped calling for Nangong Si. Instead, he stood far away and looked at them.

The mental cultivation method she practiced, as well as the guidance she received, had already made her unrecognizable from men. In fact, all these years, if not for the fact that she still had a crush on Nangong Si, she would have already forgotten that she was a woman.

When she saw him coming, he gave a light cough and looked out at the river again.

“Young Master called me?”

“… Ah…” He crossed his fingers and rested them on the stone lion on the Bridge of Helplessness. After a long time, he finally answered, “Yes.”

“What’s the matter?”

“No, no.” He did not dare to look at Ye Wangxi at all, his fingers caressing the stone lion’s curled hair, “That’s right. There’s something I want to give you.”

Ye Wangxi was confused, “What?”

Nangong Si lowered his head and slowly untied a piece of cloth from his waist. On the other side, which Ye Wangxi couldn't see, he clumsily untied it for a long time before he finally did. He passed it over to Ye Wangxi and coughed softly, "Thank you for all these years… Forget it, I don't know what to say. I don't have any valuables to wear right now, so I'll just give you this. After following me for so many years, it's not the best jade, but…"

He did not continue speaking. His eyes were lowered and his face was a little red.

He didn't dare to look at Ye Wangxi for a long time, after a while, seeing that Ye Wangxi had no reaction, he suddenly felt very upset, very rude and also very embarrassed. After hesitating for a while, he took back the phoenix totem jade pendant from Ye Wangxi's hands, and muttered: "I, I know this is not good, if you don't like it, then… Just give it back to me. It's okay, I, I won't mind… After the revival of the Rufeng Sect, I will find you the best one, I…"

Ye Wangxi was stunned for a long time before she smiled. There was a trace of a woman's gentleness in her eyes, which made her look as if she had never had a rouge in her life before.

She held the jade pendant in her hands. The wind was blowing, the bamboo leaves were rustling. Ye Wangxi said, "This one is enough. Thank you, Young Master."

Nangong's face turned even redder, and he said woodenly: "You, as long as you like it… I also… Sigh… I don't know what to say."

Mo Ran: "…"

In the bamboo forest, he almost wanted to hold on to the head and smash it against the stone lion.

Does this man know how to do nothing but raise little wolfdogs? “I don’t know what to say.”

“Madam Wang told me that I can suppress the violent spirit core in my body. Perhaps I don’t need to dual cultivate in order to do so.”

Ye Wangxi was stunned for a moment, but soon realized that he had misunderstood her words. She hummed softly and lowered her eyelashes, not saying another word.

If he didn’t need to dual cultivate, then he would have no reason to be shameless and stay by the side of anyone. She also had his dignity, and didn’t want to beg for him to love and pity her. Nangong Si used this jade pendant to make a decision, he could also save some thoughts for himself in the future.

“You understand. Hmm… Do you understand what I mean?”

“… Right.”

Nangong Si was overjoyed upon hearing that, but he still foolishly replied, “Then, then if you are willing… Actually… You can call me in the future, just like you did when you were a kid, I… I… I think that’s good. Oh, I’m sorry. I really don’t know what to say. Sigh…”

He sighed twice, until he couldn’t take it anymore. He covered his eyes and sighed, “Heavens, what am I saying?”

Now it was Ye Wangxi’s turn to be at a loss. She raised her head and suddenly seemed to understand something. She opened her eyes slightly,

and a thin layer of blood appeared on her face.

The bamboo leaves on the Bridge of Helplessness swirled in the wind as her clothes fluttered in the wind. Her jade pendant was warm and smooth. Her bright red tassels were fluttering between her fingers.

After a while, Ye Wangxi hesitated and asked in a soft voice, “What?”

In an instant, perhaps it was an illusion, but Nangong Si felt that her voice, which had been distorted by the spell to the point where it could no longer be recovered, had become a little soft, a little soft, in the vague wind.

He suddenly raised his head and looked at Ye Wangxi’s face. The morning clouds were like brocade, reflecting her expression, and she smiled, still with his familiar handsome, upright appearance, but her slightly narrowed eyes were flashing. She did not hold back as tears rolled down her face.

Nangong Si looked at her, at the face, and the vague image of a young child came back to him.

It was a little girl, young and immature. Her cheeks were flushed and her eyelashes were very long. She had a very soft and sweet appearance.

At that time, Ye Wangxi had not yet been sent to the Dark City by Nangong Liu to cultivate his mental cultivation method. She had just been picked up by Xu Shuanglin and had to learn some basic magic techniques from Nangong Si.

That day, in order to train them, Nangong Liu had them test their strength in the simplest illusions of the Rufeng Sect. That illusion was not difficult, but it was somewhat terrifying.

At first, Nangong Si did not intend to deal with Ye Wangxi, he only cared about himself. But then, he realized that Ye Wangxi was not following him. She was just a little girl curled up in the temple of the illusion, not daring to move at all.

He looked back at his and snorted. Just as he was about to leave, he saw a Hanged Ghost floating behind her. It stuck out its bright red tongue and was about to wrap it around her throat—

“AHHH!”

By the time the little girl realized it, it was already too late. She could only scream in fear, but there was nothing she could do. She hugged her sword and turned her head away.

But nothing happened.

When she opened his eyes timidly, she found that Nangong Si was standing in front of her. The Hanged Ghost had already been repelled by his sword, sticking to the Thunder Sigil spirit, and in the time it took for lightning to bloom, he turned his head to look at her, wanting to scold her a little. But the girl’s expression was so pitiful, like a frightened cat.

Nangong Si was stunned, he said after a long while, “You, why are you so useless, you are even afraid of ghosts…”

“That’s a ghost!” Ye Wangxi cried out, “If I’m not even afraid of ghosts anymore, then what am I afraid of?”

Nangong Si, “… Why are all of you girls so useless?”

“Then I also want to be of use!” The beautiful little girl cried, she was so wronged that her nose was running, “Who’s willing to drag you down, I

want to help too. But you left so quickly, you didn't even wait for me… I… I'm just scared of ghosts…"

"Err…"

After that, Nangong Si had no choice but to kneel down beside her. He could not coax her, and could only blankly watch her cry. Ye Wangxi, who had never experienced the dark city's tempering, was like an ordinary girl, her tears flowing down his face.

She cried and choked back her sobs, "What are you looking at?"

"… I want to see when you're done crying."

"…"

"After you're done crying, let's go together. Who told you to be so weak?" He raised his hand and tapped the little girl's fair forehead, "Follow me, I will protect you."

When he thought back to the past, he realized that during that illusion it was actually the only time he had seen a girl like Ye Wangxi cry because she was afraid.

Later, she became cold, stony, and suppressed all emotions under her pale face.

Suppressing her emotions, not to mention Nangong Si, he had even forgotten what kind of person she was. She only remembered to follow behind the back of the Young Master of the Rufeng Sect, from the child to the youth to when he became a Young Master.

She didn’t shed tears or drag him down. She followed him silently for twenty years.

Ch. 198 Shizun's Trip to Mount Huang

After ten days of fasting, Nangong Si and Ye Wangxi were able to set off for Mount Jiao. "Naobaijin had been wounded, and his vitality was greatly damaged, so for the time being he could not take his master on a long journey."

This huge demonic wolf transformed itself into the appearance of a young cub. The palm-sized wolf stuck its fluffy head out from Nangong Si's quiver.

Mo Ran escorted the two to the entrance of the mountain and caressed the mane of the fine horse beside him. He laughed, "The Mount Jiao Road is far, and the Imperial Sword Technique is exhausting energy. The two of them grew up eating spiritual herbs and traveled thousands of miles in a day. Although they are not as powerful as Naobaijin, it is still passable."

Nangong Si thanked Mo Ran, and with Ye Wangxi, mounted their horses. They bowed their heads and clasped their fists, "Thank you, Mo-xiong. There is no need to send us off. We shall meet again in the future."

"Yes, be careful along the way."

He stood at the entrance of the mountain and watched as Nangong Si and Ye Wangxi's silhouettes gradually disappeared into the distance. Just as he was about to leave, he suddenly heard a crisp sound from the forest to his left.

"Meow…"

"Cat?" Mo Ran narrowed his eyes and muttered.

On the other side, Ye Wangxi and Nangong Si were walking side by side down the mountain gate. There was still a deserted path from the Sisheng Peak to the town of Wuchang. Sunlight scattered down from the lush foliage and the hooves of the horses stepped, turning the shattered light into dust.

Nangong Si looked at Ye Wangxi, and was about to say something, when a head popped out of the quiver, revealing Naobaijin front claws. “Awooooooooo!” Shocked, Nangong Si quickly reined in his bridle and said, “Be careful!”

The two of them had practiced together since childhood and had a tacit understanding of each other. The two of them flew up from the left side of Nangong Si and Ye Wangxi’s sword, and after a series of clanging sounds, the poisoned Pear Blossom Needles fell off one after the other. Following that, Ye Wangxi raised her hand and threw out a talisman, and the barrier flew out and trapped the two of them.

“Who is it?!”

The sunlight was dim, but it was not obscured by the clouds. Instead, a person was standing on top of a thin branch. He was wearing a wide robe and his hair was fluttering in the wind. He stood against the sunlight with a hateful expression on his face.

The cousin of the former Sect Leader of Jiangdong Hall, Huang Xiaoyue.

He stood on the branch and watched coldly at Ye Wangxi’s face. Soon after, the dense forest was filled with rustling sounds, and more than a hundred Jiangdong Hall disciples walked out from the forest, each of them with

bright red frontal rings on their heads. They were all elite disciples of the Jiangdong Hall.

Huang Xiaoyue twirled his beard and said, “You two, are you two comfortable at Sisheng Peak? It took me ten days and ten nights to come out of hiding.”

Nangong Si was furious, “Huang Xiaoyue, why is it you again?!”

“What happened to me?” Huang Xiaoyue replied coldly, “You are well aware of the feud between the Jiangdong Hall and the Rufeng Sect.”

Nangong gritted his teeth and said, “From Linyi to Shizhong, you have to repel four attacks from your disciples, and you still want to chase after them? What grudge? Are you guys done yet? Xu Shuanglin knows his place. Your sister-in-law has killed your brother, and has come time and time again to argue with us about it. Just where is your face?”

“Face? In this old man’s opinion, the little gongzi is the one who truly does not care about face.” Huang Xiaoyue said gloomily, “It was obviously your Rufeng Sect that had greatly damaged the vitality of our Jiangdong Hall. Do you dare to deny it?”

Ye Wangxi said, “Even if you want to seek revenge for the Rufeng Sect, you should do it in a fair and honorable manner. What kind of actions are these?”

“Shut up. It’s for a man to speak, it’s not up to a girl like you to speak.” Huang Xiaoyue waved his sleeves, “Don’t think that because that bastard would treat you as a man and raise you you’re really a man.” He said, “Little girl, you will always be a silly little girl. A woman like you should be

cooking in the kitchen. You are just a girl, what qualifications do you have to come out and act arrogantly in front of me?"

Nangong Si retorted in anger, "Huang Xiaoyue, you have to be reasonable!"

"Very well. Then this old man will talk reason and settle the total debt." Huang Xiaoyue then said, "Your father shamelessly made an affair with a married woman, inciting that wicked woman to kill my own younger brother and seize power and usurp the throne. As for the one next to you…"

"She is the daughter of a beast. Her foster father has spread the private affairs of our Jiangdong Hall to the rest of the world, harming our great and noble name. Today, this old man has personally led an outstanding individual from his sect to stop a lowly person, all in order to repay the Jiangdong Hall and to give justice to the entire world!"

He waved his hand and descended, and those hundred disciples, who were like tigers eyeing their prey, immediately rushed forward to attack them. But just as they were about to scuttle out of the forest, Mo Ran suddenly descended from the sky.

"Brother Mo?"

The person who came was none other than Mo Ran. He held a willow vine in his hand as he stood on top of a tree opposite to Huang Xiaoyue, staring coldly at him.

Huang Xiaoyue didn't expect that Mo Ran would appear. His expression immediately turned ugly, and after a long while, he asked, "How come Mo-zongshi is interested in watching the show?"

“Then we should ask the disciple of the Grandmaster how he decided not to do it, but to hide in the forest and learn to meow like a cat.”

Huang Xiaoyue’s expression was gloomy, his face and surname were almost identical. He calmly asked, “Grandmaster, what do you mean by that?”

“This question should be asked to Senior Huang,” Mo Ran said. “In my Sisheng Peak, attacking Sisheng Peak’s guests, Senior Huang, do you think that my sect is too clean and tidy, and would like to sprinkle some blood on the ground?”

“Since you are already out of the sect, it is not up to you to take care of it. I will avenge my deceased brother, and there is no need for Mo-zongshi to say anything!”

Mo Ran said, “Senior Huang is right. Personal grudges. After leaving the sect, it is indeed not a matter of life or death.”

Huang Xiaoyue coldly snorted, “Then why aren’t you giving way to the Grandmaster?”

Mo Ran did not move. The bloody light from Jiangui became even brighter. The willow leaf on it almost turned into a string of red beads of blood. He said, “But what if I want to manage it myself?”

“You-!”

Huang Xiaoyue was aware of Mo Ran’s strength, but he was unwilling to give up his revenge. He could only threaten him in anger, “Mo-zongshi, are you trying to make an enemy out of my Jiangdong Hall?”

“I didn’t mean it that way. I just wanted to send a noble guest to leave Sichuan safely. As for whether it was the Jiangdong Hall or Jiang Xi Hall,

they would all be the same."

Huang Xiaoyue narrowed his eyes, the hatred in his eyes could almost turn into a visible flame, burning Mo Ran and the juniper he was standing on into ashes.

"You insist on protecting these two remnants of the Rufeng Sect?"

"What did the remaining scoundrel say?" Mo Ran asked coldly, "I would like to consult senior. Jiangdong Hall regrets that Miss Ye and Young Master Nangong have participated in this."

"…"

"Did he plot a change in Jiangdong Hall? Or did he reveal the scandal of Jiangdong Hall?" Mo Ran looked at Huang Xiaoyue and asked, "Did you kill the previous Sect Leader, or did you deliberately take part in the murder of your disciple?"

"But so what?!" Huang Xiaoyue said furiously, "The son shall pay the debts of his father! It's perfectly justified!"

"What a righteous and natural thing to do." Mo Ran said indifferently, "That's enough, I don't think there's a need to argue with Senior Huang. Let's spar and let the weapons decide."

Huang Xiaoyue was angered to the extreme as he shouted, "Mo Ran! You're so unreasonable!"

"Interesting, who's the unreasonable one?" At this moment, another voice came from the mountain path with a wild tone. Xue Meng held Longcheng in his hand as he slowly walked out from the forest. The hilt of his saber

was cold and sharp. With the shine of the sun, it was almost impossible to open one's eyes.

"You started a massacre in front of my house and shouted loudly. Why is Jiangdong Hall at Sisheng Peak? Is he courting death?"

If it was just one person, Huang Xiaoyue might not be able to defeat him, but with his numbers, he might be able to get away from him and take the opportunity to behead his enemy. However, with Phoenix Xue Meng striding forward, who knew about the fierceness of Longcheng in his hands?

At this moment, both brothers had appeared in front of the mountain gate. No matter how hard Huang Xiaoyue tried, it was impossible for him to find an opportunity to protect Nangong Si and Ye Wangxi's lives.

Seeing that Xue Meng had come, Mo Ran's expression became serious. He said to Xue Meng, "Go back."

"Let me help you —"

"This matter has nothing to do with the Sisheng Peak. It is my selfishness that is helping me, so don't interfere." Mo Ran frowned, thinking to himself, 'Is this little brother stupid?' Although Jiangdong Hall was no longer powerful, he was still a skinny camel that was bigger than a horse. He was still a part of the nine great sects, and the old hall Shizun's niece was a dao companion with the head senior apprentice brother of the Fire Phoenix Pavilion. If Xue Meng were to come out to help them, it would mean that he would be using the name of the Sisheng Peak to suddenly lose all decorum with the two great cultivation sects.

It must not be done.

Mo Ran said, “Quickly go back.”

On the contrary, he was annoyed that Mo Ran did not need his help. While they were in a stalemate, he suddenly saw the dust flying in the distance, and the snow-white horse arrived in a flash. The person on the horse was dressed in snow-white clothes, and had an extremely beautiful appearance; carrying a lute on his back, was the Immortal Lady of the Taxue Palace in Mount Kunlun.

“Urgent news! Emergency report —!” The immortal lady frowned, she whipped her horse and shouted loudly.

However, when she turned a corner and saw such a tense scene at the foot of the mountain, she suddenly reined in the reins. She was stunned for a moment and sat astride the horse, blinking blankly.

“Urgent — er… This is… What are you doing?”

Due to the sudden arrival of the herald from the Taxue Palace on Mount Kunlun, the fight between Mo Ran and Huang Xiaoyue did not succeed. Instead, Huang Xiaoyue was invited by Xue Zhengyong to the Sisheng Peak.

The Immortal Lady of the Taxue Palace stood in the Loyalty Hall. Her red lips parted, and she bowed. Then she said:

“Urgent report, Xu Shuanglin is missing.”

After saying so, Ye Wangxi’s face turned pale.

The immortal lady said, “I sent over ten thousand Jade Butterflies to track down Xu Shuanglin, and I’ve finally returned two this morning. Since we found out that there was a strange magic curse around Mount Huang, the palace master guessed that Xu Shuanglin should be hiding here, and

specifically ordered us to rush to the various big sects and report it to them as a backup plan."

Xue Zhengyong was surprised and happy at the same time. "We found it just like that?"

The immortal lady replied, "I can't be sure, but Jade Butterfly reported that the bloody aura around Mount Huang has been lingering around for the entire day. It has already become a phenomenon, so it should not be too far from the mark."

Xue Zhengyong stood up and said, "Good!". Now that he had a clue, he didn't want to delay any longer. "What does your palace master mean?"

"The palace master and Sect Leader share similar views. He also feels that the matter should not be delayed and should quickly head there and investigate."

"Great!" Xue Zhengyong then turned to Huang Xiaoyue and said, "Leader Huang, why don't we go together? If we are able to successfully capture the culprit, Xu Shuanglin, then we can take revenge for the murder of our younger brother."

Huang Xiaoyue's heart skipped a beat. He knew very well that his chances of defeating Xu Shuanglin were close to zero. Furthermore, his so-called revenge was just a pretense.

Actually, how much could his brother's death have to do with these two juniors?

While he was shouting the slogan of revenge for his disciple, he had other shrewd plans in mind. One must know that due to the calamity that had

befallen Jiangdong Hall, their strength had declined and he had long heard of the rich and precious treasures that were hidden in the Rufeng Sect. He was planning to capture both Ye Wangxi and Nangong Si in one fell swoop and force them to throw up their ancestors for their own use.

After weighing the pros and cons for a while, he forced out a brown and shriveled up smile and said: “Whether the one on the Mount Huang is Xu Shuanglin or not, we still don’t know. Not to mention that the conflict between the Jiangdong Hall and the Rufeng Sect has already been settled, this is not my personal grudge, it’s a matter that concerns my sect’s reputation, so we need to settle this properly.”

“You’re right.” Xue Zhengyong said, “Then we should first find Xu Shuanglin and settle our personal grudges, and then find Rufeng Sect to settle our grudges?”

“What Sect Leader Xue said is interesting. The Rufeng Sect is now a pile of scorched earth. Where do you want me to settle the score with you?”

“I’m not sure about that. You have to ask this Huang-daochang yourself.” Xue Zhengyong said with a smile, “Why is there only rubble left of the Rufeng Sect and the daochang is still in a hurry to exterminate these two.”

“You-!” Huang Xiaoyue shook his sleeves and said, “This is my personal matter.”

Xue Meng smiled merrily. “Just now, you said it’s the face of the sect, and it’s a big matter. Now, it’s a private matter. Jiangdong Hall is one of the nine great sects in the cultivation world. How can you act so casually?”

Huang Xiaoyue knew that he was in the wrong, but he didn’t know how to reply, so he simply didn’t speak. He gave Xue Zhengyong a fierce glare,

then waved his sleeve and led a group of Jiangdong Clan disciples out of the main entrance of the mountain of the dead in full fury. They took the lead and headed towards the Mount Huang to ride on the sword.

Extremely apologetic, Ye Wangxi said to Xue Zhengyong, “Sect Leader Xue, I am truly sorry. We —”

“Birds are caught on the net, hunters will not kill them.” Watching the people of Jiangdong Hall leave, the smile on Xue Zhengyong’s face slowly disappeared. His gaze turned cold as he said, “It’s Jiangdong Hall that has gone too far.”

He looked at the light of day outside of the great hall, and his brows were pressed down very low. A faint crease appeared in the middle, and after a long while, he sighed: “Let’s go to Mount Huang.”

Mount Huang was a long way off, so everyone chose to ride their flying swords. When they arrived at Mount Huang, a large group of cultivators had already gathered at the foot of the mountain. The remaining nine sects had all arrived at the foot of Mount Huang, and the rest of the nine cultivation worlds had all arrived.

Chu Wanning was the first one to get off the Imperial Sword Technique. His steps were a bit unsteady and his face was very pale. Fortunately, his face was very pale and the people around him could not see anything strange. He walked over and gently rubbed the back of his hand while no one was looking.

“Shizun, you flew exceptionally well.”

“Hmm?”

Mo Ran smiled and said, “It’s true.”

Chu Wanning coughed lightly and looked away.

The other eight Sect Leaders had already arrived and were standing at the very front of the mountain. In front of a barrier that reached into the sky, Xue Zhengyong immediately rushed over to help and poured his spirit energy into it.

The people that were at the Sisheng Peak arrived one after another, and after a while, Xue Meng also arrived. He landed steadily beside the two of them, looked at the scene in front of him, and immediately said with a frown, “What is he doing? Why don’t you go up the mountain?”

Seeing him come, Mo Ran explained, “It’s not that I’m not going, but I can’t go up.”

Xue Meng was rather confused. “Why?”

Chu Wanning replied: “Mount Huang is one of the four great evil mountains in the cultivation world, this mountain is very strange, and it is not so easy to enter.

Xue Meng was a little shocked, “I only know of the Four Great Sacred Mountains. Which four?”

Chu Wanning said, “Mount Jiao, Mount Jia —”

Xue Meng was stunned. “A fake mountain?”

“… Black Tortoise Armor.”

“Oh, oh.” Xue Meng’s face turned red. “Yes.”

“Fearsome Mountain, and this mountain in front of us, Mount Huang.”

Chu Wanning paused for a moment, then continued, “This is the bloody past of the cultivation world, now it’s rarely mentioned. Only by reading more books would you be able to read the records of the four great evil mountains.”

“Then why would there be something like an evil mountain?”

Chu Wanning didn’t answer directly, instead, he asked Xue Meng, “Do you still remember the time when the first sect leader of the Rufeng Sect subdued the flood dragon?”

“I remember.” Xue Meng said, “The evil dragon was in the East China Sea. It was he who defeated the evil dragon, sealed it in the Golden Drum Tower, and then signed a blood contract with the dragon so that it could be used by him. The dragon’s tendons became the mantle, the dragon’s blood became the river, the dragon’s bones became the mountain rocks, and the dragon’s armor became the trees. This mountain, for generations, has guarded the tombs of the disciples of the Rufeng Sect, hence it is known as the Hero’s Tomb, also known as Mount Jiao.”

Chu Wanning nodded, “That’s right, that’s why Mount Jiao is the transformation of the Azure Dragon Evil Spirit. You all know that the four constellations of the auspicious beasts are the Azure Dragon Vermilion Bird and the White Tiger, the Xuanwu, respectively.”

Xue Meng slowly came to a realization. “So, the remaining few tablets are the same as the Mount Jiao. They were transformed from the spirit of the evil beast?”

“Yes.”

Xue Meng said: “Then Mount Huang is… Is it a Vermilion Bird?”

He jerked his head up to look at the colossal mountain range shrouded in haze and found that the center of the mountain was towering and flattened twice, like a phoenix groaning at the nape of its neck.

Chu Wanning said, “That’s right. In addition, each of the four great evil mountains had their own evil arts. For example, Mount Jiao only allowed the descendants of the Rufeng Sect to lead people in. Those who trespassed would be dragged into the earth by the dragon tendons, buried alive. This Mount Huang, is also the same.”

“But it’s so strange.” Xue Meng turned his head to look at the Sect Leaders who were casting their spells. His father also went over to help, “Mount Jiao is the mountain belonging to the Rufeng Sect. Everyone knows about this. We just need to bring the descendants of the sects who subdued the Vermilion Bird Evil Spirit back here.”

Mo Ran, who had been silent all this while, finally spoke up, “That person died by accident not long ago. If she’s still alive, he can do it.”

Xue Meng was stunned for a moment. “You know who it is?”

“Got it. It’s a woman, we all know her.”

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"Ah, who is it? Was he the only one capable of commanding Mount Huang? What about the other descendants of the Vermilion Bird Evil Spirit?"

Mo Ran did not directly answer him. Instead, he said, "A thousand years ago, the person who subdued the Vermilion Bird's Evil Spirit was called Song Qiao, courtesy name Xingyi."

Xue Meng turned pale with fright and blurted out, "The lord of Huabi, Song Xingyi?!"

"Yes."

"H-he's the last Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast in the history of cultivation to become a Grandmaster!"

Mo Ran's face was expressionless as he said: "That's right, so the last person who could open the gates to Mount Huang has already died in the sea of fire of the Rufeng Sect. It's Song Qiutong."

Xue Meng's mouth could not help but open widely, and just as he was about to say something, a commotion suddenly occurred in the distance. At the foot of the Mount Huang, a large group of green-clothed cultivators from Bitan Manor were suddenly surrounded by the barrier.

"Lord Li!"

"My lord!"

Chu Wanning's complexion slightly changed. With sunken brows, he walked towards them. He pushed his way through the crowd and saw Li Wuxin being supported by a disciple. His face was as white as paper and he spat out blood.

The stinky blood was stuck to his white beard, his lips were green and white, his eyes were rolled up, and he was already subconsciously speaking with a trembling voice, "It's first… It was… It's first place…"

Due to Li Wuxin pulling back, the remaining Sect Leaders were affected by the backlash from the enchantment. Huang Xiaoyue was the temporary Palace Head of the Jiangdong Hall, and his spiritual energy was lower than the other Sect Leaders. At this point, he could not bear it any longer, and even turning his head was difficult.

On the other hand, Jiang Xi's face was rather pale. However, he was still capable of looking in Li Wuxin's direction. He opened his mouth and said, "He fell victim to the Phoenix Nightmare."

The Phoenix Curse was attached to the Phoenix's seal in Mount Huang. If someone wanted to tear open the crack and attempt to climb the mountain, they would be easily engulfed by this nightmare.

This was similar to the illusion of Jincheng Lake, but the Phoenix Nightmare was hard to dispel and the one who was tricked would often never wake up again.

Seeing that, the group of Bitan Manor disciples knelt down on the ground, and some of them even started to wail: "Palace Master! "Please wake up, Palace Master."

Li Wuxin laughed in his dreams for a while, then mumbled his words, and then suddenly broke free from the embrace of his disciple Zhen Congming, who was lying on the ground, and started dancing with joy, and laughed out loud: “First place! First place! First place!”

Among the disciples surrounding them, someone whispered, “What is first place?”

Li Wuxin would never answer them. He was immersed in the joy of the nightmare. His mouth was wide open, revealing two rows of teeth that were thick with blood and saliva. He laughed extremely happily.

“No-you can’t do this! You can’t do this! He said that he would return the secret sword art manual from the Bitan Manor to me! How can you go back on your word!”

A moment later it was a mournful face.

This was truly frightening. Li Wuxin was an old cultivator who cared about his reputation and was also the master of a village. He had never had such a face in front of others…

He didn’t look like a Sect Leader or a cultivator.

Not even a man.

As if he was doing his best to hide his dignity in the wrinkles that covered his face, he begged, “Eight billion gold is truly too much. That secret sword art scroll was originally from Bitan Manor, and was given to my Shizun. Sect Leader… Please, a little less…”

The crowd around them looked at each other in dismay.

8 billion gold?

Sword manual?

Afterwards, someone suddenly recalled that because of the former Sect Leader's fiery temper, he had righteously and straightforwardly provoked the attention of many sects in the cultivation world. After that incident, the entire villa and river fell, and he was unable to allocate even the leftover funds to subsidize disciples for three years. Then, for some reason, he suddenly became rich again, but strangely, ever since that generation, the Broken Water Sword Technique, which originally shook the entire Nine Regions, had fallen into desolation, and the disciples were unable to use its essence.

For this reason, there were people in the martial arts world who ridiculed Li Wuxin, saying that it was all because of his bad teaching that caused the former Sword Saint's Manor, the Bitan Manor, to be reduced to the end of the world of cultivation.

But at this moment, everyone realized with a start that things might not be as simple as they thought before — could it be that the calamity at the Bitan Manor had been brought back to the continent by selling the sword manual?

Some of the profiteers immediately thought of Guyue'ye and stealthily swept their eyes over Jiang Xi's face.

"Could it be Guyue'ye…"

"It might be Sect Leader Jiang's Martial Ancestor…"

Li Wuxin was still struggling painfully on the ground. He rolled on the ground, but Zhen Ming couldn't even hold him. He could only cry and yell at times, and at times, he could only get up and kowtow in every direction with blood and snot flowing down.

"Give it back to me. I've raised it for most of my life. The total is 5.1 billion gold." Li Wuxin wailed, "Only five billion and one hundred million gold… What you want, I've really done my best. I really don't have that much money, I can't just kill, rob, and do all sorts of bad things to get the money right?! The sect was getting more and more rich, but the Bitan Manor really didn't have that much money… I beg of you…"

Upon hearing the words "every day, every member of the noble sects will enter the sect with ten thousand gold coins", those who hadn't been sizing up Jiang Xi started to scan his direction. Jiang Xi's Xuanyuan Pavilion was the largest black market in the world of cultivation. If it wasn't for him, who else could it be?

The young disciples of the Bitan Manor were furious. Their eyes were already bloodshot as they shouted at Jiang Xi, "Sect Leader Jiang! So the three most important volumes of our Bitan Manor's Broken Water Sword Art are actually from you, Guyue'ye?! You want to ask for eight billion gold, you… How can you be so shameless!"

Before Jiang Xi could say anything, a person on the left said hoarsely, "The truth is unknown. How dare you accuse Sect Leader Jiang?"

The person who spoke was Huang Xiaoyue, who was on the verge of losing his breath.

The hands of this old fogey, who was holding on to the barrier, were already trembling. He still wanted to speak up for Jiang Xi to show his loyalty? What in the world was he planning? It was as clear as day.

The disciple from the Bitan Manor was extremely angry. He rushed forward to curse Huang Xiaoyue, but he was firmly stopped by his fellow sect members. He advised, “Zhen Fu, don’t provoke them.”

Hearing this name, Mo Ran was stunned.

In the past, he might have thought that this name was the same as being really smart, making people laugh their teeth off. However, now that he looked at the old man kowtowing and kneeling in the mud, he suddenly felt very bitter.

He couldn’t laugh at all.

“Five billion won’t do… Then… Then five billion and five hundred million?” Li Wuxin was crying. He kept wiping tears off his face with his sleeves, “Five and a half billion. I will help Yizhou’s Chang Shi’s business and sell some magic artifact and spirit stones. I can still get five and a half billion… Sect Leader, do a good deed and be merciful… Just return the sword manual to me.”

He bent over and kowtowed. In the end, even his forehead was broken and blood was flowing out.

“The Broken Water Sword Art, it’s the spirit of the Bitan Manor…” He cried, “Before I turned into my original form, my only wish was for me to redeem the sword manual. I will do my best for the rest of my life… All his life, he had gone from black hair to white hair, and the person he was begging for had also gone from your father to you… I’ve even begged Luo Fenghua…”

“AHHHHHHH!”

Everyone paled.

Luo Fenghua?!

Li Wuxin had begged Luo Fenghua before?!

Not Guyue’ye… It was… It was…

They all looked back and saw that no one was moving. However, they immediately made a path for themselves. Almost all the people from the various sects were turning their heads to look at Nangong Si and Ye Wangxi in the corner.

“It’s the Rufeng Sect!”

This time there was no need to whisper. Someone shouted.

“Shameless!”

“Just how did the sword arts of the Rufeng Sect suddenly improve by so much in these past few decades? There’s even the legacy of a Sword Saint! Beast!”

“Back in the day, the Spiritual Mountain Competition gave Nangong Si a third! Stolen sword techniques are nothing at all!”

“How disgusting!”

Of course, he did not know that the evil scandals of the Rufeng Sect, which were caused by his father and ancestors, should have landed on the 72 cities of the Rufeng Sect. Now, he was going to have to deal with them all by himself.

He did not run, nor did he utter a word. His face was ashen as he stood there silently.

Ye Wangxi wanted to shake her hand, but the man calmly withdrew his hand and stood in front of her.

“He actually has the guts to…”

“His father is already such a beast, what do you think a son is?”

The people from the Bitan Manor were the most angry, and shouted at them: “Get lost! Why aren’t you guys getting lost?!”

“The Rufeng Sect is no longer one of the top ten sects! What are you standing here for! Scram!”

“Bastards! Shameless!”

The surrounding crowd was filled with the passionate and passionate chants of Peng Bai. They were cursing and yelling, and their faces were filled with clear hatred.

Suddenly, someone rushed over with his green robe rolled around. It was a disciple of the Bitan Manor. That person grabbed Nangong Si’s lapel. Ye Wangxi immediately said, “A-Ming!”

In the blink of an eye, Nangong Si was pushed away by the disciple and his fists rained down on his face, his chest, abdomen, fist, without using any spirit energy, were all punches dull, ferocious, and berserk.

At this time, another cold voice suddenly said in a stern voice, “Stop.”

Before he managed to recover from the blow, it landed on Nangong Si's handsome face. He coughed out a mouthful of blood, his hair was disheveled, and he lay on the ground covered in mud.

The angry disciple wanted to wave his fist, but his arm was grabbed.

He looked back angrily and howled: "Bastard! "I don't want you —"

He did not speak.

That was because the person standing in front of him was the Unrivaled Grandmaster, Chu Wanning.

"Stop."

Chu Wanning's eyes were like cold spring water as he looked down at him. His expression was indescribable, as if there were many emotions on his face, but also as if there was nothing.

He just tightly held onto the young man's arm, pursed his lips, and half-jokingly said, "Stop hitting."

Nangong coughed out another mouthful of blood on the ground, Ye Wangxi hurriedly went over to help him, but was stopped by him, "Don't worry about me, I am responsible for the Rufeng Sect, I should take it on behalf of my father."

The young man got even angrier, struggling to get rid of Chu Wanning's hand and wanting to fight him again.

Chu Wanning's sword-like eyebrows creased, "Stop!"

“Don’t worry about it! You are the person who is at the pinnacle of death, so this matter is none of your business!” The young man was also mad, yelling at Chu Wanning, “What right do they have to treat my master like that? Why?! What right did he have to do this to the Bitan Manor?! How many years had Bitan Manor been acting like a horse for Rufeng Sect? Why… Why should I!”

He cried.

Behind him was Li Wuxin’s groans and pleas.

Li Wuxin was still begging Nangong Liu who did not even exist in his consciousness: “Luo Fenghua said he was willing to exchange the sword manual for me… However, he was nowhere to be found… You promised me. Sect Leader… You promised me…”

“I’m now seventy-nine. I won’t have many years to live. My cultivation base isn’t high enough in this life. I might not be able to dismember my corpse and become an Immortal, nor will I be able to see my master… But the only thing he told me, I couldn’t do it.” Every word that came out of Li Wuxin’s mouth was like a lump of blood that had been gouged out of his throat. He was also wailing, “I can’t do it, Sect Leader… Give it back to me… To take the things of the Bitan Manor… Give it back to me…”

“I beg of you…”

The disciples of the Bitan Manor were trembling, as were Chu Wanning’s hands.

The youth’s eyes were filled with tears, hatred, and confusion.

However, he was unable to break free. In the end, he spat on Chu Wanning's face and said, "What Grandmaster, they are all beasts."

"Shizun!"

"Mo Ran, stand still and don't move. Don't come over."

Chu Wanning let go of the young man's hand. Once the young man was free, he immediately went to beat up the injured Nangong Si, but unexpectedly, a golden light descended and the Haitang Spirit Formation was opened, protecting both Nangong Si and Ye Wangxi.

Chu Wanning, who was half kneeling on the ground, slowly stood up and gazed at the blurry and lively faces.

At one end of the crowd was him, and at the other end was Li Wuxin, who was covered in blood and tears.

Li Wuxin's aged voice rang out. It was Dong Ri's branches that pierced the heavens, "Five billion and five hundred million isn't enough…"

In his dream, this old man was still trying to bargain with Nangong Liu.

He died humbly.

Very humble.

It was so humble that even an old face turned into mud.

"Five billion and eight hundred million?"

His voice was trembling.

Chu Wanning closed his eyes.

His hands were also curled and quivering under his wide sleeves.

But he still said word by word: “Nangong Si the son of an old friend, Rong Yan, Madam Rong.”

In front of the huge Mount Huang, over a thousand people were quietly listening to Li Wuxin’s wails and Chu Wanning’s cold and harsh voice.

First, Li Wuxin said, “Five billion and eight hundred million, that should be enough, right? Those are only three sword manuals…”

On the other side, Chu Wanning said, “When I left the mountain, I didn’t bring any silver taels, so I didn’t know how to ask for them. It is the grace of Madam Rong to have a meal, and to have me stay in the Rufeng Sect for the time being.”

He paused, and Li Wuxin’s tearful voice was the only sound he could hear.

“Madam Rong had asked me to accept his son, Nangong Si, as my disciple. I didn’t agree because I felt too young. But that year…”

Chu Wanning turned his head and looked at the fallen Nangong Si. He finally unveiled the truth that Nangong Si did not remember, word for word.

“That year, Madam Rong brought his young son and kowtowed to me three times in front of the temple. She said that Nangong Si had completed his Shizun’s gift, and if I am willing to stay in the Rufeng Sect for a long time from now on, he will treat me with respect.”

Chu Wanning raised his eyes.

“Nangong Si is my disciple.”

Hearing this, Xue Meng's face instantly turned ashen!

Mo Ran and Shi Mei did not look too good either, but they did not say a word as they looked at Chu Wanning.

"If it is correct to say that a father owes a son his debt, then a Shizun for a day, a father for a lifetime. Since I have already received three kowtows from Nangong, he can call me Shizun." He said, "His Shizun is still here. Thus, it didn't matter if you were seeking revenge or insulting him… I am here, and will not resist at all."

"Shizun!"

"Shizun!"

Mo Ran, Xue Meng and Shi Mei knelt down together. Nangong Si also struggled to get up from the ground, the blood in his mouth had yet to stop as he mumbled, "No… I won't bow down… I've never kowtowed. I don't have a Shizun. No Shizun…"

However, at this time, Li Wuxin suddenly let out a long howl. He raised his head towards the sky, his hair blowing like snow and eyes wide open. Blood unceasingly flowed out from his eyes.

He was howling, crying, choking.

"5.9 billion, that should be fine, right? Sect Leader Nangong… 5.9 billion… If you have more, take pity on me, this old man, and leave me some money for the coffin…… Okay, okay?"

He was in a position where he could kill himself by pulling at his neck. In the end, he hissed and his veins bulged.

“Alright!”

Three consecutive times, all of a sudden, Li Wuxin spat out another mouthful of blood.

Immediately after, he plopped to the ground.

The Sect Leader of the most inferior sect in the world of cultivation. This old man, who had been trying to curry favor with every possible sect while he was still alive, was like an ugly horned old man who was wandering everywhere. This was a huge joke that he had spent most of his life and still could not accomplish anything. Even three sword manuals could not redeem him.

A trash, mediocre.

Thus, he opened his eyes and fell into the ash covered dust.

Dead.

The wind was blowing. All the living beings had different expressions on their faces, and no one said a word.

However, Mo Ran suddenly remembered that Mount Jiao had a treasure trove that was enough to revive the sect. This was something even the Jiangdong Hall knew.

The Bitan Manor and the Rufeng Sect were so close, so how could they not understand what this signified?

After Nangong Liu’s death, many large sects and small sects were chasing after him, wanting to capture him alive. They said it was for revenge, but in their hearts, it was all because of that mountain of gold and silver.

However, the Bitan Manor did not.

The Bitan Manor was clumsy as they thought of a stupid way to get on good terms with the Sisheng Peak, as well as with Guyue'ye. They hoped that in the future, they would be able to look after each other and support each other.

Li Wuxin did not even think about the golden and silver treasure of the Rufeng Sect.

He was clearly the one who had been bullied and humiliated by the Rufeng Sect for the rest of his life.

Perhaps, it was because he had been bullied for too long and had been squeezed out for too long, this old man would finally understand in his heart that while wealth could be taken away, it could not be taken away as injustice.

Mo Ran gazed into the distance at Li Wuxin's dirty and dirty old face, dirty to the point that it was somewhat laughable.

He suddenly understood why the Rufeng Sect was in such a state of shock that day. Everyone was fleeing in panic, trying to escape. This old man wanted to escape, but he cowered and did not.

He clearly didn't have much ability, but he had forced himself to stay in the sea of fire.

One Imperial Sword had saved dozens of lives that had nothing to do with him.

It was said that the Bitan Manor's Martial Ancestor had the Broken Water Sword Technique. It could break water, break the heavens, and was known

as the Sword Saint.

Li Wuxin lacked three books. If he couldn’t learn this amazing sword art, he wouldn’t be able to become a Sword Saint.

The only thing he could do, in the end, was to use a growing Imperial Sword and send out the people he did not know, or even the disciples of the Rufeng Sect, out of the sea of fire and one by one back to the human world.

Ch. 200 Shizun, Mount Huang Opened

The Bitan Manor's disciples would never have thought that their Palace Master's life would be taken before the battle of Mount Huang had even begun.

Although Li Wuxin was already old and gradually showed signs of old age with every movement, if he wasn't caught in this demonic enchantment's nightmare and his meridians overturned, he shouldn't have died so suddenly.

After a few moments of silence, the people from the Bitan Manor all knelt down.

The mournful wails shook the skies, causing everyone to be shocked. The disciple that was supposed to settle his debt with Nangong Si no longer cared and crawled over to the Old Palace Master's side, crying as he wiped his tears away with his sleeve.

Suddenly, the gigantic enchantment barrier in front of Mount Huang let out an ear-piercing buzzing sound. Jiang Xi's expression changed as he said in a stern voice, "Someone fill in Li Wuxin's spot. Otherwise, we will all die here today!"

Xue Zhengyong turned his head and shouted: "Yuheng! Come on, give me a hand!"

Naturally, Chu Wanning did not need to be said twice. His specialty was in world enchantment techniques, and his cry was a curse left behind by the phoenix evil spirit that was able to touch this layer of curse.

This meant that the elders were not far from tearing apart the barrier. If they could do it, then they would succeed, but if they couldn't, then the backlash from the curse would be able to move mountains and fill the sea.

He immediately flew over. With a sharp gaze like a bayonet, he waved his sleeve and raised it, striking the empty space left behind by Li Wuxin.

Upon touching it, Chu Wanning was startled and immediately looked at Huang Xiaoyue, who was standing beside him.

"…"

He saw that Huang Xiaoyue was sweating profusely; his entire body was trembling and his face was flushed red. He seemed to be using all of his strength to operate his technique — the other Sect Leaders also seemed to think the same way.

However, Huang Xiaoyue could deceive others, but he could not deceive the cultivator Chu Wanning.

When Chu Wanning took Li Wuxin's burden, he immediately felt that the counterattack power of this position was extremely ferocious. In other words, Li Wuxin had just taken on the evil aura from the two Sect Leaders' bodies. This kind of situation rarely happened with a formation that everyone worked together. There was only one possibility for this to happen, and that was that the person beside him had not used any of his strength at all.

Huang Xiaoyue was actually just putting on an act!

Chu Wanning was furious, his black eyebrows were creased as he said sternly, "You… How dare you play with me!"

“Wha, what…” Huang Xiaoyue was breathing heavily, and his voice was like the sound of a mosquito. His entire body seemed to be on the verge of collapse. The few nearby Sect Leaders also heard the commotion and looked over to see what was going on.

“What is Grandmaster saying… What child’s play…”

“You should know what kind of joke it is yourself! Hurry up and fuck off!”

Xue Zhengyong could not contain his anger and shouted, “Yuheng, what are you doing to Taoist Huang? You see, he’s almost unable to speak. If anything is amiss, let’s open the barrier first!”

Huang Xiaoyue’s gaze drifted over, only to be shocked by the frosty gaze that was like an unsheathed blade, causing his heart to grow cold by more than half.

He simply didn’t have the strength to open the phoenix enchantment. The reason he rushed up to help was to gain face. Afterwards, he could let the cultivation world know that Jiangdong Hall’s strength was still there and he, Huang Xiaoyue, had some skills.

However, Li Wuxin was such a pussy, yet he could not handle the evil qi of two people, and was instead hit by the phoenix enchantment and died beside him. It was one thing if he died, but the person who took over his position was Chu Wanning.

This Chu-zongshi, who deserved to be chopped into pieces!

Huang Xiaoyue’s greasy face was covered in sweat. These beads of sweat were no longer forcefully forced out, but instead, he was breaking out in a cold sweat. He was unceasingly breaking out in a cold sweat.

He was thinking, what should he do?

At this critical moment, Huang Xiaoyue was on the verge of going berserk. He bit his tongue, causing hot blood to flow out. He allowed the saliva and blood to seep onto the corner of his lips.

“Grandmaster… He has truly misunderstood this old man… After Palace Master Li withdrew, this old man was really… Never again… Never again…”

He began to cough violently, splattering his blood everywhere.

“This old man can’t take it anymore…”

How would Chu Wanning fall for it?

Li Wuxin and Huang Xiaoyue; who was the weaker of these two? There was no need to mention how strong they were. If both of them had used their full strength, how could Li Wuxin have been the first to fall?

He waved his sleeves in anger and swung Tianwen with a single hand. He actually flipped Huang Xiaoyue over ten feet away.

“Scram!”

“Ouch!”

The disciples of the Jiangdong Hall were all shocked, rushing up and surrounding their respected elders.

There were also many people who glared at Chu Wanning. “Chu-zongshi, why are you so unreasonable?”

“Taoist Huang has already done his best, why would he just shake the whip and throw the tantrum!”

“Bullying others just because you have the ability?!”

Chu Wanning turned a deaf ear to these angry shouts and words. His heart was filled with rage, his eyes were sharp and cold, perhaps because the red light of the enchantment was reflected in his eyes, causing his pupils to be a little red.

“Scram for me.”

His voice was not loud, but it was extremely gloomy.

Anyone who knew anything about Chu Wanning knew that there was room for discussion even if he scolded him. However, if he became like this, it would be cold and oppressive. Then no one could stop him.

Who would stop him? If Tianwen was enraged, it was likely that he would be able to take that person’s life.

Xue Zhengyong muttered, “Yuheng… What’s going on…”

“Huang Xiaoyue, are you really going to use half an inch of strength to open the phoenix barrier?” Chu Wanning’s hand that was covering the barrier was so angry that his veins were popping out, “When Li Wuxin was unable to bear it, did you really share the burden for him?”

“What are you talking about!”

The female disciples of the Jiangdong Hall screamed out.

“Our Taoist Huang has already vomited blood, and you still say he hasn’t tried his best? Do you only feel satisfied when we see him die like Palace Master Li?”

Chu Wanning's black brows were raised. He was about to speak again when suddenly, the barrier around him began to tremble violently. The palms of all the Sect Leaders were wrapped in a blood-red glow.

Jiang Xi immediately said, "Concentrate! The last level! It's about to be torn apart!"

"…"

Chu Wanning was in no mood to argue with those madmen. He looked back in concentration, placed his hands on top of the barrier, and inserted his spiritual power into the crack, full of raging flames.

There was a loud bang.

The earth trembled.

A huge crack appeared on the Mount Huang barrier, it was at least eight feet tall, enough for five people to walk side by side.

Xue Zhengyong said happily, "It's opened! The enchantment has been opened!"

He was very close to the opening, and when he looked out, he could feel a black and red miasma blowing against his face. He could not help but cry out, "Why is it so smelly?!"

The other cultivators no longer cared about the Bitan Manor and the Jiangdong Hall, and rushed over to take a look.

The Head of the Wubei Temple was extremely sensitive in this way. With a turn of its pearl in its hand, it said in a deep voice: "It is a place where

corpses are collected. The corpses and grievances on this Mount Huang are perhaps even more numerous than what we imagined."

Jiang Xi said with a gloomy face, "Looks like that street rat, Xu Shuanglin, is indeed hiding in this crappy mountain." As he spoke, he turned his head back and said, "Everyone listen. The ones who were injured before, terrified, useless, and acted all pretentious."

When he spoke of putting on an act, his cold and deep eyes glanced at Huang Xiaoyue who was lying on the ground, and he gave an almost imperceptible sneer.

"All these people, stay at the foot of the mountain. The rest, follow me up the mountain."

When Xue Meng saw that Chu Wanning had entered the crevice, he was anxious to follow him, but Mo Ran was not by his side. He looked around and saw that there was a commotion where Nangong Si was standing. It turned out that after the sorrow of the Bitan Manor's disciples, the hatred between them grew even stronger. Even Nangong Si had to settle the score with them. Even though Chu Wanning had set up a barrier over there, but even so, he was still surrounded by a group of twisted and hideous faces. Every one of his bright red tongues was cursing and cursing at the same time.

Xue Meng said anxiously, "Mo Ran, what are you doing there? Everyone is going up the mountain.

"Go first and take care of Shizun and Shi Mei. If you can't handle it, report it to me immediately."

Xue Meng had no choice but to leave.

At this time, the only people left at the foot of the mountain were the Bitan Manor and the people of Jiangdong Hall. Mo Ran retracted his gaze from Xue Meng's back and said, "I know how everyone is feeling, but the matter regarding the sword manual was not done by Young Master Nangong. If everyone wishes to settle the score, at least wait until you catch Xu Shuanglin."

"These are two different things. Whether it's Xu Shuanglin or Nangong Si, none of them will escape!"

"That's right! Both of them will have to pay the price!"

His eyes were red as he glared at Mo Ran. "Mo-zongshi, now that you're a Grandmaster, your Shizun is a Grandmaster too. Is this how you two Grandmasters cover for your crimes and malpractice for personal gain?"

Mo Ran said, "I just want you all to be fair. If you really want to clarify this matter, then after this matter is settled, we should follow the rules of the cultivation world and send Xu Shuanglin and the rest to the Tianyin Pavilion for questioning. Now why rush to break up a corpse who is not going to fight back?

Zhen Congming: "…"

Someone shouted, "What ten great sects? Nine! How can the Rufeng Sect be considered a sect?"

Zhen Congming suddenly said, "It's eight." There were bloodstains on his face. He wiped them off for master and then shed a few more tears. Those bloodstains made him look very sad and vacant, "They are eight sects… The Bitan Manor is ownerless now."

“Shixiong…”

He ignored the wails of his shidis and slowly turned his head to look at Mo Ran. “After the battle of the Heavenly Rift, master once said that the Sisheng Peak can be considered a fair sect. Now it seems like he might have misjudged you two.”

Mo Ran: “…”

Zhen Congming asked, “Mo-zongshi, do you really have to protect these two animals from the Rufeng Sect today?”

Before Mo Ran could reply, Nangong Si said hoarsely, “Mo Ran, go away.”

Ye Wangxi half knelt beside him and helped him up. She did not cry, nor was she at a loss. However, her voice was hoarse as he said, “Young Master Mo, let’s head up the mountain. This has nothing to do with you.”

Mo Ran said as he looked at Nangong Si, “You acknowledged my Shizun, could it be that you have done so for nothing? Since he is a member of my sect, how can you possibly have nothing to do with me?”

Nangong was at a loss for words. “You…”

Mo Ran turned his head and looked at Zhen Congming’s face again. At this time, the people from Bitan Manor were no longer in front of him, and the Jiangdong disciples also surrounded him like tigers eyeing their prey.

Under the support of the two female disciples, Huang Xiaoyue pretended to stagger closer. Panting, he rolled his eyes and stared at Mo Ran. Then, he waved away the two disciples on his left and right. His withered, wood-like fingers ferociously tapped and said, “This old man has suffered a lot of

justice from the Upper Cultivation World since he was young. How can you just sit by idly and watch?”

Mo Ran said coldly, “Taoist Huang is indeed a role model for the Upper Cultivation World. Just a moment ago, he was still struggling with his last breath, but before the time it took for an incense stick to burn had arrived, he was already able to jump up and start acting on behalf of the heavens. I really admire you.”

“You — cough cough cough!” Huang Xiaoyue seemed to be extremely angry as he clutched his chest, coughing until the sky went dark. The act was done extremely well, but Mo Ran did not even bother to look at him directly.

Qing Yi from the Bitan Manor and Jiangdong’s purple robe were surrounding the three of them. They were closing in on Qing Yi, but no one dared to make a move first.

Everyone knew that once this move landed, it would be difficult to retrieve.

Zhen Congming said in a low voice, “Mo-zongshi, let me ask you one last time. Are you sure you don’t want to go away?”

“AHHHH!”

Before Mo Ran could reply, a shrill voice suddenly rang out from the front. It was unknown which female cultivator had emitted it, but immediately after, a pile of blurry black-grey mudstones surged out from the crack in Mount Huang’s barrier.

Huang Xiaoyue said in shock, “What is it? The mountain is collapsing?”

Mo Ran narrowed his eyes.

Not a landslide.

Everyone quickly saw it clearly and sucked in a breath of cold air.

What came out of the crack were wave after wave of charred zombies! These zombies had their arms stuck to each other, their skin and flesh stuck to each other, and there was still thick water seeping out of their skin, barely allowing them to see their faces.

“Wahhhhh!” Immediately, someone couldn’t take it anymore and began to vomit on the ground.

“This is too fucking disgusting…”

“Could it be that all the mountains are made out of this kind of stuff?”

“How many corpses…”

At this time, a heavy, muffled sound came from the sky. The barrier that the few elders had torn apart earlier actually began to move again. It slowly closed up as if it was about to close down.

This barrier could actually heal itself! Not long after the tear, it would close again to prevent more people from entering!

Mo Ran said anxiously, “Let’s go up the mountain first. We’ll talk about the grudge later. Xu Shuanglin is right there on the mountain. Could it be that the culprit will be left to die just like that?”

The men from the Bitan Manor hesitated, but Huang Xiaoyue sneered and said, “Almost all the experts in the world are at that mountain, there is no need to worry about not catching Xu Shuanglin. However, these two kids from the Rufeng Sect ran as fast as mud loaches without holding back. If

we put them in the wrong places, we won't have another chance in the future."

"… Huang Xiaoyue." Mo Ran was enraged to the extreme as a red light flashed in his hand. "Are you done yet?!"

The hundred over people in front saw him summoning his godly weapon, all of them unsheathed their blades, holding their weapons, they stared at him warily.

Mo Ran knew that he wouldn't be able to escape a fierce battle this time. He would have nothing to do, but according to these people, they would probably consider his battle today to be the pinnacle of life and death…

However, at this moment, he suddenly heard a cold voice coming from behind him.

"Everyone, please head up the mountain. Nangong Si will wait here. He will definitely not escape."

Huang Xiaoyue said, "Kid, you speak so easily. Why should I believe you? Can it be that he really can turn the situation around and leave just like that?"

Nangong Si looked at him coldly and stood up from the ground. Then, he suddenly lifted his hand and pushed Ye Wangxi out of the boundary set up by Chu Wanning.

"A-Si!"

Only the people inside could go out of this barrier, but the people outside could not.

Standing alone inside, Nangong Si slowly drew his sword. The snow-white sword light, inch by inch, illuminated his face.

The chin, the lips, the tip of the nose.

Eyes.

Ye Wangxi had already understood what he was going to do. She slammed the hammer on the barrier and shouted, “Don’t mess around!”

“When our ancestors founded the sect, they once said: Greed and rape and murder are things that I, a gentleman, should never do.” Nangong said, “My father is not a kind person, which is against this rule. But I have been a proud man for twenty-six years, and I have never done anything rash. I have nothing to be ashamed of.”

With a “weng” sound, the sword in his hands came out of its case like flowing water.

“No!”

Mo Ran knew what he was going to do. He tried to unravel the barrier but it was so firm that it could not be removed in a short period of time.

He muttered, “Nangong…”

However, Nangong Si did not even glance at Ye Wangxi, nor did he bother with Mo Ran. He said, “Since the other lords are not willing to believe me today, I have no other choice. Fortunately, I have learned the art of imprisonment. Now that I am here, I hope that everyone will stop implicating the innocent. I, Nangong, will draw the Earth as a prison and await your return.”

“Nangong!”

Before he could finish his sentence, his blood was gushing wildly.

Nangong Si’s sword was instantly stabbed into the ground, leaving not even half a fragment.

At the same time, Nangong Si’s left hand was also nailed to the ground.

He actually nailed his hand fiercely to the ground, like a snake nailing seven inches. Lightning and thunder rose up from the sword, and the Forbidden Spell flew in all directions.

Ye Wangxi knelt down in front of the barrier.

The sword’s hilt dripped blood, staining the ground red.

No one could see Ye Wangxi’s expression. She hung her head low, with only her hands tightly gripping the barrier as her knuckles turned pale and convulsed.

This was the Binding Incantation to nail evil beasts, evil spirits, and livestock. Almost everyone knew how to use an expert in the Upper Cultivation World.

Nangong Si had used this incantation to nail himself.

His lips were trembling from the pain, but he did not cry. After a long while, he raised his head, and his eyes were bloodshot.

He said, “Let’s go.”

“…” It was rare for Mo Ran to be so shocked that he couldn’t speak.

In his previous life, Ye Wangxi was the only one who had managed to do so.

And in this life, he had met the person Ye Wangxi loved.

He was confused as to why exactly did Ye Wangxi like Nangong Si. A Young Master who only liked looks and pretty girls and had no brains, how could he possibly be worthy of Ye Wangxi's friendship?

But at this moment, he saw another Ye Wangxi.

Kneeling, messy, and bleeding profusely, but ruthless to the bone.

Nangong Si.

"Let's go!" Nangong Si roared, "What else is there to worry about?! Do you want me to nail my legs to the ground? Let's go!"

Zhen Congming was the first to turn around.

He returned to Li Wuxin's corpse, tidied up the Sect Leader's corpse, picked it up, and walked back.

"Shixiong!"

"Senior Brother, won't you stay?"

"Senior? Are we just going to leave? Don't tell me we have to let them go just like this…"

Zhen Congming said, "Why are you staying? Who knows how long the fight on the mountain will last, for the Sect Leader to be lying on the ground like this without a proper coffin, is he waiting?!"

The disciples of the Bitan Manor looked at each other, lowered their heads, and didn't say anything else.

Zhen Congming walked to Mo Ran's side and said, "Master Mo, remember what you said. After this battle, we shall meet with you from the Tianyin Pavilion."

"Not bad. In this world, there is still the Tianyin Pavilion that can uphold justice." There was a man with bloodshot eyes, he was the disciple who had spat on the ground and insulted Chu Wanning earlier. He followed behind his senior brother, resentful, "The Pavilion Master will definitely act impartially, so our master can rest in peace."

"Mo Ran, Nangong Si… You evil people, just you wait! You will all have retribution. Just wait for your death!"

Ch. 201 Shizun, How Can I Humiliate You?

With the departure of the Bitan Manor, even if Huang Xiaoyue wanted to stay, he had no reason to.

He could only go up the mountain.

Mo Ran hoped to end the battle quickly, so he immediately rushed into the Mount Huang barrier, and the people of Jiangdong Hall followed. Once they entered the enchantment, Mo Ran was fine, but the people from the Jiangdong Hall all screamed out —

Dead.

Dead everywhere.

The ground was littered with dead bodies, lying on the ground and hanging from the treetops. It moved, crawled, twisted, and approached every living person at an extremely slow speed.

Mount Huang had become a mountain of corpses!

Seeing this, Huang Xiaoyue took out a horsetail whisk and struck forward. In the blink of an eye, four to five corpses were beheaded. Before Mo Ran could react, he realized why this old man had suddenly become so brave…

He let out an “ah” scream and fell to the ground in an extremely exaggerated posture. His eyes rolled back as he coughed out blood and foam.

Mo Ran: “…”

The disciples of Jiangdong Hall rushed up: “Senior Huang —”

“Elder…”

“It doesn’t matter. Although this old man is heavily injured, I can at least contribute with some strength.” Huang Xiaoyue struggled to get up, but after crawling twice, his knees gave out and he fell back to the ground, gasping heavily.

Those disciples then anxiously said, “master, you should go outside to rest. There are too many evil spirits here, I’m afraid they will damage your heart.”

“Yeah, yeah.”

The blood was still mixed with thick saliva, giving off an indescribably disgusting feeling. After repeating this three times, Huang Xiaoyue led the disciples of Jiangdong Hall and showed an appearance of extreme regret. Everyone was like a crucian carp that had crossed the river as they rushed out of Mount Huang’s enchantment.

The enchantment blocked their way, but it did not stop them from escaping. Soon, there were only a few people left in the Jiangdong Hall. At this time, a young man suddenly descended from the mountainside ahead. The young man had light golden hair, dark blue eyes, and a cold expression.

When he and Mo Ran saw each other, they were slightly startled.

Mo Ran was the first to react. “Brother Mei?”

Mei Hanxue nodded. He was cold and didn’t like to talk.

Mo Ran anxiously asked, “Did you see my Shizun and the others?”

“Up ahead.” As he said this, a dead body staggered up from behind Mei Hanxue. Mo Ran was just about to remind him when he saw the sword light turn cold, and Mei Hanxue had already summoned his sword. Without even turning his head around, he stabbed a heart-piercing hole into the dead body’s chest.

Mei Hanxue’s expression was cold as he wiped the blood off his sword. He said, “You go up and keep going forward. The first mountain road is to the left, and there are too many corpses. The road is being cleared and everyone is there.”

Mo Ran thanked him and was about to catch up. However, Mei Hanxue stopped him.

“Wait.”

“Is Brother Mei busy?”

“Yes. Mistress and Madam Rong were old friends, so he couldn’t stop worrying. He told me to return and take a look at those two from the Rufeng Sect. How are they, are they still outside?”

Hearing that, Mo Ran’s heart was relieved, and he said, “They are still waiting outside. Nangong Si had placed a Binding Curse on himself. However, Huang Xiaoyue has gone out. I’m afraid that he might do something that would cause trouble for them.”

Mei Hanxue pursed his lips and said no more. With a tap of his foot, he disappeared at the edge of the boundary.

Mo Ran didn’t waste any more time and immediately headed towards the main force.

At first, he thought that with so many corpses, he should have seen the remains of some of his own people on the way, but there were none. There were chopped corpses everywhere, rotting flesh, disgusting and disgusting, but not mixed with any of the remains of other cultivators.

Is it because the Sect Leaders have brought elites?

He did not have the leisure to think about it further. He immediately threw himself into the battle of cleaning up the foot of the mountain. Just now, he had been walking along the path that everyone had taken to kill those zombies, but now that he was on the move, he felt that something was even weirder.

It was too simple.

He felt that he wasn't fighting against the vengeful spirit at all. He felt as if he was slaughtering an ordinary person with no strength left in his hands.

This situation caused him to feel uneasy, and he vaguely had a terrifying guess…

"Heeheeheeheehee ~ ~"

Suddenly, a zombie hung from the tree in front of him. Its hair was disheveled and it stretched out its hand to pinch Mo Ran's neck. Mo Ran jerked back, and the zombie immediately turned its head. Its nostrils flared as a hand grabbed his shoulder, trying to bring the vicious and rotten face closer.

Mo Ran was disgusted, but he took this opportunity to observe it first. He raised his foot and kicked it into the crowd of corpses, knocking over several rotten corpses.

“Mo Ran!”

At this time, Xue Meng also called over. He had his back to Xue Meng as he gasped for breath, his cheeks were splashed with black blood, and his eyes were like lightning. He said in a deep voice, “What’s going on, are these corpses just playing around? Playing at sea? Why is it so weak!”

The look in Mo Ran’s eyes was cold and filled with chilliness. In his previous life, the Immortal Taxian-Jun was proficient in demonic techniques, so he already had a faint guess. However, at the moment, he didn’t have enough clues, so he wasn’t sure.

Mo Ran gritted his teeth and said, “These are not the corpse of a cultivator. He’s an ordinary person.”

“What?!” Xue Meng was shocked, he turned his head and asked, “People are already rotten to the point of black ash, how can you tell if they are cultivators or not? I don’t even know if they’re men or women!”

Mo Ran did not answer directly, instead he said, “If I fought with you, and I did not dodge in time, you would grab me by the shoulder, what would happen to you?”

“… How could you expose your shoulder to me? This is a taboo in fighting techniques, even an eleven or twelve year old disciple would not make such a mistake.”

“Why is it taboo?”

“The spirit core is close! Grabbing onto your shoulder is equivalent to grabbing onto half of your spirit core. If your other hand were to pierce into your chest, it will immediately decide your life and death!”

Mo Ran said, “Alright, just now, a corpse caught me like that —”

Xue Meng said in surprise, “Why are you so careless? You want to die?!”

Mo Ran interrupted him. “It didn’t move.”

“Huh?”

“At such a close distance, it didn’t even think about using its other hand to attack my spirit core. For cultivators, protecting their spirit cores and attacking other people’s spirit cores at close range was already a habit that went deep into the bone marrow. Like you said, even young cultivators around the age of 11 or 12 would do such a thing. Even after death, when one turns into a zombie, the habits of fighting would not change. However, this corpse did not do so.”

Mo Ran paused for a moment and said in a deep voice.

“Why not? Two possibilities. I can’t do it, but I didn’t expect it.”

Xue Meng, “…”

Mo Ran said, “Your hands and feet are healthy. This is a rare opportunity, so it’s impossible for you to not be able to do so. As such, he could only choose not to think about it. When these corpses were alive, most of them were probably just ordinary people. Even if they died, they wouldn’t be a match for these elites, so up until now, there hasn’t been a single injured person.”

Xue Meng said in surprise, “How can this be? What was Xu Shuanglin doing on Mount Huang while there were so many ordinary people? He has this mental strength, why wouldn’t he be in control of the cultivators?”

Mo Ran replied, “It’s the same as before. There are two possibilities. He can’t do it, he knows it.”

“How could he not have thought of this!”

“Therefore, there is only one way left. He can’t do it.” Mo Ran’s gaze was heavy. The damned starfire splashed into his eyes, like boiling molten iron falling into the vast ocean of darkness. “Xu Shuanglin’s spiritual energy is not enough to control so many cultivators with his Zhenlong chess pieces.”

“Then even if he controls these soft-footed prawns, it’s still useless?” Xue Meng kicked back another pile of zombies. He didn’t know whether to laugh or cry. “What can you block?”

Mo Ran did not say anything more. The guess in his mind became clearer and clearer.

He looked at the zombies that were fighting with the crowd, and soon, he discovered something very strange. The corpses that had their limbs cut off and their heads cut off, upon falling to the ground, would immediately have tiny vines extending out and pierce into their chests. With a “pu” sound, their chests, along with their hearts, would suddenly sink into the ground, disappearing without a trace.

This was something that was easy to find, but with the chaos surrounding them, everyone was unable to react. The vine was small and thin, and if they did not quietly stand at the side and observe, they would not be able to see it.

“Mo Ran?”

Xue Meng was still calling out to him, but Mo Ran was completely unable to hear his voice.

Suddenly, he leaped up, grabbed a zombie by its neck, pulled out his hidden weapon and dagger, and stabbed towards the heart of the zombie.

Black blood splattered all over his face in an instant!

Xue Meng suddenly opened his mouth and took two steps back. He was actually speechless.

He felt that Mo Ran must have gone crazy…

Mo Ran tilted his face to the side and quickly used all his strength to pull out the black-gray heart of the zombie, revealing a black chess piece.

The corpses of Mount Huang were clearly under the control of Zhenlong Chess, which was why they acted as accomplices. Mo Ran was not looking for this chess piece — he was rummaging through the blood, enduring the strong stench.

Xue Meng could no longer bear it and bent his body as he vomited.

“You! Are you sick?. This was too disgusting… Ugh…”

Mo Ran ignored him, his fingers fiddling with the clot of blood. Soon, he found the item he was looking for.

On the back of the chess piece, there was a little bug lying down on the ground. It was completely red — Soul Devouring Insect.

At the same time, dozens of thin and soft vines sprouted up from the ground and headed straight for Mo Ran’s bloodied hands! He quickly

dodged, but the vines got faster and faster, vowing to wrap the chess piece along with the small insects into the core of the earth.

At this moment, Mo Ran completely understood Xu Shuanglin's intentions and actions.

All the hair on his body stood on end as his blood became thoroughly cold.

In this world, other than Immortal Taxian-Jun from his previous life, no one else could think of such an evil technique!

Just like the Ten Thousand Waves Reversal was created by Chu Wanning, everything in front of him, this chess piece, this Soul Devouring Insect, these corpses, all these arrangements, they all pointed to a spell formation.

The Shared-Heart Formation.

This was a formation that he had personally created in his previous life!

If it had been a guess in the past, then the reappearance of this formation would have given him a huge blow to his head. Its reappearance would have undoubtedly righted two things:

Firstly, there must be someone else in this world besides himself who has been reborn.

Secondly, the person who had reincarnated must have been familiar with the ways of the emperor Taxian-Jun in his previous life.

Mo Ran's hand trembled slightly, and black blood constantly dripped from the gaps between his fingers. The black chess piece and the scarlet red bug were tightly clenched in his palm.

While he dodged the flying vines, his mind was already in chaos.

In the midst of the chaos and horror, he suddenly recalled the shattered memories of his previous life…

At that time, he was only nineteen.

At that time, the Ghost World Heavenly Rift had just been filled and Shi Mei had just recently passed away. As for Shi Mei, he had secretly cultivated his Zhenlong chess skills for nearly half a year without any results, repeatedly failing.

Until that day.

The nineteen year old Mo Weiyu sat cross-legged and slowly opened his eyes.

He spread out his hands and saw two pitch-black pieces lying on his pale-white palm — this was the first time in his life that he had tempered a Zhenlong chess piece.

Before this, he had tried thousands of different methods, but all of them ended in failure. He could not understand the unfathomable words written on the Forbidden Spell, but he could not ask Chu Wanning. In fact, he was no longer willing to talk to Chu Wanning during that period of time. His death was a gap that could never be bridged.

This Shizun and disciple pair had long existed in name.

In his final months of revealing his demonic face, he would occasionally run into a man in white clothes walking over from the other side of the road. However, every time they met, he would pretend that he didn’t see them, and silently walked away.

In fact, he had brushed past him several times on the Bridge of Helplessness. Out of the corner of his eye, he noticed that Chu Wanning seemed to want to say something to him. It was a pity that Chu Wanning's dignity did not allow him to take the initiative to call his disciple. And Mo Ran would not give him any more time to hesitate. He just left like that, never to turn back.

Finally, it was the wrong shoulder.

With no one helping him, Mo Ran spent a long time in order to barely understand the meaning behind the incomplete Forbidden Technique scroll. He also knew the most important point of the Chess game:

All the chess pieces, whether it was Hei Zi or the even more powerful Bai Zi, who could empathize with the caster, were formed from the caster's spiritual energy.

The amount of spiritual energy consumed to form a chess piece was astonishing. Refining one black piece would allow one to execute over a hundred major moves. Refining one white piece would be enough to drain the spiritual energy of a grandmaster like Chu Wanning in an instant.

This was to say, if a person was extremely clever and had a thorough understanding of the chess game, then it would be of no use. If one's spirit energy was insufficient, they could only talk about military matters on paper. Although Mo Ran was talented and had abundant spiritual energy, he was still a youth who had not yet reached the age of twenty. Therefore, he had expended all of his mental and physical efforts and after a few failures, he was only able to condense two black dots.

It was lying on his palm.

Mo Ran stared at the two black men, his eyes flashing with a peculiar luster. In the darkroom, there was only a candlestick that was about to burn out shining on his face.

He did it.

At that time, he didn't care about the number of pawns at all. He was only overjoyed because he had successfully formed Zhenlong Chess. He did it!

He was clearly such a handsome person, but he suddenly had the ferocious appearance of a wild beast.

As he walked out of the cultivation room, he felt dizzy. Half of it was because he was having fun, and the other half was because the two chess pieces had used up all of his spiritual energy. He was completely exhausted.

His face turned red, then white, and a blurry scene appeared in front of his eyes. In the distance, he saw two disciples at Sisheng Peak approaching. The only thing he could do was to quickly hide the two black objects in his Qiankun bag. His legs went soft, and he fell onto the ground, fainting.

In this half asleep half awake state, he knew that he had already been brought back to his disciple's room and laid down on a bed that was not very spacious. He slightly opened his eyes. There was a person sitting beside the bed.

He had a fever, and his head ached. He could not see the man's face clearly, but he could vaguely feel the concern, concentration, gentleness, and even self-reproach in those eyes as they looked at him.

"Shi…"

His lips moved and his voice was so hoarse that he could not complete his sentence. Tears began to flow from his eyes.

The white figure paused for a moment, and then Mo Ran felt a warm hand on his face, wiping away the tears on his cheeks. The person sighed softly and said, “Why are you crying?”

“…”

Shi Mei, did you come back?

Could you not leave… Don’t die… Don’t leave me alone.

Ever since my mother left, there was no other person in this world who would treat me gently like you did. Treat me well, no one else who would not despise me and who would be willing to accompany me…

Shi Mei, don’t go…

He couldn’t stop the scalding hot tears. He also felt that he was very unpromising, but he kept on crying. In his dreams, he kept on crying.

That person sat beside his bed, accompanying him. Afterwards, that person held his hand without saying a word. That person was so clumsy, not leaving the ground even for a moment as he accompanied him.

Mo Ran recalled the two Zhenlong chess pieces in his Qiankun bag. He also knew that they were the source of evil, the seeds of demons.

However, it was also a bargaining chip between him and the heavens and the earth that he couldn’t ask for.

In fact, what he needed to refine a chess piece for wasn't spiritual energy, but rather, his originally fairly clean soul.

Mo Ran muttered. Under his moist eyelashes, his eyes were hazy as he looked at the mirages of Shi Mei. He said, "I'm sorry. If you're still here, I'll…"

I don't want to go down this road either.

However, he no longer had the strength to continue the latter half of the sentence as he fell into a deep sleep once more. When he woke up again, the man in white had already left. Mo Ran felt that it was a dream he had had while he was unconscious. However, he remembered that a pot of incense was burning inside the house. It was given to him by Xue Zhengyong to calm his mind. The incense was very fragrant, but he did not like the smell of it.

The smell was gone.

A very long incense stick wasn't burnt out, and it had been extinguished by someone.

Who had come?

He sat up and stared blankly at the censer. He had thought about it for a long time, but he had not been able to think it through. In the end, he simply did not want to continue. He saw his clothes and accessories, as well as his Divine Martial and Mystical Knife, all neatly placed on the table, along with his Qiankun bag.

When he came back to his senses, he quickly went to his own Qiankun bag with his bare feet.

When he opened it, it was still the same three knots he had purposely used before he fainted. No one moved.

Mo Ran breathed a sigh of relief and rummaged through the bag. He saw the two pieces of Zhenlong Chess that were as black as night, lying dormant in the corner like two malicious ghost eyes. To swallow him up.

He stared blankly at the two pieces for a while.

This was probably fate – if Chu Wanning had flipped through the Qiankun bag next to Mo Ran, everything would have changed.

However, Chu Wanning would not randomly flip through other people's belongings. Even if it was in his open pockets, he would not take a second look.

Mo Ran took out the chess piece. His Adam's apple bobbed and his heart thumped like a drum.

What should he do now? How should he use these two chess pieces…

This was the first time he had been able to condense such a sharp weapon. He couldn't wait to try it out — but who was he looking for? The thought that suddenly popped up in his mind like a spark, was instead an extremely crazy one.

Chu Wanning.

He wanted to strike the chess piece into Chu Wanning's body.

After entering, would that callous, hypocritical man obey his orders from then on? Would he never stand if he was told to kneel?

Would he be able to make Chu Wanning kneel down in front of him and apologize? Would he be able to make his scream that his Shizun was a Shizun that would sting and bite him?

The extreme excitement caused the light in Mo Ran pupils to twist and distort.

Yes, torture him…

How could this respected cultivator feel the most pain? The most shameful?

Humiliate him…

Mo Ran tightly held the two chess pieces, his mouth was dry, and his mouth was getting hotter and hotter.

He was overcome by a sense of excitement and anxiety, and he licked his chapped lips. He couldn't wait to see Chu Wanning lower his pale neck and reach his hand out to feel the trembling, and then…

Break his neck? Crush his bones?

Mo Ran felt unhappy.

He felt empty and unsatisfied for no reason.

To let Chu Wanning die was too boring. Even in his imagination, he didn't like it. He wanted to see him cry, wanted to see him prostrate, wanted to see him suffer a fate worse than death, filled with shame and anger.

He always felt that there was a better way to vent his anger.

He put a chess piece to his lips, felt the coldness of the chess piece against his lips, and muttered in a low voice, “You can’t stop me, Chu Wanning. There will be a day like this soon. I will make you…”

…make you what?

At that time, he had not thought it through. He did not know that a large part of his surging desire was to conquer his lust for Chu Wanning.

But he had that terrible male instinct.

He wanted to bury the first condensed demon seed into Chu Wanning’s body.

He wanted to dirty him.

He got up, pushed the door open and walked out —

Ch. 202 Shizun's First Encounter With a Demon

However, after wandering around the Red Lotus Pavilion a few times, Mo Ran was still calm and did not do such a crazy thing.

It was too dangerous.

This was his first time refining a Zhenlong chess piece, and he had never tried its effects before. He had recklessly attacked the First grandmaster. He probably thought that his life was too long.

Thus, after hesitating for a long time, Mo Ran finally controlled his impulsiveness and left the Red Lotus Pavilion. After some deliberation, he finally chose to beat the two black Zhenlong Chess pieces onto the bodies of the two juniors at Sisheng Peak — he needed to experiment a little longer.

Choosing a disciple with an unstable foundation was the safest choice.

It was a slightly cold night, and darkness shrouded the peak of the mountain. Mo Ran's hand moved extremely quickly, and when he saw the two young men who were still wasting away at the riverside competition, he was so nervous that even his hands were trembling, and his pupils had shrunk to a tiny size. The moonlight shone on his pale face, and he pursed his lips. His fingertips moved slightly as he strolled out.

That was the first time he used such an unforgivable forbidden technique. He was excited and nervous.

"Whee—"

The two of them suddenly knelt on the ground. Mo Ran was like a frightened bird, as if he was a murderer who had just killed someone, and even the slightest movement could take his life. He immediately hid himself in a nearby bush, and his heart seemed to jump out of his throat.

Bang bang bang.

After a long period of rest, he finally managed to calm his beating heart when he saw the two of them kneeling on the ground, stiff and motionless.

His undershirt was soaked through with cold sweat and his scalp was numb.

He went out.

He stood under the moonlight again, next to the riverbank's gravel.

He was calmer now than he had been before, though he still didn't dare breathe, careful as a slithering snake in the night.

Mo Ran lowered his head and looked at the two juniors.

The two people who were playing earlier had completely lost all color on their faces. They were as calm as still water as they knelt on the ground without moving. Mo Ran stared at them. They did not even raise their heads and just knelt like that.

"…"

Mo Ran tried to move his fingertips and activate the spell.

The two junior brothers kowtowed and got up. They raised their eyes and Mo Ran saw his own reflection in those two pairs of dark eyes.

The reflection was not very clear, but for some reason, Mo Ran felt that he had seen it clearly.

He saw a ghost with a pale face and red eyes facing the full moon.

When Mo Ran heard his own voice, he trembled and asked with a hoarse voice, “Speak your name.”

What answered him were two calm and serene voices. “My name is out of my control.”

Mo Ran’s heart was beating rapidly. His blood was flowing freely in his body. His Adam’s apple bobbed up and down as he continued asking in a low voice, “Where are you?”

“My location is out of my control.”

“What day is it?”

“The days are out of my control.”

For the low-level black pieces successfully controlled by Zhenlong Chess, there will be three aspects out of control: the name is out of control, the where is out of control, and the when is out of control.

— It is all up to the Master.

This was exactly the same as what was recorded in the ancient book.

It was strange to say that when he faced the two pieces he had made himself, the most he felt was not ecstasy, but fear.

What was he afraid of? He did not know, but his heart was in turmoil.

He knew that he was standing on the edge of a cliff — no, he had fallen off it, and there was darkness below him, and the endless abyss. He could not see the bottom, could not see where death was, where the end was, where there was fire, where the end was.

He felt as if there was a spirit within his body that was screaming and screaming in pain. However, it was quickly shattered, turning into powder and turning into fragments.

Trembling, he reached out and touched the cheek of one of the pieces.

He swallowed, but there was no saliva in his mouth. His lips were chapped, and his handsome face was twisted. He stared at his junior brother and asked the last question. “What do you want?”

“All that you demand, for the king, the pawn does not hesitate to sacrifice his life.”

“…”

Mo Ran stopped.

Everything around him suddenly became very quiet, cold and still, like ice.

He made two chess pieces, and with two chess pieces, the two juniors whom he didn’t even know their names, became his puppets. If he wanted them to go east, they wouldn’t go west. If he wanted them to kill each other, they wouldn’t let each other go.

He was their master.

Zhenlong Chess is the worst controllable dead object, the strongest controllable living person.

Mo Ran's Spiritual Energy was a natural domineering and fierce energy, moreover, it was a natural talent. When he made his first move, the chess piece he made was actually able to control two living cultivators, even though they were young and had just entered the sect.

After his initial fear, Mo Ran suddenly felt extremely excited. In front of his eyes, there seemed to be a large picture scroll slowly unfolding. It was filled with all sorts of colors and colors, and everything in it was in his palm. Everything was his.

He could hold anything he loved tightly.

Anything he hated could be crushed into fine powder.

Mo Ran was extremely excited. His heart was still beating very quickly, perhaps even faster. However, it was not because of his fear, but because of his excitement. It was a Zhenlong chess game! Three forbidden arts!

Stealthily, he had failed tens of thousands of times, but he had finally…… He finally succeeded… He did an excellent job.

The world would be his!

With these black marks, he could do many things that he could never have done in the past. He could make people from Mobei to Jiangnan his henchmen!

The scene before him was colorful and dazzling to the extreme.

As if he could do anything, anything, he…

"Mo Ran."

Suddenly, a familiar deep voice interrupted him.

Like a basin of cold water, the red towers seemed to collapse in an instant. It was as if he fell from the clouds onto the cold and hard ground, falling back into the repressed reality.

Mo Ran slowly turned his head. His eyes were scarlet and ferocious. Facing the moonlight, he saw a man in cold white clothes standing on the gravel.

"…"

He had never wanted to see Chu Wanning before, not even more than at this moment.

"What are you doing here?"

Mo Ran's hand clenched into a fist. He pursed his lips but didn't immediately reply.

Behind him were two other pieces that were not perfect. If Chu Wanning were to look closely, he would have felt that something was amiss and everything would have been exposed.

With Chu Wanning's personality, he would have pulled his tendons, broken his legs, destroyed his spirit core, and burned down the ancient scrolls that he had copied from the forbidden area of the Compendium Pavilion.

Seeing that he did not make a sound, Chu Wanning slightly frowned, stepped on the sand with his white silk shoes and took a step forward.

But it was also true that he had only taken that step. Then he stopped and looked at the two disciples standing strangely behind Mo Ran.

He could no longer care about anything else. Mo Ran gently crooked his pinky, but he used almost all of his willpower to shout out orders in his heart. Finally, the two disciples moved as he wished.

A disciple laughed and said: “This throw is too close. That throw just now, I will definitely throw it far more than you.”

“Keep bragging, anyway you… Ah, Elder Yuheng!”

They moved as usual, playing around like before. When they saw Chu Wanning, they were stunned for a moment. The two of them bowed to him, and he glanced at them a few times. He felt that something was wrong, but he wasn’t sure.

“Greetings Elder.”

“Elder Yuheng, hello.”

The two disciples restrained their smile and greeted Chu Wanning obediently. They were planning to leave the place tactfully.

Chu Wanning frowned, not relaxing his brows. His gaze was still watching the two chess pieces walking from the riverbank, approaching him, passing by each other, heading towards the bamboo forest… He stared at the two men for a long time before turning his head back to look at Mo Ran. Mo Ran let out a sigh of relief, but before he could catch his breath, Chu Wanning suddenly said,

“Halt.”

“…” Mo Ran’s expression changed slightly. His nails had left a red mark on his palm, but he did not say a word. He quietly observed Chu Wanning’s expression, observing his every move.

Chu Wanning said to the two frozen men, “Come back.”

Mo Ran had no choice but to orders the two chess pieces. He slowly walked back from the end of the bamboo forest and stood in front of Chu Wanning.

The light cloud moved and the full moon appeared.

Under the bright moonlight, Chu Wanning watched the two disciples’ faces attentively. Suddenly, he raised his hand and placed his fingertips on the side of one of the disciples’ neck.

Mo Ran stared at Chu Wanning’s expression, his heart was beating wildly.

He knew that Chu Wanning must have sensed something was wrong, which was why he suddenly extended his hand to check the pulse. One had to know that those who had just learned Zhenlong chess could only control corpses, not living people. Although the two were made directly from living people, Mo Ran wasn’t sure if he had truly done it perfectly. He wasn’t sure if he had instantly killed them when he put the black seed in their hearts.

“…”

After an unknown period of time, Chu Wanning finally dropped his hand. He waved his sleeve and said, “Let’s go.”

Mo Ran felt that the knife hanging around his neck had been removed — Chu Wanning did not notice. The heavens had their eyes on him, allowing him to secretly live under Chu Wanning’s nose.

After the two disciples left, Chu Wanning looked at him and said, “It’s already so late, why are you here?”

Mo Ran said, “Passing by.” His tone was firm, and he did not suddenly become nice to Chu Wanning just because he had something on his mind. Perhaps it was due to his cold and disobedient attitude that Chu Wanning, who should have suspected something, pursed his lips and was speechless for a moment.

He did not want to stay with Chu Wanning any longer, so he looked away and walked forward. But just as he was about to make a mistake, Chu Wanning suddenly said something that made him tense up.

“Someone has recently snuck into the forbidden area of the Compendium Pavilion.”

“…” Mo Ran did not look back, but his pupils were slightly distorted.

“You should know that the ten great sects are in charge of a few incomplete forbidden arts manuals.”

Mo Ran stopped and said, “I know.”

“The most important remnant of one of the scrolls had traces of it being flipped through by someone.”

Mo Ran sneered, “What does that have to do with me?”

He was holding on. He knew that as long as Tianwen was revealed and interrogated him, then all his sinful actions and budding inner demons would be exposed under Chu Wanning’s nose.

His big dreams and ambitions had all come to an end.

Chu Wanning was silent for a moment, “Mo Ran, how long are you going to be stubborn?”

His voice was filled with resentment.

“…” Mo Ran did not answer, but he could almost predict what would happen next.

He anticipated the flash of the Tianwen golden light.

He had expected that Chu Wanning would act like a righteous man and ask him why he was doing such a thing. In Chu Wanning’s eyes, he would always be like that.

“Do you know how dangerous it is?”

There was no saving him.

He still dryly thought through those four words.

He then turned his head, seemingly at a loss. He looked at Chu Wanning’s face under the moonlight.

His face was pale, and there was a faint sense of unease under his sword-like brows. A pair of clear eyes looked at him, but they didn’t see through anything. They didn’t see through anything.

“If someone really practices this forbidden art, it will kill people. You didn’t sleep at night, yet you came to this kind of desolate place. Do you want to die for nothing?”

“…”

Chu Wanning’s voice was low, as if he was biting on the edge of his words, “With so many people dying in the Heavenly Rift Battle, don’t tell me that it hasn’t taught you to cherish your life? Since you already know about the

matter of the incomplete scrolls being stolen, how can you still be so carefree!”

Mo Ran remained silent, staring at the other party with his dark brown eyes.

His forehead was covered in a thin layer of sweat. At this time, he slowly calmed down.

His body relaxed bit by bit, as an unknown strange feeling permeated his heart. In the end, Mo Ran revealed a smile. “Shizun…”

Chu Wanning’s phoenix eyes glittered slightly.

Ever since his Shi Mei died, Mo Ran had never smiled at him, and rarely called him Shizun.

Mo Ran smiled and asked, “Are you concerned about me?”

“…”

The smile widened.

It was bright like a bayonet. The white knife went in and the red knife came out and went into his chest with a plop. There were beads of blood on the blade. Like a demon, he slowly opened his mouth, revealing a mouthful of white teeth that looked like the poisonous claws of a scorpion.

“The battle between the Heaven and the Earth…” He chuckled, “Shizun being able to bring up the battle of the heavens is the best we can do. In that battle, it wasn’t important what I learned; the key is, Shizun learned how to be merciful.”

Looking at the flickering light in Chu Wanning's eyes, he was tense and did his best to avoid it. However, there was nowhere for him to retreat to.

The smile on Mo Ran's face became increasingly exaggerated, reckless and cruel.

He invaded him and bit him. He chewed on Chu Wanning's throat and suddenly felt very satisfied. He started laughing out loud, "Hahaha, very good, very good, it was really a good deal! A disciple of unknown origin, in exchange for Chu-zongshi's conscience, Chu-zongshi will finally remember the life and death of the people around him. Shizun, today I finally feel that Shi Mei's death was good."

Even someone as calm and solemn as Chu Wanning started to tremble under his mad, eagle-like laughter.

"Mo Ran…"

"It's good that Shi Mei died, it's worth it to die, but it's also worth it to die in the name of righteousness!"

"Mo Ran, you…"

Don't laugh.

Don't say it again.

But he couldn't say it, Chu Wanning couldn't say it. He couldn't beg, beg, or arrogantly reprimand his disciple who was close to insanity, saying, You're wrong, it's not that I don't want to save him, it's that I really don't have the strength to do it.

I have also suffered the same injury as him, so if I were to spend another inch of spirit energy, I would also become a corpse in the grave, a person in the afterlife.

He couldn't say it out loud.

Perhaps he felt that this confession was too weak.

Or perhaps he thought that in Mo Ran's heart, even if his Shizun died, it wouldn't be worth mentioning. It wouldn't be comparable to Shi Mingjing, who treated him the gentlest.

Thus, in the end, Chu Wanning could only suppress the trembling in his voice and say slowly, word by word, "Mo Weiyu, how long are you going to stay crazy?"

"…"

"Go back."

Angry flames boiled sorrow, the throat is full of salt and bitterness.

"Shi Mingjing didn't die in exchange for a lunatic like you."

"Shizun, you're wrong." Mo Ran smiled and said, "How could I be the one to be replaced for Shi Mei's death?"

He was like a snake and a scorpion, like a bee or an ant.

"He's dead, and the person who returned was obviously you, Shizun."

Bees pierced into flesh.

Looking at Chu Wanning's pale face, he felt a pang of joy. He did not want to risk his life to provoke and mock him. He did it himself to make Chu Wanning suffer a fate worse than death.

Great.

They go to hell together.

"I want to go back too." Mo Ran smiled leisurely, his dimples were deep, and he brewed some poison wine, "I also don't want to wander around in the middle of the night. But across the room from mine is his house."

Mo Ran did not say who it was and instead used the word "he".

The intimacy between the two made it even more difficult for Chu Wanning.

"The lights in his house will never come on again."

Chu Wanning closed his eyes.

After a long time, his expression gradually calmed down. "I want to beg for a bowl of food, but I can't."

For a moment, Chu Wanning's eyelashes trembled, his lips moved as if he wanted to say something.

However, Mo Ran did not give him the chance to say it. He did not give him the courage to say it. Mo Ran was not without ridicule: "Shizun, copying this kind of thing, the people in Shu are the best at doing it. The red oil and spicy pepper are indispensable. They're the ones you hate the most. When you wanted to cook another bowl for me, I didn't accept it. However, I

don’t need to taste what you made, I already know that there is only one word that can describe it.”

Chu Wanning did not open his eyes, his eyebrows were slightly creased.

It seemed this way, he would be able to avoid the sharp sword.

“I haven’t studied much. Fortunately, I heard from Xue Meng about it a few days ago. I feel that it’s a good idea to use it on Shizun’s handwork.”

What is it?

A waste of effort?

In vain?

Chu Wanning searched in his mind in confusion, as if he was busy finding a suitable armor, and finding up the most unpleasant words first to avoid being humiliated too much.

Worth nothing?

Mo Ran still did not speak. The word stuck playfully between his lips.

Yes, worthless.

Chu Wanning was convinced that there was nothing more chilling than this.

He calmed down.

Until he heard Mo Ran say calmly, “Dong Shi imitates Xi Shi’s frown.”[166]

He opened his eyes, almost at a loss.

He never expected the other party to be so venomous, his hands were trembling under his sleeves.

He mixed the noodles, seasoned the ingredients, and then kneaded the filling…

As he looked at “The Story of Bashu”, he looked at it seriously, one word at a time. His face was covered in flour, and the hands he used to wrap it were all twisted from crooked to perfectly round and adorable.

He had been learning and trying to understand.

Just hearing those words.

Dong Shi imitates Xi Shi’s frown.

The beach at night was suffused with a silver glow. Mo Ran looked at him. Chu Wanning stood there for a while, then without a word, he turned and left.

For some reason, Mo Ran always felt that day, his leaving pace was a little fast. It was no longer as calm and steady as before — it was like he had been defeated, like he was escaping.

He did not know why, but he felt a little uncertain. He frowned as he looked at Chu Wanning’s back. Just as it was about to disappear, he called out, “Wait!”

Ch. 203 Shizun's Misplaced Ghost

However, Chu Wanning did not stop nor did he turn around.

He couldn't turn back.

He gritted his teeth to endure, but his tears still flowed.

It was too unfair.

But even if he felt wronged, so what?

Explanation?

Rage?

Since he had already reached this point, how could he still have the face to tell Mo Ran the truth? Did he want him to explain himself when the flames of anger and hatred were mocking him? In addition to being seen as a crude imitator, did he also want to be seen as taking all the credit?

He left.

That night by the Bridge of Helplessness, by the Yellow Springs, the conversation between Shizun and disciple flowed down the surging river, into the river, into the underworld.

As for that gentle youth, if he had known in the underworld that he would hear such a conversation, would he have felt sad because of the discord between the teacher and pupil?

He stood alone on the riverbank for a while, thinking that this might be fate.

Chu Wanning suspected someone else, but not him.

Speaking of which, it was indeed quite a coincidence. Chu Wanning's Tianwen had been used when he was patrolling the back of the mountain, and it had been used by a little ghost.

The golden Tianwen was shining brightly in Chu Wanning's white robes. The rattan whip that could get him to tell the truth and kill the future emperor Taxian-Jun was shining brightly all the time.

However, Chu Wanning did not take it off, nor did he interrogate him.

Mo Ran escaped from Tianwen and slowly walked away by himself into the depths of the rustling bamboo forest. He walked to the darkest part of the night and was finally completely engulfed by darkness.

From then on, he began to concoct chess pieces in secret, two, four, ten of them in advance.

More and more.

He had planted them one by one into the bodies of the Sisheng Peak disciples, making them his eyes, ears, fangs, and arrows.

After the initial joy, Mo Ran began to become irritated and gloomy. He became more and more irritable, more and more irritable, and he became more and more unsatisfied.

Too slow.

He felt that it was not enough.

He was afraid that Chu Wanning would detect some movement, so he did not dare to waste all his energy to make a Zhenlong chess match like the first time. He only did one attack at a time, and left half of his energy behind. He was no longer tense and hostile, but had finally put away his claws and returned to Chu Wanning's seat, following him in his cultivation.

He calculated that Chu Wanning could help him raise his cultivation as fast as possible, and he would lay the bricks for his first step of clearing out the bones in the world. Why not?

On this day, he had trained too hard and was completely exhausted. He accidentally lost control of himself on the slender treetops and fell straight down.

In just a split-second, Chu Wanning's white clothes flashed past. He held onto Mo Ran, but for a moment, he could not summon out his hand to summon the enchantment. The two of them fell under a tree. Chu Wanning was crushed by Mo Ran. He groaned in pain. When Mo Ran opened his eyes, he saw that Chu Wanning's hand had been scraped. There was a bloody cut on his flesh.

At that time, his temperament had already started to distort, and he actually did not feel too much gratitude or guilt. He only felt that the blood was really good, and that it would be better to let it flow a little more.

However, he knew that it was not the right time yet, he could not reveal his sinister face under the hood, so he helped to clean up Chu Wanning's wounds and bandaged his wounds.

Neither of them spoke as they each had their own thoughts. Pale white gauze covered their faces as they spoke.

Finally, Mo Ran said meaningfully, “Thank you, Shizun.”

This sudden and unexpected ‘thank you’ surprised Chu Wanning. He raised his eyes and looked at the his face. The sunlight shone down, illuminating Mo Ran’s face. The brown color was very faint under the light.

At that time, Mo Ran was curious, what kind of opinion did Chu Wanning have towards him after he thanked him?

Finally a prodigal son turning back?

It finally began to slow down?

However, Chu Wanning didn’t say anything. He simply lowered his eyelashes and rolled down his sleeves.

The wind was blowing, and the sun was shining.

In his previous life, he had never been able to see through his Shizun, just like how his Shizun had also misjudged him.

After that, Mo Ran became more and more powerful. He had an astonishing talent. The number of chess pieces he could make with half his spiritual energy consumed increased from one to two, then to four.

But not enough.

What he wanted was a million strong army, a force that could take down Sisheng Peak in one fell swoop and trample Chu Wanning beneath his feet.

Mo Ran’s calculations were not good. The man who was about to become the Emperor Taxian-Jun held his abacus as he began to calculate furiously.

When Xue Meng came to see him, he coincidentally saw this scene, so he curiously went over and asked, “Hey, what are you doing?”

“Settle them.”

“What are you counting?”

Mo Ran paused for a moment, his eyes dark. Then he smiled and said, “Guess.”

“I can’t guess.” Xue Meng walked over and picked up the book in front of him to read carefully. As he read, he mumbled, “One… 365 days… 365… 4… 365 days… What’s all this nonsense?”

“I want to buy some sugar,” Mo Ran said calmly.

“Sugar?”

“One month’s worth of Cheng Zhai’s best candy costs one coin. If you save up one copper coin a day, you could buy three hundred and sixty-five candies in three hundred and sixty-five days. If you can save up to four copper coins a day, that would be…” He lowered his head, bent his fingers, and couldn’t figure it out. He shook his head again, and started to make calculations with a crackling sound, “Just a thousand…”

Xue Meng’s mental calculations were faster than his, so he quickly replied, “One thousand four hundred and sixty candies.”

Mo Ran raised his head, and after a moment of silence, he said, “You’re really fast.”

Xue Meng was rarely praised by him. He stared blankly for a moment, then laughed and said, “That’s not right. After all, I’ve been helping Mother with

medicine since I was young."

Mo Ran muttered to himself and laughed, "I don't know which way to go. Why don't you do the math for me?"

It had been a long time since Mo Ran was this calm after Shi Mei passed away. Xue Meng faced the sunlight and looked at him, feeling pity in his heart.

So he nodded, pulled back his chair, and sat down beside Mo Ran.

"Come on, tell me."

Mo Ran said warmly, "Ten candies a day, how much can you save in a year?"

"Three thousand six hundred and fifty. That's not worth counting. It's too simple."

Mo Ran sighed and said, "Add some more, 15 in a day…" After thinking about it, he felt that it was beyond his limit to make such a chess piece, so he asked, "Twelve pieces a day. How much?"

"Four thousand… Four thousand three hundred and eighty."

"I want five thousand candies. How many more days do I need to wait?"

"I have to…" Xue Meng scratched his head, thinking too hard, so he asked, "Why do you need so much candies? You can't eat them all."

Mo Ran lowered his eyes, covering the sinister glint in his eyes. "Next year, Sisheng Peak will have been established for thirty years. I want to give everyone a piece of candy."

Xue Meng was stunned. “You actually have this kind of thought…”

“Yes.” Mo Ran smiled, “Are you surprised? You too.”

“I don’t need it.” Xue Meng waved his hand. “I don’t need this candy. Come, I’ll continue to help you calculate. See how long you have to save before you can buy over five thousand candies.”

As he spoke, he took the abacus and began to seriously burn it down under the reflection of the flower trees by the window. Mo Ran rested his chin on his cheek as he watched, a luster flowing in his eyes. After a long while, he chuckled and said, “Many thanks.”

Xue Meng snorted. He was very focused and did not pay any attention to him.

In his eyes, there were only those crackling black beads. One and two were like black pawns, and they piled up one after the other, increasing bit by bit.

At that time, Xue Meng would probably never have imagined that what he was calculating was not candy, but rather the lives of many people, overturning the lives at Sisheng Peak.

He did not know that it was because of his appearance by the window that caused Mo Ran to feel a trace of kindness.

As such, he had to consider his old relationship with the five thousand blackstones. In the end, he hadn’t gotten a single share out of the five thousand blackstones.

“That long?” Finally, he looked at the number Xue Meng had written down. Mo Ran shook his head, “It’s too long.”

Xue Meng said, “Why don’t I lend you some money?”

Mo Ran smiled. “There’s no need.”

After Xue Meng left, he thought about it again and again. After flipping through a few scrolls, he gradually came up with a plan — and this plan became the prototype for the “Shared-Heart Formation” created by Immortal Taxian-Jun.

That night, Mo Ran had refined ten chess pieces. Those chess pieces were incomplete and could not be controlled with full strength. They could not even control the stronger corpses.

He carried these ten chess pieces down the mountain to the Wuchang town and hummed a small tune as he arrived at a place in the outskirts of the town:

Returning Crane to Slope.

A man dies riding on a crane, returning to the nine heavens. This was a beautiful and simple illusion of a mortal. In other words, this hillside was a graveyard. The families of the people that died in the Wuchang Town were all dragged to this mountain to be buried. This was the town’s burial ground.

He walked between the rows of tombs without much delay, his eyes swept across the words written on the tombstones, and very quickly, he stopped in front of a fresh grave with bright writing, and in front of the tombstone, there were still fresh fruits and buns. He raised his hand, and clenched his fingers tightly in the air.

Because of some childhood experience, Mo Ran had no fear of corpses and had no respect for them. He jumped down from the hump, summoned Mo Dao, forced open the coffin, and kicked away the thin lid.

The moonlight fell on the corpse's face. Mo Ran leaned his head over to measure the color of the pork and looked at the skeleton inside.

It was a newly buried old thing with a shroud wrapped around its shriveled face and sunken cheeks. Because the burial environment wasn't good and it didn't have much money to use for embalming, the coffin was filled with a strong stench. Some parts of its flesh had already begun to rot and give birth to maggots.

Mo Ran frowned and endured the stench. He put on the metal gloves neatly and grabbed the old man by the neck, pulling him out of the coffin. The old man's head drooped down stiffly. Mo Ran's eyes were ice-cold. With a flash from his hand, he had already sent the precious black seed flying into his chest.

"Be good, be good." Mo Ran affectionately caressed the dead man's face, and suddenly slapped the corpse back, smiling. "What are you so listless for? Stand up straight, my dear obedient little baby."

Although the incomplete black chess piece was unable to control the strong corpse, he was still more than enough to control a lethargic old man with legs.

The corpse's body began to move. A pair of tightly shut eyes suddenly opened, revealing a pair of grayish eyes.

Mo Ran said, "Speak your name."

“My name is out of my control.”

“Where are you?”

“My location is out of my control.”

“What day is it?”

“The days are out of my control.”

Mo Ran narrowed his eyes, weighing the remaining nine fragments in his hand. Indeed… If he had only controlled the corpse to such a degree, he wouldn’t have to spend so much spiritual power to create such a pure black hole.

He grinned, a smile that was extremely handsome. Slowly, he asked the last question:

“What do you want?”

The old man said in a hoarse voice: “I only care about what you ask for, as the king’s chess piece.”

Mo Ran laughed out loud. He was very satisfied with this result. He then used the remaining pieces of the chess piece to make the other nine corpses, picking out fresh ones.

These corpses were old, weak, and handicapped. They fell when the wind blew, and they did not have any power. However, Mo Ran looked at them, his eyes flashing with a crazy and joyful light.

He took out ten small boxes from his Qiankun bag and opened one of them. He saw two small, blood-red insects curled up inside.

“Alright, I’ve already enjoyed myself enough. I’ll be troubling you two to stop now. It’s time for you two to be of use to me.” As Mo Ran lazily spoke, he flicked his finger to brush away the two worms that were interacting with each other. He then took out one of the male worms and said to the old man who was playing the first chess piece, “Friend, please open your foul mouth.”

The old man obediently opened his mouth to reveal a rotten tongue. Mo Ran threw the worm into his mouth and said, “Eat it.”

There was no resistance, no hesitation.

The corpse obediently ate the Soul Devouring Insect into its stomach.

Mo Ran followed the same pattern and fed all of the worms in the box into the mouths of the corpses. Then it said, “Alright, go back and lie down. All of you should rest.”

On the second day, Mo Ran had refined another ten blackstones. They were also damaged and didn’t consume too much spirit energy. After he finished refining, he attached all the remaining female Soul Devouring Insects to the chess board and then quietly entered the bodies of some low-level disciples.

At first, those disciples only felt an itch on their backs, but there was no special feeling. Mo Ran was not impatient, he was waiting…

Wait until the female Soul Devourer lays eggs, then leave the larvae in the hearts of these disciples that resonate with the males.

In this way, two unrelated pieces passed through the adult and larva and became a corresponding mother puppet.

This was just like flying a kite. Those weak corpses became kite strings as one end led the black ink to burn while the other end led the even more valiant Jinlong black seed. Mo Ran only needed to give the order to the dead body of the adult, which was hidden inside the dead body of the corresponding child, and would do the exact same action.

It was called the common heart.

This ultimate move had been created by Mo Ran himself. Before him, those who had come into contact with Zhenlong Chess were all grandmasters, who did not lack spirit energy, nor were they crazy enough to want to make tens of thousands, or even hundreds of thousands of Zhenlong Chess, so they did not need to think of such opportunistic methods.

At that time, Mo Ran, who was obsessed with demonic techniques, didn't realize that he had already done something that no one in the cultivation world had ever done in the past tens of thousands of years.

Turning an evil technique that could destroy the heavens and the earth, everyone could learn it.

Everyone can do it.

"Brother!"

Suddenly, an explosive shout was heard.

Mo Ran suddenly became clear-headed as a blood-red light flashed before his eyes.

The Phoenix Evil Spirit that was buried in the heart of the Mount Huang Range had already turned into even more vines than before, fiercely chopping down. The Phoenix was originally a flying beast, its speed was

extremely fast, it was unable to avoid in time, and its shoulder was suddenly cut open, causing blood to immediately spurt out.

Xue Meng exclaimed, “How are you?!”

“Don’t come near me!” Mo Ran panted. His gaze was cold as he stared at the tentacle-like vine on the ground that was ready to pounce at any moment and launch a second wave of assault. He stopped Xue Meng sternly, “Quick, go to Shizun’s side! Tell him to stop! Make everyone stop!”

Blood dripped, and he gripped the heart and the chess piece tightly.

His mind spun rapidly as all kinds of thoughts surged in his mind.

This formation of the heart was not wrong, and it was even better than the one he had used in his previous life. However, no matter how much improvement there was, the principle was here. Only by maintaining the mother body on one side could the child on the other side display its strength.

Mo Ran held the Chess in his hand, his entire body still trembling. It wasn’t because of the pain in his shoulder, but because of the cold and fear that spread out from the bottom of his feet.

There was no doubt that someone had been reborn.

Then, does the person who was reborn know that he is also a living ghost? If he knew, then…

A cold chill went down his spine as Mo Ran suddenly fell into despair.

In his eyes, he saw the pale face of Taxian-Jun, with his crown on the head and a sinister smile on his face.

He sat high on the dragon throne, eating his food. He was cold and mocking.

“Mo-zongshi, please escape! Where can you escape to?”

Ghost shadows rose up like a tide. They were all people he had killed in his previous life, and they were all debts he had owed in his previous life.

He saw the bloodied Shi Mei, the bloodless Chu Wanning, the hanging woman dragging a three feet long piece of white silk, and the man with his stomach all over the ground.

They were all here to take his life.

“You won’t be able to dodge it sooner or later.”

“Someone already knows what kind of dirty spirits you have in your shell. You’ll never be able to reincarnate.”

Mo Ran closed his eyes.

If the person behind the scenes really knew that he had also been reborn, and if that person revealed all of his past, then… What should he do?

He didn’t dare think about it anymore.

Ch. 204 Shizun Protects Me

On the other side, Xue Meng had already run to the region of intense chaotic battle. He waved his arm and shouted, “Stop! Stop! Stop fighting! It’s useless!”

In fact, these people had already felt that something was amiss before he had arrived.

Thousands of elites were fighting against the unorganized corpse tide. The scene looked very grand and heroic, but the more they fought, the more confused everyone became because it didn’t look like a fierce battle was about to begin.

Everyone kept killing their way here. Aside from two people who were slightly injured, the rest of the cultivators were unharmed. Thus, when Xue Meng shouted, everyone stopped and turned to look at him.

“I…”

It was the first time that so many people were simultaneously looking at him. Moreover, many of them were well-known figures and elders. Xue Meng unexpectedly choked for a moment.

Chu Wanning asked, “What’s wrong?”

Only after hearing his Shizun’s voice did Xue Meng calm down. He pointed at where Mo Ran was fighting against the vine willow and said, “Mo Ran seems to already know what is going on here. It shouldn’t be very useful against these zombies.”

The crowd looked at each other in dismay. The Sect Leaders were not ordinary people, how could they be willing to listen to the advice of a junior? Their faces became extremely ugly. Jiang Xi's expression was the gloomiest as he said, "Mo Ran is just a young man in his early twenties. What does he know?"

If it was any other person who spoke, Xue Meng might have been a bit more polite, but since this person was Jiang Xi, Xue Meng became angry when he saw him. He immediately said angrily, "If you still drink milk when you are twenty, it doesn't mean that I have to be like you! If you are so narrow-minded and want to die, you can forget about it!"

This was truly amazing. To publicly embarrass Jiang Xi in front of the crowd, all of Guyue'ye's disciples were unable to stand anymore, and angrily rebuked his one after the other.

"What are you talking about!"

"Xue Meng, keep your mouth shut!"

Xue Meng felt uncomfortable being silently stared at by everyone. In this situation, he was actually not afraid. After quarreling with Mo Ran for so many years, he was used to being provoked. Immediately, his handsome brows slanted as he said, "What, am I wrong? It's because you, Sect Leader Jiang, are in front of this big event that you don't care about the severity of the matter. How can you use your age to talk about your qualifications!"

Jiang Xi had a bad temper as well. He was like an immortal fairy, unexpectedly squinting his eyes. In front of all these people, he had started a war of words with a junior.

“Age and seniority are linked. When you reach your father’s age, you should understand one thing — when talking to an elder, etiquette is the first thing you do.”

Xue Meng angrily said, “Even with Sect Leader Jiang’s confidence, you can still be an elder?”

“Alright, Meng’er.” Xue Zhengyong frowned, “Stop talking. Where is Ran’er? Quick, lead us there.”

Although Xue Zhengyong stopped Xue Meng in time and Jiang Xi had no way to argue with him, he still left behind a sentence with a flick of his sleeve, “Xue Zhengyong, you are truly a good teacher.”

Xue Zhengyong’s face was ashen, as if he wanted to say something. However, he seemed to be hindering the number one Sect Leader from his words. In the end, he didn’t say anything and followed everyone towards the mountainside.

Halfway up the mountain, he saw Mo Ran dressed in black, floating over.

Half of his sleeves were covered in blood, and the chess piece was tightly gripped in his hands. The vines behind him had already been burnt, and there were no new vines to be seen.

Seeing him get injured, both Chu Wanning and Xue Zhengyong’s face changed. Xue Zhengyong quickly asked, “Ran’er, how are you feeling? Heal… Heal, someone come quickly! Shi Mei! Come and help!”

Shi Mei seemed to be shocked as well. He looked at Mo Ran’s bloodied arm and his face turned pale. For a moment, he just stood there in a daze, unable to move.

Guyue'ye's Cold Scale Sacred Hand took a step forward, and with a flick of his sleeve, Mo Ran felt the burning pain in his wound slowly disappear. He nodded to Hua Binan, "Many thanks, Sacred Hand."

"Thank you." Hua Binan's voice was cold and indifferent. "I wonder what Mo-zongshi has discovered. Can you share it with everyone?"

At this moment, Mo Ran's mood had already dropped to the extreme. He was very clear that if he were to reveal the "Shared-Heart Formation" at this moment, he would definitely be met with suspicion and speculation from some people.

However, he could not care that much. He was very clear on what kind of bloody scene would follow if Zhenlong's chess game were to appear in large numbers in the martial arts world. It was something that he himself, Chu Wanning, would not wish to see.

"Look at this."

He opened his palm and showed the black piece in his hand to everyone.

Jiang Xi sneered, "Chess? Didn't he already know about it? Could this be the discovery of Mo-zongshi? If not for Zhenlong Chess, how could these corpses be at the mercy of others?"

Mo Ran pursed his lips and said, "It's not a Zhenlong chess piece. It's the Soul Devouring Insect on the chess piece."

He showed it to the others. "Here it is."

Jiang Xi stood with his hands behind his back. He didn't say anything, but just looked at him coldly. "…"

Xue Zhengyong moved closer to the insect and looked at it. After a long time, he could not think of anything, so he asked, “What’s wrong with this insect? Is there anything wrong with it?”

“Every single chess piece has it. This Zhenlong chess game is not as simple as you see it.”

Many pairs of eyes were staring at him, and he swept them with his gaze as well.

Of course he knew what he was doing.

He told everything he knew to prevent a catastrophe from happening.

However, he was very clear about the price…

This was actually the place where the mastermind was brilliant. If that person wasn’t sure if Mo Ran was a reincarnated body, the Shared-Heart Formation would undoubtedly be the best bait.

Unless Mo Ran was ruthless enough to not open his mouth and allow disaster to descend. As long as he gave guidance, he would undoubtedly reveal a piece of information to the person behind the scenes.

He must have been reborn.

But Mo Ran had no choice but to ponder, “I don’t know if any of you have ever seen a puppet show.”

Someone answered, “… Of course I have. But why do you say that?”

“I’ve seen it too, but when I was young, I was short and couldn’t squeeze into the front row, so I could only stand behind the counter and listen from

behind the scenes." Mo Ran said. "So the puppet show I'm watching might be different from what you guys are watching. What you guys are watching is a story show, where a few puppets appear on stage, fight, kill, and talk and sing."

Jiang Xi impatiently asked, "What are you trying to say? Can you be more concise?"

"No." Mo Ran said, "Not everyone understands that it is faster than Sect Leader Jiang. I want everyone to understand that."

"…"

Seeing Jiang Xi's gloomy face and not utter another word, Mo Ran continued, "Will the cloth puppets on the stage move by themselves?"

Xue Zhengyong said, "Of course not."

"Then how did they move? Do I need to have a few people squatting under the curtain, holding up sticks and ropes and manipulating them?"

"That's right."

"Alright." Mo Ran said, "I have an idea. I don't know if Xu Shuanglin thought like this, but I think it should be pretty close. The 'Mount Huang' we are currently on, is just like the 'Mount Huang' below the stage. These soft zombies are like people who are controlling the puppets at the foot of the stage – naturally, these people don't need too much skill. As long as they move the puppets, it will be enough."

Jiang Xi said, "… Go on."

“If it’s really like this, then Mount Huang is actually just a backstage. The real show will not be performed here, but on the stage. Xu Shuanglin is like the leader of this troupe. If he were to give an order, to whom would he give it?”

Xue Zhengyong said, “Of course it’s the people squatting behind the curtain and carrying the ropes.”

Mo Ran said, “That’s right. This is the logic. The people on Mount Huang are the people carrying the threads. Xu Shuanglin gave them the instructions, and they led the cloth puppet in their hands to stand up and act.”

After Jiang Xi heard this, he narrowed his eyes and said, “You mean, other than Mount Huang, there is another place with corpses piled up like a mountain. That place is the so-called ‘platform’, and those corpses are the so-called ‘cloth figures’?”

“Sect Leader Jiang is so perceptive.”

“You don’t have to flatter me.” Jiang Xi said, “I just want to know, what you said seems like a bunch of flowers, the head is clear, but the truth is that you are indulging in wild fantasies. Mo-zongshi, words are empty, what makes you think that you have the right to speak?”

“… I don’t have much of a basis. The reason why I was able to think of all these is because I accidentally discovered a chess piece with a Soul Devouring Insect inside the corpse.”

The pitch-black chess piece in his hand was still stained with blood and was very dirty. Not long after the Soul Devouring Insect left his body, it was still alive.

Mo Ran was silent for a moment. He raised his head and looked at the Cold Scale Sacred Hand behind Jiang Xi. “Sacred Hand, you should know best what kind of compatibility Soul Devouring Insects have.”

“There are many of these insects. Which one is Mo-zongshi referring to?”

Mo Ran said, “Imitate.”

Hua Binan said, “Of course. Soul Devouring Insects, larvae can easily imitate their male counterparts. They will imitate their male counterparts’ every move until they become adults.”

Mo Ran said, “Alright, then what happens if I throw the larva that corresponds to this chess piece into another person’s body?”

“…” Hua Binan’s expression changed slightly as he said, “What are the corpses doing here? That side of the body will do the same.”

“How?”

“There’s no way to cure it, except when the bugs die.”

Mo Ran nodded and said, “Everyone, spread out a little. Be careful and watch.”

When his voice fell, a cold light suddenly appeared in the bottom of his eyes as he fiercely hacked at the Soul Devouring Insect on the chess piece. At this moment, the ground suddenly trembled. The thin curtains that had been raised up abruptly once more charged towards Mo Ran. Everyone was shocked, but Mo Ran quickly retracted his killing intent and dodged a round of vine attacks.

He let out a breath, stood with one hand behind his back, and said, “Did you see that? Mount Huang was deliberately protecting these Soul Devouring Insects, preventing them from being easily killed. If there was anyone who insisted that it was just a coincidence that this bug would appear on the treasured chess set… Or maybe it’s just an act, then I have nothing else to say.”

Almost everyone was deep in their thoughts, digesting Mo Ran’s conjecture.

A bold, almost outrageous guess.

However, for some reason, he was unable to find any loopholes.

The idea of Mo Ran was too crazy, but his words were firm and his gaze was hard.

It was as if he had full confidence in Xu Shuanglin’s every move and thought, and he was doing his best to convince them.

However, this kind of belief was very scary. In the crowd, even Chu Wanning was a little uneasy. He frowned as he looked at the pale face of Mo Ran from afar. Suddenly, he felt his heart palpitating. He felt as if something had exposed a little bit of its clue, a little bit of its fangs.

Tear it open.

Perhaps only someone like Xue Zhengyong could think so simply. He didn’t care too much about why Mo Ran could think of such a peculiar “puppet control” in such a short period of time. He only thought about it seriously for a moment before patting his head.

“So, Xu Shuanglin is not here at all?!”

Mo Ran: “I don’t think so.”

Elder Xuanji’s concern was different from everyone else’s. He frowned and said, “Along the way, if we didn’t kill tens of thousands of zombies, there would have been at least 9,000. Where did he get so many corpses? If there was a place where so many people suddenly died, then there would be no reason for us not to alarm the ten great sects.”

Mo Ran sighed and said, “He just died. Have you forgotten?”

“Where did he die?”

Seeing everyone not understanding, Mo Ran simply said two words.

“Linyi.”

“Impossible!”

Immediately, someone refuted him.

“Linyi was in a sea of fire. The Heaven Calamity Flame was raging, and the city was even burnt to ashes. How could there be a corpse left behind?”

“Because there are space cracks.” “Aside from Xu Shuanglin, he has another companion who knows space cracks.”

No one objected this time.

Not because they believed, but because it was too ridiculous, too ridiculous.

After a while, Jiang Xi said, “That was the first forbidden technique that has long been lost…”

“The first forbidden technique is the Gate of Time and Space. Not space.”

“There are several thousand people here, not just Xu Shuanglin.” Jiang Xi’s expression was extremely cold, “How much ability do you have to send thousands of people to Mount Huang before they are engulfed by the sea of fire?”

“Sect Leader Jiang, why don’t you think about it another way? I feel that these people were not sent here while alive, but before they were burned to death and turned to ashes. With this teleportation technique, it’s much easier to teleport dead than alive.”

Jiang Xi didn’t like the way his juniors guided his thoughts. He narrowed his eyes, but before he could say anything, a pale, slender hand pressed down on him. Hua Binan smiled and looked at Mo Ran, “Mo-zongshi, you speak with such confidence, as though you’ve seen it with your own eyes. What proof do you have?”

Mo Ran didn’t expect the medical sect to stand up and say something. He was startled for a moment before saying, “No one knows better than master Hua whether the flesh of these zombies is burnt or rotten.”

He glanced at the zombies that were lying on the ground with their legs cut off, unable to get back up. Then he looked back at them and blandly said, “Even if they were burned, are you sure they are Linyi’s corpses?”

Mo Ran’s black eyes stared at him unflinchingly, saying, “Just guessing. If master Hua thinks it’s too absurd, then you can come up with another way and have Xu Shuanglin bring over thousands of corpses to Mount Huang without anyone noticing.”

Hua Binan smiled. “I’m not good at evil arts, so I can’t guess.”

“…”

No one said anything else for a while.

These words from the Cold Scale Sacred Hand had stabbed the hearts of everyone.

When Mo Ran speculated on the use of the Soul Devouring Insects, many people began to feel a faint sense of dread and trepidation in their hearts, and goosebumps rose on their backs.

There’s a good saying, you can see what kind of person you are.

Many of the people present weren’t naive characters, so they were able to immediately think of the crux of the problem. That was, how could Mo Ran have made such a terrifying yet meticulous guess in such a short period of time?

Naturally, he was not Xu Shuanglin’s henchman. If he was, then he would absolutely not reveal this conjecture.

In that case, did this mean that Mo-zongshi, who had always shown a ‘righteous’ attitude, had actually long since been involved in this kind of demonic technique, or had at least thoroughly studied it?

The veil on Hua Binan’s face fluttered gently as he smiled and said, “In the end, when it comes to guessing what Xu Shuanglin is thinking, I feel that I can’t compare with Mo-zongshi.”

Mo Ran wanted to refute for a moment, but he suddenly felt that he could not stand up for himself. He could not say it out loud.

At this time, he suddenly heard a cold voice, “grandmaster Hua, why do you need to use insinuations?”

“Ah!” Hua Binan smiled. “Chu-zongshi.”

Chu Wanning was wearing a snow-white robe and standing under the moonlight, his expression was very dull, “Individuals in different positions will think differently. The ones in the seats can only see the puppets on the stage, but some can only watch from the back of the stage, watching the ordinary people squatting behind the tables. Grandmaster Hua, do you understand what I mean?”

Hua Binan smiled and said: “Forgive my stupidity.”

“Mo Ran has his own ideas.” Chu Wanning said coldly, “He is a disciple of my sect. I will leave it to you not to make any further guesses.”

Such trust made Mo Ran’s throat throb as he muttered, “Shizun…”

Hua Binan looked at Chu Wanning for a moment, wanting to say something. But in the end, he didn’t say anything. Smiling, he went back to Guyue’ye’s team.

Jiang Xi retrieved his face, but his expression was still ugly.

He said coldly, “No matter what, we’ll discuss it after we reach the top.”

When everyone reached the peak, it was completely empty. There was only a gigantic spell formation, and red lumps of light constantly emerged from the core of the formation.

When Mo Ran saw this array, his heart sank and his fingertips turned cold.

It was indeed a Shared-Heart Formation… It was an array formation that required refining a common heart chess piece and combining the Soul Devouring Insects into a Zhenlong chess piece.

The palace master of the Taxue Palace frowned, sizing up the strange array totem, and said: “What array is this? Never seen it. Sect Leader Xue, you have seen a lot, have you ever seen one?”

Xue Zhengyong moved closer to take a look and shook his head. “No.”

Jiang Xi’s brown-black eyes shone with a ghostly light. He looked at the eye of the formation for a while, and then slowly probed it with his hand. He was the most proficient at this type of alchemy array. He closed his eyes for about an incense stick of time before suddenly withdrawing his hand and turning to Mo Ran, “Do you have any other ideas?”

His reaction told everyone that Mo Ran’s conjecture was correct!

Mo Ran said, “… Yes.”

Jiang Xi said, “Speak.”

“Since it’s a mother bug, then it’s just as I said. One is on the stage, the other is off the stage. As a result, as many precious pieces of chess as Xu Shuanglin has done here, countless corpses will rise up and similarly obey his orders. However, in that place, there will definitely not be piles of ordinary zombies that are as weak as a chicken. I’m afraid they are all the remains of people with extremely powerful cultivations when they were alive.”

Xue Meng said in surprise, “Is this the reason why Xu Shuanglin killed so many ordinary people? In order to make the corpses of the cultivators

under you easier to control?”

“I’m afraid so.”

“…”

Xue Meng turned around and looked at the mountain of corpses and the sea of blood below. Instantly, the color of his face completely drained. It was unknown if it was because he felt too disgusted or too shocked, or if it was because he thought of another place and the equivalent number of dead cultivators they were going to face.

Perhaps it was both. Xue Meng seemed to be swaying a little.

Suddenly, someone shouted, “Look here! There is a corpse here!”

There was no longer any tall shelter at the top of the mountain. There was only a bush. Those with sharp eyes noticed that there seemed to be a white robe sticking out from the top.

Ch. 205 Shizun, a Great Disaster Is About to Befall

Several men went to investigate and dragged it out of the bushes. It was a corpse that was charred black all over. It was burning so strongly that one could easily see that it had struggled in the sea of fire before it was born. Its face had become completely viscous, and its facial features could not be seen.

She could only be judged to be a woman when she was alive by her physique, as well as by the way she was dressed in snow-white clothing that would never melt in the face of fire.

Chu Wanning put his hand in the air, closed his eyes and said, “There are no traces of Zhenlong chess pieces.”

Someone mumbled, “Strange, could it be that Xu Shuanglin missed out on an entire mountain of Zhenlong chess?”

Immediately, someone retorted, “Have you ever seen a corpse that was left alone at the top of a mountain?”

Mo Ran also walked over, going back and forth as he carefully examined the female corpse. As the person who was the most proficient at using Chess in his previous life, he naturally knew about some of the restrictions of this technique. Therefore, he was concerned about the identity of this female corpse.

He had a more convincing guess, but he needed a little corroboration.

The evidence was quickly found.

Mo Ran took off a burnt black chain from his hand and wiped off the dark gray color on it, revealing some faint red Spirit Stones.

He handed the chain to Jiang Xi and said, “Song Qiutong.”

“… Why are you…” Jiang Xi asked halfway, then reacted with the chain in his hand. “Do you recognize this chain?”

“The wedding gift I gave her. Song Qiutong is the descendant of Song Xingyi. The clan of Butterfly-Boned Beauties who subdued the Phoenix Evil Spirit is the key to opening the Mount Huang Forbidden Area.”

Someone asked, “Xu Shuanglin killed Song Qiutong and used her as a key to open the gates to Mount Huang?”

Mo Ran shook his head and stared at Song Qiutong’s face for a long time. He did not feel pity, but his emotions were complicated. “No, I’m afraid she was still alive when he took her up the mountain.”

“What do you mean?”

Before Mo Ran could speak, Jiang Xi spoke first. Perhaps it was to save his pride, but when he met with this kind of question that he could easily answer, Jiang Xi did not plan on bringing this junior into the limelight again. Instead, he lightly said, “In order to give the order to Mount Huang.”

Mo Ran glanced at him, thinking that this was for the best. If he were to say everything, it would be harder to justify himself if suspicions were raised about him in the future. Thus, he walked to the side and handed over all the seats to Jiang Xi, allowing his to speak.

Someone asked, “Order? A weak girl like Song Qiutong, what orders can she give?”

“Although she is weak, her ancestors may not all be pustules. The Phoenix Evil Spirit of Mount Huang will only obey the orders of the bloodline that tamed it.” Jiang Xi was no fool, he said, “Song Qiutong is the last descendant of this bloodline.”

The man gasped, “Ah, the one who tamed the Phoenix Evil Spirit was the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast Venerable One?”

“That’s right.”

“This is indeed unheard-of…”

Jiang Xi said, “I’ve never heard of it, but it’s normal. Besides guarding, the four great evil mountains don’t have any other uses, so no one will care if they can be activated by anyone else. Song Qiutong had been displaced earlier and used as an auction item, so she probably did not know that he could hide on Mount Huang… she should not have even heard of her own ancestors defeating the Phoenix Evil Spirit.”

“So… So Xu Shuanglin brought her here?”

“That’s how it should be.” Jiang Xi continued, “At that time, a calamity broke out in the Rufeng Sect, and everyone was forced to flee for their lives. No one will be able to return to the main hall to bother about that weak woman. The only person who can take care of his is Xu Shuanglin, or that comrade behind Xu Shuanglin.”

Xue Zhengyong thought on the side and nodded, “Since the person behind the scenes can tear open the space crack and take Xu Shuanglin somewhere else, it would be a simple task for him to take Song Qiutong. We might as well make an assumption — he took her to Mount Huang. Song Qiutong was naturally a person who took advantage of the situation.

If she grabbed onto this life-saving straw, she would only do as she was told. At this time, that person only needs to bring her to Mount Huang and have her give an order. She won't reject."

Someone asked, "But why didn't he use the piece to control Song Qiutong?"

"Because the person who gave the order was under control due to the Phoenix Evil Spirit Identification. Only those who are alive and those who are willing will be willing to follow the command of this mountain."

Everyone slowly started to ponder about the smell. Someone exclaimed, "Then what are we doing here? They had all been tricked by him and ran into his 'background', and it was also because of this damned mantle of Mount Huang that they had no way of getting rid of these Soul Devouring Insects… What do we do now?"

Jiang Xi furrowed his brows, as if he despised the 'behind-the-scenes' analogy that Mo Ran was using, but he still said, "Find the 'front of the stage' and go directly destroy Xu Shuanglin's puppets."

"Mo-zongshi."

After Jiang Xi finished speaking, he suddenly called out to Mo Ran. Mo Ran was originally listening attentively with his arms crossed. He couldn't help but be startled when he mentioned him.

"Hmm? What's wrong?"

Jiang Xi said faintly, "Mo-zongshi's analysis just now was very thorough. Then, I would like to ask Mo-zongshi one more time, where is the stage now and how should I look for it?"

Mo Ran: “… Try and see?”

“Try… What?”

Mo Ran coughed lightly. The flame in his palm lit up, and the willow vine suddenly appeared. He said, “That’s it, it’s called ‘Jiangui’.”

Jiang Xi: “…”

Just like Tianwen, Jiangui has the ability to interrogate. It can interrogate living people, Evil Spirits, and even corpses with separated souls. The only difference was that the interrogator and the Inquisition had the two of them speak, whereas the inquiry had the spirit soul directly to communicate with the interrogator.

Song Qiutong had been dead for more than a month, her soul had long disappeared, but fortunately the mountain was still full of Yin Qi and her corpse had not rotted. Mo Ran whispered, “Jiangui, let’s go investigate.”

The only thing he saw was that Song Qiutong’s body had been wrapped in red three times by the extended branch and leaf vines immediately following his command, emitting a blinding red light.

As the red light flickered in the depths of Mo Ran’s eyes, he opened his mouth and asked in a low voice, “Was the person who brought you here Xu Shuanglin?”

It was hard to tell the facial features of Song Qiutong charred face, so they did not move for a while.

“… Is it not working?” Someone muttered softly.

Mo Ran narrowed his eyes and asked again, “Is the person who brought you here Xu Shuanglin?”

Still no movement.

Jiang Xi said, “Seems like Mo-zongshi is still too young. Why don’t you switch to your Shizun instead?”

However, just at this moment, Song Qiutong’s neck suddenly moved! His movements were stiff and extremely slow, but she undoubtedly shook her head in the most obvious manner.

“It’s not Xu Shuanglin?” Xue Zhengyong asked in shock.

Mo Ran tightly gripped the damned thing as his meridians slightly protruded from the back of his hand. He then asked, “Then, have you seen the person who brought you here?”

After a few more moments of silence, Song Qiutong suddenly opened her mouth but she did not reply. What came out of her mouth was a sticky, slippery snake that slithered to the ground and slithered away.

Some of Guyue’ye’s disciples immediately recognized her, “She has a Swallowing Snake in his stomach!”

The Swallowing Snake, an evil beast, was not poisonous. Its entire body was covered with spirit armor, and it could live for more than twenty years in a person’s stomach.

From then on, besides being able to answer the truth with the Swallowing Snake’s owner, the rest of the Dark Guard could only answer lies or be mixed in with the truth. Otherwise, this kind of snake would wake up from

its slumber, and instantly tear apart the host's internal organs, throat, and tongue.

The devilish red light was extinguished abruptly, and Song Qiutong's entire body was trembling. She could not help but shake her head as a large amount of blood spurted out of her mouth. It looked like her internal organs had been shattered, as well as her tongue and throat…

She could no longer speak the truth.

Suddenly, someone suggested, "Since she can't say it, why don't you let her write it down and read it?"

The moment Mo Ran saw the Swallowing Snake, he had already understood that the person behind the scenes was very meticulous and was not something an ordinary person could handle. However, he still went forward and raised Song Qiutong's hands to examine them.

"How is it?" Xue Zhengyong asked.

Mo Ran shook his head and said, "All her bones and tendons have been cut off and she can't write anything at all."

All of a sudden, a cold wind blew past, and the leaves in the mountain forest began to cackle, the howls of zombies could be heard from far and near. The atmosphere on the mountain peak became extremely tense and strange, and Ma Yun, the owner of the Peach Blossom Villa broke the silence, saying, "T-that lead to the end?"

No one said anything.

Jiangui had been retracted, and Song Qiutong's corpse fell limply to the ground.

Soon, the vines of Mount Huang creeped over, carefully coiled up the corpse, and dragged her into the bushes, as if to preserve her with this little bush.

Earlier, he had actually not understood why Xu Shuanglin and the rest did not directly kill Song Qiutong, burn her, and then spend so much effort to cut off the meridians in their hands and feed it to the Swallowing Snake. However, seeing this scene, he suddenly understood —

Mount Huang obeyed the clan of Butterfly-Boned Beauties, from life to death. As long as his corpse was in Mount Huang, the Phoenix Evil Spirit would not allow others to burn her to ashes.

He didn't know what feeling Mo Ran had, but he suddenly thought of his previous life. He was dead, and no one had ever taken his body from him. Before he died, he had to lie down in a coffin he had dug out beforehand. Actually, there was no point in doing that. Later on, the rebel soldiers who attacked him from the mountain, it would be weird if they didn't cut him into pieces.

In his previous life, the way he died was probably even more miserable than Song Qiutong's death. When he arrived, he didn't even have a vine willing to protect him.

Many people in the surrounding area were whispering, talking to each other, frowning, and discussing how to deal with the situation. Some of them had their eyes closed and were deep in thought, such as Jiang Xi and Chu Wanning.

Mo Ran closed his eyes and combed through what was happening before him. Such a bloody tactic was extremely similar to what he had

experienced in his previous life. Perhaps because of this, Mo Ran felt that it was not that difficult to guess Xu Shuanglin's thoughts and actions.

He seemed to see Xu Shuanglin pacing back and forth barefooted in his Three Lives Courtyard. Xu Shuanglin was thinking and asking himself: If I don't have enough spiritual energy, I can't control the cultivators' corpses, what should I do?

Then, he came up with an idea —

When using the Shared-Heart Formation, he could kill the same number of ordinary people. Each cultivator would have an ordinary corpse, just like a marionette, which he could use to drive.

Where is the safest place to do this?

Four Great Evil Mountains.

What if he couldn't open the Mount Huang barrier?

He brought along Song Qiutong's corpse.

All the clues were rapidly connected together. Mo Ran's eyes were dark, and he was deep in thought.

Where did the corpses of commoners come from?

Linyi had burned in the calamity fire.

Even though it was all a guess, every single one of them matched each other. The luster in his eyes scattered and disintegrated, disintegrating and disintegrating, and he could even feel that he was Xu Shuanglin, and Xu

Shuanglin was him. Standing at the summit of Mount Huang, his gaze frantically roamed about, watching the surging corpse tide below.

More and more clearly, more and more clearly, until suddenly, it was at a point.

If he was Xu Shuanglin, then after doing all this, shouldn't he build the "front of the stage" and perform the puppet show that he had painstakingly arranged?

Where should "the front stage" be chosen?

Where would they be able to find such a strong and considerable amount of cultivators' remains?

If he wasn't discovered, he could be protected…

The gradually flourishing sunlight suddenly dimmed down.

"Mount Jiao…" he murmured.

Jiang Xi cast a sidelong glance at him. "What?"

Mo Ran's expression changed as he looked to the east. He suddenly became somewhat furious. The Hero Tomb! — The stage he found was in front of the Hero Tomb in Mount Jiao! Linyi's calamity, the majority of the casualties were commoners. Xu Shuanglin was able to obtain so many corpses of commoners, but not cultivators with even greater magic power! — The Hero Tomb!"

Jiang Xi also reacted. "Are you saying that Xu Shuanglin's corresponding summoning is the skeleton of the Rufeng Sect that was buried in the Hero Tomb during these hundreds of years?"

Mo Ran was too lazy to waste words with him. He cursed under his breath and dashed down the mountain.

Xu Shuanglin was truly a madman! The Hero Tomb was filled with generations of Sect Leaders from the Rufeng Sect, even the original Sect Leaders whose corpses had been dissolved into immortals. It was fine to control the common cultivators with the Shared-Heart Formation, but to control these people?

Once Xu Shuanglin's magic power ran out of steam, these strong bones would go berserk and break free. At that time, Xu Shuanglin would be counterattacked and die, while the most powerful corpses of the Rufeng Sect in hundreds of years would go berserk.

That would be a great calamity no less than the Unbroken Hell's Heavenly Rift!

Ch. 206 Shizun, Just Who Am I?

Mo Ran swept past the rolling corpse tide, heading straight to the foot of the mountain. After exiting the barrier, his gaze immediately fell on Nangong Si.

At this moment, Nangong Si's imprisonment had already been released. Ye Wangxi knelt down on one knee to the side, bandaging his wounds. Mei Hanxue, on the other hand, had a cold expression on his face as he quietly sat on the floor between the Jiangdong Hall and Nangong Si.

It had to be known that Mei Hanxue was the da-shixiong of the Taxue Palace in Mount Kunlun. It was also said that he had appeared and disappeared mysteriously, and his movements were extremely strange and unpredictable.

With his blessings, although the group of people from Jiangdong Hall wished that they could cut Nangong Si to pieces, they had no other choice but to obediently sit on the rocks at the side and glare at them.

Seeing that Mo Ran had come down, Mei Hanxue's zither music abruptly stopped. He retrieved his zither, stood up and nodded slightly.

The style of a sect was extremely dignified and righteous.

"What happened on the mountain?"

Mo Ran said, "It's all fake."

"Fake?" Mei Hanxue frowned slightly. When the people of Jiangdong Hall heard this, they all gathered around. Huang Xiaoyue was still lying in the pavilion beside them.

A few disciples were massaging his legs and shoulders as they feigned a weak and dying appearance. However, when they heard his words, they could not help but narrow their eyes and prick up their ears to listen.

Mo Ran said, “Xu Shuanglin is not on this mountain, but I’m afraid at Mount Jiao. I —”

He had not finished speaking when Nangong Si’s face turned pale. He stared at Mo Ran and asked, “Xu Shuanglin is on top of the Mount Jiao?”

“Perhaps, but not with absolute certainty.”

Nangong Si was stunned for a moment before muttering, “… That’s impossible. Mount Jiao will only listen to the orders of the Nangong Family. Xu Shuanglin, he…”

He thought of something and was suddenly at a loss for words. The last bit of blood on his face faded, and his pair of bright eyes stared at Mo Ran face.

He had actually forgotten that Xu Shuanglin also wore the surname Nangong.

The Nangong family had once had a young hero that was praised by everyone. Everyone felt that the Rufeng Sect would once again rise to glory in the hands of this pair of brothers, like the sun at high noon. Who would have thought that these two brothers and the Rufeng Sect would end up like this?

Nangong Si silently lowered his eyelids and did not say another word.

At this time, the others had also successively descended from Mount Huang. Several thousand people were like a migratory school of fish that

crowded as they returned to the front of the mountain.

Chu Wanning walked over with Xue Meng and Shi Mei following behind him. He looked at Nangong Si, “How did your hand get injured?”

“It’s fine, I did it myself.” Nangong Si said. “Thank you for your kindness, zongshi.”

Xue Meng sighed and said, “Call him shizun, call him zongshi… Seriously, Shizun is giving you face, yet you don’t want it… you…”

“I’ve never taken a teacher before.” Nangong Si’s parched lips slightly opened and closed, “What I have learnt, I have never learned from a zongshi. When my mother asked for it when I was young, zongshi did not need to take it to heart.”

Chu Wanning: “…”

“Sorry. But I can’t even remember the three kowtows back then.”

Before Chu Wanning could say anything, he saw Jiang Xi and the other heads of the other sects walking towards them, with most of them hugging each other. He was not used to speaking in private in front of so many people, so he only pursed his lips and did not speak any further. He only handed a small pot of medicine from his Qiankun bag to him.

“It will be used externally every day for three days.”

After he said this simple sentence, the others had already arrived.

Huang Xiaoyue was also being supported from the pavilion as he walked over while trembling. This cup of soup was something that the Jiangdong Hall would definitely not miss.

Now that Guyue'ye was the head of the various sects, Jiang Xi should be the first one to speak in the face of such a big matter. However, Jiang Xi looked at him and wasn't sure what attitude he should take to be the most suitable for him…

The Rufeng Sect had been domineering and tyrannical for so many years, and they had accumulated a lot of enmity with other sects and clans. They had nowhere to vent their hatred and hatred on, and in the end, it all fell to Nangong Family alone.

But what was wrong with him? He didn't take away the Bitan Manor's sword manual, nor did he sell it for a sky-high price. He didn't even have time to find out where the sword manual was… His father, Nangong Liu, had committed countless crimes and died quite happily. Now, everyone said that his father would repay the debts, but if his son were to repay the debts, how many of those present would be able to remain clean and innocent?

Moreover, this young man was currently the only descendant of the Nangong family, and he was the key to open the gates to Mount Jiao.

"You…"

Jiang Xi hesitated for a moment before speaking.

Just as he was speaking, he suddenly heard someone by his side say shakily, "Benefactor Nangong, you have to come with us. To untie a bell you need the person who tied it, it's the Rufeng sect mess, we need you."

When Jiang Xi saw that, he sneered in his heart as he knew it was master Xuanjing from the Wubei Temple. He thought to herself, "This old bald donkey is dirty; I really want to pick a fight with him."

But this was just right, since he was not good at socializing, he lazily closed his mouth and stood to the side, watching Great master Xuanjing leaning on his magic staff.

After Nangong Si heard this, he said, “Sure, I will go with you to Mount Jiao.”

Great master Xuanjing did not expect him to so readily agree to help unblock the Divine Barrier. He was stunned for a moment before closing his eyes and said, “Amitabha, the benefactor is wise. Buddha has knowledge, and sin should be reduced.”

For a moment, Nangong Si seemed to want to say something, but he did not. Naobaijin in his quiver was whimpering and trying to climb out, but he quietly pushed it back.

“I went to Mount Jiao because I did not want the elites of the Rufeng Sect, who had existed for hundreds of years, to become the accomplices of a tiger”, said Nangong Si. “However, I thank grandmaster for your kind intentions in guiding me on the way.”

Thus, the key to Mount Jiao could be found.

It was different from Mount Huang. If they wanted to go to Mount Jiao, whether it was the people from the Nangong Family or any outsiders brought in by the Nangong Family, they had to do two things —

First, fast for ten days.

Second, when reaching the mountain range belonging to Mount Jiao, one must walk on foot. One cannot ride a sword or ride a horse, and with just his feet, he must cross the first three mountains to express his sincerity.

Xue Zhengyong calculated the time and said, “From here to the Panlong Mountain Range, if I were to ride a horse, it would take me about ten days, just after fasting. I think that if you do not have any urgent matters to attend to, there is no need for you to return to your own sects.

The palace master of the Taxue Palace said: “That’s fine, if we go together, we can discuss our next plans.”

Xue Zhengyong said, “We have at least three thousand men here, so it’s a little difficult to find horses…”

At this moment, a weak voice suddenly came from the crowd. With one hand raised, it was the head of a deer, a scoundrel, wearing a large red brocade robe. The edge of the brocade robe was embroidered with the totem of a black cat: “My Villa has some, it should be enough.”

“Palace Master Ma?” Jiang Xi raised his eyebrows.

This person was the Sect Leader of one of the nine great sects of the Upper Cultivation World, the “Peach Blossom Villa”, Ma Yun. He was the third richest person on the « Cloud Ranking » that Xue Meng bought, but now that Nangong Liu had died, he should be ranked second in terms of wealth.

Compared to Jiang Xi, Ma Yun was much more grounded and looked like a businessman. However, the ways in which the two of them amassed wealth were different. Jiang Xi was ferocious. He had a wide range of treasures. What he did was on the black market.

Palace Master Ma, on the other hand, had set up many large and small relay stations in the cultivation world to receive all kinds of parcels and deliveries, as well as leases of immortal horses, immortal boats, and

spiritual energy carriages. His manor specialized in making all sorts of spirit carriages, and kept a large number of powerful oxen and horses.

Facing the cold-faced Jiang Xi, the horse that received the guest seemed to be a little scared. It shrank its neck and said, “How about… Or to Rinling Island? Sect Leader Jiang’s mansion definitely has more horses than mine, hehehe.”

Everyone: “…”

Jiang Xi looked at his smile which was full of wrinkles and was speechless for a moment. He then said, “I am just moved by Palace Master Ma’s generosity and have no other intentions. This place is very close to the Peach Blossom Villa. Since Palace Master Ma is willing to lend us all our mounts, it naturally cannot be any better.”

When this Palace Master Ma heard this, he heaved a sigh of relief and smiled, “Then I invite everyone to move to this lowly manor. It’s already late in the night, why not stay in the manor for the night and depart together the next day?”

Taobao Villa is located at the edge of the West Lake, built on the summit of the Lonely Mountain. However, even though this Lonely Mountain was called a mountain, it was actually just a small hill. Climbing to the peak of the mountain would only take half an hour.

“We’re here!” Palace Master Ma excitedly stood in front of the massive crimson mountain gate and lifted his hand to remove the protective barrier. “Everyone, please come in, please come in.”

On the journey to Mount Huang, the various sect masters were either anxious or worried. Only Palace Master Ma was able to quickly act as if

nothing had happened, and he was even able to bring out a steaming smile. Everyone looked at each other and bitterly smiled, but they didn't say anything. The Sect Leader was first, the Elders were second, and the direct disciples of the various sects followed. One by one, they entered the Spirit Formation gate of the Peach Blossom Villa.

Xue Meng whispered to Mo Ran, "What the hell is this receiving horse doing? Laughing until my hair stood on end, could it be that he is also with Xu Shuanglin? Is he inviting someone to join him?"

"… No."

"Are you sure again?"

Mo Ran said, "The Sect Leaders and elites of the nine great sects are all here. Now, everyone is well armed. If he is Xu Shuanglin's partner, he won't be able to do anything, and will instead expose himself."

"Then why is he so happy?"

Mo Ran sighed and said, "He's happy to be rich."

"What money? What he did was clearly a loss-making business." Xue Meng was stupefied. It was said that when he was young, Madam Wang had given him a silver leaf and told him to go to the hawker to exchange it. In the end, he got a small kite and three oily copper coins, which made him fall into the pit to the point where he felt that the kite was very pretty.

How could someone like him know the thoughts of a guest horse.

So after thinking about it for a long time, he still said in a daze, "Did you hear wrongly? He said he was going to lend our horses, not rent one. He doesn't take a dime, he —"

At this time, the lower level disciples of the Villa that were in charge of receiving guests came to receive them. Mo Ran waved his hand, indicating for them to stop talking.

This row of courtyards were all located at the edge of a mountain. A single courtyard could accommodate six people. At dusk, Mo Ran stood at the window of his own room, gazing out at the cold mountains and the smoke of the West Lake.

Ever since he came down from Mount Huang, Mo Ran had been very anxious and restless. Now that he had closed his door, he finally revealed his complete restlessness. He ran one hand along the windowsill, the other unconsciously playing with something warm in the palm of his hand.

The scenery in Jiangnan was always beautiful, but at this moment, he was not in the mood to appreciate it. The setting sun was setting. If someone were to see the expression on his face at this moment, they would definitely not believe that he was the honest Mo-zongshi.

This was a face that belonged to the emperor Taxian-Jun from his previous life.

Perverted.

The setting sun pierced his hazel eyes.

In the twilight, Mo Weiyu's face changed.

The reincarnated person behind Xu Shuanglin caused him to shudder. He felt as if there was a blade on his neck, the blade of the blade sticking to his skin and piercing through his flesh. Blood was already seeping out.

But the man did not strike down, and he could not turn his head. He couldn't even see clearly who was standing behind him, as if they were going to take his life at any moment.

His mind was in a mess. He had a feeling that he wouldn't be able to hide the matter of his rebirth for long.

If the day of the final battle was the day the truth was revealed, what should he do?

What would his aunt and uncle think of him? How would Shi Mei see him? How would Xue Meng view him?

And there was also Chu Wanning.

Chu Wanning…

If his past life was exposed, how much hatred would Chu Wanning have towards him? Would he be unwilling to even glance at him from now on?

The more he thought about it, the colder he felt —

… Plop.

Suddenly, the object in his hand fell to the floor.

He picked it up in a daze and glanced at it indifferently.

There was a bit of dust on that little toy. It seemed like no one had lived in this courtyard for a long time. It was not tidied diligently and the floor was covered in dust…

He stopped.

Mo Ran's face suddenly turned pale.

He suddenly realized what he was playing.

Lying on his palm was a warm, pitch-black chess piece.

Zhenlong Chess!

The expression on Mo Ran's face changed!

In his previous life, he'd formed a habit during the last two years before his death. Every time his emotions became extremely complicated and irritable, he would uncontrollably gather his spirit energy in his palm and condense it into a tiny black dot, turning it over and over in his hands.

Mo Ran had overheard the people of the palace discussing this matter. They all felt that he must be sulking, angry, and wanted to create a pawn. He wanted to kill people, and he wanted to turn living people into puppets.

"I was so afraid that His Majesty would throw out that chess piece in his hands at any moment."

"To be honest, I'd rather see him play with a dead man's skull."

"What's there to be afraid of? I am a servant of His Majesty. Heaven knows how many times my legs have gone soft. How much spiritual power would it cost for His Majesty to create a pawn? He can't be playing around, can he? He must have a purpose, or maybe he wanted to vent… What if I vent on you, then what should I do…"

Mo Ran was speechless, but at the same time, he found it funny.

He did not understand what these jabbering court maids were thinking, and why they were so confident to guess at his inner thoughts.

Actually, there was no meaning in making these chess pieces. They were merely a personal hobby of Emperor Taxian-Jun's. They were as simple as that. However, ever since he had heard the discussion of the palace maids, he would occasionally play with them and pretend that he wanted to throw the Zhenlong chess piece in his hand at one of the servants, scaring those people to the point that their legs were like sieve chaff. His expression was as cold as ever, but he secretly felt amused in his heart.

Those were the only pleasures he had in the last two years of his life.

It had been a long time since he had used Zhenlong Chess.

It was as if he wanted to break away from his past self. Ever since he was reborn, Mo Ran had never cast this spell again.

In the blink of an eye, seven or eight years had passed. He thought that he would soon forget about the mantra and the mantra.

However, he could not escape at all.

Sin was planted in his soul.

As Mo Ran stared at the black piece, his hands began to tremble…

He was suddenly filled with despair.

He suddenly did not know who he was. Was it the Venerable Taxian-Jun? Or was it Mo-zongshi?

He suddenly didn’t know where he was… Was it by the lakeside? Or was it in front of Wushan Palace?

Suddenly, he was unable to distinguish between dream and reality. He was trembling uncontrollably, and that small black dot appeared in his eyes like a heavy nightmare, like a dark stain of blood.

“Mo Ran! Mo Weiyu! You can’t escape! You can’t escape! You can only be an evil person forever, you can only be a malicious ghost! You scourge! Scourge!”

The ground was shaking.

“Toc toc toc.” Suddenly, someone knocked on the door.

Mo Ran jolted awake, cold sweat pouring down his back. Gripping the chess piece tightly in his hand, he turned around and sternly asked, “Who is it?”

“It’s me.” The person outside replied, “Xue Meng.”

Ch. 207 Shizun, I Want to Tell You Something

Mo Ran opened the door.

It was not completely open, only a narrow gap. He saw Xue Meng bathed in sunlight, beside him followed Shi Mei in green clothes.

“We brought you some medicine,” said Xue Meng. “What are you doing? Open the door and let us in.”

Mo Ran was silent for a moment before he let go of the door frame. The two entered the house. Xue Meng walked over to the window and peeked out to look at the western red light. He withdrew his head and said, “Your house has a nice scenery. There are several large camphor trees outside of mine. It’s all blocked, and I can’t see anything.”

Mo Ran said absentmindedly, “If you like it, I’ll trade with you.”

“There’s no need, I’ve already put down the things, I’m just saying them casually.” Xue Meng waved his hand and walked over to the table. “Let Shi Mei apply the medicine on you. The wound on your shoulder that was cut by the vine, if you don’t deal with the suppuration then you should.”

His dark brown eyes stared at Xue Meng — If Xue Meng knew about his previous life and what kind of spirit soul was hidden under his cousin’s shell, would he smile at him like this and give him medicine…

Xue Meng was somewhat afraid from his stare and asked, “What’s wrong? Is there something on my face?”

Mo Ran shook his head, sat down at the table, and lowered his eyes.

Shi Mei stood aside and said, “Take off your shirt. Show me the wound.”

Mo Ran felt depressed, but he did not think too much about it. He lifted his hand to take off his shirt and said, “I’ll have to trouble you.”

Shi Mei shook his head and sighed: “You, ah, don’t know how to pay attention. If you follow your Shizun, you don’t have to learn from him. If there’s any danger, you can always run to the front. In the end, you can always cause yourself injuries.”

As he spoke, he took out the contents of the medicine box and carefully wiped off the wounds, applied medicine, and wrapped the medicine in gauze.

After doing all this, Shi Mei said: “Don’t go into the water anymore and don’t make too much of a move. There’s poison on the vine and the wound won’t heal easily. Also, extend your hand and let me take a pulse.”

Mo Ran stretched out his arm.

Shi Mei’s ten fingers were as white as soft jade. After patting his pulse for a while, a trace of worry flashed across his eyes.

The expression disappeared in a flash, only to be seen by Mo Ran, “What happened?”

Shi Mei came back to his senses and said: “Nothing.”

“Is the poison serious?”

Shi Mei shook his head. After hesitating for a while, he smiled at him: “Just a little bit. Remember to rest up a bit, otherwise it will cause trouble.”

As he spoke, he lowered his head and packed the medicine box, saying, “I still have some medicine to clean up. I’ll be leaving first, you guys can continue chatting.”

The door closed behind him.

Xue Meng looked at the place where he had disappeared and slightly frowned. “Why do I feel that his mood has not been very good recently? It’s strange, as if there’s something on his mind.”

Mo Ran was not in a good mood. He said, “I think after my pulse examination, you discovered that my time was up. Do you feel sad for me?”

“Pei pei pei, crow’s beak.” Xue Meng stared at him. “How can you curse yourself like this? Besides, I’m telling you seriously, Shi Mei has been very low these past few days.”

Mo Ran started to care. He stopped what he was doing and asked, “Is there?”

“Yes. Let me tell you, he was in a daze quite a few times. I called out to him two or three times before he reacted. “Do you think he could be…”

“What is it?”

“He fell in love with someone?”

Mo Ran: “…”

Shi Mei fell in love with someone? If it was eight years ago, when Xue Meng had told him this, he would probably be able to stand up and curse. However, at this moment, he felt a bit surprised. He wanted to find some

clues, but he realized that he had paid too little attention to Shi Mei. It was actually impossible to find any traces of Shi Mei.

“Don’t ask me. I’m not the one he likes anyway.” As he spoke, he pulled up his open robes and put them on. “Besides, it’s not like you care about the feelings of others, what do you have to do with so much?”

Xue Meng was a bit embarrassed. With a red face, he coughed and said, “How am I supposed to care!? I was just casually saying it!”

He stared furiously at Mo Ran, at the guy with the perfect figure dressing himself, staring at him, and suddenly felt that something was not right.

After looking carefully once more, his gaze landed on the tightly muscled chest and stopped —

Mo Ran did not care and said casually, “Why are you staring at me? Like me?”

“…” Xue Meng did not utter a single word.

Mo Ran said with the tone of someone about to die, “Stop looking, it’s impossible for the two of us.”

Only then did Xue Meng turn around with a pale face. He pretended to be calm and said, “Pfft, what a beautiful idea.”

However, his heart was pounding — he saw a crimson red crystal pendant hanging near Mo Ran’s neck. It looked extremely familiar, as if he had seen an identical pendant somewhere. He could not recall what had happened, but for some reason, goosebumps appeared all over his body and his mind buzzed.

Where have I seen it before?

After Mo Ran had put on his clothes, he suddenly noticed that there were a few stains of medicinal liquid on the table. He asked Xue Meng, “Do you have a handkerchief?”

“Hmm?…Oh, yes.” Xue Meng came back to his senses, took out a piece and gave it to him. “You still don’t remember taking one with you.”

“I’m not used to it.”

Xue Meng said with a straight face, “Last time, I said that Shizun would give you a piece, but this is not how you brag.”

Mo Ran then remembered that he had begged him to give him a haitang handkerchief. He didn’t know if he had forgotten or not, but he had never given it to him. He couldn’t help but feel a bit embarrassed. He cleared his throat and said, “I have been busy recently. Shizun isn’t free…”

“Even if he has free time, he won’t make it for you alone.” Xue Meng sneered, “I definitely have a share. Maybe that person… Nangong Si also has a share.”

When it came to Nangong Si, the already bad mood of Mo Ran turned even more cloudy.

“Did you see him?”

“No, I’ll go and see what he does.” Xue Meng said. “He and Ye Wangxi are staying next to that old fogey. I wish I could be thousands of miles away from them.”

Mo Ran nodded. “It’s good over there. Although Jiang Xi has a bad temper and has a lot of problems, he can still be considered a reasonable person. He shouldn’t make things difficult for them.”

Xue Meng angrily snorted, “Him? If that b * stard can be reasonable, then I’ll be able to have his surname. I won’t be called Xue Meng, I’ll just call him Jiang Meng.”

Mo Ran: “…”

Xue Meng always had this ability. He was always making a ruckus and was always making a fuss about nothing. But perhaps it was also because of his clamor that Mo Ran felt the warmth in the room.

Only then did the terrifying nightmares of his past life slowly fade away.

Xue Meng said, “Speaking of which, it can’t be that Shizun really wants to accept Nangong Si as his disciple, right?”

“Shizun definitely wouldn’t have wanted to do it in the past. But now, neither you nor I can stop him.”

Xue Meng was stunned. “Why?”

Mo Ran sighed, “Let me ask you, previously, Li Wuxin was adoring and revering Nangong. He is obviously an elder, but he has never dared to contradict or contradict Nangong. Why?”

“Because his dad is powerful, the number one Sect Leader in the cultivation world. Is there even a need to say that?”

“Very well, let me ask you this again. Why would someone like Huang Xiaoyue, as well as those people who do not even know their names, dare

to bully him?”

“… Because of enmity?”

Mo Ran was speechless. He thought to himself, only Xue Meng could say such words.

He suddenly felt very envious. Even though Xue Meng was already over twenty years old, he sometimes still thought like a child — “being like a child” was a very subtle description, because the most obvious characteristic of a child was innocence, simplicity, bluntness, but at the same time it also meant that a person had not grown up, was immature, and was reckless.

However, for Mo Ran, he felt that even after living for twenty years, his eyes were still extremely clean. It was a miracle.

He looked at the miracle in front of him and said with a wry smile:

“Where did all these enmity come from?”

“The Rufeng Sect has revealed so many matters regarding the cultivation world…”

“It was Xu Shuanglin who shook it. How much does it have to do with Nangong Si?” Besides, aren’t those secrets that were revealed by Nangong Si one of the most injured people there? He learned that his mother had been killed by his father, and that he was not the perpetrator at all, but a victim.”

Xue Meng opened his mouth and wanted to say something, but Mo Ran did not say anything and waited for him to say something. In the end, Xue

Meng just opened his mouth wide for a long time before bitterly closing it again.

He didn't know how to respond.

After a long while, he reluctantly asked, "Then what do you think it is?"

"First, to watch the show." "With regards to the matter of the Rufeng Sect, it's too late for everyone to get excited just by looking at it. It's much more satisfying to bully a Young Master in distress than to bully a little beggar."

This was the same as in his previous life, Xue Meng. When the young phoenix was in a difficult situation, what kind of exclusion did he suffer?

Xue Meng did not know, but Mo Ran saw it clearly.

In order to not offend Emperor Taxian-Jun, no sect was willing to take him in, and no sect was willing to cooperate with him. He had gone through all sorts of hardships, begging all the leaders of all sizes to join hands and overthrow Mo Ran before he did anything even more crazy.

It was the first year of Mo Ran's accession to the throne.

Xue Meng ran for nine years and lobbied for nine years, but no one listened to him. In the end, the only person who was willing to give him a place to stay was Taxue Palace on Mount Kunlun, and the only person who was willing to help him was Mei Hanxue.

Mo Ran rejoiced that the Xue Meng of his life would no longer need to suffer such humiliation.

Xue Meng was completely oblivious, so he asked, "Then what about the second item?"

“The second thing is to think that he is acting on behalf of the heavens.”

“What do you mean?”

“Do you know what our descendant, the Tianyin Pavilion, will do when it comes to dealing with felons in the cultivation world?”

“Let’s make it public for now, let’s hang ourselves for three days and three nights.” Xue Meng muttered, “Why are you asking me this? It’s not like you haven’t seen it before. When you just arrived at Sisheng Peak, there was already a felon who was sentenced to death. You saw it during the execution, but you were really timid then. After reading it, you were so scared that you had a fever. It lasted for four to five days before it subsided…”

Mo Ran smiled, and after a while he said, “There’s nothing I can do about it. That was the first time I saw someone digging for spiritual cores.”

“What are you afraid of? It’s not like someone will dig up your Spiritual Core.”

Mo Ran said, “The world is unpredictable.”

Xue Meng was a little taken aback. He lifted his hand to probe Mo Ran’s forehead. “There’s no fever. Why are you saying such silly things?”

“I dreamt that someone’s sword would pierce my chest, and a few more inches and my heart and spirit core would be destroyed.”

“…” Xue Meng was speechless. He waved his hand and said, “Forget it. Although you are quite annoying, you are still my cousin. I will be the first one to unceremoniously dig out your spirit core.”

Mo Ran then laughed. His pitch-black pupils could not see the bottom. There was light, there was shadow, light and shadow, his thoughts were endless.

Why did he mention the past about Xue Meng's Tianyin Pavilion?

Perhaps Xue Meng hadn't noticed it at all, but those faces had left a rich and colorful reflection in the heart of Mo Ran back then.

He remembered it was a woman, in her twenties, very young.

Men, women, elders, children, cultivators, commoners, everything was gathered in front of the plaza of the Tianyin Pavilion. All of them raised their heads and looked at the woman on the platform who was bound by the three magical artifacts, Immortal-Binding Ropes, Soul Locking Lock, and Demon Subduing Chain.

"Isn't this Madam Lin?"

"She's only just married into a famous family, what crime did she commit? She actually alarmed the Tianyin Pavilion…"

"Don't you know? She was the one who set the fire in the Zhao Family! She killed his husband!"

"Ahh…" When the surrounding people heard this, they all sucked in a breath of cold air. Someone asked, "Why is she so frustrated? I hear her husband is very nice to her."

Whispering amongst themselves, the Tianyin Pavilion's master leisurely walked onto the platform. He first greeted the audience with the sect scroll and then unhurriedly opened the sect scroll to read out the crime of this woman surnamed Lin.

The offense was very long, and he read it for less than an hour.

In other words, this woman surnamed Lin was not the young miss of the Zhao family that was going to marry her. She was just a substitute, a puppet wearing a human mask. Her real purpose in approaching Young Master Zhao was to commit murder for personal grievances. The lady who was originally going to marry into the Zhao Family had long become Miss Lin's target.

"What a great show, a leopard exchanging for a crown prince." In the end, the Tianyin Pavilion master commented righteously, "However, the Heaven's Net is always the same. Miss Lin, it is time for you to tear off your mask and let everyone have a good look at your original appearance."

The human skin mask was torn off in public and thrown to the ground like a snake's skin.

Under the messy hair of the woman on the stage, another pale and flirtatious face could be seen. The disciples of the Tianyin Pavilion stroked their chin, showing his off to them.

The audience immediately burst into an uproar. Someone shouted, "What a vicious woman!"

"Killing an innocent young miss and causing the destruction of the Rong family just because of his personal grudge?"

"Beat her to death!"

"Cut out her eyes!"

"Ling Chi She! Cut off her skin inch by inch!"

The crowd was made up of separate people, but in the end they grew the same heads, like a slow, lackluster beast whose tail doesn't grow, slobbering, growling, and growling.

This ugly thing probably thought of itself as a auspicious beast. It could represent the Azure Sun and the Moon, and it could represent the Emperor's afterlife. Standing in this world, it was fair and upright.

The screams became louder and louder as they scratched Mo Ran ears of the youths. He was shocked by their anger, like a woman who had died in vain, or a Young Master Zhao who had never lived in this world before, but now they were all their own relatives, friends, sons, mistresses. They wished that they could personally avenge their friends, family, and their sons, and their mistresses, and that they could tear up that sinner with the surname Lin alive.

Mo Ran blankly opened his eyes wide and said in a daze, "A conviction… Isn't it supposed to be decided by the Tianyin Pavilion?"

Xue Zhengyong then consoled him, "Don't be afraid, Ran Er. It was decided by the Tianyin Pavilion. Everyone just can't stand watching it happen. They were all speaking on the surface. In the end, the Tianyin Pavilion would of course judge them according to the instructions of the Divine Martial Realm. It will be fair, don't worry."

However, things did not go as Xue Zhengyong said. The crowd's cheers were getting more and more crazy and exaggerated.

"This bitch! Killing the innocent! How could he let his die so easily? Pavilion master Mu! You are the Justice Division of the cultivation world, so you

must properly judge her, giving his ten times or even a hundred times the pain! Let his have good results! and get what you deserve!”

“First, tear his mouth to pieces, pull out his teeth one by one, and cut his tongue into countless pieces!”

“Spread mud on her! After it was dried, it was torn off, and a layer of skin was attached to it! Now, if he were to pour chili concoction all over his body, the pain would kill her! Kill her!”

The brothel’s bawd came to watch the commotion. He knocked on the melon seeds and then giggled sweetly, “Aiya, tear off his clothes. Shouldn’t this kind of person be naked? Put snakes in his groin, stuffed loaches in his groin, and find a hundred men to take turns with her. That would be the right thing to do.”

Were these people really angry because of their own righteousness?

When he was about to take Xue Zhengyong away from the grandstands, there was a loud bang from the stage. No one knew where in the crowd, but someone had thrown an detonator at the woman’s feet, which was against the rules, but it was unknown if the people from the Tianyin Pavilion were able to stop it in time or if they did not want to stop it at all. The detonator exploded very quickly, causing the woman’s leg to explode into a mess of blood and gore.

“Uncle!”

He was shaking too much, he was shaking too much…

“Alright!”

The crowd erupted into cheers and applause. The heroes were all clapping their hands in glee.

“Well fought! Punishment for evil and good! Again!”

“Who threw it? Don’t throw things.” The Tianyin Pavilion disciples shouted twice on the stage before they left with the crowd. All sorts of things were thrown down on the stage, including vegetables, stones, eggs, knives, and so on. Those people cast a barrier around themselves and stood to the side to watch; as long as it didn’t immediately kill her, they wouldn’t stop her.

The Tianyin Pavilion had always been valiant, and would not go against the masses.

As Mo Ran thought of this, he felt his heart stifled and didn’t want to think about it anymore. He closed his eyes for a moment, then opened them again.

“Just watch, Xue Meng.” If he insisted on not admitting that he was his Shizun’s disciple, then he would completely lose his barrier in the cultivation world. “When the trip to Mount Jiao is over, if they really did bring Nangong Si to the Tianyin Pavilion for questioning, you will see exactly the same scene as back then.”

Xue Meng said, “But that year when the Tianyin Pavilion interrogated them, everyone was so angry because that woman had killed someone, so…”

“So with the knife in your hand, you can do whatever you want, right?” Mo Ran’s mood turned increasingly heavier. There were still the latter half of the sentence that he did not say out loud.

How many people in this world, by the banner of “justice”, are doing malicious things, venting the resentment in their lives, the madness, the shocking murderous intent in their chests, into such a place?

After finishing his tea, they chatted for a while. Seeing that the sun was setting, Xue Meng left.

Mo Ran walked to the window and took out Zhenlong Chess that he had stored in his sleeves. He stared at it for a moment, then exerted some strength into his fingers and twisted them into ashes.

The wind had picked up, all the leaves were trembling, and so was the man at the window. He slowly raised his hand to cover his face. He was almost exhausted. After standing on the windowsill for a long time, he turned around and left. He walked into the depths of the room and was engulfed by darkness.

He sat in the dark room for a long time, thinking and thinking and thinking and thinking until his whole body was broken and broken and he really didn’t know what to do, and he felt that there were some things he should have said, but they would have been even more disorderly and unmanageable.

What should he do?

He didn’t know…

The more he thought about it, the more unwilling he became. The more he thought about it, the more confused he became.

He thought about the mastermind behind him.

He thought of the reverence and superstition the Tianyin Pavilion possessed in the cultivation world.

He thought of the woman they interrogated, her legs mangled.

Mo Ran paced around the room like a trapped beast, like a lunatic. The shadows of Taxian-Jun and Mo-zongshi appeared on his handsome face, one after the other.

In the end, he could not hold it in any longer and stood up.

He pushed the door open and walked out.

It was late at night.

Just as Chu Wanning was about to fall asleep, he heard someone knocking on the door. He opened the door and was stunned to see Mo Ran standing outside.

“Why are you here?”

Mo Ran felt like he was going crazy. He was going to be driven mad by the calamity that would descend at any moment. He summoned up his courage and was about to open his mouth to explain all this nonsense. But when he looked at Chu Wanning’s face, his courage was shattered into pieces, he became a pile of mud, he became selfish and weak.

“… Shizun… I can’t sleep. Can I come in and take a seat?”

Chu Wanning stepped aside and Mo Ran entered the room, closing the door behind him. Perhaps it was because his restless aura was too thick, so thick that even if he didn’t say anything, Chu Wanning could feel the anxiety in his heart. He asked, “Did something happen?”

Mo Ran didn't say anything. He silently looked at him for a while, then suddenly walked to the window and closed it with his hands.

"I…" The moment Mo Ran opened his mouth, his voice became hoarse and fierce. Suddenly, his state of mind surged up, encouraging him to go crazy. "I have something to tell you."

"About Xu Shuanglin?"

Mo Ran shook his head, hesitated, nodded again, then shook his head again.

The light from the lantern was reflected in his eyes, like snakes spitting out their tongues, scarlet red tongues twisting and twisting. His expression was too messy, and the light from his eyes was very sparse. Chu Wanning was startled for a moment, then he raised his hand, wanting to touch his face.

But as soon as his fingertips touched his face, Mo Ran suddenly closed his eyes. His eyelashes were trembling and his Adam's apple was rolling as if he had been stung by a scorpion. He turned around and mumbled, "I'm sorry."

"…"

"Can you put out the lights?" Mo Ran said, "I can't say it when I see you."

Although Chu Wanning did not know what had happened, he had never seen Mo Ran like this before. It made his hair stand on end, as if something was about to fall and crush everyone below.

Chu Wanning did not say anything else and just stood there for a while before nodding. Mo Ran walked over to the candlestick and stared at it for a moment. Then, he raised his hand and extinguished the last bit of light.

The room was plunged into darkness.

However, Mo Ran had been staring at it for a long time. The shadow of a candle flame was still flickering in front of his eyes. It changed from orange yellow to colorful, from concrete to blurry.

He stood in place with his back facing Chu Wanning, but Chu Wanning did not rush him and waited for him to speak.

Ch. 208 Shizun, Are You Sure You Want Me to Hide Under the Bed?

Mo Ran tried to speak a few times, but all he could do was move his lips. His temples were throbbing, his blood was flowing wildly, and he felt that his blood was no longer hot, but cold, and icy.

As he struggled, even the tips of his fingers became a little cold.

“Shizun.”

“…”

“Actually… I…” He finally opened his mouth, and as soon as he opened it, only three words came out before everything was thrown into chaos again.

Why did he say that?

That was all from his previous life. He had already killed himself at the Wushan Palace. He had long since died. He was only carrying his memories from his previous life… Why do you have to say it?

If he said it out loud, his conscience would be satisfied, but was this really the right choice?

How great it was to be like this now, Xue Meng would smile at him, Chu Wanning was his, his uncles and aunts were all alive, and so was Shi Mei… Nothing is more important than to be a fugitive for the rest of your life, even if you feel guilty for the rest of your life.

He did not want to destroy everything in front of him either.

But he felt that was what he should say.

Now, he was sure that the person behind the scenes must have experienced a rebirth.

He was the only one who could give some pointers to everyone else, so that they would all be prepared. This was his chance to atone for his sins. Perhaps the heavens let him die once, but he still retained his memories for this very moment. The reason was because at this very moment, there was someone who could stand out and stop this storm.

Even at the cost of his life.

Mo Ran closed his eyes. He was trembling, and moisture could be seen between his eyelashes.

He was not afraid of death. He had already died once, but there was actually something more terrifying than death in this world. He had had enough in his previous life, and that was why he chose to commit suicide in order to escape from it. All these years, especially since his death in this life, he had been running with all his might, trying to get rid of the invisible beast behind him, but now he was forced to a dead end.

Its talons dangled from his throat.

People had left their families and were scolding them for generations.

He wouldn't be able to escape… He wouldn't be able to escape…

Mo Ran cried silently, but his tears flowed down onto the ground.

He suppressed the trembling in his voice and said, "I'm sorry. I… I don't know how to begin. Actually… I…"

Suddenly, a pair of strong yet well-proportioned arms surrounded him.

Mo Ran suddenly opened his eyes and realized that it was Chu Wanning who had come over and hugged him from behind.

“If you don’t want to say it, then don’t say it.” Chu Wanning’s voice came from his back, “Everyone has their own secrets… and they do things wrong.”

Mo Ran was stunned.

Chu Wanning understood.

He already understood… That’s right, how could Chu Wanning not see through it? He had seen Mo Ran admit his mistake many times in fear, sincerely, fakely, unwillingly, and sincerely.

Although he did not know what kind of mistake Mo Ran had committed, he knew that Mo Ran must have wanted to confess something from the past, something that he did not want to say.

“Shizun…”

“If it bothers you, if you want to tell me, then say it. I’m here. But if you feel that it is very painful to say it out loud, then if you don’t open your mouth, I won’t pursue the matter. I know you’ll never do the same thing again.”

Mo Ran’s Heart felt like it was being stabbed by a knife.

He shook his head slightly. No.

It’s not as simple as you think. It’s not that simple…

I didn’t break a flower that I shouldn’t have broken. I killed people, bled to death, and have ten thousand li of dried up bones. I destroyed half of the cultivation world, I destroyed you.

He collapsed again.

I have destroyed you, Chu Wanning!

Why did you comfort an executioner. Why did you comfort the man who stabbed himself in the heart, why did you ask me before you died to let myself go?

Why didn’t you kill me back then?

He was trembling uncontrollably. Chu Wanning suddenly felt warm water dripping onto the back of his hand. He murmured, “Mo Ran…”

“I want to say it.”

“Then tell me.”

Mo Ran was a mess. He shook his head and said, “I… I don’t know what to say.”

His voice had been well controlled until now, when he finally choked up.

“Really… I really don’t know how to begin…”

“Then don’t say it.” Chu Wanning let go of him and turned him around. In the dark night, he caressed his face, dodging Mo Ran. However, Chu Wanning still resolutely touched him, grabbing his face. What was moist was the tears that had flowed for a long time.

Chu Wanning said, “Don’t say anymore.”

“I…”

Suddenly, the fragrance of the haitangs came so close to him, Chu Wanning kissed him. This seemed to be his first time taking the initiative to kiss Mo Ran, raw and clumsy. He stuck close to his lips and bit by bit opened his bitter mouth.

Chaos, uneasiness, madness.

Mo Ran didn’t know why, but perhaps love was like an escape from all pain. After all, humans were similar to beasts. In intercourse, anything could be thrown to the back of their minds. In this desire, only joy was real.

For the helpless.

For those in desperate straits, let them rest for a moment.

No one said anything more. They kissed until they came to a spot where they could kiss. Chu Wanning could feel the desire of Mo Ran through his clothes. He hesitated for a moment before reaching out to touch him, but Mo Ran held his fingers tightly, turning them into ten interlaced fingers, “This is enough.”

He held him in his arms. Only the person in front of him could suppress his pain.

It could cleanse his soul.

“There’s no need to do anything else. This is sufficient…”

Chu Wanning raised his hand and caressed his face, feeling heartbroken for no reason, “Why are you so silly.”

Mo Ran then grabbed his other hand, so both his hands were connected. He pressed his forehead, “It would have been better if I had been that silly earlier.”

Seeing that he was unable to persuade him, and didn’t know how to say anything softer, he could only clumsily rub his cheeks, the tip of his nose and finally lightly press against his lips.

When he was doing all this, even though his ears had turned red, he still tried his best to appear very calm and at ease. He took the initiative to kiss Mo Ran, to embrace him, to do things he was not used to doing in the past.

“Shizun…” Mo Ran dodged, but his breathing got heavier and heavier from his kiss, “I don’t want it anymore… Don’t do that.”

“You’ve always been the one to do this.” Chu Wanning pulled his hand away and put it around his neck, “Today you will listen to me.”

“Shizun…”

Chu Wanning looked at his watery eyes and patted the back of his head, feeling relieved and gentle, “Be good.”

There were no lights, so they kissed and caressed against the wall, from tenderness to intensity, from intensity to thirst, from thirst to death, full of male lust and urgency.

“Shizun… Wanning…”

Mo Ran kept calling out his name, pitying, loving, demented, and guilty.

As long as Chu Wanning gave him even the slightest bit of love, it would be the strongest love medicine in the world.

He finally stopped thinking about it. He pressed Chu Wanning against the wall, fiercely kissing and rubbing him. In the end, both of them were gasping for breath, their hearts pounding. He was in a frenzy, his eyes were red. Chu Wanning frowned and said, “Lantern…”

“Isn’t it already gone?”

He continued to kiss him, kissing his earrings and neck. He heard Chu Wanning whisper in his ear, “No, light it up…”

Mo Ran was stunned.

“I want to see you,” Chu Wanning said.

The lights lit up.

The darkness was gone.

Chu Wanning’s phoenix eyes were bright, clear, stubborn, and firm. His face was covered with a layer of lust, as if there was a layer of frost on it. However, his ears were red, filled with color.

He said, “I want to look at you.”

Mo Ran suddenly felt his heart ache so much that he was on the verge of death. How could his dirty, battered and cold heart survive under such a gaze?

He hugged him, kissed him, and pressed Chu Wanning’s hand against his chest, where his heart was beating.

He said, “Remember this position.”

“…”

“If one day I am guilty of an unforgivable crime. Kill me, from here,” Mo Ran muttered as he rubbed the tip of his nose against Chu Wanning’s nose.

Chu Wanning was shocked, he stared at him in disbelief, “Do you know what you’re saying?”

Mo Ran smiled, which contained Mo-zongshi’s beauty and sincerity, as well as the evil spirit and madness of Taxian-Jun.

“My spirit core was formed because of you, and my heart is yours. If one day I have to die, both these things will belong to you, so that I can…”

He did not continue.

The shock and fear that had never appeared in Chu Wanning’s eyes made him unable to continue speaking.

Mo Ran finally lowered his eyes and said with a wry smile, “I was just teasing you. I just wanted to tell you.”

He hugged him tightly.

He didn’t know how many more opportunities he would get like this.

“Wanning…”

I love you, I want you, I can’t leave you.

There were many things that he wanted to tell him, but just like what had happened in his previous life, he had no way to tell him.

Chu Wanning was still in a daze. He had no idea how much mistakes a person had to make to be able to say such words.

But when Mo Ran kissed him, his consciousness fell apart in the chaos. He wasn't someone who had such poor mental fortitude, and perhaps this wasn't the fault of Mo Ran's kiss. It was because he didn't want to think too deeply about it.

There was despair in passion, like a drop of boiling oil in a flame.

The entanglement later became primitive and crazy. Before he even reached the bed, he had already taken off more than half of his clothes. Chu Wanning was pressed down by Mo Ran on the bed.

His undergarments were quickly removed, Mo Ran buried himself in kissing him, sucking on him, occasionally raising his eyes to look at Chu Wanning who was lying under the light, slightly gasping for air with his head raised.

How many times had they been stuck together like this?

Twice? Once?

He was about to go to Mount Jiao. Perhaps he could immediately meet the person behind the scenes. If that person really used his Zhenlong chess piece, then the only person who could quickly crack the formation would be him.

Then everything would come to an end.

However, while pestering him, he coaxed his Shizun and himself who was on the verge of despair. He said that there would be many, many more opportunities in the future.

They will always be together.

It was just like how, from night to day, he would bully him many times in the course of a night, sleeping and entangling with each other in a posture that was intertwined. At dawn, when the first rays of the morning sun shined, he would wake up in his gentleness, make love in the daytime between the beds, be filthy to the extreme, love to the extreme and reach the extreme.

Mo Ran held them together and stroked them and released them together.

Chu Wanning's phoenix eyes were filled with desire and mist. As Mo Ran, his mouth opened slightly to catch his breath, and his eyes gradually became blurry.

While he was still engrossed in his thoughts, he suddenly heard a knock on the door.

Chu Wanning snapped out of his daze, the color of his blood drained. Mo Ran immediately covered his mouth, not allowing him to make a sound. The room was quiet, but his other hand was still rolling around anxiously, stimulating him and the person in his embrace.

Chu Wanning wanted to shake his head, but the power of Mo Ran was too great. He could not move, and could only reveal a pair of phoenix eyes, feeling comfortable, painful, and resentful.

"Shizun, are you there?"

Hearing that sound, Chu Wanning became angrier and angrier as he glared at Mo Ran. He then lightly knocked on the bed.

Mo Ran swallowed his saliva, his Adam's apple moved sexy, and his voice was low and hoarse. "I know, Xue Meng."

“Shizun?” After waiting for a while and seeing that no one agreed, Xue Meng muttered, “Strange, the lights are obviously on… Shizun?”

From the looks of it, Mo Ran was not going to pay any attention to him. He was still leaning on Chu Wanning, immersed in his love for him. It was too dark in the room, he even mistook the angry look in Chu Wanning’s eyes for a moist wave of emotion.

“Shizun?”

The disciple outside did not plan to leave, nor did the disciple on the bed plan to stop. Chu Wanning was grind by the two of them, so he bit on Mo Ran’s finger, causing it to hurt. Only then did he move his hand away, with a trace of grievance in his eyes.

His voice was low, “You bit me so much…”

“Forget it.” Chu Wanning took a deep breath, glared at him, and said to the door, “I’m already in bed, what’s the matter?”

“Ah, nothing, nothing.” Xue Meng said, “It’s me… I can’t sleep, but I have something on my mind that I want to tell Shizun…”

His voice gradually grew softer, and one could almost imagine Phoenix’s head drooping outside the door.

Chu Wanning: “…”

What was going on? How come one or two of them had something on their minds tonight?

Chu Wanning was worried, he patted Mo Ran on his body and whispered, “Get up, quickly get dressed.”

Mo Ran's eyes opened wide, looking like a dog as he asked, "You want him to come in?"

"His voice doesn't sound right…"

"What about me?"

"…" Although Chu Wanning was embarrassed, he still said, "Put on your clothes and hide under the bed."

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>>sexual content

Mo Ran also choked. Xue Meng was really powerful. After such a ruckus, how could he not talk about the haze from his previous life? His mind was filled with rage and resentment.

He could not understand why Xue Meng would come to talk to Chu Wanning at this time – was he that free?

However, he could not force Chu Wanning, so he pushed himself up and looked under the bed, then stood up and kissed him, saying, "No."

"You…"

"Don't be angry, it's not like I'm not going to listen to you. But the bed is too low for me to go in."

Chu Wanning: "…"

"There is no wardrobe in this room, and there is only one window facing the door. I have nowhere else to go, so just let him go."

Chu Wanning thought about it and agreed, "Whatever it is, we can talk about it tomorrow. I'm about to go to sleep."

"Just sit down for a while, okay?" Xue Meng's voice was aggrieved and moist, and seemed to have a faint voice. "Shizun, my mind is really a little messy. There are some things that I want to ask you directly."

"…"

“Otherwise I won’t be able to sleep until tomorrow.”

Mo Ran was extremely annoyed by his soft pleading. He also wanted to know what exactly Xue Meng had to say tonight.

He stood up, looked around, and suddenly thought of a way. He whispered to Chu Wanning, and Chu Wanning’s face immediately darkened by half, “You… This is ridiculous.”

“Then let him go.”

Chu Wanning wanted to say something, but he stopped himself when he heard the rustling sound of Xue Meng kicking leaves outside the door. Thinking that it was very rare for Xue Meng to insist on pestering his like this, Chu Wanning cursed under his breath. He pushed Mo Ran away and said, “Next time… In addition, hide all the clothes on the ground and don’t leak them out.”

Xue Meng waited outside for a while, but Chu Wanning did not agree. Even though it was hard to bear, he still insisted on calling out, “Shizun?”

“… I heard it. Come in.”

The moment he entered, he frowned. This room seemed to have a faint, indescribable smell, but it was too faint. He could not tell what exactly this smell was. In short, he smelled somewhat familiar.

The thick curtain on his bed had been drawn down, covering the scene inside. Hearing the sound of Xue Meng entering, he lifted up the curtain and revealed a drowsy sleeping face. His eyes were half closed, as if he had just woken up and were still sleepy.

Xue Meng was slightly embarrassed as he mumbled, “Shizun, I’m sorry to disturb your sleep.”

“No problem, sit down.”

Xue Meng sat at the table.

Chu Wanning asked, “What do you want to tell me?”

“I…” Xue Meng seemed very conflicted. After he went back home, he thought about it carefully and suddenly remembered why the necklace on Mo Ran’s neck looked so familiar. On his way to the Rufeng Gate, Mo Ran had bought one for Chu Wanning.

At that time, Mo Ran had personally told him that it was the last one.

The more he thought about it, the weirder it felt and the more uneasy he became. He was someone who could not hide his thoughts, wandering between words and suffering. In the end, he couldn’t hold it in anymore and came to this place.

However, facing Chu Wanning’s gaze, Xue Meng hesitated. He really did not know how to express his doubt.

After brewing for a long time, Xue Meng finally said in a muffled voice, “Shizun, do you feel that Mo Ran… Is he a little weird?”

Upon hearing these words, both Chu Wanning and Mo Ran’s heart skipped a beat.

Chu Wanning’s expression did not change as he asked, “…What’s wrong?”

“Did Shizun not feel it?” It was difficult for Xue Meng to say anything. After hesitating for a while, he finally threw caution to the wind and bit the bullet, “I feel like he is… Uh… he’s particularly interested in pleasing Shizun.”

Xue Meng naturally did not dare to say “in pursuit of Shizun”, but he stole a glance at Chu Wanning, his eyes were full of worry and fear.

Chu Wanning said, “… Why do you say that?”

“Actually, today I…” It was hard to get down from the tiger’s back, so Xue Meng braced himself and said, “Today… I saw something on his neck.”

Mo Ran, who was hidden behind the bed curtains, was startled. He raised his hand to touch the crystal pendant hanging around his neck, and his expression slightly changed.

Chu Wanning didn’t have time to react when Xue Meng saw something. He just frowned and looked at him, waiting for him to continue. He waited for a while and before Xue Meng could say anything, a big, warm hand touched his leg.

The color in Chu Wanning’s eyes suddenly changed. He thought that Mo Ran was going to do something ridiculous, so he took advantage of Xue Meng’s inattention and looked towards the depths of the bed which was covered by the curtain. He saw Mo Ran pointing at his chain, using his mouth to remind him.

Chu Wanning understood everything in an instant.

He thought for a moment and said, “Did you see the exact same chain as me on Mo Ran?”

“No, no, no, I didn’t mean anything else!” Xue Meng was anxious and embarrassed. He quickly waved his hand and said, “I just think it’s a little strange, I…”

“It’s fine. I was the one who gave him that chain.”

“Ah, Shizun returned it to him?”

“If you don’t feel comfortable wearing it, you’ll return it.”

Xue Meng immediately let out a sigh of relief, his pale face finally had some color to it. He smiled, “He already told me what happened. At that time, he clearly told me that it was the last one. I thought he…”

He tossed and turned so many times that in the end, he simply slapped his forehead and said dejectedly, “Shizun, pretend I didn’t say anything. My mouth is so stupid I don’t know how to explain it. Ai, I am such a fool.”

Chu Wanning didn’t know how to lie, so he didn’t know how to answer him. In fact, there were many things that went against one’s conscience. With just a few casual words, he could completely forget about the relationship between Mo Ran and himself. What Xue Meng had was just this one sentence.

As long as Chu Wanning said “no”, even if the truth was out in front of Xue Meng, he would still choose to believe in his Shizun. However, it was this complete trust that made Chu Wanning unable to say anything, so he could only silently watch Xue Meng deceived in front of him, scratching his head and sighing.

He didn’t want to be too harsh with his words.

Looking at Xue Meng, he couldn't stop apologizing. He couldn't stop saying that he was too stupid and had gone forward recklessly. Chu Wanning suddenly felt pained and guilty. Although his expression did not change much, it was still as calm as before. He said slowly, "Xue Meng…"

Xue Meng suddenly stopped talking, waiting for him to speak.

What should he say?

He couldn't just say, "I'm sorry. I hope that you will not be disappointed with me in the end, and that you will always be willing to acknowledge me as your Shizun?" These words were too soft, too greasy, and too cruel.

What right did he have to ask Xue Meng to be willing to acknowledge him no matter what happened? People would face separation, separation, growth and transformation, just like bamboo shoots being pulled up high. Sooner or later, the outer layer of bamboo shoot clothes would peel off, turning yellow and turning into mud.

Xue Meng's life still had many decades, and there weren't many people who could accompany another person through these decades. The past, the old people, will become the snake slough, bamboo clothes.

Xue Meng, who was waiting left and right, could not wait for the next part. He uneasily opened his round eyes and muttered, "Shizun?"

"Nothing." Chu Wanning said flatly, "I felt that you were thinking too much and wanted to ask Elder Tanlang for two bottles of Tapir Fragrance dew."

Xue Meng, "…"

"Anything else?"

Xue Meng thought for a moment, then said, “I do.”

“What?”

“Does Shizun really plan on taking him in as a disciple?” Xue Meng had been holding back this matter in his heart for a while. “Then, then won’t he become my Eldest Senior Brother?”

“… You care about that?”

“Yes.” Xue Meng somewhat embarrassed rubbed the corner of his shirt. “I was the first before. If you count him, then I…”

Seeing him like this, the haze in Chu Wanning’s heart lessened a bit, and he couldn’t help but smile.

Xue Meng loved to act coquettishly with Madam Wang when he was young, and after Mo Ran came, he also loved to play with Mo Ran in front of his parents.

“There’s no difference, it’s all the same.”

“That’s no good. I don’t want him to be the eldest senior brother. Although he was the first to be accepted, he was admitted by his Shizun the latest! I don’t mind for him to enter the sect, but can you make him into the last position to be a junior disciple or something?” Xue Meng was very serious about this. “In the future, I will call him Junior Nangong.”

“…As you wish.”

Xue Meng became even happier. Now that he was happy, he actually didn’t want to leave anymore.

The more he waited on the bed, the more agitated he became. He thought to himself, “Why is this guy still talking so much? Why isn’t he leaving?”

Xue Meng did not want to scram. Xue Meng said, “I also have something that I want to ask Shizun.”

“Yes.” Chu Wanning, on the other hand, was indifferent. “Go ahead.”

Mo Ran: “…”

“It was Mo Ran who told me today that Shizun had promised to give him a handkerchief…”

Chu Wanning asked, “About that… Yeah, but I haven’t done it yet. Do you want it too?”

Xue Meng’s eyes immediately lit up. “Can I have one too?”

“I had intended to give each of you a side.” Chu Wanning said, “I was busy all along, so I was delayed.”

Hearing this, Xue Meng was pleasantly surprised, while Mo Ran was completely stunned.

No… He wasn’t the only one?

Mo Ran felt wronged at that moment. However, Chu Wanning had his face turned to the side as he chatted with Xue Meng. He didn’t notice Mo Ran’s unsettled expression at all.

The more Mo Ran thought about it, the more upset he felt. Even though he knew there was nothing between the two of them, he still felt a lot of unhappiness in his heart.

“Pollia is difficult to sew. If you want a pollia pattern, I’ll go ask Madam Wang later.”

“Hard to sew?” Xue Meng was stunned for a moment. “Then it won’t be troublesome. It’s good enough to hurt Shizun. What is Shizun good at sewing?”

“… Actually, I’m not very good at all kinds of flower and bird ornaments.” Chu Wanning felt a little awkward. He coughed lightly and said, “The best way to sew something is through the Great Perception Scripture.”

“?”

Chu Wanning said, “When I was young, I was at the Wubei Temple, I… Huaizui taught me. I…”

He hadn’t even finished speaking when his brows suddenly knit together. His expression changed slightly as he suddenly pursed his lips.

Xue Meng was stunned. “Shizun, what’s wrong?”

“…” Chu Wanning seemed to hesitate for a moment before saying, “Nothing, is there anything else?”

“Yeah, there’s one more, but I forgot it all of a sudden. Let me think…” Xue Meng lowered his head and thought again. After he lowered his eyes, Chu Wanning gasped for breath, unable to hold it in anymore. He glared at the person in the depths of the bed with fury in his eyes.

Mo Ran’s original intention was for Chu Wanning to rush Xue Meng to leave as soon as possible, but as he looked back, the corner of his eyes turned red and he could not resist. Suddenly, a fire started burning in his heart.

He was a possessive person who was very barbaric and primitive in a certain aspect. The only reason he restrained himself was because he loved Chu Wanning too much, and felt too guilty. The love and guilt were like shackles around his neck, preventing him from doing anything excessive on his bed.

But at this moment, the shackles on his neck were broken off due to frustration and jealousy. His moist black eyes silently and dangerously stared at Chu Wanning for a while, then he suddenly did something rash.

He bent over and crawled into the blanket at a distance away from Xue Meng's sight. Then, he climbed up along Chu Wanning's long and sturdy legs.

It was dark all around, and the bedclothes blotted out all the light, making the senses all the more irritating. He could clearly feel that Chu Wanning was trembling slightly. Suddenly, he stopped his shoulders with his hands. His fingers were burning hot as he grabbed his sturdy shoulders and pushed him to the side.

This was the only thing Chu Wanning could do to stop him from getting out of bed.

On the contrary, Mo Ran had the desire to tear him apart.

Xue Meng was still talking, but whatever he said was not important. Mo Ran only listened absentmindedly, and when he heard him say, "It doesn't matter what Shizun is working on, I'll like it". Mo Ran became even more furious. His breath was already at the sensitive point of Chu Wanning, he knew where his pitiful desire was, but he did not touch it.

He leaned over his face and his eyelashes moved. He kissed the skin on the inside of Chu Wanning's thigh, sucking and licking, leaving traces of kiss marks that were destined to fade eventually.

Chu Wanning trembled even more. He must be regretting his decision to leave Mo Ran behind. His fingernails dug deep into Mo Ran shoulder, but they couldn't stop the madman.

"Shizun, are you listening?"

"Hmm…"

Mo Ran was waiting. His lips were lingering near Chu Wanning's desire, his hot and humid breath stalking the other's dick. He was waiting for a crazy and exciting opportunity.

Xue Meng asked about something that didn't matter to him, and Mo Ran didn't mind so he didn't hear it clearly. However, Chu Wanning had to answer him. The instant he opened his mouth, Mo Ran moved closer to him under the blanket, almost greedily sucking him in.

"…!"

Chu Wanning was tightened in an instant. His Adam's apple moved, his fingers had grabbed onto Mo Ran's flesh, but Mo Ran did not care. He was excited by Chu Wanning's reaction, excited by the feelings they shared in the dark. He knew Chu Wanning was patient, and even if he pulled his pants down and went inside, he would not make a sound, so Mo Ran did not care.

Of course, he also knows that although Chu Wanning was reluctant, his pleasure was real, his dick was hard and hot, the full and round tip was

right against his throat. It wasn't a pleasant taste, but when he took it this deep, he sucked sweetly.

Chu Wanning was deeply stimulated. However, he could still answer Xue Meng's questions with patience and repression. His concentration, whether in his life or in his previous life, was equally amazing.

He could actually suppress it very well, his voice was a only a little deeper than usual, and his speech a little slower. As for the rest, if it wasn't for the fact that Mo Ran was currently on his bed, it would be simply impossible to believe that this man was enjoying such extreme joy and excitement.

In the end, Xue Meng nodded and said, "I understand."

"If you know, then go back quickly." Chu Wanning said, "Don't let your imagination run wild, it's not too late."

Xue Meng stood up and said, "Then Shizun, I'm leaving… Right, should i turn off the lights for Shizun?"

"… Alright."

Coincidentally, it was a deep throat, so Chu Wanning opened his mouth slightly but did not let out a sound. But he frowned, his eyelashes trembling, his face slightly flushed.

Xue Meng hesitated. "Shizun, are you having a fever?"

"… No."

"But why is your face a little red?" Worried, Xue Meng didn't think too much about it. He raised his hand to probe Chu Wanning's forehead as he got up.

This was something Chu Wanning had never expected. On one hand, he was forced to do this sort of thing with Mo Ran, and on the other, his forehead was touched by an unknown disciple. Xue Meng's gaze was filled with concern, but underneath the bed, he was sucked by Mo Ran, the warm mouth was wrapped around him, imitating the action of penetration. The pleasure was almost extinguished and the sense of humiliation almost drowned him. He had to use every bone and inch of flesh to restrain himself from letting out a gasp and a groan.

"It's not that hot either…" Xue Meng muttered, "Shizun, do you feel uncomfortable anywhere?"

Mo Ran thought, uncomfortable? How can he not feel good? Your Shizun is probably going to die from the pleasure. It's you who is standing here, I could let him feel even better.

While his heart was heavy with gloom, Chu Wanning finally sent Xue Meng away. Xue Meng was very diligent. He extinguished the lamp for his Shizun and bid him farewell before walking out.

Hearing the sound of the door closing, Chu Wanning went mad with anger. He threw aside the quilt that had been wrapped around his black hair and forced his to come over. Then, he slapped him lightly in the face and scolded in the dark in a low voice, "You bastard…Ugh!"

Mo Ran responded to his urgent gasps, his blurred black eyes. Most men were beasts in front of desire, and when they went to bed with someone they loved, they were beasts who had taken sexual medicine. Mo Ran felt no pain from being hit by him, and instead grabbed his hand and pressed it to the bed, then tore at his last clothes. Both of them could not help but groan as their skin and skin came into contact.

Mo Ran didn’t say much, and his eyes looked somewhat crazy. His lower body was hard to the point it hurt, and his horrible tip was permeated with crystal liquid. He rubbed himself against Chu Wanning’s belly drunkenly. The foul liquid made it wet and sticky.

Only then did he bully Chu Wanning as much as he wanted to when he was under the blanket, the fire burned in him just as strongly. Only then did Chu Wanning stop holding himself back from moaning and let out a sound. Only then did Mo Ran stop holding back from letting himself lift Chu Wanning’s legs and insert his cock inside him.

His muscles were tense, he kissed him fiercely, he rubbed around without thinking. He just wanted to be inside him, he wanted to burn his heart. His primitive nature drove him to get inside, he wanted to conquer him thoroughly, tear him apart, make him bear him, accept him, huff him, be done by him and become his man.

“Get up… Baby, you get up…” He murmured, “Quick, I can’t stand it any longer, my legs are tighter…”

While the last light of reason had not disappeared and Mo Ran kept murmuring, he pulled Chu Wanning up and thrusted his hot sex between his thighs as he did last time, striking fiercely and rubbing in.

He hit so hard that his chest was sweating and his eyes were bright with lust.

He held Chu Wanning's waist, and felt more desperate and dissatisfied because of the itching of his boots, and he became more passionate. He didn't say too many dirty words, he just slammed into him hard and fast.

His hot cock rubbed against Chu Wanning's, his pubic hair brushing against the top of his thighs, heavy balls hitting his backside.

Chu Wanning was distracted by his bump, but his other hand was not properly explored, holding the high tip in front of him, rubbing and moving.

“Ah…”

Mo Ran bit him on the shoulder and licked the mark left there. Then he whispered, “Don’t shout, the walls here are not good, I’m afraid Xue Meng didn’t go far.”

Chu Wanning didn’t say a word after that. His eyes were covered with mist. He was pleasured by Mo Ran on the bed, and he was subjected to the vicious impact of the knife edge repeatedly. The huge, tough and terrible thing came in and out between his legs nonstop. He dared not imagine how it would feel when it came inside. He trembled slightly…

In fact, Chu Wanning was tossed and came three times in the evening. In the end, his consciousness was scattered. He remembered that he held the man tightly, kissed and lingered, and felt heartache for no reason.

Chu Wanning kissed him, the gesture is still clumsy, but Mo Ran could not withstand the stimulation. He let out a chaotic gasp: “Don’t touch me…”

Chu Wanning was shocked.

Not touch him?

Who induced him?

It was funny and helpless. Chu Wanning said, “Then I can’t do anything but leave it to you?”

Mo Ran came over and kissed his ears. “Just let me do it.”

There was still a tinge of bitterness in his tone, and under his nose, a storm was brewing. The room was very dark, but Chu Wanning raised his eyes and clearly saw the constraint of Mo Ran’s burning eyes.

He didn’t know what to make of it. Chu Wanning suddenly had a fever in his brain. Before Mo Ran could react, he turned over and sat on his solid waist, holding Mo Ran’s hands and looking down at him.

Mo Ran was slightly startled: “Shizun, you…”

Chu Wanning did not say a word, phoenix eyes bright, earlobes burning red: “Today I told you to listen to me, I have no intention of repeating this sentence.”

Then he slowly rose and lowered down. Mo Ran watched his movements closely. His scalp was numb and his blood was rushing around his body. He said, “don’t mess around. If you… You won’t be able to make it tomorrow.”

But Chu Wanning pretended to be deaf. When this person is stubborn, he really does his own thing, without taking other people’s words in mind.

On the one hand, he longed very much for Chu Wanning to ride on his own initiative and sit on it. On the other hand, he was very unwilling for him to do such a thing at this time. He knew that once he went in and endured it for so long, it would never be possible to quit just once.

In fact, looking back, on his last life, either day and night lingering, has he ever been able to withstand doing it only once? On the craziest night, the night he gave Chu Wanning aphrodisiacs, he tortured the man who kept moaning all night almost nonstop.

He didn’t come until the end, but he wasn’t satisfied and refused to quit, so he stuffed himself into Chu Wanning’s inner walls, which were wet and contracted.——

He was grinding with his legs, his lips and tongue lingering, he inserted himself within him, and spoke in his ear a blush of heartbeat.

“Are you happy?”

“Shizun, you’re still sucking me down here.”

“Have you satisfied yourself with all that ejaculation?” At that time, he even forced Chu Wanning to bow his head to see where they were connected. Then he extended his hand gently to touch Chu Wanning’s tight lower abdomen and said slowly and hoarsely, “You have all my semen in your stomach. What should you do?”

He spoke those absurd words, his eyes full of lust, the breath of beasts.

“Will the shizun be pregnant with this one’s child? Hmm?”

He stood up inside again, and the sticky loving liquid he had released many times before seeped out from the entrance where they were connected because of this action.

The drug was still in effect. Mo Ran looked at the man in his arms, on his shivering sour and soft, gently humming, and couldn’t help but look darker. In the end, it was unbearable. He began to play tricks on him one by one to please him.

At that time, he could not resist being emperor of the mortal world.

His desire for Chu Wanning has always been so strong that he only wanted to find a room to lock him up, do nothing every day, see no one, only concentrate on making love with Chu Wanning. Let Wanning be fucked by lying on his front, pressed against the wall and fucked by him, lying on the bed, spreading his long legs and fucked by him, or riding on top of him,repeatedly thrusting inside him.

It was good to see that Chu Wanning was fucked into murmuring aphasia, crying and begging for mercy, and climaxing uncontrollably, his genitals covered with their fluids. It was good not to come out of Chu Wanning's body at all in this life. That's the ultimate joy in the world.

Mo Ran knows his heart's lava-like animal desire. His throat was gathering saliva and his black eyes kept staring at Chu Wanning. It was a warning and a plea: "Shizun, don't do this…"

"Then I'll do something else." Chu Wanning's cheeks were hot, but his eyes were stubborn.

Before Mo Ran had the time to think about what else he said, he bent down and buried himself with him. He moved very fast. He did not give Mo Ran the chance to refuse, nor did he give himself time to hesitate.

He held Mo Ran's burning, ferocious cock.

"Ah…"

Mo Ran's abdomen was tense and his spine was lightning-stricken. He closed his eyes instinctively from pleasure, and then threaded his fingers into Chu Wanning's long hair curtain. His big, well-knit hands held the back of Chu Wanning's head tightly, and his muscular chest fluctuated violently.

“Wanning…”

Tears oozed from the corners of his eyes. Was it pleasure or gratitude?

Was it pain or pleasure?

It was not clear anymore.

His cock is uncontrollably swollen in the hands the beloved, and his muscles are distinct, making him extremely brutal and aggressive.

Chu Wanning could not accommodate such a big thing at all, but he still imitated what Mo Ran did to him, licking on the tip. Shame made him tremble all over, but love made his chest warm again. He tried his best to contain the huge glans and stems, but half of them, he had withstood the throat, the hot touch and light. He was almost nauseated by the slight stinging.

Mo Ran was so distressed that he busily said to Chu Wanning, “Baobei, no need, just…”

Before he had finished, he could not help groaning.

Because Chu Wanning stubbornly refused to accept defeat, even in bed, he began to move, began to suck and suck… Mo Ran was not a short practise man, but when he became Taxian-Jun, he was even more not so.

But Chu Wanning could lie in his crotch, kiss him, suck him. His eyes pale and dark, sometimes colorful and sometimes empty.

And it was the most exciting thing for him.

Mo Ran uncontrollably tilted his head back slightly and gasped in a low voice. His slender and symmetrical arms could not help touching Chu Wanning's long hair, making a sexy and blazing muffled groan.

His Wanning, his shizun…

Yuheng Beidou Xianzun.

The most beautiful man in the world…

Someone as innocent as Chu Wanning was willing to do such a thing for him.

No aphrodisiacs, no coercion.

It's all by his own will…

Mo Ran's eyes were moist and his dark eyelashes trembled slightly.

It was a wish of the Sui Dynasty.

Chu Wanning's skill wasn't good, his technique wasn't good, and sometimes even his teeth didn't pay attention to him, but he almost uncontrollably surrendered to Chu Wanning's stimulation. At last, when came, there were tears in the corners of his eyes.

He held Chu Wanning in his arms and kissed him. He only felt so heartbroken, but it's so warm and painful.

"Wanning…" Over and over he whispered in his ear, "Wanning…"

Chu Wanning looked at him with a moist black phoenix glance because of his desire, then drooped his eyelashes because of shame. After a while, he asked in a husky voice, "Did you like it?"

A word of tenderness, into the flesh and blood.

The pain was especially deep.

Mo Ran hugged him tightly and said slowly, “I liked it.”

Chu Wanning’s ear became more and more red, he got approval, and no longer spoke.

Mo Ran couldn’t help himself and stroked his hair. He whispered, “Just like you… I love you the most… Wanning.”

No one in the world is better than you.

Nobody but you can touch my heart any more.

Shizun.

I love you so much.

Ch. 210 Shizun's Handkerchief Can Only Be Given to Me

In the middle of the night, Chu Wanning woke up from a shallow dream. Mo Ran had gotten out of bed, and his clothes were all properly dressed. He was sitting at his desk, lighting a single lamp and looking down at a pile of objects.

All the uneasiness and helplessness from before was replaced by the faint afterglow of the lamp. Chu Wanning looked at him lazily for a while and then said, "What are you doing?"

"Shizun is awake? Is the light too bright…"

"No." Chu Wanning asked again, "What are you doing?"

Mo Ran pursed his lips and smiled embarrassedly.

Chu Wanning got up, put on his robe and walked barefoot to his side. He leaned against the table and looked at him. It turned out that the handkerchief on the table was his own. Mo Ran took the other three plain white handkerchief and was sewing at the ornaments on it.

"You're embroidering a handkerchief?"

"… I think that what Shizun has done, will be given to me alone." Mo Ran put down the needle and thread, put his arm around Chu Wanning's waist, leaned over and kissed his chest.

There was a scar on Chu Wanning's heart.

Since Chu Wanning did not explain the origin of the scar, Mo Ran did not ask further.

It was just that when they were touching, they would subconsciously and often tenderly kiss here.

Mo Ran said, “I will just sew the other’s handkerchiefs. They don’t know who did it anyway…” As he spoke, he picked up a piece of handkerchief that he had already embroidered and asked with a smile, “Shizun, does the needlepoint look similar to yours?”

Chu Wanning sighed, “You don’t even need to look to know it’s true.”

Why was this man so possessive?

Chu Wanning stroked Mo Ran’s hair, and Mo Ran smiled as he raised his head to look at him.

The lamp was too dim. It burned so hard that it hurt his eyes. When he lifted his eyes, there were traces of blood on them, but his face and smile were both gentle and brilliant.

Chu Wanning asked, “Do you still want those that don’t exist?”

Mo Ran stared blankly for a moment and then softly said, “I don’t want to.”

“Yes.” He said. “That’s good.”

“Let nature take its course…” This sentence seemed to be directed at him, but also at Chu Wanning.

Let nature take its course.

Too few days like this.

He was no god. He was just a tiny duckweed in the endless red dust. Everyone had their own selfish thoughts. They would give a person who

was about to die of thirst a cup of water, and then ask that person to voluntarily pour out the cup of water. They would then choose to die of thirst — this was too difficult, and almost no one in the world could do that.

Drink a little more of the sweet rain, he thought.

If he entered Purgatory again in the future, it wouldn't hurt so much.

There is a clear past, enough to comfort a dry life.

On the second day, everyone gathered outside of the manor and left for Mount Jiao together.

Palace Master Ma ordered his subordinates to prepare a strong steed for each of them. In front of the black and gold saddle hung a Qiankun bag embroidered with a cat design. Xue Meng sat on the horse's back and picked up the bag to take a look, immediately wrinkling his nose in disgust.

Suddenly, he heard someone beside him chuckling. "Palace Master Ma's taste is really terrible. Not only is there a big cat embroidered on the Qiankun bag, but there's also the word 'horse' embroidered on the back. Interesting."

Xue Meng turned his head and saw Mei Hanxue riding on a tall white horse, playing with the bag. He raised his light green eyes and looked at Xue Meng with a smile that was not a smile. The droplet-shaped crystal hanging between his forehead was exuding a warm luster. It swayed slightly, causing his face to appear even more enchanting.

Xue Meng rolled his eyes and softly cursed, "Scum."

The scum only smiled and squinted his eyes, not angry at all. Instead, he said: “Looking at you today, Young Master Xue’s complexion is not too good. Are you not full?”

“…”

“There’s a tinge of green in the eyes, and the Fate Palace is still dark. I have some herbal ointment to calm the deities and help them sleep…”

“Mei Hanxue, are you very free?” After enduring for a while, Xue Meng realized that he could not hold it in and turned around in anger. “The Taxue Palace kicked you out of the sect? Why are you wandering around Sisheng Peak?”

“My master told me to come here.” Mei Hanxue was still smiling. “Give your father the concealed weapon he wanted yesterday.”

“Then hurry up and fuck off.”

Mei Hanxue actually did not get angry. He smiled and said, “En, I’m out of here.”

“?”

The few times he saw him, he was either soft like a woman, or cold like a stone. The last time he ran into him at the Rufeng Gate, he had beaten him up, and today, he had changed to a good person’s face, “You hit my left cheek, and I’ll also send my right face up.” Xue Meng couldn’t help but think of this as he turned his horse around and stared at the extremely handsome man on top of the horse.

“No, Mei Hanxue, I have no enmity with you, right?”

“Nope.”

“Then do I know you well?”

Mei Hanxue smiled. He didn’t answer him immediately, but his pale eyes were filled with tiny bits of light. When the wind blew, his golden hair would fall to the side. When the sun shined on it, it only served to soften the light.

Xue Meng didn’t really want to hear his answer. He frowned and said, “Scram right after you send the concealed weapon. If you want to hook up with someone from another sect, I don’t care. Don’t think of getting along with me.”

“… Pfft.” Mei Hanxue couldn’t help but laugh out loud. However, his hands immediately curled into fists. Covering his lips, he gave a light cough and very interestingly sized up Xue Meng for a moment before saying, “Okay.”

He took the reins, a silver bell tied to his white wrist, and the wind blew and clanged.

Mei Hanxue smiled and cast a sidelong glance at him. “I’m leaving.”

Xue Meng stared at him. “Leaving so quickly? Do you want me to send you off with firecrackers?”

Mei Hanxue really did leave. His horse’s hooves had taken two steps when he suddenly remembered something. He turned his head and said, “Oh right, there’s one more thing.”

Xue Meng did not want to hear it, but Xue Meng was curious, so he snappily asked, “What?”

Mei Hanxue faintly smiled and pressed a slender white finger to his lips. He spoke in a low voice, “You are really ruthless.”

Xue Meng’s face instantly turned green!

“You… You — you!” He was thoroughly disgusted. After a long time, he still could not come out even half of the way. This was the order from the Sect Leader at the front to assemble and prepare to leave. Mei Hanxue waved at him with a smile and urged his horse to go further.

By the time Mo Ran rode his horse to Xue Meng’s side, Mei Hanxue had already disappeared into the sea of people.

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment. “Did you eat something bad?”

“Owehh — don’t talk to me now, I’m so fucking early in the morning, and I ate dog shit…”

Mo Ran: “… Although you are very hungry, no matter how hungry you are, you shouldn’t eat dog shit…”

“Scram!” Xue Meng pushed Mo Ran’s chest away, pushing Mo Ran and his horse away. He was simply angered to the point that he was about to ascend to the heavens and reach the Second Nirvana Realm. He roared towards the distance with a red face and a thick neck, “Ouch —! Bullshit! You’re the fucking spicy one!”

After a period of clamor, thousands of people departed from the lone mountain and headed in the direction of Mount Jiao. This scene was truly rare. Normally, when everyone left the city, they would use the Imperial Sword Technique. Even if a large group of people gathered, they would

arrive in an instant. It was rare for a group of cultivators to ride on horseback.

It was a good thing that on the first day many people had not ridden so long, and it was not easy to bear it for a long time. Fortunately, Palace Master Ma had everything in his Qiankun bag, such as refreshed pills, scented fans, and even a few books made of silk with the prices and suitability of the new products of the Valley of the Peach Blossom.

Xue Meng stared at the master of the horse farm, who was shouting in the shade while he rested. The second richest man in the world was shouting with all his might, “My lords, if you have any goods you want, just put them in the booklet. When I return, I will return and deliver them to the mansion, returning in seven days and exchanging them in fifteen days.

There were many people who had nothing to do, and Palace Master Ma was definitely doing it on purpose. With such a huge Qiankun bag, there was nothing else to look at but these booklets.

Even Xue Meng couldn’t help but draw a circle on the paper: “Young and old, delicious, light tasting, good selection, greatly increased spiritual energy — the Spirit Yan Yan Yan Nest Cake on the South Mountain.”

At last, he understood the method Mo Ran was referring to as “earning money”.

After seven days of travelling, Palace Master Ma had made a huge profit, causing everyone to feel a bit tired. On this evening, they finally arrived at the mountain range of the Pan Long mountains.

“The dragon has a prideful backbone, I hope to see the Emperor.”

Xue Zhengyong looked at the huge boulder that stood in front of him and recited the words on the boulder. He turned around and asked Nangong Si, “Young Master Nangong, what do you mean by this?”

“The meaning is that we must walk on foot for the rest of the journey. Moreover, from the moment we enter the mountain until the opening of the Mount Jiao barrier, we must not speak dirty words or else we will be punished.”

Since Nangong had warned them, the Sect Leaders immediately passed down the message. Jiang Xi stood there unmoving, and it was Hua Binan who had sent the message. Hua Binan waved his sleeves, and a ball of black smoke surged out from his sleeves, and upon closer inspection, he realized that it was not smoke, but hundreds of little flying insects, one by one, stopping at the ears of the disciples of Lone Moon.

Xue Meng was extremely disgusted and said, “The Cold Scale Sacred Hand is really abnormal, could it be that his entire body is filled with bugs?” Then, he suddenly thought of something and turned to Shi Mei, “Speaking of which, you’ve even gone to Rinling Island to study, but you haven’t had any contact with Hua Binan, have you? Don’t try to play with bugs when the time comes.

Shi Mei turned his head and smiled: “… The Young Lord is truly worried.”

At this time, the Sisheng Peak began to send out messages, the other sects were more or less ready to show off their abilities.

“After entering the valley, do not use vulgarities! He couldn’t control himself, so he used the Silencing Mantra to cover his mouth! Did you all hear that?”

A loud and confident voice echoed through the forest, shaking the trees and making the clouds tremble. The echoes lingered in the air —

“Did you hear that? Did you hear that? Have we arrived? “Is that so?”

All the cultivators were speechless.

Ch. 211 Shizun, Let's Enter Mount Jiao

Abandoning the horse and entering the mountain, he came out unscathed on the first day. On the second night, when everyone was meditating and resting, an accident occurred.

One of the cultivators went into the jungle in the middle of the night to relieve himself. When he finished, he felt an itch in his leg. He looked down and saw a huge poisonous mosquito sitting between his legs.

He was drinking blood and enjoying himself. That cultivator killed the bug with a single slap, and in the end, he even chattered out of habit, "fuck your mother, daring to bite your grandpa."

In the end, as the sound of his voice faded, he heard strange sounds coming from the surrounding trees. This cultivator was shocked and suddenly remembered the words of Nangong Si in front of the mountain. He was so scared that he did not even have the time to pull up his pants before he ran for his life, shouting loudly, "Help!"

"Master! Help!"

It turned out that this person was a disciple of Jiangdong Hall who was standing by Huang Xiaoyue's side. He called out to his mother with a loud voice, as if he was a giant boulder entering a lake.

It stirred a thousand ripples, and the people who were originally quietly meditating all stood up one by one. They saw a Jiangdong Cultivator running towards them from afar while urinating.

This person was bare-chested, shaking his head as he ran while crying. Behind him were at least a hundred black skinned snakes, some of which were already wrapped around his legs.

Huang Xiaoyue said in shock, “Disciple?”

“Don’t go over there!”

The disciple ran over while wailing, but more and more snakes climbed on top of him. In the end, he fell to the ground and wailed, “Shizun! Shizun, save me!”

Originally, Huang Xiaoyue was going to lend a helping hand, but Nangong said, “This snake is made from the whiskers of a dragon. If you kill one snake, he will kill another. The more you kill, the more you will kill. If Taoist Huang is not afraid, then go and accept the challenge.”

When Huang Xiaoyue heard this, he immediately submitted and muttered, “The bigger picture is important, the bigger picture is important.” He watched helplessly as his disciple was engulfed by the tide like a black snake. That person writhed and writhed in pain, and the snake tide had already completely covered him, turning into a black mass of low hills. This mass of low hills was denting at a speed visible to the naked eye, and when the tide scattered, other than a pool of blood, not a single bone remained…

After this incident, no one spoke any more nonsense during the last day of the journey.

Words cannot fail, this was a principle that everyone was well aware of.

Xue Zhengyong had even given himself and Xue Meng a Silencing Spell. It was for no other reason but because the father and son duo usually talked too freely. If they casually muttered a “dog thing”, they would become a food for the snakes in the blink of an eye.

Finally, on the night of the third day, after passing through the mountains of the Mount Jiao, they arrived at the tomb of the hero of the Rufeng Sect — at the foot of Mount Jiao.

Mount Jiao’s barrier was different from Mount Huang. Flood Dragons were detestable, so the barrier was transparent and one could clearly see the scenery at the foot of the mountain from the outside without using any obstructing techniques.

Looking at the scene before him, Jiang Xi asked, “Is this the burial ground of the elites of the Rufeng Sect?”

The moonlight shone on Nangong’s face. After a moment of silence, he said, “That’s right.”

Mount Jiao was created by a demonic dragon. After the first sect leader of the Rufeng Sect subdued this dragon, he established a blood contract with it. It turned it into a mountain to protect the spiritual soul and treasures of the Rufeng Sect for generations, as well as the ancestral temple and ancestral hall.

This mountain, Nangong Si remembered, every winter solstice would come here with his father to sweep the tomb. Previously, when he came here, he could see a vast and endless stretch of white jade stone steps. The dark city guards who were already waiting for him were guarding the two sides of the mountain road.

“Welcome, Young Master.”

Rumbling sounds could still be heard as everyone fell to their knees. As he walked up the mountain path, he would be able to see his father, who was already preparing for the Rites of Sacrifice at the very top of the ancestral hall.

“Young noble Nangong, it’s best to let go of the sad spring. The great battle cannot be delayed, so you should open the barrier as soon as possible so that we can enter. Demon Execution Squad.”

The person who spoke was Huang Xiaoyue.

During the golden age of the Rufeng Sect, even if this kind of person was on a whim and gave him ten slaps without any reason, he would not dare to retort.

Today, they could all brag and glare at him in front of his ancestral grave, flaunting their might.

He had no choice but to endure.

He gritted his teeth in pain and tried his best to hold it in.

“All of you, step back a bit.” As he spoke, he arrived at the entrance by himself.

On the left and right stood two tombstones made from Evil Spirit Stones. Their toes alone were the size of a five-six year old child. Each of the two deities held a magic tool in their hands, and their arms were wrapped around the arm. Strangely, these deities were normally opened wide like leopards, but their eyes were closed and they were frowning. They seemed to be somewhat strange.

Without batting an eye, Nangong Si drew a spell on the Evil Spirit Stone and said, “The seventh generation ancestor of the Rufeng Sect, Nangong Si, pays his respects.”

“Rumble ~ ~ ~ ~”

The earth trembled.

Some of the less experienced people exclaimed, “He has opened his eyes! That statue!”

Standing amongst the crowd, Mo Ran also raised his head to look.

If the situation had not been tense, he would have told the man: not the statue, but the two statues.

One on the left and one on the right, the two Grave Gods both opened their eyes. Their eyes were amber in color and their pupils were narrow like the eyeballs of a snake.

The statue on the left slowly spoke out, his voice was like a loud bell, buzzing loudly, “Nangong Si, do you remember it well, the Seven Edicts of Rufeng Sect?”

Nangong Si said, “It is impossible for a gentleman like me to commit crimes such as molesting.”

Behind him, Huang Xiaoyue sneered, “What you say sounds better than what you’re singing.”

It was not only Huang Xiaoyue. Many people were muttering in their hearts. These seven things could not be done. This was truly the greatest mockery of the current Rufeng Sect.

The statue on the right opened its mouth as well. Its voice was distant, as if it came from the past, “Nangong, there is a mirror hanging above, and below it is the vast Yellow Springs.”

“I have no regrets.”

These two paragraphs were the questions and answers that he had memorized since he was young. No matter who it was, as long as they stepped into the Hero Tomb, they would have to go through these two questions first and answer these two questions.

The reason why the ancestors of the Rufeng Sect had asked these two questions was because they hoped that their descendants would be able to remember the teachings of their ancestors and reflect on themselves when they went up the mountain to pay their respects.

At this moment, Nangong couldn’t help but wonder if his father had ever felt the slightest bit of emotion or guilt when he answered these two questions by coming here every winter solstice to pay his respects.

He was truly going to answer this question one after another as if it were the key to the key. He was going to use it as a body examination talisman to open the Divine Seal of Mount Jiao. That would be it.

The barrier opened.

The two stone statues that were originally standing suddenly began to vibrate slowly, changing their positions. In the end, one left and one right knelt down.

“Master, please enter the mountain.”

Nangong had his back facing the crowd as he stood there for a while. No one could see the expression on his face, not even Ye Wangxi.

Only Naobaijin whimpered in his quiver, and its white claws reached out and clung to the edge of the quiver. “Meow, meow.”

“Come in.”

After saying those three simple words, he took the lead and stepped into the Mount Jiao region.

Xue Zhengyong undid his Silencing Mantra and asked, “Do you still need to be careful when you’re here?”

“No need.” Nangong Si said, “Caution is done in the vicinity of the mountain range, but it is also done to prevent those who have ill intentions towards the Rufeng Sect from entering the mountain. Now that the Flood Dragon has determined that the person who has arrived should not be an enemy, it will no longer use words.”

However, even though he said those words, many people still felt sad and were unwilling to speak anymore. They could only silently follow Nangong Si up the mountain. Every three hundred meters, there would be two totem stones carved into the body. First it was male and female, then it was female and mouse, then it was male and female, tiger and rabbit… From the middle of the mountain, it was the burial ground for the Rufeng Sect’s heroes.

These heroes would go from the lowest to the highest in accordance with the contributions they had made throughout their lives. They would rest at Mount Jiao for a long time, one after the other.

The first place they came to was the lowest level, the Boneyard.

There was a white piece of jade about eight feet tall that was engraved with the names of individuals. At the very top, there were four handwritten words, “Soul of Loyalty”.

“I heard that the people buried here are the loyal servants of the Nangong Family.” Xue Meng whispered to Mo Ran, “There’s always around a thousand.”

What he said was right. This mountain region was densely packed with graves, and there was no end in sight.

Shi Mei said worriedly: “What if all these thousands of servants get up? The Nangong Family’s servants are not bad, I’m afraid that they will be able to stall them for a while.”

Xue Meng hurriedly covered his mouth. “Shh, you’re crazy. Pah, pah, pah, pah, don’t be a crow…”

Mo Ran gloomily said, “I’m afraid it really isn’t a jinx.”

“Hey, you dog, where are you going?”

Mo Ran did not pay any attention to Xue Meng. He directly left the group and walked in front of a loyal soul tomb. He half knelt down and carefully sized it up.

The Hero Tomb of the Rufeng Sect was different from an ordinary burial ground. It did not have a tomb as it was made from a translucent jade coffin, similar to the thick ice surface. Half of the coffin was buried underground while the other half was exposed outside.

This kind of cold jade was similar to the coffin at the Sisheng Peak, the Frosted Sky Hall. It could preserve the corpse without rotting away, just like when one was alive. As a result, the surface of the jade coffin was covered with a thick layer of dust. Mo Ran could only vaguely make out the outline of the deceased person below, but his facial features could not be seen. From the looks of it, he seemed to be a woman.

He stared at the woman for a while, then his gaze wandered around the coffin —

He felt that there was something wrong with this coffin.

However, he did not know what exactly was wrong.

He looked around, and while no one was paying attention to him, he placed his hand on the coffin surface, closed his eyes, and carefully probed around…

Suddenly, his palm trembled.

Mo Ran opened his eyes, his expression extremely ugly.

There was indeed an evil aura inside the coffin, but it was not thick enough. The piece of jewelry was not inside… Could it be that he was wrong?

“Mo Ran!” Xue Meng and the others were already walking far away as they yelled at him from afar.

Mo Ran muttered to himself, “Quick.”

His slender hands brushed the surface of the coffin inch by inch as he tried to wipe off the thick dust on it. He wanted to see the woman’s face more

clearly if he couldn’t open the coffin.

He was wiping it when he caught a glimpse of a detail out of the corner of his eye and stopped abruptly.

He knew what was wrong.

Ash.

There was something wrong with this coffin!

Besides the place he had just wiped, Mo Ran suddenly discovered that there was another spot that was free of dust — on the side of the coffin, there were four marks of varying lengths. He hesitated for a moment and then extended his hand to compare them, only to discover that it was exactly the place where a person climbed out from.

Mo Ran’s expression changed in shock. Just as he wanted to make everyone stop their footsteps on the mountain, he suddenly felt a cold, wet air in front of him.

He jerked his head up and caught a dead white face.

A woman in a shroud squatted behind the tombstone, staring at him.

Book III: Decisive Battle

Ch. 212 [Mount Jiao] Too Much

“Don’t go forward! Retreat! Retreat! Go to the foot of the mountain!”

With a sudden shout, everyone turned their heads and saw Mo Ran, dressed in black, rushing towards them. Behind him, a female corpse was chasing after him, letting out terrifying howls from its mouth.

Xue Zhengyong said in shock, “Mo Ran? Why… What’s going on?!”

“Step back! Go back!” Beneath his pitch black eyebrows, his gaze was like a bayonet drawn from its scabbard. He called out to Nangong Si, “Nangong Si! Drop the Soul-Resisting Stone in front of us!”

On the tombs of the loyal souls, there were tombs of the senior disciples of the Rufeng Sect. In order to prevent future generations from intruding, a long wall was built between the two tombs as a barrier.

He started to run with all his might, with Ye Wangxi following closely behind him. However, before he could reach the Soul-Resisting Wall, he suddenly stopped.

At the top of the mountain path, a group of people slowly walked down, all of them were wearing green clothes and cranes, their silk ribbons fluttering. At a glance, they looked just like a group of valiant and valiant disciples that had just arrived.

But Nangong knew it was wrong.

Ye Wangxi was also clear about this.

There was a difference between these disciples of the Rufeng Sect and the ones who they had been together with from morning to night. That was, each of them had a green ribbon embroidered with the shadow of a crane embroidered on their eyes.

It looked like an extremely small difference, but the people from the Nangong family understood what it meant — a living person would never wear this blindfolded ribbon. This was the funeral that the Rufeng Sect disciples were given before they were buried. It meant that their eyes would be covered by auspicious clouds, and they would be able to grow up happily…

Those who went down the mountain were all dead people from the Rufeng Sect!

Nangong Si took a step back and raised his hand to stop Ye Wangxi.

Without turning his head, he whispered, “You may leave.”

“…”

“Go down! Go tell Mo-zongshi that it’s too late.” Nangong Si took a deep breath and spat out a quivering sentence, “All the high ranked disciples of the Rufeng Sect have been exhumed and are now heading down the mountain.”

“What about you?”

“I’ll hold it off for a while, hurry up.” Mater Nangong Si turned his head to the side and said to Ye Wangxi, “Let them try their best to retreat towards the foot of the mountain. When they reach the foot of the mountain, ignite their fumes and I will come down immediately.”

Ye Wangxi bit her lips. She knew very well that this matter had not yet occurred and the last thing she could do was to untie her quiver, toss it to Nangong Si, and say in a low voice, “Catch. You never remember to take more.”

By the time he reached the side of the mountain, there was already a fierce battle going on. The previously hidden corpses of the servants of the Rufeng Sect were swarming out from the bushes and behind the rocks like locusts from all possible hiding places, pouncing towards the enemy cultivators. These corpses were all wearing burial coats and their entire bodies were pale white. When mixed together with the various cultivators in different attires, they looked like a snowstorm rolling over the land. From afar, it looked extremely spectacular, but the price was simply too high.

Her foster father was like a crafty rabbit, leaving them with a peaceful “tomb of loyalty”. In fact, he had already summoned the corpse of the corpse inside the tomb and hid it in the darkness, just so that when they reached the highest point, he could mobilize the “High Disciple Tomb” in front of them to attack from the front and then attack from behind.

They were the fish in the net.

Ye Wangxi found Mo Ran in the free-for-all. “Mo-zongshi!”

Mo Ran was in the middle of fighting with the five corpses when he heard Ye Wangxi’s voice. He raised his head abruptly and said anxiously, “What is it?”

Before he could say anything, he saw Ye Wangxi’s face and knew the answer.

Mo Ran cursed. At this moment, a zombie bit his arm, but he couldn't get rid of it. In his fury, he directly put his hand into the zombie's mouth.

"Aooo!"

Black blood splattered everywhere. The zombie could no longer bite him. It was hit in the chest with the back of its elbow and fell to the ground.

When he looked at Ye Wangxi once more, he couldn't help but shiver. However, she steadied herself and said, "A-Si told you to retreat as soon as possible and wait for him at the foot of the mountain."

Mo Ran nodded. Instantly, the sound amplifying technique spread throughout the entire battle arena.

"Don't keep fighting. Go to the foot of the mountain. All of you retreat to the foot of the mountain."

Huang Xiaoyue immediately became anxious, "We had originally prepared to fight Xu Shuanglin to the death, but the scene in front of us is something we had expected. How can we retreat now?"

He wanted to go to the top of the mountain with all his might to find the treasure hidden in the Heavenly Palace of the Rufeng Sect. That was his own business, he repeated in a stern voice, "Those that don't want to die, go down the mountain! Immediately! All of you, go down!"

Although the servants' corpses were not powerful, they were not weak commoners on Mount Huang. Furthermore, they numbered an astonishing number and were not afraid of pain. One after another, servants rushed forth, and by the time everyone retreated to the foot of the mountain, more than 10 cultivators had already died.

Huang Xiaoyue also retreated. He knew that with his own ability, it was impossible for him to reach the peak by himself.

However, he blew his beard and sneered, “Mo-zongshi, that’s great. The one who wanted to come to Mount Jiao was you, and the one who told us to withdraw in the middle of the fight is also you? How about you take the lead and we follow you out of the barrier?”

Even if he were to kill him, he would feel that his hands would be dirty. In this lifetime, it was only because Mo Ran was no longer Taxian-Jun, and had become a clean and upright Grandmaster that he could not be slapped in public.

But Mo Ran could choose to ignore him completely.

Just as Huang Xiaoyue was about to say more, he suddenly saw a cloud of smoke rise up in front of him. It was Nangong Si riding the re-transformed demonic wolf, Naobaijin, and he rushed over like a gale, followed by a few hundred high ranking disciples of the Rufeng Sect. Huang Xiaoyue looked over and exclaimed: “Oh, that’s incredible! I’ve fallen into his trap!”

This old thing finally reacted. He knew that this was an ambush set up by Xu Shuanglin, and it wasn’t too stupid after all.

However, the last part of Huang Xiaoyue’s words were, “Nangong Si! How dare you! You actually gathered the remnants of the Rufeng Sect, and want to fight against the other sects?”

Mo Ran: “…”

Nangong Si lowered himself above the demon wolf, running for the road. Naobaijin was as fast as an arrow that had left the bowstring, leaving the

corpses chasing behind him further and further behind. At this moment, Huang Xiaoyue realized that he had misunderstood him. However, he didn't feel the slightest bit of guilt. Instead, his eyes were wide open as he stared at the zombies that were approaching them like a tide.

Nangong Si rushed into the crowd and jumped down from the demon wolf. He stuffed the arrow quiver into Ye Wangxi's arms and gasped, "There are still some arrows left. I'll return them to you first. Take everyone and retreat."

When Ye Wangxi heard the first part of the sentence, she felt a little relieved. However, the latter part made her suddenly raise her head and stare into the face of Nangong Si. "What do you want to do?"

"A small matter."

At the side, Huang Xiaoyue watched as the upper echelons of the Rufeng Sect approached closer and closer. Seeing that he was about to fight with the elites of the Rufeng Sect that was born a hundred years ago, he broke out into a cold sweat and turned his head to scold, "Nangong Si! You're a nuisance! Like your father! Why did you lure these monsters to us? You want us to kill the enemy for you?"

Seeing that Nangong Si did not look at him and did not utter a word, Huang Xiaoyue became even more furious and said with a trembling voice, "Alright, I finally know what your plan is now. You are afraid that if you do not go up the mountain peak by yourself, you will not be able to obtain the treasure that your father left for you. O Nangong! Such vicious thoughts!"

Seeing that his words were getting out of hand, Xue Zhengyong, who was standing beside him, could not help but frown and say, "Alright, Taoist

Huang, stop talking."

"Stop? Why should I stop?" Huang Xiaoyue did not even put the lower cultivation world in his eyes. Normally, he would be a little more calm, taking into account Xue Zhengyong's face, but at this critical moment, how could he still have any intentions of putting on an act? He pointed at Nangong Si and scolded, "You really are the son of an evil creature, the heart of a tiger and the wolf! You actually used such a famous hero to clear the barricade for you! Where did you get your face from?"

Nangong was at a loss for words: "…"

Huang Xiaoyue was still not giving up, growling in anger, "People like you should die to thank the heavens, but you actually escaped from the corpses, and you even lured these beasts over to us, you…"

"Pah!"

An extremely resounding slap landed solidly on Huang Xiaoyue's face.

The Noble Wind Ye Wangxi was still maintaining her position by slapping Huang Xiaoyue on the face. She was slightly trembling, gasping for breath, and her gaze was ruthless as she stared at the person in front of her.

"Bastard." She said hoarsely.

"How can a man like you speak such foul language in front of the Hero Tomb of the Rufeng Sect?!"

The crowd in the Jiangdong Hall drew their swords and pointed them at Ye Wangxi. A middle-aged female cultivator sitting under Huang Xiaoyue raised his eyebrows and shouted, "You are a man, not a woman, but a man! You dare to make a move on an elder? You are the animal! You dog!"

She shouted and was about to rush over to take care of Ye Wangxi. Just as Mo Ran was about to help, he suddenly heard the sound of a rattan whip fiercely whipping away the air.

Chu Wanning walked out of the crowd, his hands held in the air as he squinted his phoenix eyes.

With his back facing Ye Wangxi, he faced the east side of the river.

“I did.” He spoke word by word, “Nangong Si is my disciple. Everyone, if you do not wish to pass the judgement of the Tianyin Pavilion, then please come before me. We can discuss about fairness, or about punches and kicks.”

In the dead silence, he threw out the last part of his sentence.

“I’ll follow you to the end.”

The atmosphere was extremely tense.

Not only did he fail to advance to Jiangdong Hall, he failed to retreat as well. Yet, he retreated and lost all face. He finally made it in… Would they really be able to shake the Beidou Immortal? What’s more, should they have formed a feud with Chu Wanning and become enemies from now on?

The corpses were still approaching, getting closer and closer…

Someone could not hold it in anymore and shouted loudly, “Stop fighting! Let’s talk about it after we get out of here! Think of a way first! What should I do!?”

“Fight?”

“Are we just going to fight like this? Then why did we retreat to the foot of the mountain? What’s the difference between fighting on a mountain and fighting on a mountain?”

Right, even Mo Ran couldn’t help but think, what’s the difference?

Even though he knew that Nangong Si’s actions were not without purpose, as the last disciple of the Nangong Family, since Nangong Si wanted them to retreat to the bottom of the mountain, he must have other plans in mind.

He couldn’t help but look at Nangong Si, who hadn’t said a word since the beginning. However, he suddenly discovered that man’s eyes were flashing with an indescribable light.

A light that made him shudder.

“Nangong!”

He shouted, but it was of no use. Nangong Si had been silently chanting a forbidden spell ever since Huang Xiaoyue pointed at him and yelled at him.

He realized that it was already too late.

Countless vines burst out from the ground. Mo Ran, Ye Wangxi, Xue Meng… Almost at the same time, everyone was caught by the vine and thrown out of the boundary, out of the mountain range.

Ye Wangxi’s face changed in fright, “A-Si! What are you trying to do?!”

She wanted to charge in again, but Nangong Si raised his hand and swung it fiercely. The two grave gods stood up with heavy steps, their bodies covered in dust and stones, and they each lifted their left and right hands

against each other. In that instant, a new translucent barrier enveloped the entire mountain entrance, blocking everyone's path to the mountain.

Nangong Si stood alone in front of the barrier, facing the thousand over corpse tide, his back facing the people behind the barrier.

He said: "Mount Jiao has rattan, is formed of dragon tendons, can pull everything into the ground. But you can't be inside. — As long as the Nangong Family's blood isn't flowing through your bodies, once I use this array, the Dragon Tendon Vine will drag everyone into the ground and bury them alive, regardless of who they are.

Ye Wangxi was angered by grief and anger, he shouted angrily, "Honorable Nangong! Do you know that you are alone!" She pounded her hammer but could only call out to him from outside the enchantment: "Nangong!"

"Why is there only one person?" Nangong Si turned his face to the side and said, "Don't we still have you?"

"…"

Then, he seemed to have thought of something and grinned.

After the annihilation of the Rufeng Sect, that brilliant smile never appeared on his face again. It was wild and unrestrained, as if years of high spirits had returned to his face, and his eyes were bright and unrestrained.

It was the same situation as when he and Ye Wangxi first entered the Mirage Realm. With his face turned sideways, he raised his sword and smiled at her.

"However, you girls are truly useless. In the end, I will still have to protect you."

Finished speaking, he turned around and walked towards the rolling tide of corpses.

One step.

Two steps.

Three steps.

Stop.

Nangong kept his sword in the ground, opened the bandage on his hand and slashed down fiercely along the sharp sword tip.

Blood flowed down along the bloody groove of the sword and flowed into the moist earth of Mount Jiao.

He looked straight ahead without fear.

He did not know that at this moment, he was standing outside the barrier in front of Mo Ran. His figure overlapped and overlapped with Ye Wangxi, who had fought to the death in his previous life.

“Blood Sacrificing Azure Dragon, obtained tendons and bones. Open the formation!”

Countless tree vines broke out from the ground that was already cracked, and in a split-second, sand and mud began to fall. That tree vine was completely different from the one that had bound them. It was a scarlet vine without any leaves on it. It could even be said that the blood vessels rose up from the ground one after another, instantly latching onto each and every corpse under the control of the Exquisite Pagoda.

With just the power of a single person, over a thousand dragon tendons had been pulled out and a huge amount of spirit energy had been consumed in an instant. Beads of sweat seeped out of his forehead, and the hand holding the sword trembled slightly.

“Immerse!”

His face was pale and trembling as he gave his final order.

The thousand dragon tendons began to pull the corpses down fiercely, but the zombies obviously wouldn’t sit still and wait for their deaths. They all tried their best to shout, roar, and struggle.

At this moment, Nangong Si was also working with his dragon tendon, so he had to squeeze out more of his power to use more blood to sacrifice the dragon tendon. He had to use more power to pull the corpses down.

Ankle, calf… thigh…

The zombies all over the mountains were howling, hissing and salivating.

Nangong gasped. Their legs. It was still their legs…

He could feel that his spiritual energy was almost exhausted, but he hadn’t yet sunk those zombies into the ground. They were still furiously twisting their bodies, using their hands to prop themselves up and try to break free.

More, to the waist. At least to the waist.

Only by doing this could they unravel the barrier and allow the people outside to enter. This way, the zombies wouldn’t be able to break free and turn the situation around in an instant.

At least…

A little more.

He exhausted his spirit energy and used up his spirit core.

Nangong Si only felt a dull pain in his heart. The spirit core that was prone to cracking slightly trembled in his chest. He clenched his teeth, but blood still flowed out from the corner of his lips.

A little more.

Back…

Very good, they were all extremely difficult to move, but they were still not the most stable. The zombies' strength was even greater than when they were alive, and once buried here, they could still make a breakthrough.

A little more!

"Cough cough —!" He once again released the power of his spiritual core, causing Nangong Si to feel a wave of dizziness. He could not hold on any longer and knelt on the ground. He vomited a mouthful of blood, dripping onto the black soil.

Nangong shakily raised his eyes. In the swaying shadow, he saw that the corpses had been dragged deeper and deeper by the dragon tendon, almost burying their chests.

The monsters were temporarily unable to move.

The corners of Nangong Si's lips turned blood-red as he laughed.

He heard Ye Wangxi shouting outside, “Nangong Si! Enough! Open the enchantment! Open the barrier!”

Xue Zhengyong was also shouting, “Open the enchantment, Nangong! We’ll help you!”

“Nangong, quickly open the barrier! Open the enchantment!”

More and more people started shouting. In this world, not everyone was heartless.

After the annihilation of the Rufeng Sect, he had not cried even after suffering so many grievances, but at this moment, tears started to roll down his face.

He choked with sobs and mumbled hoarsely, “… I know, it’s just… It opened…”

He raised his trembling hand and prepared to remove the barrier that was blocking the crowd. However, the ground suddenly shook and then began to shake.

He was startled. Then he raised his head and looked at the scene before him with an expression of disbelief.

The dragon tendons that had obeyed him just now and dragged the zombies deep into the ground all of a sudden loosened, then wrapped around the corpses’ chests and backs, pulling them out of the ground one by one…

“Impossible…” Nangong said blankly, “That’s impossible!”

How could Mount Jiao not listen to his master’s orders?

Even if Xu Shuanglin had given the order to the contrary, these dragon tendons would not have been able to obey. To the Demon Dragon's Evil Spirit that was hibernating here, the Nangong Family's descendants were all the same.

If the two descendants of the Nangong clan gave the opposite order to the Mount Jiao, then Mount Jiao would only stop what it was doing and not help anyone, turning neutral.

Unless…

Nangong Si suddenly felt goosebumps all over his body. He thought of someone.

This thought made him tremble all over, and the pain in his heart seemed to be even more intense than before. He panted and slowly raised his head.

A tall and straight man with a valiant appearance was slowly walking down the long stairs.

He wore a luxurious robe embroidered with flood dragons swallowing the sun and moon, billowing the seas. With every step he took, the golden threads and silver threads that were fused into his clothes would emit a luster like flowing water under the moonlight.

Above his tall and straight nose, there was a neatly tied silk ribbon, worn by the dead men of Jinfeng, covering his eyes. However, the silk ribbon was not green, but black. What was embroidered on it was not a crane, but an Azure Dragon with strong claws and a surging flame electricity.

He stared at the man who walked down the steps step by step, his eyes opened wide in disbelief as he muttered, “Why… How was this possible… Grand Sect Master…”

Moonlight shone from the leaves of the trees, illuminating the handsome, clean-cut face of the man.

It was him.

In this world, there was only one person who could make Nangong Si disobey the Nangong Family’s heirs’ commands, submit to the Demon Dragon, and suppress the ancient evil beasts under the pagoda. He was the one who founded the greatest immortal sect in hundreds of years.

He was the greatest Grandmaster of the world hundreds of years ago. He was the one who gave up flying to enter the Heaven Realm while he was still alive in order to survive the worldly tribulation.

Nangong Changying!

Ch. 213 [Mount Jiao] Life-and-Death Battles

Although the Sect Leader of Changying was a man of ancient times, many of the paintings in the world had portraits of him.

The first generation Sect Leader of the Rufeng Sect is worshiped by the Xian Hall, therefore, Ye Wangxi reacted instantly, “Ahh, quickly open the barrier! You can’t beat him!”

Of course not…

Who could beat him?

Perhaps even the most powerful master in the cultivation world, Chu Wanning, would not have a chance of victory in a battle.

Nangong Si was trembling, not because he was afraid, but because he felt extreme grief and anger — Grand Sect master… Xu Shuanglin had actually turned the Grand Sect master’s corpse into a Zhenlong chess piece!

Crazy…

This was insane!

They were their ancestors, the souls of the Rufeng Sect, and the roots of the Rufeng Sect. They were gods that had been respected by their disciples and heirs for hundreds of years.

It was Nangong Changying!

The veins on Nangong Si’s neck throbbed, he let out an extremely twisted roar, like a tiger howling in the mountains, “Xu Shuanglin! No, Nangong Xu! Come out! Come out!”

The lingering sound lingered on for a long time like that of a vulture.

If no one replied, Xu Shuanglin would naturally not come out.

The only one who reacted was Nangong Changying, whose eyes were covered by a silk ribbon. He turned his face slightly, his pale fingers sliding across his sword sheath.

He raised his sword and slowly took another step forward.

At the same time, Nangong Si took a step back and muttered, “Grand Sect Master…”

Nangong Changying walked steadily, the tip of his sword pointed at the jade steps.

It made an ear-piercing scraping sound. His eyes were covered, and the silk ribbon was tied to a mage after death, so he could not see the road in front of him. He could only rely on sound and scent to determine the location of Nangong Si’s voice.

“Who are you?”

Suddenly, a low and ethereal voice sounded.

It was actually Nangong Changying speaking!

“Why did you trespass?”

After hearing hundreds of years of ancestors speak, even as a mere chess piece, he was still stunned.

Nangong Si swallowed his saliva and said, “Grand Sect Master, I…”

“…”

He suddenly let go of the sword he was supporting and knelt down to kowtow, “This junior is unfilial, the direct disciple of the seventh generation of the Rufeng Sect, Nangong Si has come to pay his respects.”

“The seventh generation… That’s right!” Changying’s corpse slowly and numbly repeated these words. Then it shook its head, raised its sword, and only said one word, “Kill.”

The two weapons clashed!

Under the attack of Nangong Changying, he felt his arm go numb. The strength of his predecessors were shocking, his ghastly pale face was approaching and his breath was as cold as ice.

“Those who trespass, kill them.”

“Grand Sect Master!”

Dazzling Sword Flower. The sword aura was both sharp and astonishing. As the metal blade and metal blade clanged against each other, flower flames flew in all directions, quickly turning the snow into snow.

Xue Zhengyong punched the barrier and said: “Are you crazy? How could he possibly win?”

Who didn’t know how brave Nangong Changying was? According to legend, with his astonishing strength, even if he didn’t use a weapon, he could still smash a rock into pieces with a single hand.

Deal with him?

Most likely, not even ten of them would be enough to fool around with his ancestor.

He had never thought that one day, he would be able to exchange moves with the first generation leader of the Rufeng Sect in Mount Jiao. After the first clash between the two swords, he was suddenly pushed ten feet back, and if he did not grab the sword in time, he would have already fallen on his knees in the weeds.

Nangong Changying raised his treasure sword and slowly closed in.

He repeated the order in a low voice, “Kill…”

At the moment, outside the barrier, Xue Zhengyong was furiously hammering the membrane. Jiang Xi was frowning and pursing his lips without saying a word, while Palace Master Ma simply covered his eyes, “Aiyo, aiya,” not daring to look, while Huang Xiaoyue was secretly shocked and glad that he did not capture Nangong Si back then.

Only Chu Wanning kept a close eye on Nangong Changying’s actions. He felt that something was wrong.

Who was Nangong Changying?

Of the two demonic beasts he subdued, one was a Demon Dragon, and the other was a Gǔn. There was no need to explain how terrifying this person’s spiritual energy was. Even if his soul had already left his body and was merely a shell in the world, many magic techniques could not be used. However, it was obvious that fighting techniques should not be affected.

Then how fierce was Nangong Changying’s fighting technique?

Near the Flying Flower Island of the Far East, there was a remnant left behind by the Rufeng Sect, the Wind Gate — a lake in the island.

This lake was neither big nor small. Furthermore, it was stagnant water without any magnificent scenery. Walking leisurely around it, it would take around half an hour.

Everyone knew, however, that the lake was not a lake but a small hill, which was used to hide from the battle between Nangong Changying and the Gǔn a few times. In the battle between Nangong Changying and the Gǔn, he landed a heavy punch on a rock several dozen times, but in the end, the final punch actually shattered a thousand feet tall rock, causing the earth to collapse and the ground to crack.

Thus, it was not that Chu Wanning was looking down on Nangong Si. However, he felt that when Nangong Changying's first sword strike clashed with Nangong Si, Nangong Si would have flown out a hundred feet, and there would not be a chance for him to get up.

There was something fishy about this corpse.

Chu Wanning's gaze was like a shiny blade scraping through every inch of Nangong Changying's body.

Suddenly, his sharp gaze focused on the arm that Nangong Changying was using to wield the sword. He paused for a moment as his mind suddenly lit up with fire. He suddenly realized where something was wrong.

On the other side, Nangong Si was struggling to hold onto his sword as he staggered to his feet. He was like the wolfhound he was raising; he could lose, but he would never run away. He used his sleeve to ruthlessly wipe away the blood at the corner of his lips. Just as he was about to continue

fighting, he suddenly heard a familiar voice say from behind him, “Attack his left side. All the meridians in his left arm have been cut off.”

“Chu-zongshi?”

“Don’t get distracted.” Chu Wanning stood outside the enchantment, his brown eyes staring at the two men’s attack, “Even if Nangong Changying has lost his left arm, you still can’t let your guard down.”

Hearing Chu Wanning’s words, the surrounding Sect Leaders all looked at the left arm of Changying, and discovered that the left arm of the corpse was weak, Xue Zhengyong said in shock, “Did Changying’s meridians get cut off after Sect Leader died?! Who did it?”

……

No one answered.

However, people like Ye Wangxi, who were familiar with the history of the kingdom, quickly understood what was going on.

Who did it? In this world, who would break his meridians?

Nangong Si, who was fighting with Nangong Changying, stared at his ancestor’s face. His face was exactly the same as the jade carvings of the Xian Tang. It was as if Nangong Changying was still alive in this world and had never walked towards death.

If he really was still alive, if he truly was not dead, if he was to write off the hundreds of years he had been living through, was he still being tested by the first generation Sect Leader, given a trial by his guidance?

“Naobaijin! Come here!” Slowly, Nangong Si regained his senses. He shouted at the demon wolf and jumped onto its back, staring at the Sect Leader’s left arm, attacking it at an extremely fast speed.

The scene of his childhood flashed before his eyes.

He stood in front of the magnificent jade carving of the Hall of Sages, tilting his head to look at the statue of the First Sect Leader.

A child’s perspective was always strange. He suddenly turned his head towards Rong Yan and said, “Mother, this statue is incomplete.”

“Why isn’t it done?” Rong Yan pulled her luxurious robes over her mouth and coughed softly. She walked to the side of the child and looked up at the statue of the Sect Leader, “Isn’t it good? It’s so slim and lifelike.”

“… I don’t understand.”

Rong Yan sighed, she was an impatient person, she wished that she could put the knowledge that others had spent twenty years on, into her son’s head in these two years, “It’s carved to look like a living person, every detail is vivid. Didn’t I teach you these two words before?”

Nangong Si pursed his lips and said, “But the carving is wrong.”

“What’s wrong with it?”

“Mother, look.” He pointed to the first Sect Leader’s left arm and then to his right arm, “his left arm is a lot thicker than his right arm. I’ve been staring at it for a long time, I’m sure it’s thick and thin, not symmetrical at all. It’s wrong!”

As he said that, he raised up his arms for his to see, and explained to his seriously, “My arms are as thick as the sides, and mine are the same, my father’s is the same too… So, this carving was wrong. Let the craftsmen reconstruct it!”

“So that’s what I meant.” Rong Yan shook her head, and said, “This is not the fault of the craftsmen, rather, the Great Sect Leader’s left and right arms were somewhat lacking.”

“Why? Is it natural?”

“Of course not.” Rong Yan said, “Grand Sect Master usually uses his left hand. His left arm’s strength is much greater than his right arm, and over time, the left side became thicker and stronger than the right side. In other words, not only did the craftsman who carved this statue not make a mistake, he was actually very meticulous and noticed these minute details.”

“Clang!”

When the two long blades clashed, Nangong Si and Nangong Changying were standing very close to each other, clenching their teeth as they used their weapons to defend against the enemy.

Having lost his left hand, Nangong Changying was now facing a heavily injured and exhausted Nangong Si. This was a close combat battle.

Xue Zhengyong had an idea that made him gasp, “The meridians in his left arm, could it be… Could it be that he broke it himself?!”

Actually, it wasn’t only Xue Zhengyong. Many of the spectators outside the barrier also gradually had the same guess in their hearts.

From the time the high-level disciples of the Rufeng Sect were buried, their eyes had to be covered with spiritual power. Was it really just to “ride on a crane and view the sky and the clouds”?

Was it possible that Nangong Changying had also predicted the changes in the human world after hundreds of years?

Therefore, when he founded the Rufeng Sect, he had already thought of the end of the day. The reason why he covered the eyes of every disciple was to prevent them from displaying their strongest battle prowess, to prevent them from bringing disaster to the human world.

Therefore, the godly weapon that accompanied him throughout his life was not inside the coffin. What he held in his hand was only a long sword.

So, before dying, he cut off all the meridians in his left arm. Even if there were truly unrighteous people in the future who used his corpse to stir up the wind and waves, they would not be able to gain his entire battle power.

However, the answer was still unknown.

Dozens of attacks were exchanged, and just as the exchange of blows was getting more intense, Nangong Si suddenly saw the Great Sect Leader’s eyebrows slightly knitted, and he muttered: “Nangong…” No one dared to say anything. The seventh generation…

Outside the barrier, Mo Ran was observing every single movement that was happening to Nangong Changying. As Taxian-Jun, he was different from all the other decent people present. He was able to accurately detect things that would be difficult for someone who had never played a chess game before to immediately discover.

From Mo Ran's point of view, this corpse was clearly different from the others. He seemed to be struggling the entire time to regain his consciousness.

This was also one of the worries of Mo Ran before — Although Zhenlong Chess was one of the three forbidden arts, there was no spell in the world that was perfect. If a person's willpower was especially strong, then the caster would have to continuously use Spirit Flow to suppress the resistance of the chess pieces.

Once the caster ran out of spirit energy, the piece would go berserk, and sometimes even backfire on the caster. This was also the reason why many of the casters in the history of the game had suddenly died from an evil disease, or from having their meridians reversed, resulting in their deaths.

Mo Ran's face was overcast as he followed Nangong Changying with his eyes.

He was almost certain that Xu Shuanglin could not completely control Nangong Changying.

"Bam!"

A sudden muffled sound caused the five fingers of Mo Ran's caress on the barrier to clench tightly, his veins protruding.

The difference in power was just too great.

Everyone present could clearly see that even though Nangong Changying had severed his own arm and forcefully cut his own strength, a Grandmaster would still be a Grandmaster. Even though he had pulled out

his sharp claws and teeth, this empty corpse was still able to fight evenly with Mei Hanxue and Xue Meng, the juniors of the same level.

If he really wanted to suppress him, he would have to make the Sect Leader and Elders take action.

However, the Sect Leader and the Elders couldn't enter. With the barrier sealed and the Nangong Family's territory inside, if any one of them rashly broke in, it would cause the spirit of Mount Jiao to erupt.

This was the civil war of the Rufeng Sect, and no one was allowed to interfere.

If it was Nangong Si who was brimming with vitality, he would probably be able to take care of this broken corpse in front of him by himself. However, he had already suffered too much before this. Another heavy blow. Nangong Si could have easily dodged it. However, when he flipped his back up with the gold ring on his neck, the wound on his palm tore and he was momentarily unable to stop it.

"Wuuaaooo ~ ~ ~"

The Agate let out a sorrowful cry. The sword in Nangong's hand was struck and sent flying, rolling back to the edge of the barrier.

Mo Ran saw that the hilt of the sword was already stained with the blood from Nangong's palm…

"A-Si! Stop fighting! Come out! Let's think of another way!" Ye Wangxi kept shouting at him.

People were always like this. Ye Wangxi would never beg for mercy herself, but Nangong Si was her weakness.

She was crying, crying.

Mo Ran had never seen her cry like this in his previous life. At this moment, she really did have the shadow of a girl. The two brothers Nangong Liu and Nangong Xu had selfishly placed a cold and resolute mask on her face.

She had always thought that she would never be able to take off this mask. However, the moment she saw the sword that was stained with blood, she instantly turned into ashes.

“Father…”

The blow was too heavy. Nangong Si clenched his teeth and began to sweat profusely. He tried to get up from the ground without making a sound. However, a cold light flashed and a snow-white blade light shone on his face.

He raised his face that was similar to Nangong Changying’s, and stared at his ancestor through the bright sword light.

Nangong Changying’s sword was already hanging right above him.

Within and outside the barrier, it was deathly silent.

Ch. 214 [Mount Jiao] Spirit Core Fragmentation

His hands were clenched in the dark, and his heart was beating like a war drum.

The veins on his temples throbbed as he stared at the tense situation in front of him. A crazy thought was running through his mind — Nangong Changying could take Nangong Si's life at any time. Was he really going to stand like this? Could he really just stand there like that?!

He was trembling. He was suffering, but fortunately, no one could see what was wrong with him. The line between life and death within the boundary was like a fine sand that sucked in water. Everyone's eyes were focused on him.

The sharp sword could be stained with blood at any moment.

Mo Ran gripped the hidden weapon in his sleeve, his fingers stroking the edge of the sharp arrow. He wanted to do one thing, but that matter made his fear grow as wild as grass…

Suddenly, Nangong Changying's body trembled.

The trembling was too obvious. Everyone could see it very clearly.

Xue Zhengyong asked in surprise, "What's wrong?"

Nangong Changying could not see exactly where Nangong Si was. He was actually slightly off in the distance when he was raising his sword. But Nangong Si could not make a sound. A single sound, a strange movement of the wind could make Nangong Changying react.

He stared at his ancestor's face, pale and stubborn. He pursed his lips, which were stained with blood.

"You are… Nangong… no?"

"AHHHHHH!"

This time, not to mention Xue Zhengyong, even the people who were standing in front of him started to shiver.

Nangong Changying's will?!

The expression on Mo Ran's face also changed. A cold light flashed from his sleeve, and he took back the hidden arrow that was about to be used. His back was soaked with cold sweat and his heart was pounding wildly.

So close… He was about to be exposed…

He felt lucky that he didn't have to do anything, but then he felt uneasy and disgusted by the luck he'd just had.

In front of this Mount Jiao, his past life had been a battle of attrition against the two spirit souls of his current life.

He didn't know how long he could last.

"Nangong…" No one dared to say anything. "Seventh…"

Inside the boundary, Nangong Changying's sword was moving slightly.

Little by little, inch by inch…

Xue Zhengyong was extremely shocked. "He really has a consciousness?"

No, not completely.

He was recovering his consciousness, restoring the last bit of consciousness in this corpse.

Mo Ran knew that Xu Shuanglin, who was hiding in a corner of Mount Jiao, was like a clumsy puppet artist. He had never danced with such a complex and massive puppet before, and he was on the verge of collapsing.

Nangong Changying was about to struggle free from his grasp.

“Swish!”

Before Mo Ran could finish his thoughts, the muffled sound that penetrated his skin caused his scalp to go numb and his pupils to contract.

In that instant.

Blood blossomed!

After a few moments of silence, suddenly, an extremely twisted shout exploded in his ears, and a cold sword thrust straight into his periosteum.

“Miss Ye!”

“Ye Wangxi!”

Ye Wangxi, whose eyes were bloodshot, was on the verge of going berserk. He was afraid that Ye Wangxi would do something too extreme, but people soon realized that this was too much. What could she do? She was not a member of the Nangong Family. No matter how powerful she was, in front of Mount Jiao, he was only an outsider.

She couldn’t get in at all.

Nangong Changying's sword ruthlessly pierced the back of Nangong Si's shoulder. If he could see with his eyes, he would have opened a hole in Nangong Si's chest that was as cold as the wind.

Nangong was stunned for a moment, as if he wanted to say something, but then Changying pulled out his sword, causing blood to spurt out. Nangong Si was on the ground, spitting out a large mouthful of blood.

He did not know what Xu Shuanglin had done, but perhaps he had donated his spiritual core's energy, or perhaps he had used all of his consciousness to control Nangong Changying.

His body, which had almost recovered its consciousness, suddenly became a killing puppet. With his sword in hand, blood continued to flow from the thin sword slot, dripping on the ground. Under the moonlight, it gathered into a small pool of dark and gloomy liquid.

Once again, he tried to get up from the ground, but to no avail. In the mud, he barely managed to raise his face.

Mo Ran's eyelashes trembled as he closed his eyes.

He would rather not let anyone see this face. It was a face that was originally proud, flying in the air, and had always been clean and handsome. At this moment, there was only blood and mud on the face, and one could barely make out its facial features.

Although there was no sadness in his eyes.

There was still fire in his eyes, still light.

Nangong Changying wanted to use his sword again, but a white light charged over and started to fight him. The white light kept on attacking

him.

“Nangong Si…”

Ye Wangxi was on the verge of collapse, but Nangong Si was not looking at her. Instead, he was staring at Jiang Xi with his bloody lips moving.

He couldn’t make too much noise now, but Jiang Xi understood the words on his lips. He put his hands behind his back and stared unblinkingly at the movement of Nangong’s lips with his brown eyes.

Nangong Si was finished.

Jiang Xi said, “…” Good. “I know.”

Wu wu wu…

With another dull bang, Nangong Changying struck out with a single hand. The sound of its fall was much louder than its Master’s. Nangong Si’s snow-white body smashed into the trees and leaves, crushing a large part of the leaves. A cloud of smoke rose from the spot with a “pu” sound. Before the smoke had dispersed, a fluffy white puppy, no bigger than a human palm, staggered out and bit onto Nangong Changying’s clothes with all its might.

It was the original form of Naobaijin as a cub.

Nangong Si turned his head and coughed softly, “Let’s go, let’s go.”

“Awoo, awoo, awoo, awoo!” The onyx won’t leave.

However, this bit of force bit onto Nangong Changying’s body, like a clay ox entering the sea, it never came back. Nangong Changying could not be bothered with it at all, he moved his fingers, causing the ground to shake,

and all the hundreds of corpses that had been tied up by Nangong were instantly pulled out of the ground.

His strength was unstoppable.

It was like pulling apart rotten weeds.

His eyes flashed with an intense luster and he actually pressed his hand down hard on the ground. In an instant, his chest was in pain, his spirit core had been shattered!

He used the spirit core that he had cultivated for more than twenty years, and the blood that he had trained with for more than twenty years, to risk everything and never turn back as he yelled in a low voice, “Immerse!”

Crack.

He could clearly feel that the core of his heart, which had been with him for twenty years, had cracked in an instant.

It was very light, like the wind passing over a spring lake, causing ripples in the air.

It was very heavy, as if mountains and rivers had shattered, and rocks and soil had tumbled down.

In the end, all of them were reduced to smithereens.

At that moment, Nangong felt a vague sense of relief. So this was what it felt like to have one’s Spiritual Core being exhausted to pieces? Although it was painful, it was not heart-wrenching.

Then, when Mother died, she shouldn’t have suffered too much, right?

Just for a moment, it was gone.

The evil dragon's spirit was actually trembling slightly because of his sacrifice. The blood vines that were about to release suddenly closed up again, tightly clinging to the zombies that were about to break out. Nangong Changying raised his chin, and said in a low voice, "Huh?" After saying that, he walked step by step to stand in front of Nangong Si.

At this moment, Nangong Si could not even take a single step. Without his spirit core, he was no different from a normal person.

He couldn't even recall his own sword.

He gasped for breath and raised his head. His eyes reflected the moonlight, reflecting Nangong Changying's face against the moonlight.

"Grand Sect Master…"

Nangong Changying's blindfolded ribbon fluttered in the cold wind. He stood in his original spot for a while, and then moved his fingers a little, but due to the sacrifice of Nangong Si's spirit core, the Mount Jiao Spirit could not immediately respond to the orders from the original owner's corpse. As a result, the blood vines did not move at all.

But Nangong knew that he could not hold on any longer.

As long as Nangong Changying went all out to give the order, Mount Jiao would most definitely listen to his first master's instructions. He could not change all of this.

However, even though it couldn't be changed, he would still pay such a price to do it.

He felt ashamed.

Outside of the spirit formation, Mo Ran clenched his teeth tightly. The arrow in his sleeve was once again at his fingertip. The lines on his face were stretched to the extreme, and his hand was trembling under his robe.

Inside the boundary, Nangong Si said, “Grand Sect Master… I’m sorry, I still… could do… Nothing at all…”

The ancestor raised his sword again, and Nangong Si closed his eyes slowly.

Suddenly, just as he was about to cut off the throat, he saw Nangong Changying turn his neck with difficulty, and squeeze out a word from between his teeth, “You… were called… Nangong… ?

Nangong Si suddenly froze, and said hoarsely, “Great Sect Leader? Do you, do you have any consciousness? You. Do you understand what I’m saying?!”

Mo Ran could no longer clearly hear the rest of the sentence. However, everyone could see that Nangong Changying’s underlings had suddenly slowed down and their lips were slightly parted. It was obvious that they were talking to Nangong Si.

“I… shouldn’t… Fight… With you…”

Nangong Changying’s sword was still hanging in the air, but he kept making little sounds from his throat.

“My heart still exists… Memories of the past… Before I died, I was worried that there would be a change in the future…” He had just recovered his consciousness, so his words were unclear. He said hoarsely, “Unexpectedly… Indeed, today it came.”

Nangong Changying paused for a moment and then continued, “Nangong… After a while… When I. After I finished chanting the incantation… You’re going to. Take the bow and arrow away… I…”

Bows and arrows?

What bow?

Nangong Si’s mind was buzzing and he could not react in time. However, he had already turned his sword and slashed at the ground, letting out a long dragon’s roar. Soon after, he flew back a few feet with his clothes fluttering in the wind, looking like an immortal that had been exiled from the heavens.

Nangong Changying was trembling. At that moment, he was barely able to get his lips and tongue out of the caster’s control. Every word he said consumed a lot of power.

“Cloud, Cloud, summon, come.”

The ground in front of Nangong Si suddenly split apart, and a dark blue bow repeatedly buzzed within the tumbling silt, illuminating the endless night.

Everyone was terrified, even a cold person like Chu Wanning had a slight change in expression.

Legend has it that the first Sect Leader of the Rufeng Sect of Wind was buried in the hands of a Martial God.

Cloud Piercer!

“Quick, take it away!” His hands were trembling violently, as if he was fighting against the invisible spider web, and did his best to not let himself go forward to pick up his divine bow and go through the clouds, “Cloud-piercing arrows can burn flesh and blood…… Burn.”

But the excitement was too great. He could not believe it, so he asked in a dry voice, “Burn what?”

“Me!” Nangong Changying suddenly shouted in anger.

“Grand Sect Master!”

“Don’t let my corpse… do… The thing it hated the most… when it was alive. It’s a matter of fact.” Nangong Changying was tall and elegant, and his clothes fluttered in the wind. He said the last word a hundred years later, “Burn it.”

Ch. 215 [Mount Jiao] Incineration of Body Remnants

In the thousand years of the cultivation world, many heroes had appeared and there were only ten people listed in the Cultivator Manual. Nangong Changying was one of them.

In the past, Mo Ran did not think much of it. He once crushed the 72 cities of the Rufeng Sect with his little finger and felt that there were hundreds of waste pustules in the Immortal City. Before the blade had even reached his neck, he began to cry out for pain.

Just as Ye Wangxi had said before he died in his previous life, none of the people in the 70 cities were men.

In Mo Ran's eyes, the Rufeng Sect was just a piece of loose sand, and with Nangong Changying who had gathered this piece of loose sand, what kind of amazing person could they be?

The blood stains were mottled on the ground, the hundred year old foundation was instantly razed to the ground, corpses were everywhere, and crows were pecking at the intestines of the dead. Back then, when he climbed the stairs, he didn't show any expression as he pushed open the door to the Hall of Sages.

He wore a black cloak that reached the ground and walked through the long corridor that was hung with paintings of sect leaders and elders. Finally, he stopped at the end of the hall.

Under the hood, he could not see Taxian-Jun's entire face, but only his pale chin. The smile on his face was fierce and arrogant as he raised his head slightly to size up the statue that was taller than the real person.

It was a statue carved with white jade spirit stones, and it depicted a young immortal in a wide robe and wide sleeves, standing tall and straight with a bow in his hands.

The half of the face under Taxian-Jun's hood suddenly revealed a smile, revealing a sweet dimple with white teeth.

He tidied up his clothes and clasped his hands together. Then, he lifted up his handsome face and said with a smile, "I've heard a lot about you, Nangong Immortal."

Naturally, the statue did not speak, only the black crystal glistened as if it was staring at someone.

No one paid any attention to him. He was still able to happily put on an act for a long time. "Junior Mo Weiyu is fortunate to be here today. Immortal Elder Nangong sure is impressive."

He talked for a long time, laughing and talking animatedly, while the living went mad at the statue.

"I've seen your profound mystery…" He snapped his fingers and sighed, "I don't know. Who knows which nephew of yours is yours? I wonder which disciple of yours is yours."

Then he smiled brightly. "But now they are all ghosts under my sword, so if you haven't been reincarnated, you've probably met them before."

"It's a pity I didn't see your Xuan Xuan grandson. That guy escaped before the city got destroyed. I don't know if he's still alive or dead, but I feel somewhat regretful."

He was happy again as he chatted intimately with the statue for a while. Then he said, “That’s right, I heard that Elder Nangong was also an outstanding person in his generation. Wherever he goes, there was people vowing their loyalty and following him.”

Mo Ran said with a smile, “Then wouldn’t you be as impressive as I am today? Thus, what I have come here to say is all nonsense. I only have a question — why did Senior Nangong Changying not refuse to ascend to the throne back then?”

He paused for a moment and then took a few steps forward. At this moment, his gaze landed on the warning tablet behind Nangong Changying’s sculpture. Actually, this tablet was very large.

The stone tablet was carved by Nangong Changying when he was ninety-six years old. It was originally simple and unadorned, but later on it was dyed gold and dyed red.

Mo Ran stared at it for a while, then laughed, “Oh, I understand. ‘Greedy and resentful, acting like a killer or a pervert, is something I, a gentleman, can’t do?’ Immortal Elder is really a good person.”

He stood with his hands behind his back, and continued, “But Immortal Elders Hao Bai, with a clear reputation, and a profound teachings to the future, until death, but I am very curious, did Immortal Elder ever expect that one day, Rufeng Sect would become like this?”

As he spoke, he pursed his lips, as if he was trying to come up with a suitable phrase to describe the situation. Then, he thought of something and laughed.

After he finished speaking, he laughed heartily and wildly with a pure and evil smile. For a long time, the sound reverberated throughout the empty and solemn Sect Temple, like the tearing of silk, as if he was about to tear apart the paintings that were swaying slightly in the wind, and tear apart the portraits of the elites of the Rufeng Sect of Wind.

The laughter finally stopped in front of Nangong Changying's ice-cold sculpture.

Mo Ran no longer smiled. He withdrew his smile, and a layer of ice slowly formed on his face.

His pitch-black eyes were fixated on Wu Zong's previous Master, the one who could command the world and wipe out all immortals, just like him back in the day.

It was as though time and space had intersected here, with the First Immortal of two eras standing in confrontation amidst the flow of time.

In the end, Mo Ran said softly, "Nangong Changying, your Rufeng Sect is a dirty pool of water. I do not believe that you will be clean."

He suddenly swished his sleeves and turned around, striding out of the Hall of Heroes. Suddenly, a gust of violent wind blew past his hat, revealing the nearly crazed face of Taxian-Jun the Immortal Emperor.

He was the most handsome man in the world, a man worthy of being called a handsome man. However, on his face, there was a vicious gaze akin to that of a carrion vulture.

The black robe was like thick clouds flipping over ink, rolling down along the long path.

He was an evil spirit from the mortal world, an Asura from the mortal world. When he looked around, he could only see the dead bodies of the disciples from the imperial court.

At that moment, an extremely cruel feeling of joy arose in Mo Ran's heart. He looked at the splendor of the morning glow at the horizon. The rising sun pierced through the clouds, and a dazzling golden light shone on his blood-colored face.

He closed his eyes, took a deep breath, and squeezed his hands in his sleeves, trembling with ecstasy and excitement.

He had been a man with a life like grass. When he was young, he had begged for food in Linyi's territory and had seen his mother starve to death. He did not even have a mat to wrap her in. At that time, he had asked a cultivator of the Rufeng Sect if he could get her a coffin. The weakest coffin was fine, but that person had ridiculed him with one sentence —

The cultivator said, "Any person should get a coffin. It's hard for you to find a third of a meter."

There was nothing he could do. He wanted to bury his mother on the spot, but Linyi was under strict control, and the nearest unmarked cemetery was outside of Dai City, over two hills.

He dragged his mother's body all the way through repulsive, contemptuous, surprised, and sympathetic looks, but no one helped him. He walked for fourteen days, a child dragging a woman's body for fourteen days.

Fourteen days. No one was willing to help him.

In the beginning, he would kneel by the side of the road and beg for help. He would plead with the gentleman, the groom, and the peasants to take him and his mother on a wooden cart.

But who would want to put a complete stranger in their care?

Then he stopped begging and just gritted his teeth and dragged his mother along, step by step.

The body stiffened, softened, and began to rot. The stench and the liquid seeped out, and the passersby all backed away from him, covering their noses with their hands.

On the fourteenth day, he finally reached the unmarked cemetery.

There was no longer the smell of a living person on him, and the stench of his own body had seeped into his bones.

Without a pick, he used his hands to dig a shallow hole at the bottom of the mound — he really didn't have the strength to dig a deep hole. He dragged his own mother, who was in a disfigured state, into the hole and then sat down beside his in a daze.

After a long time, he said stiffly, "Mother, I should bury you."

He began to scoop up the dirt and threw it at his mother's chest. He collapsed, and began to cry bitterly.

It was strange that he thought his tears had dried up long ago.

"No, no, no, we won't be able to see it once it's buried." He crawled back into the pit and lay on the rotting body, wailing, tears streaming down his

face. As soon as he felt better, he went back to the earth, but it smelled as if it could open up a man's tear ducts, and he was defeated again.

"Why is it so rotten… It's already rotten to this extent…"

"Why is there not even a single mat?"

"Mother… Mother…"

He rubbed his face against her, and he did not despise her for being dirty. She stank, she was dead, she had no good skin, she was bleeding pus, and maggots were crawling all over her body.

He was crying in her arms, choking and choking. Every sound was like a gouge of blood in his throat.

Finally, his wails echoed from the cemetery. They were hoarse and indistinct, sometimes like the cries of a human, but more often like the wails of a young beast that had lost its mother.

"Mother… Mother!"

"Someone come… Is there anyone… Someone bury me too… Bury me as well…"

In the blink of an eye, twenty years had passed.

Mo Ran returned to Linyi and stood at the top of the mountain of Bi Wa in front of the mountains of corpses and the sea of blood.

The young cub that reeked of corpses years ago already had bright fur and sharp fangs. He once again opened his eyes, and his pupils flickered with a crazy and excited brilliance.

If he stood here today, who would dare to tell him that he had hit three feet?

Ridiculous! He wanted to be thirty meters tall, three hundred meters, and three thousand meters!

He wanted them, wanted everyone in this world to kneel down, rub their knees against the ground, and present to him on his knees —

He had trampled over all Immortals, and was now the sovereign of the world!

After entering the Hall of Sages and meeting Nangong Changying, he had become increasingly certain of his desires and ambitions. Yes, he had stepped through all immortals to gain the respect of the world.

He would no longer be the child who wept over a corpse. He would no longer let the person he loved die in front of him. She rot in front of him. Her skin would turn white and her face would turn into mud.

Never again.

In a hundred years, he would also become a god like Nangong Changying, worshiped by the people, revered by the mountains, white jade for the body of gold powder.

No, he would be even better than Nangong Changying, the Sisheng Peak would be far superior to the Rufeng Sect School, and he, the first emperor of the cultivation world, would be even more admirable than Nangong Changying, a hypocrite who could not be put down.

Sin?

He did not believe that Nangong Changying was innocent. How could a person who gave birth to a monster like the Rufeng Sect be a righteous gentleman that sacrificed his life?

Isn't it just "greedily killing and raping, is something that I, a gentleman, can't do"? Who doesn't know how to speak pretty words? Before he, Mo Weiyu, died, he could find someone to think of some brilliant and admirable words of exultation for him, find someone who would flatter him and write a history book for him. From then on, he, Taxian-Jun, would also become the master of the divine arts and the mind of all the people, as well as the master of everything in one fell swoop.

That's great.

There was no ending. It would be better than this.

"Greedy and resentful, killing and raping… It's me……" said the gentleman. Seven… "It can't be…"

A weak whisper was like a clap of thunder, ringing in his ears.

Mo Ran suddenly pulled himself out of the quagmire of his memories, but his vision was still blurry. He looked up at the barrier where Nangong Changying had pierced his chest with an arrow pierced through by Nangong's Cloud-Piercing Arrow.

It was the exact same face as the jade carving from back then.

Someone exclaimed, "How can he draw the Cloud-Piercing Bow when he's already injured like that?!"

"Was that bow prepared long ago?!"

“Look, there’s some spirit energy attached to the bow… It was not Nangong Si! Yes, yes…”

No one continued.

However, everyone was well aware of this fact.

It was from Nangong Changying.

The only person who could control the Sky Cloud Divine Bow was Nangong Changying.

On the bow, there was the final spirit stream that Nangong Changying had left behind before he died.

The fire spread and burned Nangong Changying’s chest. The arrow that pierced through the clouds pierced his heart, and the fire immediately spread to his entire body.

However, the corpse did not feel any pain. Nangong Changying’s body seemed so tall and straight in the flames, and his face was so serene that it seemed as if he was unperturbed.

Beside him, Mo Ran heard Xue Zhengyong mumbling, “He already expected it?… He… Did he already foresee such a day?”

No…

It wasn’t something he had expected. It was just a coincidence.

His body was covered with a black ink, and his pupils were twisted into two thin slits.

This was only a coincidence!

But how could he convince himself? To be able to break free from the control of Zhenlong chess pieces, long broken meridians, and even buried in Mount Jiao, the unburied Divine Martial Chenyun, and also the bow and arrow that was filled with spirit energy.

…… If not for meticulous planning, how could he have achieved such a state?

He staggered back a step.

He had thought that they were the same. He had thought that all the legendary heroes in this world had the ability to cover the sky with their hands, to wipe away all the stains on their lives, to put on a clean life jacket, and to leave behind a trail of whiteness. He had thought that Nangong Changying was just like all the other men he had seen in Rufeng Sect.

Was he wrong?

He looked at Nangong Changying, who was surrounded by blazing flames. A few hundred years ago, he was the same as him.

Was he wrong?!

Nothing can drown in sin, no matter how grandly the official history is written, it will leave an unexplainable flaw, the mouth can never block.

Nangong Changying was a man of the best. He refused to dominate, nor did he ascend. He once thought that it was nothing more than a disguise and cover up for himself by those at the pinnacle of power.

Was he wrong…

Nothing could bury the truth, just as the snow that had accumulated for a winter would melt away, and when the whiteness had faded and the earth was bare and ridged, there was no escape from the filth that lay in all the wrinkles, and the sun shone down and they screamed in the day.

He… Was it wrong…

He stared fixedly at Nangong Changying, who had also raised his head. He was still wearing the black silk ribbon embroidered with the Soaring Dragon pattern, so no one could see his eyes, nor could he see his eyes.

However, he did not know if it was his imagination or not, but he felt as if Nangong Changying was smiling. A smile could be seen under that black ribbon, and it was impossible to wash it off with water.

If he could, he would like to be selfish and leave behind this broken body, always accompanying Qing Shan, Tsui Bai, and the future heroes.

The world was too beautiful. No one wanted to leave.

However, he also knew that sometimes it was impossible to not leave. So, he had already planned to break the meridian to hide the bow, and in the future, his body would be used as an accomplice.

The human world was too beautiful. Having flowers was enough, one shouldn't be infected by blood.

"Grand Sect Master…" Nangong Si knelt on the ground with the Cloud-Piercing Divine Bow in his hand. The light from the fire illuminated his young face and also the tears on it. "This junior is unfilial…"

The Cloud-Piercing Fire had destroyed the precious black seed in Nangong Changying's body. His body was almost burnt to ashes and became fainter

and fainter in the flames.

Nangong Changying, who was completely free, asked Nangong Si, “How many years has it been since the founding of the Rufeng Sect?”

He was just a corpse, and his soul was no longer there.

There weren’t many memories and consciousnesses left in his body, so if he wanted to ask, he could only ask such a simple question.

Nangong Si did not dare to be negligent, and replied in a choked voice, “The founding of the Rufeng Sect has already reached 421 years of age.”

Nangong Changying tilted his head, even smiling.

He said, “A long time.”

That voice was faint, like a gust of wind that had pierced through the mountain and forest, scattering without a trace.

“I thought it would be over in two hundred years.” Nangong Changying’s voice was gentle and rich, flowing through the leaves of Mount Jiao, “All living things in the world have a lifespan, when the lifespan reaches the end, only humans can continue on. Moreover, old age will one day be replaced by youth, and old age will one day be replaced by new. Anything that was used for a long time would become dirty and old. Someone would throw it away and overthrow it. This was a good thing. No need to blame yourself.”

He had lost too much blood and his face was as pale as a sheet of paper. His voice trembled slightly as he said, “Grand Sect Master!”

“In fact, the long history of the Rufeng Sect does not lie in the fact that they have existed for a few years and have retained many disciples.” Nangong Changying’s figure was almost gone and his voice was getting further and further away, “There are still people in this world who remember that I, young master of the Rufeng Sect, can’t kill, be greedy, or rape.”

As he spoke, his sleeves gently waved. In that instant, the vegetation around Mount Flood began to shake, and vines rose up from all directions. The corpses that were on the verge of escaping their restraints all sank into the depths of the earth.

“As long as you remember, your job is done.”

After he finished saying those words, Nangong Changying’s body, amidst the raging flames, suddenly broke apart and turned into specks of dust. The golden-red starlight scattered throughout the vast forest.

His body had vanished, but the sound of it had not dissipated yet.

Inside the barrier, Nangong Si was already sobbing. Outside the barrier, Ye Wangxi had already knelt down. One after another, people began to kneel down.

After they died, they were all heroes.

Ch. 216 [Mount Jiao] Degradation to Slavery

The great Mount Jiao was calm again, the blood vine disappeared, and the bodies manipulated by chess pieces sank into the depths of the earth one after another. In the end, Nangong Changying died against the spirit of the dragon, even if it was his descendant.

The moon is white and the wind is clear, and the land is in a mess.

After shooting the last arrow, the bow in the hands of Nangong Si gradually became dull and sunk because of the loss of Nangong Changying's power. He dripped blood to the ground, almost the moment when the boundary was unraveled, Ye Wangxi ran to him and knelt beside him. "Don't move, don't move." Her voice was trembling. "I'll heal you…"

"Come on, I could have jumped around, and if you had cured me, I would probably have gone to see Taishou." Nangong Si coughed gently, pushed aside Ye Wangxi. Black eyes looked at Jiang Xi. "Sect Leader Jiang, still bothering you…"

Jiang Xi nodded his head and said, "I'm coming."

He is the leader of the Pharmacist Sect. He is willing to help others. Naturally, it is beyond the reach of others.

Jiang Xiyu's white fingertips were placed on Nangong Si's wrist. Almost as soon as he touched them, his pupils narrowed slightly, then he did not utter a word and looked at each other with Nangong Si.

He could clearly feel that the spirit core of Nangong Si had been crushed. Therefore, he was not different from ordinary people. He could no longer

use magic or spiritual power.

It was impossible for Nangong Si himself not to know about it, but Ye Wangxi was there. As she watched Jiang Xi, she shook her head slightly and unconsciously.

“What? Sect Leader Jiang, what’s wrong with A-Si?

“…”

Jiang Xi silently withdrew his hand, and then took out a shallow porcelain bottle from cosmic bag and handed it to Ye Wangxi: “It’s nothing serious. The trauma is not harmful, you can rest assured. If you take this powder and apply it to the affected area every day, you will recover after ten days at most.”

When Jiang Xi finished, he put the spiritual power on his fingertips, and then passed several acupoints on Nangong Si, finally covered the palm that was injured by the sword, and the blood soon stopped flowing. Having done all this, Jiang Xi rose to the public and said, “it is not advisable to stay here for a long time.”

He turned and left, but the conversation between Ye and Nangong Si still fell to his ears.

He heard Nangong Si whisper to Ye Wangxi: “He said it’s all right, in a few days it will be all right. What are you crying about? Alas, how can it become so useless, well, no such minor injuries…”

Jiang Xi closed his eyes.

He thought of the lip service to himself when he was thinking that his life was hanging on the line in the border area. He sighed and led the crowd to

the long white jade steps leading to the ancestral temple and the heavenly palace.

From the foot of the hill to the top of the hill, there are three checkpoints that need to be smeared with the blood of the Nangong family before they can pass smoothly. However, Nangong Si does not need to cut his finger and drip blood at the moment. He already has wounds all over his body. Every little bit can dispel the boundary maze.

All the way up, there is no obstacle.

When Nangong Si put blood on the dragon's eye of the White Jade Carving Dragon, the last heavy stone block gate sank slowly and solemnly into the ground. The heavenly palace at the top of Jiao mountain appeared in front of everyone.

It was a fairy-spirited shrine, with a dense forest outside the palace gate. They were standing outside the forest at the moment, across the flowers and vines, flowing water. They could see a long step up the sky, with a total of 9,990 steps. The steps were so high that the top ancestral temple palace seemed to be lying on the top of the clouds. They could only see the dim shadows, spreading under the infiltration of the moonlight. Brilliant and translucent light, such as Guanghan Palace, like Xiaoxiao Palace, I do not know heaven and earth.

Almost everyone at first glance at the temple was shocked by its magnificence and miraculous workmanship, followed by anger, jealousy, greed and salivation… Various feelings came to mind.

The most wordless of them is Ma Zhuang master.

As he patted his forehead, he cried out, “my mamma, what a long step, why can’t the sword on this hill run with its feet? This is another mountain!”

Huang Xiaoyue laughed and said, “the old man is not malicious. He is only making a joke. According to the old man, it is true that Nangong’s immortal dragon does not have to fly up. He can create such a heavenly palace. What is the difference between the human world and the heavens?”

Suddenly they heard someone say coldly: “The construction of Rufeng sect Heavenly Palace was started during Nangong Yu, the third sect leader, and finished two generations later, under the fifth sect leader Nangong Xian. This Heavenly Palace has no connection with Nangong Changying.

Huang Xiaoyue: “…”

He looked back and saw the extremely cold face of Chu Wanning. As soon as Ink burned the face, he knew that Chu Wanning had almost endured the limit. As long as the fire was added, Butterfly Town asked about the old stories that attracted people in that year, I was afraid that it could be repeated.

Chu Wanning said coldly: “like Huang Xianchang, I do not have any malicious advice. Before you read the book thoroughly, you’d better learn to be cautious and prudent.”

Huang Xiaoyue has always wanted to maintain face, but in front of all the younger generations, he was broken in pitiless way by Chu Wanning. For a moment, he was extremely embarrassed. His lips were waiting fight back. Suddenly, Jiang Xi said, “Huang Xiaoyue, is it a joke to you that the reputation of Nangong Xianchang is pure?”

At Jiang Xi's speech, his status and position were self-evident. Huang Xiaoyue looked suddenly pale, but still forced a laugh calmly. "Why should Sect Leader Jiang take it seriously? This old man spoke without any malice."

"Shall I indulge your malice because you think it's no harm?" Jiang Xi rolled his eyes coldly and looked at Huang Xiaoyue. He didn't even want to give him the eye. "Do I have to endure your ignorance because of your aging?"

"…" Master Chu is a master, but in the final analysis, he has only ability, not real power. But Jiang Xi is not the same. Now he coughs on the lonely night, and the world must shake three times.

Jiang Xi brushed his sleeves and walked coldly into the woods toward the long steps at the end. Others glanced at Huang Xiaoyue with disdain or sympathy. Of course, others completely ignored him and followed Jiang Xi away. The abbot of Wubei Temple sighed "Amitabha Buddha". If it wasn't for the situation, Mo Ran would really laugh.

They walked in the woods, but they didn't take even a few steps. Nangong Si said, "Hmm?" A sound.

Jiang Xi asked, "What's wrong?"

"Orange trees…" Nangong Si looked around and there were orange trees everywhere with white orange blossoms. "Why is there an orange tree? All the trees planted here are dragon nursery trees."

"Look over there!" As he spoke, a sharp-eyed man pointed to a distant spring and whispered, "There's a man there!"

They looked where the man's fingers pointed, and sure enough, they saw a man sitting with his back to them, buried in a bushy orange tree, beside

the tinkling spring.

Xue Zhengyong frowned and said, “Is it a man or a ghost?”

“I’ll go and have a look,” said Mo Ran.

His light work is excellent. He skimmed past and instantaneously hid lightly and silently in the nearby trees, and then carefully circled around the side.

He was stunned.

Because he saw the man’s face clearly.

That was the father of Nangong Si, the last leader of Rufeng Sect.

—— Nangong Liu.

What’s the matter? Hadn’t Nangong Liu suffered lingchi? He should have been dead for three hundred and sixty-five days now. But why did he seem to have flesh and skin at the moment?

Washing a basket of oranges??

The spring rippled with waves, and the silver moon was grind in the spring water. With a dreamlike look on the Nangong Liu’s face, he hummed a tune, drenched the washed oranges one by one, and then put them in the back basket beside him.

“Weak crown time is the best, light-footed horse, see the end of the world flowers.”

Nangong Liu hummed softly, sleeves rolled high, arms soaked in clear water, arms intact, and did not swallow the mottled scars of the Lingchi guo.

He can clearly perceive that something is missing on Nangong Liu. This man has apparently been made into a chess piece, but he and the corpses in the grave are different. Nangong Liu has obviously retained a large part of his consciousness. Looking at his behavior, it is not too different from a normal living person.

“What’s the matter?”

Xue Zhengyong asked anxiously when he saw that Mo Ran had gone quickly and returned.

Mo Ran first looked at Nangong Si and then whispered, “It’s Nangong Liu.”

There were many people who had hatred with Nangong Liu. On the spot, a monk raised from the ground and drew his sword: “That animal! I’m going to kill him!”

Nangong Si’s eyes were dim, his face grey and his head drooping silently: “…”

“There is something fishy, this Nangong Liu is obviously also controlled by the Zhenlong chess game, but strangely enough, he has no scar left by the Lingchi. I think it is better not to disturb him rashly.” Mo Ran said.

Chu Wanning pondered and asked. “Can the effect of the Lingchi fruit be eliminated?”

Guyue’ye was the best one at this kind of problem, the Cold Scale Sacred Hand said: “It may be possible, but it is more troublesome. I don’t think Xu Shuanglin should have stuffed him with a Lingchi fruit, and then took great pains to help him to untie the curse of the fruit. It’s totally meaningless to do so.”

Jiang Xi said, “Anyway, Nangong Liu is here. Xu Shuanglin should be in the temple palace. At last we did not make another trip in vain.”

As he said this, Yu Guang suddenly caught a glimpse of a shadow shaking in the distance. Jiang Xi turned his head. Others followed his eyes and saw the head of the Rufeng Sect, full of a basket of oranges, coming out of the woods. He still had a stick in his hand, and walked lightly. When he got closer, he could see that his face was still smiling.

Nangong Si had made up his mind not to see it, but finally he could not resist it. He looked up at his father and his eyelashes shook like flocks in the wind. He could not tell what he felt and hated at the moment. Heartache? Or something else?

He did not know if he wanted to look away, but the figure was like a fishhook, and it was impossible to loosen the hook.

At this time, suddenly someone who could not suppress his emotions shouted loudly, “Nangong Liu! You’ll pay your debt of blood today!”

With a loud voice, the plume and arrow left the string and went straight to the back of Nangong Liu.

It was too late for others to stop him, but fortunately the man’s bowing skills were not good enough, so the screaming arrow went straight into the basket behind him and pierced several round oranges.

Suddenly, many people cursed in their hearts. This is not good because there are too many of them. They always mix in some silly things when someone stir up the water. But at this moment, it’s meaningless to think about which dumb person put the cold arrow. What’s important is that

Nangong Liu has noticed their existence and slowly turned his head around.

Seeing so many people standing in the mountains and woods, Nangong Liu was stunned for a moment, then walked towards them, his face was still that vague color.

As he approached, many monks had shone their swords several inches on their waists, and their eyes were watching him with great vigilance. Under the pressure of thousands of eyes, Nangong Liu seemed to finally feel some pressure. He slowly stopped and stood still in the shadows of the swaying trees.

“Gentlemen…”

When he opened his mouth, the silence was broken. Dozens of people couldn’t resist it. Subconsciously, he took a step forward. Several people even had their swords out of sheath.

Nangong Liu suddenly smiled, this smiling face, standing at the front of the array of several palms are familiar with, this is Nangong Liu once faced with everyone the kind of flattering and warm-hearted smile.

The owner of Taxue Palace was shocked: “This…”

Several people looked at each other and thought the chess piece was too weird to know what kind of medicine was sold in the gourd. At this time, they saw the Nangong Liu brushing his sleeves around, rolling them down, and then kneeling down on both knees and nodding respectfully to hundreds of monks.

“Ah, Nangong Liu, a slave, is a courteous room. You distinguished guests have come all the way, from far away.”

Following his kowtow, a basket full of orange bones rolled out of his back and sprinkled all around him.

Nangong Liu knocked his head, knelt on the ground again, laid down the basket to pick up the oranges without shame, restored and tidied the oranges under the staring gaze of a crowd, then rubbed his hands and laughed, “You distinguished guests, but you are going to see his Majesty?”

His majesty!

Mo Ran instantly had goosebumps. After all, he had been the so called Emperor for nearly ten years. When he heard the word “Your Majesty”, he still habitually felt that he was addressing himself.

Others were confused. Look at me. I look at you. Xue Zhengyong even gave a bitter laugh, but no one answered for a moment.

When Liu saw that everybody ignored him, he scratched his head in some doubts and carefully asked, “Hey, you distinguished guests, are you going to see his Majesty?”

Jiang Xi: “…”

Nangong Liu was slightly discouraged, but he repeatedly asked, “You distinguished guests, but you want to see your majesty?”

“…”

“Your distinguished —”

“Who is your majesty?” he asked quietly.

“Your Majesty is your Majesty.” Nangong Liu was glad to see that he had been attended to at last, and said, “If you want to see your Majesty, you have to go up all the way, but he is very busy. He may not have the time to attend to you. He has great matters to attend to all over the world.”

At last, Xue Zhengyong could not hold back. It was in such a tense atmosphere. He could not help but laugh. “What’s this ‘great matter all over the world’? Haha, what’s the most important thing in the world? Managing a dead man on a hill, playing chess with himself and playing puppets with string, is this also a big event in the world? Haha ha ha ha Xu Shuanglin, he is too, too funny.”

There was an uneasy gloom between the burning eyebrows. He then asked, “It means that he is in the palace of heaven at the moment. Although he is very busy, we can go to see him, right?”

“Yes. Of course you can go to see him. If he closes the door to thank his guests, you can wait in the city. When your Majesty is busy, he will come out. I’m going to go to the top too. The oranges over there have been eaten up again. I need to fill them up quickly. Otherwise, his Majesty will be angry later again.” He said, and went away, leaving everyone looking at each other.

“What shall we do?”

“Go up?”

“Will there be any deceit…?”

But Mo Ran had already taken the lead, and he was walking fast. He quickly left Nangong Liu and all the people behind.

Finally, breathing heavily, he took the lead in reaching the Heavenly Palace. Standing in front of the main gate of the palace, he looked up and realized how magnificent the palace was.

Only two palace gates have the potential of blinding the sun. The top is carved from the Yellow River to the blue sky. The left side of the gate is Tenglong Tengyi, on the right side is Huohuang Tuyue, the sun and the moon shining, and the crevices of the dragon's scales are filled with melted pure gold. Their momentum is astonishing. The tails of the phoenix feathers are all set with jewels. There are bronze Chiba lamps with whale oil hanging from the rafters on the top of the palace. The lights will not go out for thousands of years. In the light of the tens of millions of candles, the door to the sky is golden and blue, with beautiful flowing light.

Mo Ran originally thought that the door was very heavy and difficult to open. However, when his fingers touched the door lightly, with the blooming thunder, the dragon and phoenix gate[167] did not need him to use one's strength to slowly shrink back.

And in the moment of seeing the front of the Heavenly Palace, the whole people were shocked by Mo Ran.

This… What kind of a tricky scene is this?

Ch. 217 [Mount Jiao] Nightmare

He walked along the long central path of the front of the Heavenly Palace. Every brick and stone beneath his feet was shining like thin ice, reflecting his figure.

Du. Du. Du.

Step by step, the empty footsteps echoed lonely in the hall.

But Mo Ran was not alone. He is standing at the center of the hall of the front door of the Rufeng temple in the endless distance. The two sides are densely packed with men, women, old and young, with different faces.

He stood in the middle, just like a small city pool. On his left hand, the corpse of Nangong Liu and those of Xu Shuanglin became humble people, who were delayed and severed, and were executed by various criminal laws, then resurrected. And the other side there is singing and dancing, free and easy.

He even saw Luo Xianxian, who should not be the real soul, but the appearance of other corpses made of illusion, controlled by sunspots, like those of Jincheng Lake.

Luo's bun was tied up, and at the moment, together with her husband Chen Bohuan, the two of them looked comfortable and laid back. He also saw the Chen's youngest daughter, sitting beside her brother and sister-in-law, talking to them with laughter. And Luo Xianxian was snuggled up to Chen Bohuan. When she heard something interesting, she would cover her mouth with her sleeve and smile with joy.

It was a beautiful dream, but there was a sudden chill up Mo Ran's back.

He paced along this long corridor, half hell and half heaven, where good and evil were clearly separated. On his left, there was laughter and smiles, and on his right, cries and groans.

He walked forward as if he were walking through water and fire, light and shadow. He looked to the left, butterflies flying in clusters, a stream of water flowing from behind the beams and pillars, with clear wine in it. By the river of wine, some people were reading leisurely, others were singing poems and fu, children were laughing, women were drunk and managing clouds and clothes.

He looked to the right, the brass was hot, the cooking oil was hot, a twisting body was poured with rolling oil, the tongue was pulled through, people cursed each other, they tore each other, eyes flashed with the cold beast.

He also saw the former abbot of Wubei Temple, the old monk who had planned the dark screen of the Spiritual Mountain Competition with one hand. He was surrounded by three people, each with a rusty small stew knife in his hand. He was cutting his face, legs and brother's desk separately. One knife after another, the cut flesh and skin soon recovered. The old monk kept screaming, but only expressed his intention. An ambiguous roar - his rumored tongue had already been torn off.

The farther Mo Ran walked, the more shivering it feels.

He didn't even want to look on either side, cries, laughter, anger and joy.

On the left, a woman said in a soft voice, "Life and death, loneliness and destiny. A lover cannot call out a lover."

On the right, a woman is being bitten by a vicious dog and screaming.

Half of his remaining light saw light and half saw darkness, which were absolute, just like the chessboard pieces, black and white confrontation, clear about the good and evil.

Mo Ran feels a splitting headache.

He stood in the middle. He simply stopped and closed his eyes. He did not want to see the scene of nine days in purgatory.

He was there, waiting for the big army to catch up with him.

“Dreams of falling leaves are frightened and broken, and the dust of idle strolls is red……”

“No! Don’t do this to me anymore! Beg you! Save me… Help me…”

But the voices on both sides are endless, like arrows, into the wood three points.

He heard Luo Xianxian gently say to her husband, “Chen Bohuan, the orange flowers in the courtyard are all blooming. Shall I show you around?”

He heard Qin Shi, the former head of Jiangdong Hall, laughing wildly: “Adultery? Ha ha ha ha, yes, I was adulterous with Nangong Liu! I’m a slut, a prostitute, I’m a slut, a poisonous woman. I killed my husband, I want to be in charge. Hahaha, you all come to see my true face ah, see I’m an ugly bitch, aha ha ha ha…”

Everything was gathered together.

Living people, dead people.

Real or illusory?

Black or white, good or evil?

The voice around him was gradually like the tide, and the waves were rolling. He seemed to see two dragons breaking through the water and the moonlight shining on their cold, wet scales.

Are those two dragons?

No, they are two souls of their own.

Fighting began again, snarling and spewing dragon breath, biting and crashing together.

The earth shakes the hills.

Mo Ran could not stand this crazy noise. He covered his ears, but he could not stop the noisy voice. Eventually, he could not bear it. He wanted to raise his hand and drop the curse of silence.

He opened his eyes violently.

The surrounding scenery disappeared.

Mo Ran looked with horror.

He's stunned in place - what's wrong? How can all the sights around disappear?

Where is he?

Why is it black everywhere, endless black…

Is it Xu Shuanglin's illusion?

Mo Ran looked around, nothing, all dark.

He took a few steps and tentatively shouted, “Shizun?”

“Xue Meng?”

“Has anybody come?”

No one answered him, black, deathly black.

Who has seen countless storms, such black and creepy, he walked forward, straight goosebumps on his arms, he went forward…

Suddenly, he saw a faint white light shining far ahead, which seemed to be an exit.

He went to that place.

Suddenly there were figures around him, not so clear, but he heard the voices of those people, and the tide generally knelt down to him.

Those people are singing grandly, their voices are low, and they are rolling together into rivers.——

“Congratulations to the Emperor Taxian-Jun for a life of balance with heaven.”

Emperor Taxian-Jun?

No… No!

He shivered. He shivered. He ran forward as fast as he could, but it seemed that tens of millions of hands were coming from all directions to catch him.

“Your Majesty-”

“Taxian-Jun immortal.”

“Life is endless, fortune is not central.”

Mo Ran was forced into madness, he tried hard to break away those invisible hands, he ran towards the light: “No, not me! Go away… Go away!”

“Taxian-Jun…”

But those voices followed him like shadows, lingering, Mo Ran began to think that Xu Shuanglin was the devil of the ghost world. At this moment, he came out to catch him.

“Why does Your Majesty want to go?”

“Emperor, emperor…”

Mo Ran staggered under his feet, his eyes flashed fiery light, he wanted to go, but all the grievances were trapping him. He was forced to be trapped, and he had no way to hide. He suddenly became furious. He turned his head in anger. Suddenly he drew his sword and swore, and cut all the shadows into broken darkness.

He looks like a wolf and a leopard. He’s almost ferocious.

“Get out!” He roared, “Get away from this Venerable one! Roll!”

His voice fell and his face looked sad.

He heard someone murmuring around him and snickering, “This Venerable One?”

“He said this Venerable One… Yes… He’s talking about this Venerable One…”

“Emperor, what’s wrong with us? You should know in your heart who you are and where you came from. You can’t escape.”

Mo Ran retreated with his sword and shook his head. “No, it’s not… Not so…”

The black smoke which he had chopped was gathered and shaped again, and a vague shadow fell in front of him, pressing towards him step by step.

The shadow whispered softly, “Not so?”

“I am not Taxian-Jun!”

“How are you not Taxian-Jun?” The voice is dim and soft, like the smoke curling up from the veil curtain in summer, “Of course, you have a debt, only you, you can’t escape…”

“But it’s over!” Mo Ran stared at the dark shadows. “It’s over! Taxian-Jun had already died before the Heaven-Piercing Tower. It had nothing to do with me when he entered the grave. I’m just… I’m just…”

The shadow smiled softly, as delicate as a flower stamen: “What are you?”

Mo Ran: “…”

“Are you just a reincarnated soul?” It asks, “Just a memory of the flesh? Are you just an innocent life living in the shadow of Taxian-Jun? Or… Are you just a dream?”

If anger and fear are still there, once this sentence come out, Mo Ran's mood became as hard as ice, and his blood froze all over.

He was almost at a loss, he did not respond. He tried to speak, but he could not speak a whole sentence for a long time. After a while, he opened his mouth, and his voice was harsh. He dug out his throat and dug up a broken word. "Dream?"

"You know you're reborn, but who knows for sure? Do you think it must be true? Is it you or me who is real at the moment?" The blurred smoke surrounded him, gathering more clearly. "You said you died under the tower of heaven, but now you are standing here vividly… Are you really dead?"

Mo Ran stared at the black smoke.

He no longer trembled, he felt cold, like falling into an ice cave, and stepped into the abyss of ten thousand feet.

It's cold.

Did he really die?

The cold of the Wushan hall seems to be still in the bone marrow. The fire of the ten major factions in the uprising is like a long snake winding its way from the foot of the mountain to snap his neck.

Xue Meng seemed to have just stood in front of him, with nothing left and tears in his eyes. He said ruthlessly, "Mo Ran, give me back my Shizun."

Did he really die?

He remembered taking the poison, the poison pierced his heart and lungs. He staggered to the Tower of Heaven, climbed into the excavated grave with his last strength, and lay in the coffin.

Haitang flowers blossom very gently, light fragrant, clouds and shadows wandering.

He closed his eyes…

“Then you opened your eyes. You went back to your sixteenth year, back to the time when everything could be saved, right?”

The black image was able to see through his heart and murmur with a low laugh.

“You came back, Sisheng Peak was not destroyed. Although the Rufeng Sect was turned into scorched earth for the second time, it was not you who did it. Ye Wangxi and Shi Mingjing did not die. You saw your mind clearly. You fell in love with Chu Wanning, you became Master Mo. He finally accepted you. Now you’re the leader of the Rebel Army. You’re the leader of the Qingzheng Road. You’re the hero of a generation of young people who want to hunt down the bully leader Xu Shuanglin on the mountain.”

A few deaths.

The blood vessels of the neck burned up, and the heart beat fiercely together.

The shadow had no face, but it was staring at him. He knew it was staring at him.

“You think beautifully.”

Cold swords pierce the heart and poisonous teeth pierce the neck.

Mo Ran can feel despair spread in his body, poison spread in general, like the deadly poison he took when he was thirty-two years old, spreading… Immersed in liver and gallbladder… Immersed in the heart…

“You’re not reborn at all. You’re all dead. Everyone’s dead. Xue Meng is alive, but he hates you so much.” The shadow said, “Now wake up, open your eyes, Taxian-Jun, you are still the Lord of Darkness.”

“No…” Mo Ran heard someone talking, and the voice was so weak and broken that it seemed to have been beaten up countless times and glued together. Then he was surprised to find that the person who uttered the voice was himself, “No…”

He drives his courage in every inch of bone and every drop of blood. He keeps his eyes open and his eyes full of madness.——

“You lie! It’s impossible! It’s impossible!”

He gathered his sword and swung it, panting furiously.

The black smoke dispersed again.

But his voice did not fade, and he was laughing in a low voice: “Lying? But your Majesty, why don’t you look down and see what you hold in your hand?

Ch.218 [Mount Jiao] The Emperor's Return

He lowered his head.

He lowered his head —

The blood was flowing in reverse, his head was buzzing, and he saw… Bu'gui.

The blade held in his hand was actually the Blade of the Hundred Fights, Bu'gui!

The black blade Bu'gui was maliciously lying in the middle of the night. The hilt was long and thin, the strength was hard, and the Tang Sword style was sheathless. It was extremely similar to a sword.

On the hilt of the saber, which was inlaid with a golden ring, there were two characters written on it.

Bu'gui.

Affairs of the past upon vermilion bridge in emerald green.

Another year goes but still you do not return.

Mo Ran looked as if he had been struck by lightning, the light in his eyes was as thin as a needle, and his face was paler than a dead man's, and more hideous than a ghoul.

"No… No… No… No!"

He almost despaired, threw Bu'gui to the ground, but the Wu and his heart, automatically to the waist.

“No!” Mo Ran was hysterical. He tried to summon Jiangui out of him, but Jiangui couldn’t come. He called that piece of scarlet willow vine again and again.

Jiangui, no rattan whip.

Only Bu’gui was with him.

“Do you believe it now?” The ghostly figure closed in again. This time, it gathered even faster than before. Soon, it had shape, four limbs, waist, head…

Mo Ran refused to believe it.

He refused to believe it.

He ignored the cloud of black smoke and ran toward the end of the light.

This was an illusion created by Xu Shuanglin… This was just an illusion…

Go where the light is, and it will all be over.

He sprinted towards that direction.

But his arm was held tight again.

Mo Ran didn’t want to pay any more attention to it. He threw it away and shouted angrily, “Get lost! Get lost! What is true? You know better than me what’s true? I know what’s real! He treats me well, it’s true! It was true that he was not dead! What has happened between him and me all these years, how could it be false?! Jincheng Lake, Peach Blossom Springs, Ghost Realm Butterfly Town, we will send —”

The voice interrupted him softly, almost with a sigh, “A-Ran, why don’t you remember that I’m the one who married you?”

He suddenly turned around and saw that the black fog had condensed into a human form. Her face was as beautiful as a lotus, and she was truly a beauty in the mortal world. She gently snuggled over and wore a head full of emerald and flowery hairpins, wearing the bright red dress she wore when she was married.

“Xu Yingfeng, I couldn’t walk anymore. You’re the one who carried me up. You told me not to call you ‘Your Majesty’, and from now on I will only call you ‘A-Ran’, have you forgotten that?”

Her smile was soft as grass, but her hands were surprisingly strong.

Mo Ran suddenly struggled free from her. This was definitely not Song Qiutong. His wrist had already turned purple, and he continued to move forward… The white light grew closer and closer…

He seemed to know somehow that this was the way out.

Over there. As long as we get there.

He heard Song Qiutong say with a smile, “Your Majesty, where are you going? Chu Wanning is dead, you got yourself killed, do you really have to go there?”

“…”

“Over there is…”

He did not hear her clearly, he had broken free from the clutches of the wraiths, he ran, he threw her voice to the back of his mind, the white light

grew brighter and bigger before his eyes, he was like a drowning man trying his best to swim on his feet towards the shattered shadow of the sea.

Suddenly!

He plunged into the great white light, and the darkness disappeared.

He gasped for breath, his feet weak, breathing slowly, like a man who has just emerged from water, breathing greedily, unable to get used to the light for a moment. He raised his arm to shield his eyes, and after a long while he heard the birds chirping and smelled the faint fragrance of the haitang.

He slowly opened his eyes.

… Where is he?

The first thing he saw was a luxuriant haitang tree, which was covered in a bright red glow, just like the glow of a brocade.

It was not in the Ancestral Shrine of the Rufeng Sect.

This illusion… Is it still not over?

However, his mind was already slowly falling apart. He was suddenly not so sure who he was, where was it a dream, and where was it real.

He sat up, an haitang flower that had landed on the tip of his nose fluttering in his lap.

…… Sit up?

Only now did he realize that he was actually lying down just now, as if he had just finished a nightmare. He looked around and realized that he was

looking at the Heaven-Piercing Tower which was at Sisheng Peak's door, while he himself sat inside an open coffin that was pitch black.

Instantly, even Mo Ran's fingertips seemed to turn cold.

He stood still for a long time, then suddenly got up and stumbled out of the coffin. In front of the coffin was a stone with no words on it. Instead, there was a bowl of wontons and several plates of stir-fry, his favorite food. He stared at them. He stared at the coffin.

No…

No.

The nightmare was not over.

He had fallen into a deeper nightmare, or was he now sober?

Could it be that what the black shadow said was true?

Did he really just submit, lie down in front of Heaven-Piercing Tower, and have a long, long dream? Everything in the dream was…

He didn't dare to continue thinking about it. He crawled up as if he was crazy, and directly ran towards the peak of the South Peak which was the Sisheng Peak.

However, it was different from before he died. He remembered that back then, he clearly chased everyone away, but when he was halfway there, a group of people rushed out, and the one in the lead was Liu-gong who had served him for many years. He held a box in his hand, and his wrinkled face was filled with joy: "Your Majesty, we have found the Rebirth Immortal medicine! This is the immortal medicine for rebirth!"

He stopped abruptly.

When everyone knelt down to congratulate him, Liu-gong also knelt down. His withered hands held up the embroidered box, and he shakily handed it over to Mo Ran. He said hoarsely, “Immortal medicine, ah! The immortal medicine that His Majesty has been begging for finally moved the gods.”

Mo Ran was taken aback, “No… I, didn’t I chase you all down the mountain?”

All the servants’ faces were ashen as they kowtowed repeatedly. Liu-gong was also extremely frightened: “Why would His Majesty chase us away? But where could this old servant not serve? Old servant —”

“What about the top ten sects?”

Elder Liu was confused and raised his head blankly: “What top ten sects? Your Majesty, what’s wrong?”

As soon as he left the forest, he pointed towards the tomb in front of the tower. “Look over there, I was just sleeping there, I —”

He turned to find that the coffin and grave were gone.

There were only two lonely tombs of empress and concubine, with his dog crawl scrawled on them.

Mo Ran: “…”

Elder Liu asked worriedly, “Your Majesty, what’s wrong?”

“I…” Mo Ran stared at the two graves, his mind in a state of confusion. For a moment he could clearly sense that all of this was false, but then he felt a

blur of reality, and he couldn't tell where he was or how long he had been there.

Elder Liu sighed, "Your Majesty's worries are too deep. Have you been dreaming?"

"It's not a dream… No, of course this is a dream…" He rambled on for a long time before suddenly turning his head to stare at Elder Liu. "What about the rebirth medicine?"

Elder Liu then handed the box over.

He didn't go to get the box, instead, he just opened it. Inside was a pill that was as white as jade and gave off a warm glow.

Trembling, he picked it up, his Adam's apple bobbing in his throat, and headed in the direction of the Red Lotus Pavilion.

However, Elder Liu suddenly stopped him, and when he suddenly turned around, his nerves were stretched taut, about to break, so he asked, "What's wrong?"

Elder Liu, who had been amiable a moment ago, suddenly darkened his face. A strange light flashed in his eyes as he spoke darkly: "Your Majesty, have you gone in the wrong direction?"

"What do you mean by heading in the wrong direction…"

"The place that Your Majesty should go is the Soul Recruitment Platform." Elder Liu said slowly as the servants slowly surrounded him, surrounding him and slowly approaching him. "His Majesty has always been thinking day and night about reviving your senior brother, Shi Mingjing?"

“I…”

“Now that the Rebirth Immortal Medicine is in our hands, why did His Majesty abandon the Soul Summoning Platform and instead go to the Red Lotus Pavilion?” Old Liu said faintly, “For this method of rebirth, His Majesty had killed tens of thousands of people, flattened the Rufeng Sect, and caused the world to be filled with grief, blood to flow like rivers. Did His Majesty do all of these things, and end up going against his original intentions and taking this pill into another person’s mouth?”

Mo Ran’s mind was in a mess. He tightly held onto the immortal medicine and said, “You don’t understand.”

“Your Majesty must go to the Soul Summoning Platform. You are not allowed to go to the Red Lotus Pavilion.” Everyone’s eyes flashed with a terrifying light. Their ghostly faces surrounded him as they repeated, “Your Majesty must go to the Soul Summoning Platform. You must not go to the Red Lotus Pavilion!”

Mo Ran protected the immortal medicine with all his might. His face was pale as he said, “All of you, get out of my way.”

“His Majesty has to go to the Soul Summoning Platform…”

“Out of the way!”

He pulled out Bu’gui and held onto that ice-cold saber hilt. Those people seemed to have shrunk for a moment. Then, their pupils became as long and narrow as a snake’s, and they all revealed twisted smiles.

“You will be punished…”

“What do you think you can change?”

“You’re breaking your promise.”

“Three to four.”

“Hoh, how could such a heartless and unrighteous person be worthy of possessing immortal medicines?”

“Get it back! Get it back!”

Mo Ran, protecting the immortal medicine, fiercely cut open a path of blood and rushed towards the Southern Peak, where was Sisheng Peak. Regardless of whether it was a dream or real, he knew that Chu Wanning was there… Regardless of life or death, he had to go there. He had to stay by Chu Wanning’s side to be at ease.

He ran into the boundary of the Red Lotus Pavilion.

Elder Liu and the others were all blocked outside the boundary.

He turned around and glanced at them, then closed the jade green bamboo door. He did not want to see anyone else. This was the Red Lotus Pavilion. He only thought of himself, and…

“Shizun?”

His eyes widened in surprise as he saw Chu Wanning standing under a haitang tree. He wore a high ponytail and a pair of metal gloves. He had a focused expression on his face as he tried to complete a Holy Night Guardian. The wind began to blow, and the light pink petals began to rustle down. Like the first snow, they fell in front of the stairs. On the table, they were gentle as ripples.

Mo Ran's eyes turned moist red, and in a split-second, he was choked with sobs.

"Shizun…"

Chu Wanning heard his voice and looked up. Because he was busy, he was biting on a small file. Seeing Mo Ran, he was slightly surprised. He took the file and stood up, nodding at him, "Why are you here?"

Ch. 219 [Mount Jiao] Don’t Go Away

Mo Ran did not answer, or perhaps he could not. He walked forward and hugged Chu Wanning.

“… What’s the matter with you?”

In his arms was a slightly cold shirt and a warm body.

“Why are you crying?”

He didn’t know. Dreams, reality?

He was no longer clear about the details, but in the Red Lotus Pavilion, there wasn’t a body of Chu Wanning lying cold. his Shizun was still alive and worried about whether his mechanical armor joints were agile or not. He was considering whether he should use some oil or varnish.

It seemed enough.

For a moment he was absorbed in this, and did not want to wake up again.

He and Chu Wanning finished the mech pilot together. It was already late in the night, so he pulled Chu Wanning back into the room. Just like his previous life, they intertwined with each other with their heads rubbing together.

Chu Wanning in his dream was not so docile, he always had this kind of ruthlessness, the kind of thing he couldn’t let go.

Even when the happiness between the two had reached its peak, he would often bite his lips refusing to vent out. His phoenix-like eyes formed tears, but he remained silent. He only gasped for air, unable to restrain it.

The candle flame did not extinguish, the light from the lamp was shining on the person's face, Mo Ran was staring at his infatuated appearance, he was staring at Chu Wanning's facial features, his black eyes, and the shadow of the candle in his eyes.

The candle flickered like a flower petal falling in a deep pond.

While Mo Ran looked, the petal was floating in the water. The ripples spread out, and in the end, some moist water fell from Chu Wanning's eyes and was kissed by Mo Ran.

He knew very well what kind of person Chu Wanning was. If he did not use any love potions, it would be difficult to get him to orgasm. His self-control was truly remarkable.

But so what?

He couldn't control his tears, and his gasps and his rapid breathing. It was good to see him get fucked until he started crying, his face flushing and his eyes losing focus. His firm chest heaving up and down as he gasped for breath again and again.

The night was charming and gentle. It was only at the Yin hour that they embraced and went to sleep.

Mo Ran tightly embraced the person in his arms. Both of them were sweating, his hot and wet body was sticking to his hot and wet body, and even his hair was glued to the side of his face.

He kissed his earlobe softly and hugged him tighter with his neck.

"That's good, Shizun. Now that you're by my side, that's good."

He fell asleep.

He opened his eyes and was surprised to find that Chu Wanning was no longer beside his bed.

“Shizun?!”

He sat up.

Then, he saw Chu Wanning standing by the half-open window. It was already dawn, and light rain was drizzling through the window.

Mo Ran breathed a sigh of relief and stretched out his hand. “Shizun, come here…”

However, Chu Wanning did not move. He was dressed neatly, wearing a snow-white robe as he quietly looked at the man on the bed. Mo Ran stared at him and suddenly felt a strong sense of unease.

Chu Wanning said to him, “Mo Ran, it’s time for me to go.”

“Leave?” He was still in a daze, the bed was still warm, there was hair cut off on the pillow, and a hint of obscenity in the air. But Chu Wanning, who was standing in front of him, seemed to be separated by a lake and a sea. “This is the Red Lotus Pavilion, your home. We are already at home, where else can you go?”

Chu Wanning shook his head. He turned his head to the side and looked out the window at the pale face slowly appearing. He said, “There’s no more time, the sky is about to brighten.”

“Wanning!”

It was just a blink of an eye.

The room was empty, leaving nothing behind.

He jumped out of bed in a panic, and, without putting on his shoes and socks, stumbled out the door.

The night before, the branches of the haitang blossoms that had shone brightly had already been cut in half. The broken flowers covered the steps and chairs, and on the stone table, there was a finished Holy Night Guardian. The metal gloves and file were tossed aside, as if Chu Wanning had just left, as if Chu Wanning would return at any moment.

“Wanning? Wanning!”

He frantically ran around the Red Lotus Pavilion to search, but he kept bypassing the lotus pond. Subconsciously, he didn’t dare go to the lotus pond, and he didn’t dare to go…

However, in the end, he still walked over in a daze.

Barefooted, he stepped onto the ice-cold limestone road.

He stopped a good distance from the lily pool, moving up from his pale toes, until he could see a face that was not human.

He blankly opened his eyes wide. He saw the man lying in the lotus pond in the distance, and it was the same man he would see almost every day in the last two years before his death in his previous life.

Lying in the depths of the lotus, his body uncorrupted and his clothes clean, what difference was there between him and when he was alive?

…… What's the difference!

He walked over step by step.

Closer.

Closer.

As long as he continued forward, he would arrive at the edge of the pool. He would be able to clearly see every eyelash, his sword-like eyebrows that were slightly furrowed after death, and his phoenix eyes that were no longer open.

However, he hesitantly knelt down.

Kneeling on the stone floor, he curled up into a ball and trembled for a long time. Suddenly, he thought of the immortal medicine Elder Liu had given him, the one that could revive the dead, and he became ecstatic, his fingers trembling fiercely as he rummaged through the Qiankun bag and took out the items inside one by one.

"Immortal medicine… Immortal medicine… I want the immortal medicine that can bring the dead back to life… Where's the immortal medicine! Where's the Immortal medicine?!"

After digging through everything, he flipped the entire Qiankun bag upside down. He was not willing to let go of even the gaps between needle and thread.

But no.

The elixir was gone, the elixir was not inside.

Or perhaps it was just a dream that he had rammed into Elder Liu and obtained some immortal medicine?

No, it was all a dream, a dream after a dream…

He collapsed, his mind was in chaos, he desperately raised his hand to rub his cheeks and eyelids, he muttered, “No, yes. I put it in there. Immortal medicine… Those with immortal medicines… Some… Yes.”

He searched frantically again, kneeling in front of Chu Wanning’s corpse. His eyes were filled with a terrifying radiance, but his voice was getting more and more choked up, more and more desperate. Finally, he started to cry.

“I put it here, I put it in here!”

He brushed away the debris in front of him with his palm. Countless jingling porcelain bottles tumbled, even shattered, and he crawled forward on his knees amid the debris, the debris digging into his flesh and knees. Ignoring it, he crawled towards the man lying in the lotus pond.

He finally lifted him out of the pool and held the cold body tightly in his arms.

— That was something he had always wanted to do in his previous life, but had never done.

The rain continued to fall and the sky brightened up, but it had nothing to do with them. He held his body and cried. He pressed his cheek against him, kissing the bridge of his nose, his eyes, and his lips.

“Shizun… Please… I beg you…”

At that moment, his figure and the orphan who had once been on the cemetery, crying and breaking down while holding his mother's rotting body, begging him to bury him with his mother, just like that.

That year, he was only five years old. A five-year-old swears never to see a loved one again, his flesh rotted and turned to mush in front of him.

In the blink of an eye, so many years had passed. At the age of thirty-two, Taxian-Jun Through the Heavens held his Shizun's corpse in his arms. Sometimes he would laugh maniacally, and at other times he would cry bitterly.

It was a body that looked exactly the same as it had in his previous life. Now that he had succeeded, he could make the dead look like strangers. The skin of the corpse even seemed to be faintly colored, as if he was sleeping.

This time, he did not beg anyone to bury him along with Chu Wanning.

The day after Chu Wanning died, he drank a whole jar of pear blossom white, and every day after that, he would fall asleep in a tomb of a living corpse called the Red Lotus Pavilion. From that day on, he had buried himself.

"Shizun, please pay attention to me…"

"Mo Ran!"

"You… pay attention to me…"

He could vaguely hear someone calling to him, a familiar voice. It was dark again, and he clung to a piece of driftwood like a drowning man, and

someone offered him a hand, and he choked and clutched at the man, and said, “Don’t go, I won’t do anything bad, I won’t make you angry again.”

He caught the man’s fingers and locked his fingers together.

He could smell the faint fragrance of flowers, the fragrance of haitang.

“I have an elixir of life, but I… I don’t know why, but I can’t find it… I can’t find it, but can you please stay, please…” Ignoring everything else, he followed the warmth of the body and embraced it. “Please, I’d rather…”

“I would rather die.”

“Mo Ran! Wake up!”

However, he couldn’t wake up. The pain was even worse than the sea, and he was about to drown to death. He couldn’t wake up.

His throat was choked with sobs. He tightly embraced the person who had called out to him, and his eyelashes actually became moist. “The person who I would rather die is me, Shizun…”

“You dog! What are you trying to do! Hey!”

Suddenly, a person rushed over and grabbed him. Then, all around him was a mass of chaos. Someone poured a pool of ice-cold water between his teeth.

Mo Ran suddenly felt a chill all over his body. The water was as cold as a thousand-year ice, almost freezing his internal organs.

He suddenly opened his eyes!

“…”

The first thing that caught his eye was Jiang Xi's gloomy face. He was even holding a green jade bottle in his hand. Apparently, it was the bottle that had been given to him just now.

"I…"

As soon as he opened his mouth, he found that his throat was hoarse, and he was unable to say more.

After that, he looked around and discovered that he had returned to the Ancestral Shrine's Heavenly Palace. He was drenched in cold sweat, and the surrounding people were all looking at him with strange expressions.

He was lying on Chu Wanning's lap with his hands around his waist. The solemn and respectful clothes he was wearing were all messed up by him in his dream. The hem of his robe had slipped to his shoulders.

Mo Ran: "…"

He didn't. He didn't say anything he shouldn't have?

Chu Wanning's face was also ugly, but he was still calm. He asked, "Why is it that you run so fast by yourself?"

"Shizun, I… Just now, I…"

"You got a nightmare." Jiang Xi put away the jade bottle and stood up again, saying, "Rest for a while, I'm feeding you the Dream Breaking Cold Water. You'll feel very cold. Just wait for about a cup of tea."

Mo Ran still hadn't recovered from the terrifying layers of dreams, but his eyes were still somewhat confused. After a long time, he muttered, "The

Nightmare stopped?… But I've been careful not to. I didn't notice any traces of arcane skills at all…"

Jiang Xi showed his sharp fangs and claws, "Art? What is that stupid thing?"

Everyone present: "…"

"The world is the most ruthless, the most brutal, and the most intangible. Do you think it's a magical technique?" The medical sect Leader squinted his eyes as he waved his sleeves in disdain, "You are ridiculously wrong. The most amazing thing in the world is medicine."

"In this palace, there is a type of incense called 'Nineteen Hells'. This kind of spice is colorless and tasteless, but it can make people hallucinate and experience the biggest fear in their life." At this point, Jiang Xi paused for a moment before sizing up Mo Ran, "The greater the fear, the deeper one goes. I have also saved a few people who were trapped by the Nineteen Hells Nightmare and gave them four to five drops of Dream Breaking Cold Water before waking them up — but do you know how much you drank?"

"… How much?"

Jiang Xi seemed displeased and said, "Half a bottle. Enough to save a hundred people, to bring your consciousness back. I'm curious now. Mo-zongshi, why are you so afraid at such a young age? What exactly are you afraid of?"

Ch. 220 [Mount Jiao] Walking Side By Side

Mo Ran fell silent.

If it were not for this big dream, he would not know that deep inside his heart, he was hiding such a terrifying fear. He was terrified of Chu Wanning's death.

He lowered his head, unsure if it was due to the dream-breaking cold water or some other reason.

He felt cold, shivering.

Chu Wanning stood up from the ground. There were too many eyes here. He couldn't have a closer act with Mo Ran, not to mention the fact that Mo Ran was hugging him tightly in his nightmare.

Call his name. If he had not tried his best to suppress it, he would have been crushed to the ground by Mo Ran in front of the crowd. Even though none of this had happened, Mo Ran was still extremely emotional.

He did not know how many people around him had detected the difference.

Chu Wanning slowly stood up. He had been sitting there for too long and his legs were tingling.

Xue Meng subconsciously lifted his hand, but for some reason, in the end, he did not step forward to support it. On the other hand, Shi Mei reached out his hand and said, "Shizun, please slow down."

Lowering his eyelashes, Chu Wanning did not say much and did not explain anything. He only removed the robes that were already in disarray, the white robes fluttering as they landed on Mo Ran's shoulders.

"Wear it. Give it back to me after the cold energy from the medicine has disappeared."

Mo Ran didn't dare to look at him and replied in a low voice, "Yes, Shizun."

The others were all carefully inspecting the scene in the hall, or checking to see if there were any hidden traps. Then, all of them dispersed. Xue Zhengyong asked a few questions. Seeing that his nephew was unharmed, he patted him on the shoulder and walked over to where the other heads were.

However, Xue Meng did not leave. After everyone had left, he suddenly bent down and looked around. Then, he suppressed his voice and howled angrily in a low voice, "Just what did you dream just now?"

Mo Ran: "…"

Xue Meng gritted his teeth. "I'm asking you a question."

"It's all just a dream."

"Those are all the thoughts in your mind!" The light in Xue Meng's eyes was somewhat chaotic. He was extremely anxious, "What are you thinking? Are you. Are you…"

"I dreamed I killed someone." Due to the bone-piercing cold, Mo Ran was trembling slightly, and his lips were white. "Dream on to the day I kill Shizun."

“You-!”

“There’s nothing else…”

Xue Meng’s lips quivered, as if he wanted to ask something else. However, hearing what Mo Ran said just now, it didn’t seem like he was lying. However, he said that he dreamt of killing his Shizun…

He didn’t know why Mo Ran felt such fear even though he had respected his Shizun. However, he held on tightly to Chu Wanning with that expression on his face. Was it possible for him to be a disciple? Was there something more? More. Xue Meng did not dare to continue thinking about it.

One more step and it would be a bottomless abyss.

The medicinal strength gradually dissipated, and Mo Ran slowly stood up from the ground. Xue Meng hesitated for a moment, but still supported him.

Mo Ran said, “Thank you.”

He then looked at the cultivators walking in front of him and asked, “Is there anyone else who has been captivated by the incense?”

“No more, you’re the only one. You ran too fast.” Xue Meng was still preoccupied with his own matters, but at least his mood was not as intense as it was at the beginning. “The moment we entered the hall, Jiang Xi sensed that eighteen ghosts’ incense was lit up here.”

“… Not eighteen ghosts, but nineteen.”

“It’s this thing anyway. Name doesn’t matter. He dispersed, so if we enter again, we’ll be fine.” He paused for a moment and suddenly thought of something, then said, “However, this is just a coincidence. If there was any more trouble just now, it would be troublesome.”

“What do you mean?”

“You walked so fast that you didn’t see it. While we were on our way to the Heavenly Palace, several poisonous snakes suddenly sprang out of the rattan basket carried by Nangong Liu. The venom was extremely toxic. Jiang Xi had wanted us to go first, so he decided to stay behind and extract the poison for them. He would only follow us after he was done with the venom… If that’s really the case, then all of those who arrived at the Heavenly Palace would be hit by it.” Xue Meng said, “He only has that bottle of Dream Break Cold Water, he really can’t wake up so many people.”

Feeling that something was wrong, Mo Ran asked, “Then why didn’t he stay and help everyone extract the poison?”

“He had a young disciple who said that he knew how to solve the problem. Therefore, Jiang Xi left his disciple there, and came up with us first.”

Mo Ran’s frown deepened.

Looking at the back of Guyue’ye’s group, he looked around the crowd, but didn’t find the one he was looking for.

If Jiang Xi’s disciple didn’t know how to cure the snake’s poison, then there would only be two people who would remain where they were. One was Jiang Xi, and the other was Hua Binan.

“Where’s Hua Binan?”

Xue Meng was stunned for a moment. “You suspect the Cold Scale Sacred Hand?”

“Just a question.”

“There is nothing to be suspicious about. Hua Binan has been bitten himself and is currently meditating below. However, he already has a lot of poison in his body, so he can just rest for a while.

The expression on Mo Ran’s face became even more gloomy.

The Cold Scale Sacred Hand was injured and unable to move. In that case, the only person capable of healing was Jiang Xi. It was fortunate that Jiang Xi still had a disciple who could cure the snake poison. If not for this person, Jiang Xi would still be below, trying to extract the poison from the injured cultivator.

When he ascended again, what would the scene in the ancestral hall be like? A bottle of Dream Break Cold Water, could it still save the situation?

“Xue Meng.”

“Hmm?”

“Watch out for Hua Binan”

As these words fell, he suddenly felt the ground shake, and then a dragon’s roar pierced the sky from far away, coming from outside the hall.

Some people were already frightened like a bird that had been frightened by its bow as they said, “What’s going on? What was that sound just now?”

One of the more daring cultivators said, “I’ll go take a look.”

He quickly arrived at the entrance of the hall and looked down. He also looked up at the sky before saying, “It’s fine. It should only be the occasional sound coming from this mountain. It’s the transformation of the Flood Dragon’s Evil Spirit after all.”

He started to walk back.

But at that moment, something grabbed his ankle. The cultivator looked down and saw a pale hand. For a moment, he did not react. He just stood there in a daze in the distance.

Xue Zhengyong’s eyes were sharp, but he shouted from afar, “Be careful!”

However, it was too late. A corpse flew up into the air, wrapped in a silk ribbon and tied up by a crane from the Rufeng Sect. With a single sword strike, it firmly pierced through that cultivator’s chest.

“I…” The cultivator blankly stared with wide eyes. He raised his hand and subconsciously touched the sword before spitting out a mouthful of blood and plopped to the ground, no longer moving.

The ground began to rumble and shake again. Everyone looked towards the door of the hall at the same time, only to see thick dragon tendons rising from the ground, piercing through the clouds, each dragon tendon carrying the body of a first generation disciple of the Rufeng Sect. From afar, it looked like a dense swarm of bees was gathering in the air, ready to rush into the hall and mash everyone into meat paste at any time.

Palace Master Ma covered his eyes in shock, “Oh my God, oh my God, I’m going to die! I’m going to die!”

Xue Zhengyong spat blood from being angered by Shang Jia, he slapped the back of Shang Jia's head to shut him up, then shouted to everyone: "Quickly close the doors! All of you, go fucking block the palace doors! Don't let them rush in!"

As he said this, he took the lead and faced the zombie that was swaying along with the dripping blood sword. He waved his fan and kicked it out of the hall.

However, for some reason, the door was easily pushed up from the outside, but it was as heavy as a rock from the inside. Xue Zhengyong's veins were bulging, but his strength was like a mud bull entering the ocean. Seeing the zombies getting closer and closer to the dragon tendon, Xue Zhengyong cursed, "What's going on? Didn't Nangong Changying just seal them? This shitty flood dragon was disobedient! Going against your own master!"

Mo Ran and Xue Meng also immediately rushed to Xue Zhengyong's side to help. "My great-grandfather sent four thousand porters to deliver these two spirit stones, so it's impossible for you to touch them."

Huang Xiaoyue was so angry that he was about to burst into flames. He cursed, "Your great-grandfather sure is capable!"

However, Nangong Si completely ignored him. He said to the group of people who were trying their best to fend off the zombies from the gate, "From the inside, we have to go to the end of the hall to pull the trigger. You guys can stop for a while, I'll go open the engine."

Xue Zhengyong waved his fan in the air, sending three or four zombies flying forward. Black blood immediately splashed all over the fan, falling on

the words “Xue Lang is very beautiful.” However, these zombies were brave men, they rolled down the stairs, got up immediately and continued to rush forward.

Xue Zhengyong turned his head and said: “Hurry! More and more! Fuck me… What exactly is going on?”

He knew that the temple door was the last line of defense, so he decided to rush out and fight with the zombies on the long stairs. But the steps were long and narrow. He could not use his full strength, so he had to be even more careful not to step into the air and descend from the nine heavens. Because of this, fighting was extremely strenuous.

He lashed out at a row of corpses that were about to climb up, but more monsters were being lifted up from the ground by the stench of dragon tendons. In the end, he was almost trapped in the sea of corpses, unable to escape.

However, Mo Ran did not intend to immediately escape. These zombies were aware of the human nature of the situation and felt that he was the closest target. Almost all of the dead bodies were heading in his direction.

Palace Master Ma, who was shivering with fear, hid behind Jiang Xi, sighing with emotion, “Aiya, Mo-zongshi is full of righteousness and strength. How bold, how bold.”

Jiang Xi was infuriated. He turned his head and asked, “Can you use it for something other than business?”

“What I know is something that needs time to study. For example, formations, techniques, weapon assembly, etc. I’m really not good at dealing with short ranged weapons…” Palace Master Ma looked at Jiang Xi

with cold eyes, choked for a while, and then tried, “How about… I’ll give you guys a toast?”

Jiang Xi: “…”

Each of the sects had their own strengths and weaknesses, and only a few people would be able to survive a bloody battle like this. The rest of them would all be sending themselves to their deaths, and even Jiang Xi would not be able to get close to them, since the powder was useless against corpses.

Xue Meng stood at the entrance of the hall with the Longcheng in his hand. His eyes were fixed on the black figure floating in the center of the crane. He saw a bloody vine rise up from the ground. Xue Meng could not hold it in any longer. He swung his sword and cut off the arm of the corpse. Then, he leaned against the back of Mo Ran and chopped off the twisting dragon tendon with his sword.

Instantly, blood splattered everywhere!

Xue Zhengyong cried out involuntarily, “Meng’er! Come back quickly!”

“I’m fine! I’ll go with him!”

It was naturally self-evident who he was referring to.

Mo Ran turned his face to the side and said to Xue Meng, “Quickly go back. I will take care of this place. If you make a second line of defense, I won’t be able to hold you —”

“Shut up!” Longcheng in Xue Meng’s hands buzzed as he said snappily, “Were you first in Spiritual Mountain, or was I first in Spiritual Mountain?

Are you the Young Master of the ‘Sisheng Peak’, or am I the Young Master of the ‘Sisheng Peak’? Are you strong, or am I strong?”

“…”

Mo Ran’s chest began to heat up, and he no longer spoke. He wholeheartedly focused on fighting alongside Xue Meng, back against back, welcoming the zombies that were rising in all directions.

Just then, he heard a loud noise from both sides of the stone door as it started to slowly move towards the middle. Xue Zhengyong was overjoyed and said hurriedly, “Good, good, good. The door is about to close. The two of you, come back! Come this way!”

Mo Ran and Xue Meng combined their powers to form a shadow around the bloody red light of Longcheng. With a clang, countless corpses fell from the sky, their dragon tendons bleeding profusely.

They slowly moved closer to the door, and it began to close.

Xue Meng said, “You go in first.”

Mo Ran said, “Let’s go in together.”

“…”

“Let’s go! What are you still standing there for!”

Xue Zhengyong said anxiously: “Quickly! Come back quickly!”

Mo Ran grabbed Xue Meng’s clothes and Xue Meng said angrily, “Let go of him! Don’t try to mess with me, you —”

“Who wants to play hero with you? Gone!” As he spoke, he dragged Xue Meng with one hand and stepped on the stone steps with the other. Then, he ruthlessly threw down the hell, repelling a group of zombies that were about to charge at him.

The door was only half closed, but he wasn’t in a hurry at all. Mo Ran threw Xue Meng to Xue Zhengyong, leaned against the door of the hall, and held onto the exploding cane whip as they stood against the wind. His expression was gloomy as he slowly retreated.

Suddenly, the two closing boulders stopped.

Xue Meng said in surprise, “Why aren’t you moving?”

He turned around and saw that Nangong Si’s face was ashen white. Coming out from behind the Heavenly Palace’s pillar that had ten adult men holding onto it, he said extremely gloomily:

“The central axis of the machine has been destroyed. Halfway through it, the chain breaks and cannot be reattached.”

After Nangong Si finished speaking, he raised his hand. In the palm of his hand that was riddled with wounds, there was a half bronze lock in the middle of his hand that was shaking slightly.

Ch. 221 [Mount Jiao] Handing Over

Xue Meng almost choked on his blood, but Mo Ran didn't have the time to act cocky. When he heard these words, he turned around and returned to the group of corpses, blocking the first line of defense.

Chu Wanning had been helping Nangong Si adjust the situation. When he saw that Mo Ran was in the middle of a bitter battle, he immediately flew to the door and shouted, "Mo Ran, come back!"

"Shizun…"

Chu Wanning hacked down a golden enchantment. The light from the enchantment lit up the crowd of corpses and pushed them back several meters. Then, he threw down three enchantments on the ground, on the ground in front of the palace, and on the rock door.

"Stop right there."

Mo Ran said anxiously, "Shizun's barrier won't be able to hold out for long inside Mount Jiao! Shizun, what is there to do?!"

Chu Wanning's eyes were like blue frost and purple lightning. He gritted his teeth and pushed Mo Ran back into the hall. "Shi Mingjing!"

"Shizun, I'm here."

Chu Wanning pointed at Mo Ran and said, "Help him heal."

Shi Mei nodded: "Yes, Shizun."

"Shizun, your barrier will only last for the time it takes for an incense stick to burn here. It will consume a lot of your spiritual power, you…"

Chu Wanning stood in the sunlight without even turning his head, “Then, I’ll hold on for the time it takes for an incense stick to burn.”

Mo Ran wanted to continue speaking, but he was pulled back by the healer. Shi Mei’s slightly cold hands touched his skin and rolled up his sleeves as he started to cast magic to heal his wounds. Mo Ran looked at him and shook his head.

Chu Wanning called, “Xue Meng.”

“Yes, Shizun.”

“I can’t hold on any longer, so you go. Don’t force yourself. If you feel that your strength isn’t enough, then switch to a Sect Leader.”

Xue Zhengyong quickly said, “Alright, it’s better to come on your own.”

Chu Wanning continued to channel his spiritual energy into the third layer of the barrier, and said, “There is something else that I have to trouble the Sect Leader with.”

“Go ahead.”

Chu Wanning gritted his teeth, “Ask that group of trash hiding in the back. Apart from those who aren’t good at fighting, let them fight anyone they can against, including those from the Taxue Palace and Guyue’ye!”

“… What if they don’t come?”

Chu Wanning said, “Then we’ll just have to break the door and sit on the ground and wait for death. “See if they can make it.”

Xue Zhengyong walked over eagerly. Nangong was staring at the broken lock in his hand with a gloomy expression. He didn't know what to do. He also didn't know why the prohibition under the First Sect Leader was suddenly broken.

Logically speaking, as long as it was Nangong Changying who gave the order, no one would be able to change the Evil Dragon's Spirit anymore. Why would it suddenly become like this…

Xue Zhengyong asked those who could handle the situation to go to the front to deal with it. Ye Wangxi said, "I'll do it."

Nangong Si immediately snapped out of his daze and pulled her back. "You're a girl, how can you —"

Ye Wangxi stared at the submissive group of disciples and said coldly, "Even if there are only two people in the Rufeng Sect, we are not cowards."

The middle-aged cultivators who had mocked her before were now silent. Their gazes were diverted away from Ye Wangxi's face.

Just like that, Xue Zhengyong gathered some people and was suddenly stunned for a moment: "Hanxue? How did you. No, no, no. You're not good at this sort of thing. You can go back."

Mei Hanxue looked cold and collected today. He said, "Uncle, don't worry. I know what I'm doing. It won't be a child's play."

Xue Zhengyong looked at the Palace Lord of Taxue Palace. Seeing that the Palace Lord had no objection, he had no choice but to let Mei Hanxue join this group.

Jiang Xi said with a frown, “Just like that? Leave a few people suitable for a battle and send them to the rear hall to take a look at the situation.”

Xue Zhengyong said, “We’ll deal with them for a while and see if we can fix the machine. It’s the best idea to go with them. If we can’t fix them, we can only split them into two groups. One to block them and the other to check out the situation in the rear palace.”

Jiang Xi said, “… This was good as well. But who can fix a machine?”

At this time, Ma Yun, who had been scolded by Jiang Xi to the point that he was like a pariah, stuck his head out and weakly said, “T-this mechanical and technical work. I-I think I can still give it a try.”

Jiang Xi was both angry and amused. “Why aren’t you going?”

Ma Yun dragged Nangong Si away and stumbled over. Xue Zhengyong and his welcoming team left.

Jiang Xi turned around and surveyed his surroundings. He was lost in thought as he looked at the palace that had been split into two — Purgatory and Nine Heavens.

His gaze swept across the chessmen who were still in their original spot joking, chatting, or being tortured on the other side of the table. Finally, it landed on Nangong Liu who was squatting beside a basket of oranges with a blank expression.

He felt very strange.

Why was it that neither Nangong Liu nor the other chess pieces in the hall had gone berserk like the corpses on the outside? Why weren’t they trying to kill each other?

If Xu Shuanglin were to control these Zhenlong chess pieces in the hall and attack them as well, they would definitely be unable to make ends meet and would fall into a trap of internal and external difficulties.

Why didn't he do it?

Don't want to do it?

Or… What if he couldn't do it?

Jiang Xi was surprised, but Mo Ran wasn't surprised at all.

He could clearly sense that all the precious treasures in the palace retained the temperament, obsession, and even some memories of the puppets before they died.

Xu Shuanglin did not control these living corpses for a single reason — his spiritual energy had already reached its limit.

"Chu-zongshi, lend a hand!"

Suddenly, a soft call came from the bottom of the stone steps. Chu Wanning looked up and saw Hua Binan leading about a dozen cultivators. They were struggling to break out of the encirclement.

They were bitten by poisonous snakes and were resting on the spot. They never thought that they would encounter the second berserk corpse horde. Over 20 cultivators were instantly killed and half of them were now fighting with their blood. All of them were seriously injured. Chu Wanning immediately raised his hand and cast another layer of barrier around them, protecting them. He then cast Tianwen to repel the zombies that were fighting around them.

“Come here!”

Chu Wanning stretched out his hand towards Hua Binan.

Mo Ran suddenly became alert. He could not care less about using only half of the medicine in his body, so he stood up to stop them. “Be careful, Shizun!”

However, there was nothing unusual about Hua Binan. He held Chu Wanning’s hand with trembling hands and was dragged behind his into an even stronger protective barrier. He turned around and said, “A few people, please help me!”

One by one, the survivors were pulled back into the hall, gasping for breath. Their faces were covered in blood and they looked extremely miserable.

Jiang Xi led a group of Guyue’ye’s disciples forward, bending down in front of Hua Binan, his face showing a rare look of anxiety, “Why are your injuries so severe…”

“I’m still fine, Sect Leader should go check on the others first.” Hua Binan leaned against the pillar. His bamboo hat and veil had been cut, and his robe was stained with blood. Jiang Xi was about to check his pulse, but he raised his hand to stop him, “It’s nothing, it’s just a small wound, but it’s the little disciple of the Sect Leader… Cough cough, he, his injuries are too severe. Sect Leader, hurry up and treat him, there’s no need to worry about me…”

This group of people’s injuries were all very serious. Some of them even had their legs broken. Compared to them, Hua Binan, who could still speak properly was indeed very light.

Jiang Xi cursed in a low voice as he glanced at Hua Binan before turning around to help heal the others.

With trembling hands, Hua Binan fished out a bottle of blood medicine powder from his Qiankun bag. Just as he was about to sprinkle it all over his wounds, a hand suddenly grabbed the porcelain bottle in his hand and said, “I will help you.”

“… No need.”

Mo Ran looked at him with his dark eyes. “It’s just a powder. It’s no big deal.”

Hua Binan took the bottle and said softly: “I’m not used to being touched by others. Moreover, you are not a healing cultivator at all.”

“Then I’ll help you.”

“Shi Mei?” Mo Ran turned his head to the side and saw that Shi Mei had swiftly put down the medical pouch. When Hua Binan saw the medical pouch, he curled his lips and didn’t say anything else. He also didn’t resist.

Shi Mei unwrapped his silver needle cloth, and said in a low voice: “Senior Sacred Hand, please forgive me if I may be in the wrong.”

Hua Binan: “….”

His injuries were severe, and he was immediately forced to cast a magic curse to stop his bleeding. He had to use a spiritual needle to block it. A cold light suddenly flashed, and a sharp light flashed, and in the blink of an eye, more than ten needles fell from his eyes.

“Senior’s veil and bamboo hat…”

A trace of gloom flashed through the eyes of the Cold Scaled Saint, but he knew that there were a few acupuncture points that needed to be pricked on the face, so he said with a ruthless expression, “I will take them myself.”

The blood-drenched veil fell down, revealing the cold, scaly hand that refused to show its face.

It was an extremely weird face, the upper half of which was considered pretty, but from the bridge of the nose, the entire face was twisted and burned, like that of some kind of seastar.[168]

Hua Binan raised his head. There was hatred and ridicule in his eyes: “What? Mo-zongshi, are you still here?”

“… Sorry.”

Hua Binan sneered from behind: “I told you not to stand here long ago, you were the one who didn’t listen. At this time, you are saying that you are sorry, but I don’t know what you are thinking in your heart – you are probably thinking, ‘This Cold Scale Sacred Hand is really ugly, haha.’”

Mo Ran shook his head and left without saying anything else.

Palace Master Ma was still struggling with the broken iron lock. At the entrance of the Heavenly Palace, Chu Wanning’s spiritual power was almost depleted. He turned to Xue Meng and said, “Xue Meng, take over!”

Xue Meng immediately understood what was going on. He raised his saber and welcomed the attack. Their handover was extremely smooth and there was not even a moment for a zombie to squeeze in.

Once Chu Wanning removed the barrier, he could not help but take a step back. Seeing his pale face, Mo Ran felt extremely pained, but he couldn’t

do anything in front of the crowd. He couldn't even hold Chu Wanning's hand, so he could only suppress himself and ask, "Wan N… Shizun, are you alright?"

"It's fine." Chu Wanning coughed lightly, "I just used up some spiritual energy."

However, Mo Ran knew that Chu Wanning's spirit core was fragile to begin with. To others, expending more spirit energy might not be a big deal, but to Chu Wanning…

Mo Ran closed his eyes.

In his previous life, the Shizun and disciple pair went against each other and broke up. Because Chu Wanning had exhausted his spirit energy in that battle, his spirit core was instantly destroyed and he became no different from a mortal. His body was even weaker than a mortal's.

How could there be no harm…

Mo Ran's heart was in pain. His eyes were slightly red. He silently draped the clothes Chu Wanning had given him over his shoulders. Only at this moment could he gently squeeze his shoulder through his shirt.

All his heavy love for him could only be hidden in this moment between his fingers.

He supported his to the side. He specially found a secluded place to hide and sat down with him.

Before anyone realized it, Mo Ran quietly held onto Chu Wanning's hand.

It was very cold.

It was the same feeling he had when he bent over and stepped on his chest before reaching out to pinch his chin.

Mo Ran lowered his eyes, his fingertips trembling.

Chu Wanning wanted to pull his hand away. After all, there were too many eyes here. However, he felt a slight tremble, so his fingers were intertwined with the hand that was about to be pulled away.

“Let me see.” Chu Wanning raised his other hand and asked Mo Ran to lift up his face. His face and nose were both injured, “Does it hurt?”

Mo Ran shook his head as he stared at Chu Wanning’s face. He looked at the man who was still concerned about him even though his lips were already green and white.

He felt pain.

Not a wound.

It was the heart.

He finally learned to lie like Chu Wanning and said, “No, it doesn’t hurt.”

“Why are you trembling if it doesn’t hurt?”

He did not make a sound, and was unable to make a sound, so Chu Wanning misunderstood that he was still trembling because of the pain, and a faint jade light surrounded his fingertips. His pupils suddenly contracted, and he grabbed onto Chu Wanning’s hand, which was about to touch his cheek: “Are you crazy? How can you use your spiritual power?!”

“This is nothing. It’s just a tiny healing spell to stop the pain.”

His fingertips touched his scar.

Analgesic.

However, his heart felt as though it had been cut by a knife.

Mo Ran naturally knew that this was only a small amount of spiritual power, like a drop in the ocean. Chu Wanning gave everyone almost all of his spiritual power, with only a small amount being distributed to him.

In his previous life, he had been angry at Chu Wanning because he had always been too kind to him and also because he had given himself too little to him.

But he would not have known then.

In fact, the little things that Chu Wanning had given him, even though they were very little, were all that he had left.

“Alright! It’s fixed, it’s repaired!”

Suddenly, a cultivator under Palace Master Ma rushed to the door, his cheeks were flushed red, as he shouted, “Prepare to retreat, it’s about to close soon! It’s about to close soon!”

At this time, Mei Hanxue had been used to fight the zombies, and when Xue Meng retreated, he was also injured. However, his injuries were not serious, so he had to wrap himself in gauze and tie his knot while watching Mei Hanxue retreat.

Strangely, he remembered that Mei Hanxue had a water and wood type Spiritual Core, but he didn’t know why he was able to use a fire type technique. He alone, with the broken water lying on the ground, his face

was cold. He attacked with the fire-red barrier of flames, pushing back all the corpses that were trying to get close to him.

“It’s closed! Young Master Mei!”

Mei Hanxue was lying on the ground, and as he retreated step by step to the door, he suddenly realized that something was wrong. He turned his head and said, “Can you open the door a little more? This zither is too broad, I can’t enter it…”

“No need.”

Mei Hanxue coldly and succinctly interrupted Xue Meng’s words. He suddenly put away the harp in the music box, and after losing the suppression of the zither sound and the spiritual fire, a group of zombies rushed up in an instant. Xue Meng knew that he was not good at close combat, so his expression suddenly changed, and he pulled out of the Longcheng to rush out to help.

Before he could go over, he saw a flash of silver light and a silver sword appear in Mei Hanxue’s palm. As the wind blew at his hair, his sword danced in the air before retreating abruptly and throwing the sword out. Before the door closed, Mei Hanxue raised his hand and shouted, “Shuofeng, come back!”

The sword turned into a bright flash of light as it flew through the crack. Mei Hanxue caught it abruptly and brought it back to his side.

The door to the Heavenly Palace slammed shut.

A muffled sound came from the outside, it was the sound of corpses and dragon tendons smashing on the door, but it seemed like it came from very

far away. The Nangong family's building of a palace wasn't easy to break through.

Everyone let out a long sigh of relief. There were a few disciples from the higher cultivation realms who had never seen the greater good. Their legs went weak as they knelt on the ground. "What the hell is going on…"

Mei Hanxue, who was behind him, heaved a sigh of relief. However, the way he heaved a sigh of relief was no different from his usual self. If it weren't for the fact that Xue Meng was watching him from the side, he probably wouldn't have noticed him slightly opening his lips and letting out a sigh of relief.

Suddenly, Mei Hanxue discovered two terrifying gazes from the side. He turned his head, "… What? Why are you looking at me?"

Xue Meng's throat was a little dry. "That sword of yours…"

Mei Hanxue cast a sidelong glance at the flowing silver sword. "Sou Feng."

Xue Meng's face was unsettled for a moment before he opened his mouth and asked: "When did you learn how to use the sword?… No, no, no. It should be you."

"Always."

Xue Meng asked in surprise, "Then why didn't you use it during the Spiritual Mountain Competition?"

"… I don't want to use it."

Xue Meng was clearly very confused and even somewhat angry. "Are you looking down on us? If you take out your godly weapon, then maybe you

would have been the first… Second?”

Mei Hanxue rolled his eyes. His ice-cold eyes seemed to show some ridicule. He looked at Xue Meng for a while, whose face had turned slightly red due to anger. Then he said, “Third place is very good, first…” He pursed his lips, walked over to Xue Meng, and said a few simple words into Xue Meng’s ear.

“First place is too stupid.”

Ch. 222 [Mount Jiao] Frightening Change

Xue Meng stood in a daze for a while before he suddenly felt the strength come over him. He angrily said to Mei Hanxue, “You bastard! Who did you say was stupid?”

Xue Zhengyong pulled him back, “Meng’er!”

“This person called me stupid!”

“Alright, alright. You misheard. Hanxue clearly didn’t say anything.”

“That’s because he whispered in my ear!”

It was noisy over here while Jiang Xi was taking inventory of the injured and checking the situation. After the inspection, Jiang Xi told everyone to stay where they were for a moment to recover from their injuries and to meditate. There was no helping it, he had consumed a lot of his most powerful combat power.

It was as if the bow had not been fully drawn and the arrowhead had been sharpened. If he continued forward like this, if there were any more surprises, he would not be able to handle it.

After giving out the instructions, Jiang Xi walked over to Nangong Si, “Nangong, I have something to ask you.”

“Please speak, Sect Leader Jiang.”

Jiang Xi did not say a word. Instead, he gave Ye Wangxi a look.

“There is no need for her to leave.”

“It’s better if she does.” Jiang Xi lowered his gaze as he spoke, his gaze landing on Nangong Si’s heart. That was the location of Nangong Si’s spirit core.

After Ye Wangxi left, Jiang Xi sat down next to Nangong Si.

“What about your spirit core? You plan to hide it?”

“I still don’t know how to explain it to her.”

“Are you afraid that she will turn her back on you? Actually, you’re overthinking things. Miss Ye is not a —”

“No.” Nangong Si interrupted Jiang Xi’s words, “I am not afraid that he will despise me. I was just afraid she’d be upset.”

“…” Jiang Xi was silent for a moment, as if he had been stabbed by Nangong Si’s pride. He sneered, “You sure are confident.”

“Sect Leader Jiang is wrong. I don’t believe in myself, I just believe in her.”

Jiang Xi heard that his tone was tough and said lightly, “You’re a tiger that has fallen to the bottom of the sun, yet you still talk to me in such a manner. Aren’t you afraid that I’ll cause trouble for you in the future?”

“You won’t.”

Jiang Xi paused. “Do you believe me?”

“Along the way, I also know what kind of person Sect Leader Jiang is. That’s why I thought I said those words to you when my life ended.”

“…” Jiang Xi kept staring at Nangong until he brought up the matter. Only then did he turn his gaze away. “Now that you’re still alive, are those words

still true?”

“Count them all. After I defeat Xu Shuanglin, I will explain everything to everyone.”

Jiang Xi did not continue speaking. After a long while, he finally said, “Nangong Si, it’s a pity that we can’t see the Rufeng Sect shine in your hands. Otherwise, you would be considered as a worthy opponent.”

Nangong Si’s answer was very calm, but there was a faint hint of pride in his tone, “Sect Leader, you are still wrong. I have already learned the best in the Rufeng Sect.”

It was very rare for Jiang Xi to not refute others, and it was also very rare for his not to mock and ridicule others, and it was even rarer for his to admire or approve of others. However, this time, he remained silent for a long time and did not attempt to deny what Nangong had just said. Finally, he said: “Let’s not talk about this anymore. I have something more important to ask you.”

“… I know what the Sect Leader wants to ask. The demon wolf was injured. A piece of its forehead was scratched on the fur, and blood was still seeping out. But, why did Mount Jiao suddenly lose control and go against the Great Sect Leader’s wishes? That is something that I do not know about. I also think that’s impossible.”

Jiang Xi said, “There’s no trace at all? Think about it again. Is there any secret information regarding this mountain in the Rufeng Sect?”

Nangong Si shook his head and replied, “No. From generation to generation, the Nangong Family knows that this Mount Jiao follows the

orders of their family's heir, but the one who is ranked first must be the Changying Ancestor."

"There's absolutely no one else?"

"Absolutely not. The Flood Dragon's soul recognizes its first master as the Grand Sect Leader, and will never change."

Jiang Xi's eyes were unsettled, his expression even more vicious because of the deadlock. "How did Xu Shuanglin do it?"

"I don't understand either." Jiang Xi thought that he had thought of something and turned to look at him, only to discover that he was staring at a person in the distance. Following his gaze, Jiang Xi saw Nangong Liu, who was peeling an orange.

Nangong had been trying not to look at his father, who had been turned into a pawn. However, when his eyes met Nangong, his expression immediately turned extremely painful. Jiang Xi was actually around the same age as Xu Shuanglin and Xue Zhengyong, but because of the difference in mental cultivation methods, he still looked young and handsome. However, this had nothing to do with his state of mind. His state of mind was not as grand as it had been a long time ago. When he looked at Nangong Si, he was unable to bear it any longer and said, "Stop looking."

"…"

"Stop looking."

It seemed as if it took all the strength Nangong had left to tear his gaze away from his father. When he lowered his eyes, his shoulders seemed to

tremble slightly. Finally, he buried his face in his palms, but he could not conceal the sobs in his voice.

He mumbled hoarsely, trying to change the topic. “I also don’t understand how Xu Shuanglin did it. That was the Demon Dragon tamed by the Grand Sect Leader…”

His shoulders shook more and more violently.

Jiang Xi had been stiff all this time, and his face had always been pale, but he had finally extended his hand and patted Nangong’s shoulder. He seemed to want to comfort Nangong Si, but he had never comforted anyone before. In the end, he only said dryly, “It doesn’t matter, everyone has their own lives. Even though you and your father have been in this situation for so long, there has still been a battle between father and son. Think about it.”

After saying that, Nangong Si ignored him. He also felt that it was dry. After all, what he said seemed to be worse than nothing.

Jiang Xi stood up, feeling a little awkward. “I’ll take a look elsewhere. You should rest for a while and continue moving forward later.”

“…”

“Right, what is that place ahead?”

Nangong said in a muffled voice, “Dragon Soul Pool.”

“For what?”

“That is the blood pool where the evil dragon’s spirit is sacrificed. The Primordial Spirit of the dragon sleeps in the pond. Every year, the people of

the Rufeng Sect will worship it."

Jiang Xi frowned when he heard this. Finally, he said, "I hope nothing bad will happen over there."

Everyone rested for less than an hour in the front hall. The wounded and people who had expended too much spiritual energy were gradually recovering with the help of healing cultivators.

Jiang Xi looked left and right at the 'kindness' and 'evil' that Xu Shuanglin had made. These two extremes caused the creases between his eyebrows to tighten even more.

This sort of thing that had no battle prowess, what did Xu Shuanglin use it for? Do you look good?

Listening to Nangong Liu call him 'Your Majesty', it seemed as if Xu Shuanglin regarded him as the emperor, and these precious puppets that were split into black and white, good and evil, as his subjects?

He looked around and finally arrived in front of Nangong Liu. Nangong Liu was sitting on his bamboo basket and slowly peeling an orange.

Jiang Xi paused for a moment, and then suddenly bent down, not willing to give up, and asked him something that he had asked before. "Can you take us to His Majesty's place?"

Nangong Liu replied with the same answer as before, "His Majesty has his own matters to attend to, how can he be seen so easily?"

"…" Jiang Xi said in a displeased manner, "There's no use at all. A trash pus is a useless pustule. No matter if you're alive or have been made into a pawn, you're still a waste pus."

Nangong Liu was scolded and cowardly hugged his orange cane basket. After a while, he started crying, “Why are you so fierce? Since I’m useless, then it’s useless. I’m just a useless piece of trash anyway, so what can you do if you’re angry at me?”

His wailing and howling was so loud that it attracted the attention of the people around him.

By now, Chu Wanning had also finished meditating. He frowned and said, “This Nangong Liu is so strange.”

Mo Ran asked, “Why?”

“I can’t say. I feel that this person is Nangong Liu, but there’s something fishy about it. It doesn’t feel like he’s the Nangong Liu that I know.”

Mo Ran was staring over there. Jiang Xi was staring at Nangong Liu with an ashen face while Nangong Liu was sobbing. From time to time, he would rub his eyes with both of his hands, feeling wronged.

“…” Seeing his actions, Mo Ran felt that something was indeed amiss. It was an indescribable contrast, as if he was a child with the head of a middle-aged man, causing goosebumps to rise all over his body. Suddenly, Mo Ran froze for a moment before he muttered, “Child…”

“What?”

Mo Ran suddenly turned his head and asked, “Shizun, do you think that he looks like a child?” As he said that, he glanced at Nangong Liu for a while. Seeing that Nangong Liu was actually starting to blow his nose, he said, “… And he’s only five or six years old.”

When he said this, Chu Wanning looked again and it was true.

Although Nangong Liu still looked like he was in his forties, his every move revealed his immaturity.

Chu Wanning mumbled, “Could it be that Xu Shuanglin did something to him that caused his spiritual sense to only be kept at the age of five or six?”

Mo Ran said, “Shizun, please wait. I’ll go give it a try.”

“How are you going to try?”

Mo Ran did not reply. Under the watchful eyes of the crowd, he walked over to Nangong Liu and picked up an orange. He offered it to him and probed, “Don’t cry anymore. Eat a tangerine.”

“I won’t eat it. I’ve already eaten it. This is for His Majesty.”

Mo Ran placed the orange back into the basket and asked, “Who is Your Majesty?”

Jiang Xi asked, “What’s the use of it? I have already tried him for that.”

Sure enough, Nangong Liu said, “Your Majesty… His Majesty is his Majesty, who else could he be?”

Mo Ran was not discouraged and instead asked for a second sentence, “Alright, His Majesty is His Majesty. Since you are so loyal and sensible, His Majesty will definitely be very happy if he finds out. Oh right, I’ve been asking you about His Majesty and haven’t asked you about it yet. Little brother, what’s your name?”

Huang Xiaoyue watched impatiently from the side and was about to say something when Jiang Xi stopped him, shaking his head. He also faintly felt that something was wrong.

Nangong Liu who was holding a basket of oranges looked at Mo Ran for a while before timidly saying, “My name is Nangong Liu.”

Mo Ran smiled and rubbed Nangong Liu’s head. He calmly asked, “Let’s get to know each other. My name is Mo Ran, I’m 22 this year. What about you?”

“I, I am five years old…”

…

For a moment, there was complete silence.

Although Nangong Liu’s reply was not loud, the surrounding people were all quietly looking over. Thus, his trembling “I’m 5 years old” was like a clap of thunder as it exploded within the palace hall.

Almost everyone was stunned.

If not for the tense situation, many people would have burst into laughter. They were laughing until tears were flowing down their faces. Five years old? Five years old?

But three years ago, they had to believe that the world’s number one sect, the Sect Leader, was actually cowering beside a basket of oranges, mumbling, “I’m five years old.” These people would probably rather believe that the sow would climb the tree.

However, at this moment, Nangong Liu had clearly said those words. The group of people were stunned by what they heard. They stood there stiffly. They looked at each other, but did not know what was going on.

Jiang Xi took a step forward and asked with a stern voice, “What do you do in this palace every day?”

Nangong Liu hurriedly retreated behind Mo Ran. He tugged on Mo Ran’s sleeve and said, “Big Brother, I don’t want to talk to him. This uncle is so fierce…”

Jiang Xi: “…”

Nangong Liu was older than him, so he never would have thought that one day Nangong Liu would call him uncle.

If he was really a five-year-old child, then he would have been alright. However, the person holding him back at this moment was a man with wrinkles at the end of his eyes. The corner of Mo Ran’s mouth twitched as he coughed and comforted, “Alright, alright. You don’t need to care about him. Let me ask you, what are you doing in this palace everyday?”

Jiang Xi widened his eyes — he was already impressed by Mo Ran. It’s not bad, this kid can even tolerate this?

“Every day, I pick some oranges and wash them clean. After that, I’ll carry them on His Majesty’s back and wait for him to come out to eat.” Nangong Liu said, “Your Majesty likes eating oranges the most. He can eat an entire basket of oranges every day. At the foot of the mountain, there used to be a type of tree that only bloomed but did not bear fruit. Since His Majesty said it was boring, the trees were all replaced with orange trees.”

He chattered on for a while, but his eyes suddenly dimmed. “It’s a pity that His Majesty’s health hasn’t been very good these days. Even after picking a basket, he can only eat half of it…”

Jiang Xi grasped the crux of the matter. “Has His Majesty been ill recently?”

Nangong Liu was very vengeful. He curled his lips and puffed up his cheeks as he said, “You’re annoying. I’m not talking to you.”

Jiang Xi held himself back for a moment. Unable to hold himself back, he quickly turned his head around and used a handkerchief to cover his nose and mouth.

Huang Xiaoyue asked with concern, “What happened to Sect Leader Jiang?”

“Don’t talk to me.” Jiang Xi frowned in disgust and refused to look at the giant child, Nangong Liu, who was squatting there with a pout. “I feel a little fucking sick.”

Mo Ran asked, “How is His Majesty’s health unwell?”

“That’s right… It’s just that he’s always coughing up blood. He’s also very thin, yet he refuses to eat even though he’s so skinny. There are many places on his body that are rotten…” As Nangong Liu spoke, his tears dripped like a broken pillar. He began to mourn and cry, “I’m so worried about him. If he isn’t here anymore, what should I do? After that, no one will play with me anymore. Talk to me and feed me oranges.”

“… And he fed you oranges?”

However, from what he had seen back at the Rufeng Sect, Nangong Liu and Xu Shuanglin’s relationship was like a bloody feud. It was already a miracle that Xu Shuanglin did not continue to feed his brother the fruit.

He couldn’t even imagine it.

Jiang Xi muttered to himself, “Many parts of his body are rotten…”

Xue Zhengyong said, “It sounds like the backlash from a Zhenlong chess game.”

Mo Ran was very clear on this point. The three great forbidden arts including Zhenlong chess. If the caster’s spiritual energy was insufficient and the chess piece was forcefully manipulated too many times, the body would slowly begin to fester.

In his previous life, when he first started cultivating, he had also gotten tired of it. From his toes onwards, Mo Ran must have been discovered by Chu Wanning, so he did not dare to act rashly. Only after he invented the “Heart of Unity Formation” did he continue cultivating. Later on, when he became the Emperor of the Immortals, he had abundant spiritual energy and could control thousands of troops without the use of a Heart Array. However, he was unable to recover that dead left toe.

Mo Ran could not help but feel curious.

The zombies outside were obviously controlled by the Heart of Tranquil Water. Only the free movement of the corpses in the hall was completely controlled by Xu Shuanglin’s spiritual energy.

Since Xu Shuanglin could not support so many chess pieces, why did he need to do things that were not worth it?

It was useless to be stuck here. Jiang Xi replied, “Let’s move forward.”

After activating it, the back door of the front hall that was embedded with a Seven Star Arrays immediately let out a muffled rumbling sound. The

stone door shrank into the wall, and the middle hall of the Deities Templar slowly revealed its appearance in front of everyone.

It was an hexagonal, enclosed room. The walls were cold and damp, and at the top of the sky, there was a carved, solid sculpture of a soaring dragon. Its muscles were sharp, and its eyes were staring angrily.

In the center of the hall, there was a pool of blood-red foam, steaming hot.

Nangong Si said, “This is the Dragon Soul Pool. The demon dragon’s primordial spirit is sealed in this pool of blood.”

Someone wanted to get closer to take a closer look, but Nangong Si said, “Don’t look too much, this pond is filled with evil Qi. If you keep staring at it for too long, you will lose your mind. Let’s go.”

Under Nangong’s lead, the group passed by the blood pool one by one. They entered the corridor behind the central hall. Although it was dark and there were no references, Mo Ran could still feel that they were going uphill.

After walking for about an incense stick of time, Nangong Liu stopped. In front of him was a door that was narrower than the previous ones, but filled with jewelry and decorations.

“Once this door is opened, we’ll be at the exit of the passageway after a short walk. After we leave this place, we will reach the last part of the Heavenly Palace. It is called the Soul Summoning Platform. Xu Shuanglin should be on it.”

Huang Xiaoyue suddenly asked, “How many places are there in the Heavenly Palace? The front hall, the Dragon Blood Pool, and even the Soul

Summoning Terrace?”

“That’s right.”

“Is there no secret chamber?” He was momentarily anxious, and almost became a hidden treasure chamber. Thankfully, he managed to react in time. “I’m saying that Xu Shuanglin might also be in the secret chamber.”

Nangong Si gave him a meaningful glance. That gaze of his made Huang Xiaoyue feel somewhat uneasy. Finally, Nangong Si said, “Let’s go to the Soul Recruitment Platform first.”

When he opened the last door, he also needed the Nangong Family’s blood. Nangong Si smeared his blood on the Dragon Mark’s eye. The mechanism on the door began to move and spin. Then, he heard a faint sigh.

Huang Xiaoyue was frightened, “Who is talking?!”

And then he pointed at Nangong Si and said, “You little rascal, are you trying to trick me? You want me to accept your offer?”

Nangong Si said indifferently, “If Taoist Huang doesn’t trust me, then it is still too late to leave. Let’s sit in the great hall and wait.”

Of course, Huang Xiaoyue didn’t want to, but before he went in, he was careful — all this way, he discovered that all the important doorsteps required the Nangong Family’s blood to open. The legendary hidden treasure chamber must have the same result. Thus, before Huang Xiaoyue entered, he intentionally wiped his hands on the Dragon Eye and secretly dropped some of Nangong’s blood…

Suddenly, an empty voice sounded from the pitch-black passageway…

“Who are those people?”

Huang Xiaoyue was guilty of being a bandit and was so shocked that he almost jumped up in fright. The others also looked around. Nangong Si said, “That’s right. The seventh generation member of the Rufeng Clan, Nangong Si.”

“Lost and separated… Welcome… Master…”

After the voice said this, it disappeared.

“That is the name of that Demon Dragon.” Nangong Si said to Jiang Xi, “Sect Leader Jiang, please.”

Jiang Xi looked at the tunnel in front of him. About a hundred feet away, there was a white light emitting from it. Presumably, it was the Soul Summoning Platform. Jiang Xi took a few steps forward.

“I am perplexed, respectfully welcoming… Master… … People…”

“What’s wrong with this dragon?” Jiang Xi frowned. “It said the same sentence twice?”

However, Nangong Si’s expression had already changed. He immediately turned his head to look in the direction of the Soul Summoning Terrace, where light suddenly flickered. Before he could see clearly, he heard hissing sounds, followed by a flood of light.

Nangong Si’s pupils suddenly contracted as he shouted sternly, “Run!”

Ch. 223 [Mount Jiao] Getaway

How could it be Hong Bo that was madly rushing towards them? It was obviously a venomous snake that was gathering into a stream!

The narrow passage was a mess. If you push, you'll be pushed to death, and if you step in, you'll be stomped to death. Jiang Xi pushed him forward, "You go first, I'll deal with this."

As he spoke, his sleeve had already released a sparkling powder. When the snakes smelled the powder, they froze in place, not daring to move forward.

Jiang Xi shouted angrily towards the front, "Calm down, quickly retreat to the middle hall! Don't push!"

He stopped the snake tide, then quickly caught up with the group. When he retreated to the stone door, he found that Nangong was there looking at the Soaring Dragon relief, he asked Nangong, "What exactly happened?"

"The demon dragon must have been controlled. I want to go back and check on the Dragon Soul Pool."

As he was about to leave, Jiang Xi grabbed him, "What about the rest of the snakes behind us? I didn't bring much of the powder with me, so it will definitely come back when the effects of the medicine are over."

Ye Wangxi, who was standing beside him, said, "Let me do it."

She had been taught in the dark city of the Rufeng Sect since childhood, so she was more adept than anyone else at fighting on his own in the dark

and narrow areas. Although Nangong didn't want her to stay, Ye Wangxi had a resolute expression on her face.

And indeed there was no better choice than her, so in the end he had to pat her on the shoulder.

"It's too dark here. I know you don't like it. Stay here for a while, I'll be right back."

Jiang Xi and Nangong Si were the last to leave the tunnel. The moment they came out, Huang Xiaoyue pounced on them. His vicious attitude was truly not the type of appearance that a white-haired old man should have.

"Nangong Si! You still dare to say that you were the one who did this?"

Nangong Si endured it for a long time, and at this moment, he finally stretched to his limit and shouted angrily, "It's me who is messing with you, you think you can still stand here? Go away, don't block the way!"

Huang Xiaoyue was shocked at first, but then pointed at his nose: "Look, look! Did you tear off the mask? Did the fox's tail show? You have always been pretending to be a grandson. Now that you have reached your territory, even your voice has sounded out. Do you think you are still the heaven-defying descendant of the Rufeng Sect? How dare you be so arrogant!"

"Huang Xiaoyue."

Other than Nangong, there was another person who had endured to the limit.

Jiang Xi couldn't stand the sand in his eyes. He gritted his teeth and said, "Don't think I don't know what you're trying to do."

Huang Xiaoyue's expression changed, but he forced himself to remain calm: "Sect Leader Jiang might not be able to understand this old man's feelings, I have a blood feud with the Rufeng Sect, I…"

"I really can't understand Taoist Huang's feelings." Jiang Xi rolled his eyes as he coldly stared at him, "I am not the least bit interested in the hidden treasure chamber of the Rufeng Sect."

His gaze was like two unsheathed knives. Huang Xiaoyue took two steps back, staring blankly at Jiang Xi. His lips opened and closed, but it was as if he couldn't say a word.

Jiang Xi said, "Nangong, go and check it out."

However, the Dragon Soul Pool was only this big, and he could see every inch of it clearly. He observed for a few rounds, but didn't find anything unusual. Nangong Si shook his head and said, "I'll go to the front hall to take a look."

The furnishings in the front palace hall were much more complicated. Furthermore, there were so many Zhenlong chess pieces. When Nangong Liu was previously left in the palace and Nangong Si entered, he was holding the basket of oranges and sleeping soundly.

He stood in front of his father for a moment, his eyes blank and empty, but his eyes red involuntarily. He didn't dare to stand there for too long. He didn't try to wake up his father, who had been turned into a chess piece. Instead, the chess pieces looked over one by one, hoping to find some clues.

He only knew that it was divided into two parts, "Extreme Pleasure" and "Purgatory". At this moment, each puppet looked over and saw the

silhouettes of quite a few old friends, he saw his fourth uncle, who had always been on bad terms with Xu Shuanglin, had sunk deep into “Purgatory” and was being roasted over a fire in the rifling. He saw that the maids in Three Lives Courtyard were currently in the “Extreme Pleasure” area, capturing butterflies…

He even saw his grandfather.

But Nangong didn’t have much time to be sad, because he suddenly felt that he was about to see someone.

Then he heard it.

In that tide of murmurs, he heard it.

There was a trembling sound, as light as the sound of a mosquito.

“No need…”

Before he could look back, his eyes were already wet with tears.

He turned around. In the hazy mist, he only saw a blurry azure figure. He ran towards the figure in a panic as he shouted in a hoarse voice, “Mother! Mother!”

Tears streamed down his face, and he could see clearly.

In the world of ‘bliss’, there was a person standing there majestically. It was Nangong Si’s mother, Rong Yan. Just like Nangong Changying, this woman was extremely strong and stable, coupled with the fact that Xu Shuanglin had retained the personality of a chess piece in the main hall, even though Nangong Si was no longer the same as when he was young, but with his

broken body, he was still able to recognize her after he entered his field of vision.

Trembling, Nangong stretched out his stiff finger with great difficulty. “Er…”

The clothes that Rong Yan was wearing was the exact same one that Nangong Si had seen her wearing when he last saw her. He knelt in front of her, and it was as though he had returned to that time, to that night in the Rufeng Sect. The mother went to the child’s study to look for him. Outside the window the moon was full.

He raised his head and looked at her. He had a lot of things he wanted to say, but in the end, he said with a trembling voice, “Mother… All the people in the world are praised for it, but not advised against it. All the people in the world are praised for it, but not discouraged…”

That was how time went wrong.

His stern mother stood by the window, frowning as she asked, “All the people in the world are not the same. What was the last sentence?”

The child stammered, but could not answer.

Then he left too suddenly, and when he knelt in front of his dark coffin, he still could not recite the last volume of scripture his mother had made him recite.

This sentence, “all the world’s reputation without persuasion, all the world without Ju Ju,” after more than ten years of hazel, the dust finally settled.

He knelt in front of her, still in the same posture as when they left Yue Ye. Their figures finally matched each other back then, just that at that time, they were filled with resentment, but now, they were filled with pain.

Rong Yan caressed Nangong Si's hair and face. Finally, he grabbed her bloody hands and closed his eyes, trembling.

"No problem. Mother's body is currently being controlled. She's like a piece of meat on a tree, and will lose consciousness again at any time… But you must believe. Mother, these words are all from the bottom of my heart… It was all in his mind before he left. Although he hated his uncle for his actions… But mother is also grateful to him…"

"Mother…"

"If not for him… Turn me into a chess piece, how can I meet you again… Following… I'm telling you…" She was trembling as she reached out her hand and then held on tightly to Nangong Si in her embrace.

"Before mother left, what she regretted the most was…" She was choked with sobs, she was choked with sobs, but it was not because she needed to be controlled by Xu Shuanglin again. She hugged her child so tightly, her voice trembling as she said, "What I regret the most is that I've never, never hugged you so well before. I've never held you like this before. Honest child…"

"Mother loves you too."

Nangong Si was already sobbing, "I know… I know everything, Mother, I know everything from a long time ago."

Suddenly, the earth began to shake again. Rong Yan suddenly shivered, opened her eyes, and muttered: "The lost blood contract is about to be torn apart…"

"What?"

“The blood contract of frustration is about to be torn apart! I can see it every day!” Rong Yan suddenly tensed up, “Si’er, nothing must happen to you, I have to go stop him… I am going to stop Nangong Xu…”

Nangong Si wiped away his tears and pulled her back, “Mother, what did you see here? What blood contract is about to be torn apart?”

“Listen.” For a moment, she seemed to be at a loss of what to do, but she clenched her teeth tightly, and with the help of her will, she managed to block the control of the chess piece, “Listen carefully, Nangong Xu has collected five godly weapons, and these five godly weapons drank ten thousand people’s blood. Together, they will be able to sever the link between the Demon Dragon and the Nangong Family.”

“Break the bond?!”

“Not bad, the dragon tendon was the first to be severed.”

Nangong Si was frightened, “So those zombies outside suddenly got rid of their dragon tendons and got out of control?”

“Exactly.” Rong Yan said hoarsely, “The second, is the dragon scale.”

Nangong Si suddenly recalled that those poisonous snakes he had just encountered were probably all formed from dragon scales.

“Third, is the dragon’s tail.”

Nangong Si’s face paled, “Then that vibration just now, was the draconic tail severed?!”

“That’s right. Then the dragon head, and finally the body of the dragon.” Rong Yan said, “The moment Nangong Xu succeeded in using the fifth

godly weapon, he would lose control of the entire Mount Jiao. Never again… He will never acknowledge the Supreme Sect Leader as his master again…”

Her expression became pained once more. For a while, she could not say more. Xu Shuanglin seemed to have already sensed her actions, and was doing his utmost to take over her body.

Rong Yan moaned softly, her long and pale fingers pressed tightly into her head: “No… No…”

“Mother!”

“No, no, no…”

Her voice caused her to wake up abruptly. She was like a person dying of thirst receiving a sweet spring. She tightly held onto him with a somewhat helpless and fearful expression.

It was a helplessness he had never seen on her face.

He held her in his arms. In the past, he was still a child, and his mother was always cold and solemn. She rarely hugged him.

Now he could finally protect his mother.

Although it was just a reflection of the moon and the water, it was still a body that contained some of the consciousness of before death, and even the soul was no longer there.

That’s enough.

Rong Yan's stooped body trembled slightly in Nangong Si's embrace. After a long while, she raised her head again, her face was covered in the blood and tears of a Zhenlong chess piece.

She raised her hand to wipe her throat, but no matter how she did it, it was all dirty. No matter how she wiped it, the bloodstains would not be wiped away. She painfully closed her eyes.

Rong Yan said, "I can feel that he is… He has sensed me. I don't have much time left. Listen, he cut off the blood contract for… It was all for the sake of resigning the contract with the demon dragon, and at that time… Ahhh!"

Her consciousness blurred and she was unable to continue.

But Nangong Si had already understood what was going on. The last bit of color on his face also disappeared. "At that time, we will only listen to his orders. We will not be able to escape from Mount Jiao?!"

"We can't do this…"

"Absolutely not!"

Both mother and son spoke at the same time.

Nangong looked down at his mother. "What should I do?"

"Nangong Xu can't train…" A hint of coldness flashed across Rong Yan's face, "He… He couldn't suppress the treasured chess piece at all… This is why there was a backlash. This was also why I… To be able to reflect on the inner workings of his heart… I know what to do — you listen to me."

Rong Yan held onto Nangong Si's arm, her gaze swept across every inch, and in the end it landed on her husband.

Due to the shaking of the earth just now, Nangong Liu was awakened. He was holding his basket of oranges as he looked around with a confused expression on his face. He did not know what was going on.

She stared at him like a falcon staring at a snake in a cave.

“Someone has to die.” With her red lips opened and closed, Rong Yan said, “Si’er, go kill him.”

Ch. 224 [Mount Jiao] A Gentleman's Promise

"Mother?"

"The contract with the Demon Dragon can only be strengthened by the Nangong Family's blood sacrifice." Rong Yan said, "Only you…"

Or her. So, of course, he. She was already a pawn, a walking corpse… Moreover, what right did he have to live on? Her is unfaithful for a husband, unscrupulous for a father, disrespectful for a king, and unworthy of being a man. Who knew why Nangong Xu's kindness of thought had broken his curse?

Only made him a fool?!

Nangong Si froze where he was, as if he, too, had become a chess piece, rigid and immobile.

"Si'er, mother is unable to control herself and is unable to make a move. You're the only one. Only you can throw him into the Dragon Soul Pool… The only thing that remained was… A lowly life could be exchanged for everyone's safety, so count him… After death, virtue was accumulated!"

Before he could react, he suddenly heard someone from the Dragon Soul Pool shout, "What happened? Where did these beetles come from?"

Beetle…?

Immediately, miserable shrieks and the shouts of Xue Zhengyong, Jiang Xi, and the others could be heard from the hall. Rong Yan said anxiously: "As soon as possible, the blood contract for the Dragon Tail has already been

broken. There are still the last two contracts. Once it's completely undone, even if you throw it into the pool of blood, it will be of no use."

Nangong Si woke up from his stupor.

"What's there to hesitate about?!" Rong Yan said, "It is he who committed heinous crimes everywhere, causing the Rufeng Sect to be in such a state today, no matter the consequences! Wake up! There's no other choice, you-!"

She suddenly lost her voice.

Immediately afterwards, her eyes rolled up slightly, and her pupils rapidly contracted. Xu Shuanglin finally seemed to be unable to bear it any longer and used the most ruthless amount of spiritual energy to hold her back.

She no longer had any consciousness of her own.

A dream-like expression appeared on her face once more. She slowly got up and walked to the side of the "Extreme Delight", returning to the inconspicuous place she was originally staying. Her eyes were empty as she muttered to herself. "Tell my aunt that the world is destroyed without a break. What is the first sentence? I… I… destroyed the whole world."

Nangong was trembling.

He knelt on the ground and trembled. He was not controlled by anything, but he felt that there was no way out.

All the world's reputation without exhortation, all the world to destroy without Ju Ju.

This was what his mother wanted him to do. It was so difficult.

It was really difficult.

When he was young, whether it was memorizing the obscure, carefree travel or the fact that he had to hit the red heart nine times out of the ten arrows, it was too difficult.

Now, he told him that he was going to use his father's blood to strengthen the blood contract on Mount Flood.

Listening to the pitiful screams coming from outside and hearing the voices, he knew how terrifying the beetles would be. He thought of Ye Wangxi, who was still fighting the snakes alone in the darkness, waiting for him to find out everything about her.

"No need…" Behind him was his mother's muttering.

He slowly unsheathed his sword and walked towards Nangong Liu.

Hate.

How could they not hate him?

He looked at this man…

How could he not hate him?

He had dug up his mother's heart, secretly colluded with the East River Hall's leader, harmed Bitan Manor's Palace Master Li, caused the Rufeng Sect to be destroyed, leaving behind a pile of mess and a notorious reputation. He and Ye Wangxi were in a panic and had nowhere to return.

He raised his sword, and snow illuminated Nangong Liu's face.

That face that was no longer young carried a serenity and calmness that only a child would have.

Nangong Liu looked at Nangong Si. Thus, Nangong Si's hands trembled and he turned his head away. He said, "Stand up."

"Who are you? Why should I get up? I want to sit here, and wait for His Majesty…"

"What His Majesty?! That's your brother!" he shouted at him, his heart pounding and his blood pumping in his veins.

"Little brother is also his Majesty." Nangong Liu was startled and curled up, "Don't be so fierce, you…… You. Why are you crying?"

Am I crying?

Nangong Si thought blankly.

I… Am I crying?

Bitter, salty tears rolled down his face, falling to the ground with his sword.

Nangong Si suddenly knelt on the ground and started wailing.

Why did this happen?

He hated him. He truly believed that he could hate to the point of forcing his father to follow him to the Dragon Soul Pool and then reforming the blood contract between Mount Jiao and Fushe.

Why couldn't he hate it? If the person in front of him caused him to become homeless and lose his family, then why wouldn't he hate him?

However…

But he really couldn’t do it.

When the sword light illuminated the man’s face, when he saw the wrinkles around the man’s eyes, he thought of —

It was actually when he was very young, he had stumbled around the Howling Moon Grass Field chasing after Naobaijin.

His legs became unstable and he finally ran and fell.

Rong Yan stood in front of him and told him who was crying, “Stand up.”

So painful.

However, it was truly painful. He struggled and tried his best, but he could not get up.

He reached out and begged his mother to give him a hug.

However, she did not extend her hand, nor did he do so.

Finally, another warm big hand lifted the little man from the ground and held him in his arms. Sunlight shone down and he saw a face.

A young, amiable, nice gentleman’s face, always kind and angry.

“Aiya, we’ll need someone to help us out occasionally.” The man stroked his silky hair, his eyes very gentle. “If they all crawled up on their own, what would I need my parents for?”

That was the earliest impression he had of his father in his memory.

In this spacious hall full of living dead, the only living person staggered, stumbled, and crawled up on his own.

He got up, but quickly fell to his knees again.

He kowtowed three times towards the direction that Rong Yan was at, then stood up again and turned to leave.

Suddenly, his sleeve was caught.

The person holding him back was Nangong Liu.

"…"

Nangong Liu fished out an orange from the basket and handed it over to him. After thinking for a moment, he peeled off another orange and placed it next to his lips.

"Don't cry, though I don't know what you're going to do. But the oranges are sweet and very tasty. I got it. Try it."

Nangong Si did not want to eat it, but that piece of orange was just beside his lips. Nangong Liu passed it to him, just like how he had fed him countless times when he was young.

The sweet and sour juice flowed down between his teeth. Nangong Si wiped his tears away and finally made up his mind to throw down his sword. He turned around and walked out of the front hall in big strides.

He came to the side of the Dragon Soul Pool, which was in a chaotic battle.

The beetle formed by the dragon's tail was too vicious. Many cultivators had already died in battle, and blood flowed like a river from the ground.

Since the bugs were too small, Chu Wanning, Jiang Xi and the other Shizuns could only protect the few people behind them. The scene was jumbled, as if it was a pot in boiling water and a wok in a wok.

No one noticed that Nangong Si had come in.

He entered the hall.

A few hours ago, he lost his spirit core and thought that he would become a mortal for the rest of his life.

At this moment, he suddenly felt that fate knew that he was a person with a high heart. Even though it wasn't thicker than him, at the very end, it wasn't weaker than him either.

The only thing he owed…

His gaze landed on the tunnel that led to the Soul Summoning Platform.

Ye Wangxi.

Nangong Si suddenly revealed a smile.

Fortunately, in the end, he didn't have the time to thank her for not leaving and for not giving up. Fortunately, he didn't have time to tell her that he had finally understood her good intentions, and that he was willing to stay with her forever.

Otherwise, if he were to implicate that young lady for no reason at all, then…

"Plop."

So what?

He did not finish his thoughts. If he continued to think about it, he probably would not have the courage to do so anymore. He did not finish his thoughts, so the boiling pool of blood engulfed him. He did not finish his thoughts, and he turned into bones, melting into ashes.

The last thing he had been able to do before he died was to untie the quiver at his waist, and throw the quiver that his mother had stitched for him along with the howling demon wolf, Neptune, to the side of the pool.

The moment when Nangong Si felt that he had disintegrated into ashes, it was as if he was conscious, but not in pain. He could clearly hear the sound of the quiver of arrows safely landing on the ground.

He thought.

He wanted to reply:

Shizun…

I'll take you.

How could I not recognize you?

Actually, I still remember that year under the flower tree, kowtowing to the ceremony of taking in a Shizun.

But you won't take me.

I also have my own pride, afraid that you do not like my bone root, so always pretended to be too young, had forgotten.

Later on you were willing to acknowledge me, but I was also afraid of implicating you.

It’s all right now.

I have a Shizun, so I gave my mother a free and unrestrained tour. Ye Wangxi and Naobaijin are both fine.

Right, I didn’t expect to be able to eat a piece of orange before I died.

It was that person… Personally peeled…

It’s the same taste as when I was a kid and I was fed oranges.

So sweet…

Nangong’s spirit was suddenly shattered. Everything had faded, and everything had become a mirage. The past and the dreams had passed.

To the blood contract.

Wherever the light touched, the dragon’s cry and sword’s roar could be heard, as if it was tearing through dry weeds. All of the dragon-tailed beetles, dragon-scaled slithering snakes, and the sinister-looking dragon tendons that were holding up the corpse tide outside all turned into ashes and turned into smithereens.

When Ye Wangxi rushed out of the cave, what she saw was Nangong Si falling into the pool at the very last moment, the pool of blood which was illuminated by the dragon’s light, and all the cultivators who were staring at the pool of blood. There were also the moaning and helpless Naobaijin at the side, and Chu Wanning who was bending over to hold Naobaijin in his arms…

Her sword clattered to the ground.

“A-Si!”

Her voice was hoarse as she tore apart the heavens!

At this moment, Ye Wangxi was covered in wounds. She staggered a few steps forward, but before she could reach the pool of blood and even shed tears, the heavy injuries and crazy emotions had finally destroyed her. The snake poison spread throughout her body. Her bones and blood were ice-cold, and her entire body was ice-cold.

“A-Si…”

Her lips were purplish, moving, choking, and tears were streaming down her face. But she couldn’t hold on any longer. She hit the cold brick hard.

It was dark, but she was still trying to crawl forward, her bloody fingers pressed against the ground.

She knew it was too late.

She had clearly seen Nangong Si jump into the Dragon Soul Pool.

It was all over.

But she couldn’t accept it. How could she accept it…? How could she be willing!

It seemed that as long as she kept climbing to the edge of the pool, she would be able to bring that person back. It seemed that if she persisted for even a moment longer, she would be able to return to his side.

He said so.

In front of the snake den, he had clearly promised —

It’s too dark in here. I know you don’t like it.

Tears rolled down her face.

She persisted, clenching her teeth and clenching her teeth until they shattered. She slowly crawled to the edge of the Dragon Soul Pool, which had already died out.

I’m here.

What about you?

Her vision was very dark and her surroundings were very cold. Could it be that another evil spirit was coming? Could it be that another poisonous snake was committing crimes? Could you act like how it was in the past? A spiritual talisman dropped down as it majestically turned its head around.

Tell me again: “Come with me, I will protect you.”

“Nangong Si… A-Si…” She sobbed and finally burst into tears. “Come back! A word from a gentleman. You have to keep your word, come back!”

However, the crying did not last long. Before she lost consciousness, the last thing she needed to do was to extend her hand and touch the walls of the Dragon Soul Pool, as if that way she could catch the clothes of the person in the pool and keep him by her side.

Everything was going to be better. Ye Wangxi could think of a way to stop the spirit core’s tyranny, and everyone no longer hated them that much… Originally… She was almost out of it.

But the darkness came again. This time, for her, perhaps there would be no more daylight.

“A-Si…”

Ye Wangxi murmured and slowly closed her eyes.

The evil spirit of the Demon Dragon was finally suppressed. Nangong Si sacrificed his flesh and blood to strengthen the ties that were on the verge of breaking down. Now that he had fused with the Dragon Blood Pool, Xu Shuanglin was no longer able to destroy it.

It’s over.

There was not a single blade of grass or tree in Mount Jiao that could be used by Xu Shuanglin. Although Nangong was not as capable as Nangong Changying, in the end, he was the one who sliced off Xu Shuanglin’s sharpest claws.

No one spoke. They could only hear the faint words of the men who had been wounded.

The light from the Dragon Blood Pool gradually dissipated. Mo Ran walked to Chu Wanning’s side. Chu Wanning’s head was lowered and his eyes were closed. His hand that was holding Naobaijin was cold. Because he was enduring, the veins beneath his skin bulged out.

“Shizun…”

Chu Wanning did not say anything. In the end, he just placed Naobaijin at Ye Wangxi’s side along with Nangong Si’s quiver.

He stood up, water vapor in his eyes, but when he looked at the path that led to the Soul Summoning Platform, the water vapor had turned into ice.

He did not say a single word as golden light flowed from Tianwen in his hand. He walked towards the pitch-black passageway.

Mo Ran followed him, and all the disciples at the Sisheng Peak followed silently.

No one asked, no one spoke.

They all knew what it meant to be in the lead, but none of them backed down. And then there was the Taxue Palace, Guyue'ye…

Before Jiang Xi walked into the tunnel, he ordered a few healing and guarding disciples and said, "You all stay here and take good care of the wounded, especially Miss Ye. If these people who have not died lose their lives again, the entire year's salary would be deducted."

"Yes, Sect Leader."

The door leading to the Soul Summoning Platform had already been opened. They arrived at the last part of the Heavenly Shrine of the Rufeng Sect after losing a large amount of troops.

They had finally arrived at the location of the Soul Summoning Worship.

The Soul Summoning Platform.

Ch. 225 [Mount Jiao] Laughs at Me for Being Insane

Chu Wanning was the first one to walk out of the aisle, which was different from the narrow one in the Yong road. When he stepped out of the last stone steps, he saw the vast open platform. He could hardly see the end of his eyes, like a pure land floating on the nine sides of the sky.

At this time, a bright moon is in the sky, the four fields of Gaotai are lonely, the grass is barren, look up, but see the bleak wind gusts, clouds and shadows, and the most central place of Gaotai is sitting a person.

Xu Shuanglin.

Afterwards, people came out one after another, but they were stunned when they saw Xu Shuanglin. Xue Zhengyong was even more shocked and said, “How… This is… What is this?”

Others took a cold breath and whispered, “Oh my God, why is this so?”

“Is he alive or dead?”

The nearer Mo Ran got, the more frigid the scene was. Xu Shuanglin sat cross-legged on the ground with his eyes closed. The right side of his body had rotted completely, and he could not see the human form at all. His body was constantly gushing with pus, blood and black water. The stench was terrible. Around him, there were five fierce spirits.

Mo Ran’s fingertips curled up involuntarily-he saw Bu’gui.

Bu’gui was on the ground, the light green glow climbed all the way from the ground, and finally converged with the light of four other weapons into

the heart of Xu Shuanglin, which shone a rugged and thin face of Xu Shuanglin in a shady and shadowy twinkle.

Behind Xu Shuanglin, there was a black cloud of smoke circling and twisting, which seemed to be some kind of boundary about to coalesce and form.

Others followed in succession.

Huang Xiaoyue muttered incredibly, “This is… Is this the art of the Wu soul?”

Xue Meng didn’t know what was the art of the soul of war. He just wanted to ask his father, but when he turned his head, he saw Xue Zhengyong’s face turned pale. Obviously, he didn’t believe anyone would use this technique at all.

It’s hard to believe that someone would use it.

“What on earth is this?”

Obviously Xue Meng was not the only one who didn’t know the skill of Wu soul. A younger disciple was asking quietly as well.

Chu Wanning stared at Xu Shuanglin’s face and said, “The art of the soul of Wu is to dedicate one’s soul to the God Wu dyed with blood, make a contract with the God Wu, swear that after death, its soul will be torn up and swallowed by the weapon spirit of the God Wu, and become a sacrifice to temper the God Wu.”

“Life sacrificial weapons?” Xue Meng was astonished. “Why would he want to do this?”

“Because he’s not smart enough.” Chu Wanning said, “This is a way to rapidly and substantially enhance their own strength. He dedicated his soul to the divine force, which lent him his strength.”

While he was talking, he suddenly heard a sigh.

Almost everyone could not help stepping back. Xue Meng stepped out of his place and stared closely at Xu Shuanglin’s face.

Xu Shuanglin slowly opened his eyes. In the moonlight, he raised his face. Half of it was normal, and half of it was a foul mud.

“Master Chu… Gentlemen, you are still looking for it.”

With one hand on the ground, he staggered to his feet, and his eyes swept through the faces of vigilance, nausea and fear.

He didn’t care, but his normal eye rotated, and there was even a malicious trick and evil in it. But he swept over one time and another, and could not find someone. The malicious laughter on his face froze and disappeared.

Xu Shuanglin muttered, “What about Ye Wangxi?!”

Xue Meng said angrily, “You have the nerve to mention her name, too?”

“What did you do to her?!”

Xue Meng was even more angry: “How could you? What face do you have to miss Ye Wangxi, you heartless, heartless, flesh and blood?”

“I miss her?” This word seems to startle Xu Shuanglin. He was stunned at first, then squinted, and seemed to calm down slowly. “No, how can I miss her? It’s ridiculous…”

Jiang Xichen said, “What do you do with his nonsense? Kill him!”

Speaking of raising his right hand, the sword Xuehuang was now in the palm of his hand. He was about to cut down Xu Shuanglin. Unexpectedly, a dark shadow, like lightning, cut off his offensive.

Jiang Xi raised his eyebrows and gritted his teeth and said, “Why did Master Mo stop me?”

“I have something to ask him!” Mo Ran turned around and his eyes shone with complex light. He wiped his lips. He seemed to want to say more, but in the end he vomited out only four words, “What about your accomplices?”

Xu Shuanglin rubbed his toes slowly.

Mo Ran noticed that he was not wearing shoes today.

“They said they were my partners.” Xu Shuanglin smiled, and the smile on the other side of the face seemed very bright, with a hint of sarcasm. “Then you should know that I would never say. I Xu Shuanglin, at this point of righteousness. You heroes, gentlemen, you do not have to spend this part of the heart.”

He glanced at the weapon in Mo Ran’s hand and said, “Other interrogation methods need not be used. It’s no big deal to cut off one’s tongue. There’s always a way I can avoid to tell the truth.”

Xue Meng looked very astonished: “You… even though you are such a person, how can you not be ashamed to talk about righteousness…”

“Strange, why can’t I speak of righteousness?” Xu Shuanglin said, “Friends help each other, brothers are respectful, teachers are kind and filial, the

good enjoy peace, the evil get punishment, this is what the world should look like. Do you think only you people can understand this?”

Xue Meng was shocked and stunned by his wall-thick face, pointing at him and saying, “Brothers and friends, courtesy? Teachers, kindness and filial piety?… You?”

Xu Shuanglin said slowly, “Yes, how about it?”

“Do you have a face? You are the one who mutilated your brother, and it’s you who encouraged Nangong Liu to eat Luo Fenghua’s core. You’ve done all the bad things, you actually… you can still say so confidently——This is what the world should be like?”

Faced with a series of questions from Xue Meng, Xu Shuanglin grinned, but did not deny it. Instead, he suddenly asked, “How old is this little brother this year?”

“Why do you ask?”

“Don’t tell me.” Xu Shuanglin looked up and down at him and said, “I think you are in your twenties. Twenty-year-olds, who are always full of hot blood, innocence and pride, stand in front of the world, feeling that nothing in the world is impossible for them to do.”

He paused and smiled, “What a wonderful age.”

The glory of the earth’s martial arts is flowing continuously, and continues to give him a strong spirit. He uses this spirit to maintain his manipulation of thousands of Zhenlong chess pieces and fight against the counter-phage of chess pieces. But let alone, his skin is still decaying at a visible speed with the naked eye.

Xu Shuanglin didn't seem to take it seriously. He didn't seem to see his body being swallowed up by exhaustion. He paced back and forth in front of the winding junction behind him: "Twenty years old… Do you know what I was doing when I was about your age?"

"What else can you do?" Xue Meng said indignantly, "Who doesn't know what you did? You seized the Sect Leader's ring and replaced your brother as the leader of the sect. Within two months, you killed two lords of the upper spiritual circles. Later, someone came to you to ask for a comment, and you dug out all their eyes - you are a dead pervert, unjust, deaf-blocked listener, you have done all of these! If I was to do these things at the age of twenty like you, I would rather die at the age of twelve!"

When Xue Zhengyong saw his anger, he was afraid that he might attract Xu Shuanglin's attention. He could not eat and walk around in his fingers. He whispered, "Meng'er, you shouldn't speak so much."

"No." Unexpectedly, Xu Shuanglin heard this sentence, and he waved his hand with a smile. "Then, why not say a few words more?"

When Xue Meng saw that he was still laughing, his face looked like a parrot flapping its wings on a shelf and singing. He was having fun. He couldn't help but feel his blood rising and became angry and said, "You, you are so shameless! There is no remedy for you!"

"What am I shameless about? What you said is nothing at all." Xu Shuanglin said, "You said I took the Sect Leader's ring from ancient times. My garbage brother can't do anything. With a three-inch glib tongue, he can even mix the wind and water. People who haven't actually competed with him all think he is one of the top two figures. They call us Rufeng scholars, equal in spiritual skills. Don't you think it's ridiculous?"

“Me, and him?” Xu Shuanglin patted his forehead and sneered. “Don’t be funny. I could beat him with one hand from an early age. Want me to keep pace with him? All day long, when I was working hard, he only knew to peel oranges and eat them in his wife’s arms. I practiced every day and every month whether its summer or winter. He didn’t have a single school day in spring. He was sleeping in the hot summer days! Later, I sought a true reputation at the Spiritual Mountain Competition, but behind my back, he made a discussion and enjoyed his success! What happened later? Is it fair for you to give a hard-working man the name of plagiarism and to give him the reputation of being the first handsome man in the world?”

Xue Meng hesitated for a moment, but still insisted, “Then you can’t do that either…”

“Nonsense! It’s easy to accuse others. But when it’s your turn, you will all turn into a different face. Can you tolerate things like that in the Spiritual Mountain Competition?!”

Xue Meng was stunned by his counterattack

Can he bear it?

“Hundreds of people at the competition pointed at you and said you have no shame. All the rankings and applause are his, leaving you with only one injustice that will last a lifetime. Your diligent cultivation and hard training, defeated by his silver tongue— that’s fair?”

“I…”

Seeing Xue Meng worried and speechless, Xu Shuanglin sneered: “Talk again about me killing those two leaders. Two of them, one knocking on wooden fish all day long, and the other one is magnificent and dignified.

The honest and upright gentleman is known all over the world, but they pushed me down to the abyss without facial expression for their selfish interests. Ask gentlemen, why should I spare his dog's life?"

When the people of the two factions heard him say this, their faces were blue and purple, and they wanted to refute, but they could not find any sentences of restraint and frustration. Finally, the Great master Xuanjing of Wubei Temple sighed softly and closed his eyes and said, "When is it that the grievances are repaid?"

"Yes, when did they say that they would like to get rid of their grievances, but why am I?" Xu Shuanglin said angrily word by word, but his face was still smiling, laughing lightly, even a little ridiculous, "I slapped you, and then said when the grievance was repaid, not let you fight back, would you like to, bald donkey?"

Someone was angry and said, "Nangong Xu, please clean your mouth! How can you talk to your predecessors like that?!"

"I'm your fucking predecessor, too." Xu Shuanglin said with a laugh, "My dear, let me clean your mouth."

"…"

Huang Xiaoyue twisted his way and said, "Nangong Xu…"

Before the words were finished, the other party made a stop gesture, pulled half of the sound, half of the rotten corners of his mouth: "Can you call me Xu Shuanglin? I don't like the name Nangong Xu."

Huang Xiaoyue flicked his sleeves: "Even if you wanted to ask for justice and kill those two leaders, it would have been long overdue. What's the

reason for digging out so many people's eyes?"

Xu Shuanglin said happily, "I used to reason with you. But nobody listened to me."

After a pause, he laughed and said, "Later, I became a madman, but you are going to drag the madman into black and white, you honest gentlemen! Interesting." He clapped his hands and said, "It's so interesting."

Mo Ran was standing beside him. At this moment, he suddenly asked, "So, you ask for fairness yourself, right?"

"…" Xu Shuanglin's eyes moved up inch by inch and moved to Mo Ran's face.

The two of them looked at each other on a steep windy stone platform.

In the eyes of Mo Ran, Xu Shuanglin's shadow gradually blurred, and he did not seem to see the man whose limbs were rotten and lingering.

Through Xu Shuanglin, he saw another shadow, wearing a pearl corona and a black-and-gold gown. He saw the emperor Taxian-Jun and himself in his previous life.

"We met Nangong Liu on our way here. He called you Your Majesty, and you sealed up the God for yourself. You have become the emperor of this heavenly palace, holding the power of judgment," said Mo Ran. "What you say is right, is right, what you say is wrong, it's out of line. It's up to you to kill or allow to live. That's your fairness?"

Xu Shuanglin was silent for a moment, then sneered.

Mo Ran saw Taxian-Jun sneering, his pale and handsome face covered with ridicule.

“Yes, and what? As you can see, I once believed in the so-called fairness of the world, such as honest gentlemen, but what’s the result?”

He paused and paced back and forth before the battle of martial arts. His eyes flashed with excitement: “It is you who regard cowards as heroes and step on heroes under your feet. It’s you who regard hard work as dung and build latrines into altars. It is you who regard flattery as friendliness and arrogance as humility. You have done all the evil things to trample me into the mire! Then tell me that even if I suffer more crimes, even if my brother’s walls are planted, even if my clothes are uncovered and humiliated, that’s my own business, and how can I vent my resentment on innocent people? Ha, it’s a joke!!”

Mo Ran saw that Taxian-Jun’s sneer became more and more exaggerated, and gradually turned into a sneer.

“Thousands of men do not refer to you. It is not you who bears no guilt. Of course, you can say all the beautiful things in the world. And I, I am only in my own way, seeking the right way in the world.”

“… Is there a way in the world?” Mo Ran stood opposite of Taxian-Jun. He asked, “How many people have been killed for your own view of right in the world. You self-proclaimed emperor, your feet are heavy bones and blood. Have you never had a single regret?”

“What can I repent of? I killed them, but I will give them a chance to rebirth. They will all be my chess pieces. From then on, everything I do is

under my control. From then on, there is a clear distinction between black and white, between good and evil, which is the fairness of the world."

Mo Ran was silent for a moment and said, "It seems that you really regard yourself as a ruler to measure the world."

"I am the ruler."

Xu Shuanglin hunts in the wind.

He is Nangong Xu in the eyes of all.

It's Taxian-Jun in the eyes of Mo Ran.

He said, "Look at the front hall, don't you think it's beautiful? Good people live and work in peace and contentment, while ugly people burn themselves in flames and cook and fry in tripod brackets. Anyone who has stabbed another person will let him lead the neck and make up for it. It's clear that every account is settled. Is there any mistake in paying blood debts and blood repayments?"

Mo Ran: "You really look up to yourself."

Then he heard Taxian-Jun reply, "Why should I look down on myself? In my opinion, this is the best karma."

No one spoke for a moment.

Most people were shocked by Xu Shuanglin's crazy remarks.

Before they came, many people thought that Xu Shuanglin did all this, probably for power, for personal hatred, and so on.

None of them thought that Xu Shuanglin thought he was doing everything right for the sake of fairness and justice.

But who can be the fairest ruler in the world? Even the descendants of the gods, Tianyin Pavilion, may not be able to do so.

Mo Ran stood where he was. After a while, his heart finally recovered some calm. He looked at the emperor who stood up against him.

The crown disappeared, and the handsome face sank and became blackened.

He blinked. The man in front of him was Xu Shuanglin, not the Emperor Taxian-Jun. Because Xu Shuanglin's actions are too similar to those of his predecessors, he had an illusion of distant dialogue with himself across time and space.

"Well, can I understand that the chess pieces in the hall, even if you lack spiritual power, should let them retain their minds before they die. You built your own kingdom in this heavenly palace. From then on, you are God or Buddha, your Majesty, you divide the world into two parts, good to good, evil to evil, that is how you want to be fair?"

He said this.

At the same time, his mind was like a snowstorm, flying through many memory fragments related to Xu Shuanglin.

In the past, in order to save Ye Wangxi, Xu Shuanglin died under his sword.

Standing in the Sansheng courtyard, laughing with bare feet, teasing the parrots.

At Jincheng Lake Xu Shuanglin asked his brother for a piece of orange as a reward.

Mount Jiao orange tree, the mind back to the pure child Nangong Liu, and Luo Fenghua, who was rotting in hell… One by one, the mountains rushed into his mind like a tsunami.

Mo Ran raised his dark eyes, which were neither ridiculous nor contemptuous, but looked at him quietly like that: “Am I right, Nangong Xu?”

“Call me Xu Shuanglin…”

“No, you’re Nangong Xu.” Mo Ran stepped forward. He looked at the man in front of him. He knew that no one in the room knew better than himself what Nangong Xu was thinking at this moment. They were all people who had been driven to extinction. The former Emperor Taxian-Jun, Xu Shuanglin of this world, were the same.

As he watched, he kept a close eye on the most subtle changes in Xu Shuanglin’s face.

He stopped and suddenly looked down.

“It’s so cold, so cold on the ground. Why don’t you wear shoes, Nangong Xu?”

The smile on Xu Shuanglin’s face suddenly froze, but he soon froze his twinkling eyes firmly as gold: “I don’t wear what I want -”

“Do you like Ye Wangxi?”

“…”

“I went to Sansheng that day. The first time I saw you, you didn’t wear shoes. It was she who later told you to put it on, and the satisfaction on your face, I’m afraid you didn’t notice it.”

Mo Ran stared at Xu Shuanglin’s face.

That’s the answer he was guessing when he was on Feihua Island, watching the fire and smoke billowing in Linyi on the other side.

“Nangong Xu, you’ve always wanted someone to notice your bare feet and someone to tell you—”

Xu Shuanglin, who had been laughing and singing, suddenly flashed a trace of fear on his face. He stepped back, wrinkled his nose, and had a fierce face: “Shut up.”

Mo Ran naturally wouldn’t shut up. He looked at Xu Shuanglin, who was only speculating about something. In Xu Shuanglin’s sudden and fierce reaction, it turned into reality.

Mo Ran to look at him, he feels that what he sees is not Xu Shuanglin, but the oneself who has nowhere to escape in the dark.

“Put your shoes on. It’s cool on the ground.”

Like a cheetah leaping up, the light and shadow gathered together to contend, Xu Shuanglin suddenly rushed up and grabbed Mo Ran’s robes in a fury. The normal hand and the stinky claw grasped him at the same time. Xu Shuanglin’s eyes were full of blood. He gritted his teeth and said, “I told you to shut up! You shut up for me!”

“Well, before I shut up, say one more word.”

“Don’t say—!” Xu Shuanglin was almost desperate. He was like a dragon pulled out of the scales and bleeding like a pour, “Don’t say…”

“Ye Wangxi really looked like Luo Fenghua.”

This light description, but in an instant emptied all the strength of Xu Shuanglin.

He stood dumb and blank.

The surrounding people who have seen Luo Fenghua and Ye Wangxi were stunned. They recall in their minds that these two completely different people have no relatives. Even in the tumultuous world, one is dead, the other is alive… But at this point, they suddenly realized - ah, that’s true.

Ye’s every move, every move, even temperament, voice and expression are the same as Luo Fenghua, Xu Shuanglin’s mentor.

Xu Shuanglin abruptly withdrew Mo Ran’s hands, twisted his fingers and claws, buried his face in his palm, and his shoulders trembled slightly.

Xue Meng muttered, “He… Is he crying?”

Cry?

No.

Xu Shuanglin buried himself in his palm. After a long time, the shaking of his shoulders became more and more obvious. A twisted and sophisticated smile leaked from his fingers: “Ha…” The smile grew like a ripple. Suddenly he put down his hands and laughed wildly. “Ha ha ha ha ha, they look alike? That’s ridiculous! Master Mo, have you seen Luo Fenghua? You also

saw his corpse at the beginning of Infernal Hell. After seeing that, you think they were like? You're a little too confident."

"Since you mention hell, you mention Luo Fenghua's body. Where is he?" Mo Ran asked.

Xu Shuanglin's eyes were grim and his smile suddenly tightened. "Where is he?"

"In your kingdom, punishment for good and evil, or sinking or honoring, are under your control. But you didn't even want to kill Nangong Liu. You also solved his curse. I don't know why, but since he is here, there is no reason for Luo Fenghua to be abandoned by you. You are weak in spirit and want to devote your soul to a divine force, but Jincheng Lake Peach Blossom Springs has dealt with you several times. I know that your strength is not so weak."

Xu Shuanglin: "…"

"In addition to the use of Zhenlong chess games too much, there's another reason why you can't stand it. That's the second entrance guard technique you've been practicing so hard these years."

Mo Ran looked up, and the knife finally stabbed down: "Did your rebirth finally save Luo Fenghua from the eighteenth level purgatory?"

Xu Shuanglin's face was like plaster before his words fell. He was about to say something. Suddenly, a white smoke was rising from the black lacquer that had been circulating behind him.

Xue Zhengyong's response was the quickest: "Mo, there's something behind that!"

Ch. 226 [Mount Jiao] Will Never Be Forgotten

Everyone unsheathed their weapons. Xue Zhengyong placed Xue Meng behind him with a terrible look on his face, “Meng’er, don’t go over there. Stay behind father!”

Just now, when everyone saw the Martial Spirit Formation, they naturally did not think of breaking it, because once someone broke it, Xu Shuanglin’s spirit energy would quickly run out and he would most likely die, and they still had questions for him.

No one had expected Xu Shuanglin to be hiding a formation beneath the Martial Spirit Formation.

What kind of formation would that be?

Was it a Heavenly Rift used to escape? Furthermore, it was a ferocious blood curse that allowed one to fight to the death.

Chu Wanning raised his hand and placed a barrier between the two of them.

He did not want to see more young cultivators die before his very eyes.

“Everyone be careful, don’t advance recklessly,” Chu Wanning warned.

The sky turned dark, and the clouds converged. The moon that was originally hanging high in the sky was covered by thick clouds that looked like they were turning ink. In an instant, sand and rocks were sent flying, and dust flew everywhere in confusion.

Dressed in a pure white single robe, Xu Shuanglin stood amidst the raging winds, suddenly grinning at them. “Thank you for listening to my gossip for so long. Thank you. Everyone, the array formation has been activated.”

While he was speaking, the withered ghost claw pointed backwards. The black formation was like a dragon soaring through the clouds and surfing crazily into his palm. After this layer of formation was retracted, a curse formation flowing with colorful lights was revealed.

Xue Meng said in surprise, “What formation is this?”

“Is this a Rebirth Array?” Xue Zhengyong turned his head to ask the Master of Xuanjing, but he shook his head and said, “Although my sect has the sin of knowing the path of rebirth, we never used it in front of others, so the old monk doesn’t know about it.”

Everyone stared fixedly at the array, all of them seeming to pull their bowstrings to the extreme. They were waiting for Xu Shuanglin’s tiny movements, the air extremely quiet, with only the eerie sound of a strong wind whistling past.

They were a pot of oil that seemed calm, but was actually boiling hot.

A drop of water was all that was needed…

“It’s the Corpse Soul Formation!”

Suddenly, there was an explosive shout.

The world shook with earth-shattering rumbles and explosions.

It was the Cold Scale Sacred Hands, Hua Binan. He recognized the formation instantly and shouted, “Corpse Soul Formation! Xu Shuanglin is

going to summon Luo Fenghua's Demonic Corpse and perish together with us! Fast! We must not let this formation take shape!"

Hearing the three words 'Corpse Soul Array', almost everyone was thrown into disarray. They all knew that this was a demonic technique second only to the three great forbidden techniques, and a kind of evil Medical Sect technique. As the number one master in the entire world, the Cold Scaled Sacred Hand's words were absolutely true.

Jiang Xi had been familiar with the words 'Corpse Soul Array' ever since he was young, so he reacted faster than the average person. He rushed to the front of the barrier, released the Silver Phoenix, and fiercely attacked the center with his full spiritual power!

"Clang!"

Sabers and swords clashed, flames flew everywhere, Xu Shuanglin actually managed to quickly appear in front of the Soul of the Dead barrier, pulling out his saber and blocking Jiang Xi's weapon. His eyes were cold.

"This is what I hoped for all my life. Don't even think about getting close."

Jiang Xi flew into a rage, "What you want the rest of your life is for us to fight to the death?"

Xu Shuanglin gritted his teeth and said, "Bullshit!" His hand that was holding the sword was trembling, veins popping out, and his face was flushed red.

Jiang Xi said: "You are already covered in wounds, so what can you do even if you become a Corpse Demon? You and the others will be buried with him?"

“What Corpse Devil? What funeral?! Open your eyes wide and let me see clearly, where is this…”

“Swish!”

While Jiang Xi was holding Xu Shuanglin back, an arrow filled with spiritual power shot out at an unknown speed, aiming for the barrier behind the two of them.

“Don’t —!”

Xu Shuanglin, who had always been calm and composed, let out a terrified cry for the first time tonight. “Stop!”

Almost at the same moment as he was distracted, Xu Shuanglin was struck by Jiang Xi’s falling sword. In an instant, blood spurted out, and he fell to his knees in pain, his eyes filled with madness and despair, but what he saw was not his severed flesh, but his arm covered in bones. His eyes were bloodshot, and he was looking in the direction of the Spirit Formation.

His face was still smeared with blood, his eyes bulging, his lips quivering.

Neither Nangong Xu’s nor Xu Shuanglin’s face had that kind of terrifying expression before.

He trembled as his palm maintained the posture of releasing spirit energy.

He had unleashed his full power with this attack in order to stop the cold arrow before the spirit formation.

He had succeeded.

Xu Shuanglin was gasping for breath, his arm that had been cut by Jiang Xi was continuously gushing blood, and the corner of his mouth was oozing blood. However, when he saw that arrow successfully block and shatter under his spiritual energy, his green and white lips quivered, and he actually forced out a smile.

At this time, Mo Ran heard master Ye mumble beside him, “This… This is not a Demonic Corpse Array.”

When Huang Xiaoyue heard that, he snorted and said, “Aren’t you ashamed of being so young? How can it be wrong for the Cold Scale Sacred Hand to say that it is a Demonic Corpse Formation?”

However, Shi Mei shook his head, “The Corpse Devil Formation isn’t like this.”

“I say, you, are you venomous in the eyes of the Saint Hand of the Medical Sect, or in your eyes?”

Shi Mei was about to say something, but Mo Ran stopped him.

“Shi Mei, stop wasting words with this old man. Are you sure this isn’t a Demonic Corpse Formation?”

“It’s only an image, but definitely not. The Corpse Devil Formation has the luster of fish scales. Although there is light on the array, it’s continuous, and not fragmented.”

At this time, Jiang Xi angrily shouted, “Nangong Xu, what the hell are you doing in your gourd?!”

Xu Shuanglin completely ignored him. The formation emitted a dazzling brilliance as he dragged his badly damaged body all the way to the front of

the array, blood dripping onto the ground.

The smile on his face became more and more obvious. The light from the magic array illuminated his face and unexpectedly gave off a high-spirited feeling. In an instant, he looked like a young man.

He murmured, “Soon…”

He raised his hand and lightly touched the surface of the formation. His fingers descended and ripples appeared on the surface.

It was as if he was about to meet an old friend who had been separated for many years, a relative who had been separated for a long time, a sinister injury and rotten flesh that could not stop his happiness.

His eyes were bright as he muttered to himself, “Soon… Almost there, just a little bit more…”

The surrounding gales suddenly stopped. The thick clouds dispersed and a full moon appeared in the sky. Xu Shuanglin’s eyes were wide with hope. He was shaking again, but this time it was not because of fear, but rather excitement that he could not contain.

“Shizun…”

Everyone discovered that a golden light suddenly floated within the barrier, and then a translucent spirit core appeared. The barrier continuously sent light to the center of the barrier, and countless strands of light gradually took the shape of a human.

“It’s Luo Fenghua?!”

“It’s Luo Fenghua!”

Luo Fenghua, who had been dead for so many years, appeared on the spiritual altar of the Rufeng Sect just like that! Within the barrier of golden light, an orange tree with blooming white petals appeared. Luo Fenghua, who was dressed in the same robe as the Heavenly Blue Crane, was sitting under the tree with his eyes closed.

He was still a shadow, a blurry, mirror-like scene. Only the Ghost Birth Spirit Core that he obtained from the Underworld was real, and it was emitting light from that empty body.

“Falling Flower of the Pond, twittering on the strings on the shore.”

A light male voice came from the Spirit Core without surprise.

Luo Fenghua, who was under the flower tree, continued with the letter and sang a melody from Shu.

“Weak crowns are the best in years. Light hooves, fast horses, see all the flowers in the world…”

Suddenly, a hoarse voice and Luo Fenghua’s dreamy voice blended together. Xu Shuanglin was actually trying to please him. That voice was choked with sobs, which was too unpleasant to listen to. It was like a broken gong or rotten iron, but it was still as stubborn as before.

“This, this is Corpse Demon?” Xue Zhengyong was startled, “What is going on?”

Apparently, there was more than one person who shared the same doubts as him. Even Jiang Xi slightly frowned, pursed his lips, but didn’t say anything. There seemed to be traces of doubt in his eyes.

Golden light floated as Luo Fenghua slowly took form. His facial features, nose, and lips became clearer and clearer. Amidst Cen Yuan's peaceful singing, Hua Binan suddenly shouted, "Quick! Corpse Monsters are about to form!

Shi Mei kept a low profile along the way. He knew that he was very soft, so he didn't say much, but he suddenly turned his head and shouted at Hua Binan, "Senior Sheng Hand is wrong, this is not a Corpse Demon! It's…"

It was a Rebirth Formation.

Mo Ran's heart had already understood.

Yes, Shi Mei was right, this was not a Corpse Devil Formation, this was a Rebirth Array!

But with a group of people gathered together, would they believe in a nameless cultivator, or a famous Sacred Hand of the Medical Sect? As soon as Hua Binan mentioned that the Corpse Monster was about to take shape, no matter how hard Shi Mei tried to refute him, it was always more important for him to stay alive. Immediately, a dark green shadow flew past them at an extreme speed. Before Xu Shuanglin could react, the shadow had already ruthlessly thrust a dagger filled with spiritual energy towards the barrier.

"NO!"

That one strike shattered Luo Fenghua's spirit core. The golden light of the barrier flickered for a moment and then recklessly dissipated, disintegrating the barrier.

"NO! No! Shizun! Shizun!"

Xu Shuanglin suddenly got up, furiously roaring as he knocked that person down in the air. A few feet away, it was a Guyue'ye cultivator who had listened to Hua Binan's instructions in the face of danger, and suddenly vomited a large mouthful of blood — Xu Shuanglin's attack had used 100% of his strength. Even though he was at the end of his strength, that person was still beaten down by him until he couldn't stand up, curled up on the ground, and quickly lost his breath.

But it was too late.

The death of this cultivator did not change anything.

Xu Shuanglin had tried his best to take back the Luo Fenghua Ghost Body's spirit core from the 18 Hells of Flame, but it had already opened a huge hole. Xu Shuanglin crawled all the way to Luo Fenghua's side in an attempt to pull his clothes, but the human form had already begun to scatter. Luo Fenghua's clothes were placed in his hands like sand.

"Shizun… Shizun…" he said first.

Then he went crazy, his eyes flashing with a sinister, quivering light.

"Luo Fenghua! Luo Fenghua!"

It was useless.

No matter how he shouted or how he addressed himself.

Luo Fenghua's afterimages quickly dissipated. In the end, they turned into tens of thousands of dots of light, blowing into the wind…

Nothing was left.

Xu Shuanglin knelt there blankly, straight-backed and stiff.

He did not move.

Didn't cry.

No more shouting.

On the Soul Summoning Platform, a cracked spirit core lost its light in the cold wind. It fell to the ground, dim and colorless.

The magical formation that was supposed to take the form of Luo Fenghua's new body was now like tens of millions of willow leaves floating in the air, speckled with stars and floating in the air.

Xu Shuanglin knelt in the midst of a dream of dust and smoke.

After a long while, he seemed to be mumbling to himself, but he also seemed to be laughing at himself as he said, "The age of the Weak Crown is the best. Look at the ends of the world?"

What a good song.

When he was young, he had often heard Luo Fenghua sing.

His eyes were filled with memories of the past. In those floating golden catkins, he saw the first scene of his Shizun's childhood —

At that time, both he and his brother were still young, and their father had brought them to the front of the academy. At that time, it was autumn, and the academy had an old, desolate orange tree with heavy fruits growing on it. Under the tree, two men were conversing.

The other was valiant and brave.

Father led them over and said, “Quickly meet your master.”

His brother quickly bowed and said, “Disciple Nangong Liu greets Shizun.”

The man waved his hand and said, “I’m just here to ask Mr. Luo for some advice. I’m not your Shizun. Young Masters, you’ve recognized the wrong person.”

His father also smiled and led them towards the man who did not look too impressive, saying: “This is your Shizun, Immortal Elder Luo Feng.”

He raised his head and saw Luo Fenghua’s bashful smile. At that time, Luo Fenghua was already young, but once he tensed up, he became even more immature. His round eyes reflected the image of his two disciples, and his cheeks were slightly red. The old head took his hand and told him, “Immortal Elder, my two children have very different personalities, so the cultivation path they should take is also different. In the future, please take care of them and teach them accordingly.”

Luo Fenghua was holding an orange in his hand, as if he was trying his best to extract the dignity of a teacher. However, as he continuously twisted and turned the orange in his hand, his youthfulness and blush was revealed.

Nangong Liu was a kind boy and immediately called out sweetly, “Shizun Luo, Shizun Luo.”

Luo Fenghua’s face immediately turned deep red, the tips of his ears had been taken over by the color of blood, he waved his hands, “I… No, there’s no need to be so polite. It’s my first time as a teacher, and I don’t know anything at all… In the future, I hope that the two Young Masters can give me some pointers, I…”

Xu Shuanglin clearly remembered the sunlight from that day in Linyi. This Luo Fenghua, who was more like a “little brother” rather than a “Shizun,” stood under a tree covered in oranges and stood in the light of day.

The edges of his ears were thin. In the reverse light, he could see the faint cyan veins beneath his skin. The edges of his ears had been reflected into a sparkling and translucent orange color.

Thus, Xu Shuanglin said his first words to Luo Fenghua.

“Mr. Luo Fenghua, are you 20 this year?”

This was originally a taunt that even the father standing beside him could hear, but Luo Fenghua was unable to do so. He actually smiled and replied sincerely, “I’m not really, I’m seventeen this year.”

“…”

Xu Shuanglin moved his lips, wanting to say something, but in the end, he did not, so he just walked away.

His father pulled him back to a corner and said sternly, “How can you just look at your abilities when you’re young?”

“He’s not much older than us.”

“The Immortal Wang that I hired you earlier, you think he’s old?!”

“Isn’t he old?” Xu Shuanglin rolled his eyes, “97, I think he’s about to decompose into an immortal.”

“You don’t like him even if he’s seventeen or ninety-seven. What exactly do you want?”

Xu Shuanglin said lazily, “Dad, can you not look for someone twice? There’s a difference of eighty years between the two of them?”

“…” The old head became angry, but he was embarrassed by his son’s words. Gritting his teeth for a long time, he finally said, “Although his ability isn’t the best, he’s very knowledgeable and knows a lot, and his skills are all top-notch. In short, if you honestly follow him, we can exchange after a year if you’re still not satisfied!”

After talking for a while, the two of them came out from the corner. When they returned to the front of the academy, Xu Shuanglin saw that his brother and Luo Fenghua were actually having a very pleasant conversation. From the look on his face, it seemed like he had known Master Luo for more than ten years.

However, this was not too strange. After all, Nangong Liu had an ability. As long as he wanted to, he could do whatever he wanted with anyone.

On the other hand, Luo Fenghua was still a bit nervous and restrained in his actions. When he looked up and saw Xu Shuanglin, his nervousness and restraint became even more obvious.

He looked at Xu Shuanglin’s impatient face as he was pulled over to him by his father.

He hesitated for a while and used the most clumsy and childish way to please his wayward little disciple.

He handed Xu Shuanglin the tangerine that he had been holding tightly to and had not eaten.

Xu Shuanglin: “…”

“It’s very sweet. Try it.”

That seventeen year old little Shizun looked helpless, panicked, and even a little pitiful.

Only now did Xu Shuanglin notice that on the corner of his clothes, there was even a flat patch.

So poor?

To be able to obtain the positions of Master of the two Young Masters of the Rufeng Sect, it was no wonder that he was so anxious and wanted to beg for it.

“I don’t like oranges.” Xu Shuanglin said, “Since master Luo wants to stay here and not leave, then this is the first thing I want to ask Master Luo to remember.”

“Xu’er!”

As the old head was about to reprimand him, Luo Fenghua waved his hand and quickly put away Tangerine. He said, “It’s alright, Sect Leader, you don’t have to worry about it.”

“Ai, this child is rude and doesn’t know how to respect his teacher, causing the immortal elder to feel wronged.”

“It doesn’t matter.” His gaze was warm and friendly, and it was also a bit cautious. “Actually, it doesn’t matter whether I take you in as my disciple or not, as long as you follow me and learn from me, you don’t have to acknowledge me as your Shizun.”

The old head quickly said, “How can that be…”

“Their reputations are all empty.” Luo Fenghua’s cheeks turned red as he scratched his head uneasily, “Actually, I feel that I’m too young…” He turned his head and said to Xu Shuanglin, “If little gongzi cares, you can call me by my name from now on.”

Xu Shuanglin quietly watched him for a while, then suddenly sneered. Just as Luo Fenghua, this poor honest man, was confused by his actions and grew more and more embarrassed, he tidied up his clothes, gave him a proper bow, and then raised his head.

The tangerine tree was fragrant and the light and shadow were moving.

Xu Shuanglin smiled, his eyebrows raised high and domineering, the corners of his mouth slightly arrogant and evil, but in the end, he was still young at the time. When he smiled, it naturally carried with it a hint of peach like tenderness.

That was true. Their reputations were all empty.

So why should he care so much about what he called the other party?

Thus, Xu Shuanglin lazily called out to him in a slow and unhurried manner, “Shizun.”

The orange leaves rustled, and the ground was mottled with leaves.

The wind was blowing.

‘Forget it. I just barely managed to find a Shizun. In less than a year, I’ll have to look for another one,’ he thought.

Back then, Xu Shuanglin had truly believed that everything had been as it had been, as if nothing had happened, and this day was just one of the

most ordinary days of his life.

Ch. 227 [Mount Jiao] Old Words

In the blink of an eye, two years passed.

Two years later, on an autumn day, Xu Shuanglin was lying on the roof of the Rufeng Gate's main hall, squinting at the red clouds all over the sky, a dogtail grass in his mouth.

Very few people would go up to the top of the hall. Originally, he was alone, but now there were two people sitting on his left and right sides.

One was his older brother Nangong Liu. The other was Master Luo, who was about the same age as them.

Xu Shuanglin felt that he sometimes seemed like some grimacing beast that would not easily allow others to invade his territory, so he didn't know why, and he didn't know when, but he was willing to bring these two people up to the roof to stare blankly with him.

Looking at the clouds, look at the dragonflies flying low, catkins floating high.

"Liu'er! Xu'er! Where are you?" came his father's anxious, slightly angry voice from below.

"Seriously, every time I get them to help clean the courtyard, they run faster than a rabbit. These two brats."

"Aiya." Nangong Liu quietly stuck his head out from the corner of the eaves and looked at his father who was walking away hastily. He then turned his head back and said, "Haha, let's go."

“The old man is stupid too.” Xu Shuanglin lazily crossed his legs, looking down at them disdainfully. “I knew he’d never come up to the roof to look for us.”

On the other hand, Luo Fenghua was a bit worried: “Isn’t it bad that we’re doing this… Ai, how about you all go down in a moment. Don’t make the Sect Leader anxious.”

“What does it matter? Anyway, the sky is falling and we’re holding it up.” Nangong Liu made a face at him, “What are you worried about? A-Xu, tell me, right?”

Xu Shuanglin was neither right nor wrong. He spat out the dogtail grass in his mouth, stretched, and sat up straight. “Give me some seeds.”

Nangong Liu had poured more than half of the melon seeds that he had brought along into his hands. Xu Shuanglin slowly knocked on the melon seeds while squinting his eyes. He looked at Luo Fenghua with a funny expression of unease.

He spat out a piece of melon seeds that stuck to his lips and smiled. “Shizun is afraid?”

“I just don’t think that’s good…”

“What’s not good about it?” Xu Shuanglin said, “If the old man blames you, I’ll give him a hard time.”

Luo Fenghua: “…”

Xu Shuanglin extended his hand towards Luo Fenghua. “Give me one tangerine.”

“Didn’t you say that you don’t like to eat…”

Xu Shuanglin furrowed his brows. “You’re just being long-winded, are you going to give it or not? If I don’t grab your ankle, I’ll throw you down.”

His brother came to defend his teacher. “A-Xu, don’t always be so fierce when talking to Shizun.”

“Shizun, what are you talking about? You are always asking others to listen to you.” Xu Shuanglin said, “How could there be a Shizun who would sneakily go up to the roof with his disciple to knock on a melon seed?”

Luo Fenghua was embarrassed by what he said and he slowly lowered his head.

Xu Shuanglin loved to see him like this. Every time he saw him, he felt like a bully bullying the weak. He looked at Luo Fenghua for a while, before suddenly opening his mouth and exposing his white teeth.

“Big Brother Shizun, is what I said right?”

Shizun and older brother were nicknames that Xu Shuanglin had come up with all of a sudden. They were respectful but intimate, and there was also a hint of teasing hidden within their intimacy. Thus, Luo Fenghua appeared very anxious and also very sad: “No, don’t call me that.”

“Salutation is just a formality. Shizun, Big Brother said so himself.”

Luo Fenghua: “…”

After teasing him, Xu Shuanglin stretched out his hand again, begging for more, “Tangerine.”

“You don’t like it. I only brought one for Liu.”

Xu Shuanglin opened his eyes wide, but he was not glaring at Luo Fenghua. Instead, he was glaring at his brother.

Nangong Liu was stuffing pastries into his mouth when he suddenly choked. He vaguely waved his hand and said, “Erm, I don’t really want to eat oranges today. Shizun, please give it to him.”

Luo Fenghua thought for a moment and said, “You guys can split it in half.”

He wiped the orange on his sleeve and peeled it off, trying to break it in half fairly, but it was still big on one side and small on the other.

Thus, Luo Fenghua appeared to be troubled.

It was probably because of his poor background that he was always troubled by such trivial matters.

“Sigh…”

“Give me the big one.” Xu Shuanglin was not courteous at all. He took the tangerine and made a decision for Luo Fenghua, who was trying to make things even, “I’ll give it to him.”

Luo Fenghua said, “Don’t always bully your brother…”

Before he could finish his sentence, he was stuffed with a fresh orange juice. He widened his round eyes in astonishment, blankly staring at Xu Shuanglin.

“What are you talking about?” Xu Shuanglin laughed. His attitude was carefree, but his eyes were very gentle. “This part of me… I’m going to split

with Shizun and Big Brother again.”

Nangong Liu also came over and took the other half of the tangerine. After counting the number of petals, he gave a few pieces to Xu Shuanglin and Luo Fenghua.

The later sect leader of the Rufeng Sect chuckled. Under the sunset, his fine, soft hair was like lint, slightly falling in front of his forehead. Xu Shuanglin looked at him with amusement. “What are you doing?”

“We’ll have oranges to eat together.”

He divided the melon seeds, the pastries, and the dried fruits into three piles.

“Let’s have some snacks and try it together.”

“You all… You all are really…” However, regardless of whether it might be Xu Shuanglin or Nangong Liu, they seemed to not be affected by his words at all. Instead, they were looking at him with a kind and mischievous gaze.

Luo Fenghua felt happy and ridiculous under this kind of friendly gaze. After a long while, he muttered: “What a mess…”

Nangong Liu said, “If they are not messing around, then it is the three of them that are messing around.”

When Xu Shuanglin heard this, he finally burst out into laughter. With one hand on the roof and the other on his forehead, he smiled and said, “Okay, then the three of us will have oranges to eat together in the future. If there’s any snacks, then we’ll have some.”

He paused for a moment, looking at the magnificent scenery of the Rufeng Sect house, then grinned, “if there’s a roof, let’s climb together.”

The scene flashed by.

It was still that year, the Lantern Festival.

Xu Shuanglin was walking lazily along the main road of the Rufeng Sect, barefooted and holding a branch in his mouth. From time to time, he would point at the lantern and say, “Hang it a little higher and say ‘you’. What are you hanging it so low for? Someone else with a short leg will go up.”

An anxious voice suddenly came from behind: “A-Xu, wait a moment.”

Xu Shuanglin turned around and saw Luo Fenghua bringing a pair of shoes over. With a frown, he asked, “Why are you running around without wearing shoes again?”

“This road is filled with Qi Refining Stones. You don’t have to wear shoes to absorb spiritual power.”

“The sky is so cold, so what’s with this little spiritual energy? Put it on quickly. Look at you, your toes are red from the cold.”

“Tsk, you’re so annoying.”

However, even though he said that, Xu Shuanglin still slowly put on his shoes. He didn’t wear any rules, so he casually stepped on them. With his eyes closed, he asked Luo Fenghua: “What, are you free? Do you want to come with me to the lantern market?”

“A-Liu’s class hasn’t been completed yet, I have to finish his lesson before I…”

As his voice fell, he was interrupted by Xu Shuanglin.

He raised his chin with a haughty look in his eyes, “If you want to keep an eye on my brother, that idiot, writing for him, then you’ll have to waste the entire Lantern Festival. Don’t overdo it.”

Luo Fenghua had a good temper as he laughed, “But it’s just that, I don’t really like the liveliness either.”

Xu Shuanglin stared at him for a while, before suddenly kicking off his shoes in anger, sending them flying far away. Luo Fenghua asked in astonishment, “What’s wrong with you?”

“I won’t wear it, I won’t wear it!” He exclaimed. “Fuck off.”

“Wear shoes, it’s cold.”

“I won’t wear it! Scram!”

“… Are you angry?”

Xu Shuanglin’s face was filled with disgust. “I’m angry? What’s there to be angry about? You and my brother, you two are idiots and poor people. Go. Don’t pay any attention to me.”

With that, he waved his hand and casually walked forward.

At that time, he actually hoped that Luo Fenghua would catch up.

Even if his feet were red from the cold, he didn’t care.

He just wanted to kick off both their shoes and wait for someone to call him from behind. He was anxious to get mad and tell him that he was going to catch a cold.

Xu Shuanglin walked forward expectantly.

However, after waiting for a while, Luo Fenghua did not catch up, nor did he call out to him.

He paused, then slowed down.

After walking for a hundred meters, he would reach the city gate, but no one called out to him. He pinched his knuckles and thought to himself, whatever, since I've never had any playmates since I was young, how many years has it been since I've last seen the lanterns on my own? It's not that big of a deal.

He stepped down the steps.

One level.

Two levels.

Finally, he quickly turned his head around, wrinkled his nose, changed his appearance, and couldn't help but shout: "Luo Fenghua!"

Actually, Luo Fenghua hadn't left yet. He stood at his original spot and had already retrieved his shoes. He was currently in a dilemma and didn't know what to do. At this moment, hearing Xu Shuanglin's explosive shout, it was like a blow to the head. Suddenly, he regained his senses and opened his round eyes wide, saying in a daze, "Ah…"

"…"

Forget it.

I really admire him.

Therefore, on that year's Lantern Festival, he and Xu Shuanglin accompanied Nangong Liu.

Nangong Liu was distressed to the extreme as he clashed against the magic scroll to the death. He rolled his eyes and recited, "The bottom of the heart is an inch and a half, for the Great Ravine Acupuncture Point, for the Curtain of the Heart. What did you do that for? I don't remember."

"Stupid! Just forget it!"

Xu Shuanglin used the bamboo slip to knock on his brother's head, his face full of hostility. "In the lower half, I'll wake up with my fist. If I don't heal after I wake up, I'll die a hundred days later. The water acupoint on the navel belongs to the small intestine and stomach, and dies on the 28th day of a severe injury. The ninth time! How come you're not dead stupid?!"

Nangong Liu was clearly very depressed. He laid his head on the table and let out a long sigh. However, he opened his eyes and blew out a strand of his soft hair that had fallen in front of his forehead.

"I also feel that I'm very stupid… If only I were as smart as you."

"Impossible." Xu Shuanglin said resolutely, "Keep dreaming."

With a flip of the warm curtain, Luo Fenghua who had just gone out to cook on the Lantern Festival returned.

He was wearing a thick cloak, and his dark hair and eyes were covered with a fine layer of snow. Under the light of the fire, his ordinary face gave off a

pleasant feeling.

It was just like welcoming the spring, when the snow fell, it would be beautiful.

“I’ve been carrying it for a long time, let’s eat some of it. Let’s rest for a while.”

Luo Fenghua brought the wooden tray over. There were three bowls of supper and a bowl for each of them.

Nangong Liu cheered and immediately rushed to the front of the table. Just as he was about to extend his hand, he was stopped by someone behind her.

Xu Shuanglin’s face was gloomy. “What’s the rush? There’s no need to be so reckless, thank you!”

Nangong Liu was flabbergasted. It was as if he was surprised that his younger brother, who did not follow any rules, would talk back to him like this.

“What?”

Seeing that his brother’s eyes were squinted in danger, Nangong Liu quickly waved his hand. He brushed his sleeves and made a big bow. He raised his head and jokingly said, “Little servant thanks Shizun for the gift ~”

Luo Fenghua: “…”

Xu Shuanglin saw this fellow’s mischievousness and felt that it was both good and funny. He knew that this person had probably learned it from some sort of book, so he said, “Alright, let’s eat some snacks.”

Luo Fenghua rubbed his hands that were a little stiff and red, then put them to his mouth. Xu Shuanglin helped him take off his cloak, and he was a little flattered: “Ah, no need to trouble yourself.”

Xu Shuanglin was too lazy to pay him any attention. He indifferently asked, “It’s snowing outside?”

“Yes, I just got off. I don’t know if I can pile it up tonight, but we can have a snowball fight the next day.”

“… Shizun.” The sudden greeting was not out of respect, but out of ridicule. “How old are you already?”

Xu Shuanglin couldn’t help but feel warmth in his heart, but when he felt this gentleness, he felt infuriated for no reason. He hurriedly searched for a reason to vent his anger, and sure enough, Luo Fenghua did not disappoint him. He quickly found one, which was why he pointed at a patch on his cloak and said:

“Are you poor? You had been in the Rufeng Sect for so long, why didn’t you throw this piece of trash away? What if people outside think we’re bullying you, are you stupid!?”

Luo Fenghua immediately became apprehensive: “This, even if it’s broken, I can still wear it after making up for it. Thinking about how there are still so many people suffering in the lower cultivation world, I can’t eat well, ah…”

“…” Xu Shuanglin’s finger was still on the bandage, glaring at him angrily.

Luo Fenghua cautiously sought the approval of his disciple, “Don’t you think so?”

“I think you’re sick! Poor sick!”

But even so, he hung the cloak back on the rack.

The three of them surrounded the stove and ate the Soup Dumplings.

Although he couldn’t see the lanterns, the three youngsters who were about the same age as him could chat for a while and not feel bored at all.

It was snowing outside the window, and the frost that covered the edge of the red window frame was crystal clear.

Inside the house, the firewood crackled and reflected the room as if it were spring.

Afterwards, after drinking a bit, the atmosphere became even better. Luo Fenghua was unable to refuse them, so he accepted the shimmer from Nangong Liu. His face was red and slightly drunk. He fiddled with it a couple of times and sang a song to his hometown.

“Falling Flower in the pool is about 3 or 4 points, the chords on the shore are about 1 or 2 chimes, the Weak Crown is about the best. Light hooves, fast horses, all the flowers in the world…”

“Shizun, this sounds good. What’s its name?”

“Young You.” Luo Fenghua said gently, “It’s a short song from Shu. I think it’s very suitable for the occasion.”

Nangong Liu raised his head and laughed. His smile was always overly friendly and always had a hint of flattery, but after drinking too much, it turned out to be straightforward and hearty. “Hahaha, a young man’s travels are nice.”

Xu Shuanglin gave a cold humph and folded his arms. “You can’t recite a book even after you’ve recited it nine times. Which young man would be as stupid as you?”

“Aiya, each person has their own strengths and weaknesses.” Nangong Liu smiled. He actually refuted his younger brother with energy, “Although you are a heaven warping talent, I might have my own natural endowments.”

“… You drank too much.”

Luo Fenghua also smiled. He raised his wine cup and said, “I hope that all of you will live a weak life. Each of you will depend on your own director to be a gentleman for your entire life.”

When he pushed him away, Nangong Liu did not seem to mind. He laughed loudly and said, “When Shizun said this, I suddenly remembered that even though we did not put out the lanterns, we still had to make a wish. Let’s all make one wish.”

Xu Shuanglin pursed his lips. “I think making a wish is rather disgusting.”

Luo Fenghua said, “Write it on paper. After you finish writing it, throw it into the fire and it will come true.”

In the end, they still wrote down their wishes. Of course, there was no need to explain what Luo Fenghua was talking about. He had already mentioned it when he was toasting earlier.

Nangong Liu had a problem with reading and liked to read while writing, “Weng… Eat well, drink well, have good prospects, be harmonious, and reunite.”

Xu Shuanglin was extremely disgusted, but within the disgust was a subtle emotion that could not be described with words.

He was a bastard, and no one in the family paid much attention to him.

It was only after Luo Fenghua arrived that he had a companion. He, Nangong Liu and his Shizun would often play together and cultivate together.

Rather than saying that Luo Fenghua was his Shizun, he would say that he was his first best friend.

With Luo Fenghua around, he was no longer jealous of his brother for being so useless, but instead paid attention to his identity as Luo Fenghua's disciple. As they spent their days together, they were able to see how cute Nangong Liu was.

"What did A-Xu write?"

Xu Shuanglin did not answer, throwing his folded paper into the fire.

His heart's desire was quickly swallowed up by the light and the heat, and the flames that splashed out reflected his eyes.

"Nothing, white paper."

Luo Fenghua and Nangong Liu were greatly disappointed and revealed expressions of disappointment.

Xu Shuanglin then revealed his teeth and laughed. His smile was also a little sweet, carrying a sort of pride that came from teasing people.

I lied to you.

The writing on the paper was neat, straight, and careful. It said —

I hope that Luo Fenghua, Nangong Xu, and Nangong Liu can be friends for life. They can eat oranges together, share pastries together, and climb on the roof together.

From a weak crown to white hair at the temples.

Ch. 228 [Mount Jiao] An Empty Space

On the spiritual platform of the Rufeng Sect, Xu Shuanglin gazed at the specks of golden light floating in the night sky. Suddenly, he felt very much like that snowy night when he had thrown a piece of paper into the furnace.

In an instant, it was burnt to ashes, and only a few sparks remained.

Luo Fenghua, Nangong Xu, and Nangong Liu.

Being able to be close friends for life.

However, there was no Nangong Xu in the world. Xu Shuanglin was now standing here, a madman or a demon who had crawled out of the depths of hell to seek the lives of all the righteous and proper people in the world.

There was no more Nangong Xu.

He was just like his name, adrift and helpless, floating in the vast world.

After the passage of time, the mountain range had been torn apart.

What's more, it was just a tiny willow leaf.

After so many years had passed, the willow tree was old, the Feng Hua withered, and they drifted about. What they saw was not the Heaven's End Flower, but the blood that filled the mountains and covered the lands, filling the sky with hatred.

However, why did he still give up everything that Luo Fenghua taught him that year to Ye Wangxi? Why did he feel pity and not be vicious when he saw a true man of kindness?

Why…

Why are you crying?

Xu Shuanglin knelt on the Soul Summoning Platform and finally broke out into a loud wail, his tears flowing down his ugly face.

His twisted face kept on falling, he rubbed the spirit core that was in Luo Fenghua's hand, finally crying until his heart was broken, as if every inch of sound was dug out from his throat and blood.

"Shizun… Luo Fenghua…"

He did all the calculations he could think of. He was filled with madness and hatred, distortion and longing.

Was it destroyed just like that?

When he thought of the Spiritual Mountain Competition, he was filled with resentment. When his father told him that Nangong Liu was his son, he felt indignant and took the throne out of anger.

—

He remembered the old, pale face of his father, staring at him in disbelief.

"This Sect Leader position is mine." His hand was placed on his father's throat, slowly closing, his expression was cold and ruthless, a light flashed in his eyes, "Rufeng Sect's hundred years of foundation, if father does not want to ruin it, then I will take it. You are old enough to rest."

"Xu'er…"

He closed his eyes and did not allow his father to continue speaking. The meridians in his hands bulged, and he could only hear a “kacha” sound. It was the sound of his throat breaking.

He took the ring of Rufeng Sect Leader and pressed it to his lips.

The thumb ring was cold, but so was his face.

“I just want justice. If you don’t give it to me, I’ll take it for myself. Father, you don’t have to hate me in the underworld.”

He turned around and walked out.

The scenes in his memories changed.

That was the first night after he usurped power. His servants cleaned up the bloodstains on the ground after the great battle, his father was dead, Nangong Liu and his family were imprisoned, and all those who tried to resist him were suppressed. Everything was set, and he did not know what to do.

He built a stove in the yard and drank his own tea. He was the only one in the courtyard. He rubbed the Sect Leader’s ring that was shining brightly on his thumb.

From then on, he was the Sect Leader of the Rufeng Sect.

There was no need to talk about the outsiders who had plotted against him at the Spiritual Mountain Competition. They would all be chopped to pieces if they found a chance, but he did not know how to deal with his big brother, much less Luo Fenghua.

As the twilight deepened, the golden crows began to sink.

Seeing that the sky was darkening, Xu Shuanglin finally made up his mind. He went to the water prison to meet his brother and his Shizun who were in custody.

He brought a few followers with him and walked halfway through the journey. The last bit of sunlight was swallowed up by the night sky as he shivered. Suddenly, he felt a little cold, and his head felt a little dizzy.

“Sect Leader, what’s wrong?”

Xu Shuanglin waved his servant away and said, “It’s fine. I suddenly remember that I haven’t dealt with one thing properly. I’ll go back to the main hall first. You guys don’t have to follow me.”

Suppressing the increasingly obvious pain, he put on the hood of his cloak and strode towards the main hall of the Rufeng Sect. In the end, he truly could not hold on any longer. Even if he could endure no more, he still could not resist running a bit further. He fiercely pushed open the door and entered, and then tightly shut the door.

“Sect Leader?”

“All of you, stand guard at the door. You are not allowed to enter, and you are not allowed to act rashly. If anything happens, inform me at any time.”

With these orders given by the guards, Xu Shuanglin staggered into the depths of the hall, panting. He suddenly took off his hood, and when he lowered his head to look, he discovered that his flesh was already completely chapped and his eyes were full of sinister scars.

His first reaction was that his father had cursed him.

Then, he felt that it was impossible. The old man was already very ill and didn't even have the strength to cast spells. How could he do such a thing without anyone noticing?

What was that all about?

The pain was excruciating. His muscles were broken, his skin was hideous, and he continued to spasm and tremble by the window. His knuckles were pale and twisted, and he was lying on the ground, scratching out streaks of red.

It was too painful…

He did not dare to call out nor call for a medical officer. As the leader of the rebel army, how could he expose half of his weakness?

He kept gasping in the hall, rolling and twitching in pain. As he kicked, he accidentally pulled down a curtain and landed on his body due to the intense pain.

The moonlight outside the window was obscured.

He felt the pain suddenly slow, and he was cold with sweat. He huddled under the curtain, gasping for breath, and after a while, thinking the pain was over, he pulled the curtain back down and sat up, trying to get up.

Who would have thought that under the moonlight, the skin would be ripped open again, and the pain would pierce through the bones and tendons.

Only now did Xu Shuanglin suddenly realize that it might be due to the moonlight shining on him. Therefore, he staggered to his feet, struggled to

close the window tightly, and hid in the darkest part of the hall, unable to see his fingers in front of him.

His breathing gradually calmed down.

The pain was gone, and the bleeding flesh was healing at a speed visible to the naked eye.

Xu Shuanglin felt that something was off, so he donned his cloak tightly and did not reveal any of his body. He rushed to the library and searched through the night until he found a scroll of his grandfather's past —

It turned out that Nangong Changying, the first head of the Rufeng Sect, had fought against the beast Gǔn. Although he had defeated the evil beast and kept it under the Golden Drum Tower, he had been cursed by the Gǔn.

The ancient evil beast was yin, and it was closely related to the night and the moonlight. It then cursed the previous leaders of the Rufeng Sect. As long as they saw the moonlight, their skin and flesh would be torn apart, and they would feel an excruciating pain that could pierce through their hearts and gouge out their bones.

And every full moon night, the Yin Qi was the most abundant. Even if one hid in the darkest corner without the moonlight, it would still make one feel extremely tormented.

Therefore, for hundreds of years, this had always been the greatest secret of the Rufeng Sect. Every previous sect's leader had always kept this a secret, afraid that someone would take this opportunity to sneak in.

Ironic.

He had spent a lot of effort, but what he got in return was a position of power that had been cursed at?

On the second day, Xu Shuanglin arrived at the water prison.

Nangong Liu and his wife, Rong Yan, were both locked inside, while Luo Fenghua was in another secret room.

Without looking at Luo Fenghua, he first went to his brother's prison.

"A-Xu! A-Xu! What are you doing? What are you trying to do…" Seeing him, Nangong Liu was extremely excited. However, his hands and feet were sealed by a seal and he could not move at all. He could only kneel on the ground and tear at his younger brother, "Have you gone mad? For the sake of a Sect Leader position, do you really have to go this far?"

After a night of torture, Xu Shuanglin still looked weak. He laughed coldly, "I just got back what I deserved."

"…"

"You stole my sword technique and ruined my reputation. I am only twenty years old, Nangong Liu." He paused, his eyes cold. "I am only twenty years old, and you have let me see for the rest of my life."

He walked over slowly, his robe tied around his waist, and then bent his head to look at his brother's face.

"Nangong Liu, trash like you all possess the ambition to gain power. If you all wish to become outstanding, then what about me?" he said slowly. "I am more diligent than you, more gifted than you, more superior than anything but your tongue."

He pinched Nangong Liu's chin and used his two fingers to pry open the other party's tightly shut mouth.

He stared at the slimy, sticky, reddish thing inside.

"What a bloodless weapon. Cut it."

Nangong Liu widened his eyes in fear, but because his mouth was stuck, he could not say a word. He could only moan in pain as saliva dripped from his mouth.

"No cutting?" Xu Shuanglin sneered. "It's fine if you don't cut your tongue. Seeing that you and I have been brothers for so long, and have happily killed you, at least I have shown mercy."

The moment he let go, Nangong Liu cried out, "Don't kill me! Don't kill me! No, isn't that the matter with the Spiritual Mountain Competition? You, bring me out, I will give you… I… I will give you justice in front of the entire world!"

"Too late." Xu Shuanglin took out a snow-white handkerchief and wiped his hands, glancing at him indifferently. "No matter what you say, everyone in the world will only take it as a forced admission from me. The sewage you poured on me can no longer be washed away."

Nangong Liu did not have the time to speak when he heard a girl's voice beside his that was as sharp as a knife.

"Nangong Xu! You know you've been wronged, but what are you doing now? You had killed your own father, deprived the Sect Leader of his ring, and now, you want to kill your brother? You… How could you be so heartless?"

“Oh, Senior Sister Rong.” Xu Shuanglin gave a slight smile. “If you hadn’t spoken, I would have forgotten you were here.”

Although Rong Yan was restrained by the curse, she was still kneeling. However, she had a resolute expression, and although her eyes were filled with tears, they were not weak. “I really misjudged you back then.”

“So what if you don’t see wrongly with me?” Xu Shuanglin smiled. “The one who gave me the scented sachet was you, and the one who married Nangong Liu was also you. You were the one who gave me the scented sachet first. You don’t want to tell me that you were forced by him to do this, do you?”

Rong Yan’s face turned white as if she wanted to say something, but in the end, she bit her lower lip and closed her eyes.

Tears ran down her cheeks.

The blade was already in his hand, glowing with a cold light.

“No… No… A-Xu, you can say anything, I can talk to you about anything… Don’t kill me. I beg you, don’t kill me…”

“Are you sure you’re not in the wrong place?” Xu Shuanglin wiped the blade, his lips still carrying that evil smile, “Nangong Liu, I am the Sect Leader now and you are a prisoner. You have nothing in your hands, yet you still want to negotiate conditions with me? What are you trying to use as a bargaining chip, your dog life?”

“I can be your slave! Yes. I can plant the grass, I, I am willing to do anything! As long as you are willing, Senior Sister Rong can return it to you!”

Rong Yan suddenly opened her eyes, she turned her head furiously, “Nangong Liu!”

Nangong Liu was scared out of his wits. He ignored his wife and sobbed to his brother, “As long as you let me go…… I beg you, please let me go…”

“Come on.” Xu Shuanglin lazily patted him on the face with the handle of his blade. “Do you think I’ll ever touch that tangerine you licked?”

“Then I can — I can —” Nangong Liu searched his stomach, but he could not think of anything. Only tears and snot flowed incessantly, and in the end, he cried out, “A-Xu, we once said that we ate the pastries together and climbed up on the roof together… We will cultivate together, spend the night with Shizun, and learn how to play the zither. Those days, have you forgotten about them?”

Xu Shuanglin’s face darkened, but in the end, he only laughed coldly. Raising his blade, he slashed down.

“AHHHHH!”

“Wait a minute!”

The cold blade stopped just a few inches away from Nangong Liu’s neck. In truth, Xu Shuanglin was not sure. Even without these two shouts, his blade would not be able to move a few more inches forward.

However, his expression remained unchanged and he said indifferently, “What now? You two really have a lot of last words.”

Ch. 229 [Mount Jiao] From then on, It Became Cloudy

Rong Yan did not look at her husband, but instead looked at him with moist almond-shaped eyes, her back was straight, and she choked with sobs: “Out of friendship from the past, can you please let me have my child?”

“…” Xu Shuanglin’s gaze slowly moved down and landed on Rong Yan’s lower abdomen. At first glance, it looked normal, but upon closer inspection, it was already bulging slightly.

Rong Yan kowtowed but her face was cold.

“Please.”

“…”

“Father’s guilt is irrefutable. But Nangong Xu, I want to beg you to spare your nephew’s life.”

Xu Shuanglin stared at this woman for a while and only felt that it was laughable.

Spare her of the vile spawn in her stomach? What did that unformed lump of flesh, nephew or niece, have to do with him?

However, in the midst of his viciousness, he suddenly recalled the excruciating pain from last night. Xu Shuanglin paused for a moment, suddenly realizing that this was a very good thing — the Sect Leader of the Rufeng Sect could only pass on the inheritance to the Young Master after the Old Sect Leader had passed away.

Or through usurpation. As for the rest, it didn't matter if he abdicated, gave way to meritocracy or resigned his position to someone more virtuous. It was all useless.

Thus, it was impossible for him to give up the seat to Nangong Liu. However, a hundred years later, he would be able to pass the seat to Nangong Liu's child.

It was best for a father to repay his son's debts.

For a moment, he was in a good mood. The corners of his brows raised into a bright smile. Before the two of them could react, he threw his saber and walked out of the cell, laughing loudly.

Later on, he did not kill Nangong Liu, nor did he kill Rong Yan. Instead, he placed them under house arrest in a small courtyard, planning to wait for the birth of their child before bestowing him the title of the next Sect Leader, establishing a blood contract with himself.

He was afraid that he would be able to boast of his magnanimity in the world, regardless of his past grudges.

But he did not see that day.

Not long after he ascended to the throne, he committed many atrocities. At that time, he had accumulated a lot of grievances between the outside and the inside of the sect. Later, a city lord held resentment against him, so he secretly released Nangong Liu and Luo Fenghua when he was unprepared.

Luo Fenghua did not know what was going on behind his back. He only thought that he had done all these crazy things for the sake of the sect's

high position. With Nangong Liu's clever tongue, he became more frustrated. Thus, he joined hands with Nangong Liu to seize the position, trying to drive Xu Shuanglin out of the Sect Leader’s position, which was still warm from the sun.

That night, there was a civil war in the Rufeng Sect, with over a hundred casualties. Amidst the flames of war, Luo Fenghua was the first to find Xu Shuanglin who had taken refuge in the Moonhowl Courtyard.

It was a full moon that night, and Xu Shuanglin was in terrible pain. His entire body was covered in blood, and as he lay in the leaves, he looked like a snake that had its skin ripped off, exposing bright red flesh.

When Luo Fenghua saw him, he thought that he had been injured by the magic curse during the war. Although there was resentment in his heart, he could not help but feel pity for his beloved disciple because of his miserable state.

Xu Shuanglin shivered in the forest as he raised his head, revealing a pitiful smile. “You came.”

“…”

“I fought with him, and you always helped him in the end.”

Luo Fenghua said, “This time, you went too far. Did you kill Grandmaster Tian Chan?”

“That’s right.”

“Where is Taoist Master Lin?”

“He deserved to die.”

“… What about your father…”

After a moment of silence, Xu Shuanglin said, “He’s unfair. He believes me to be a thief. He asked for it.”

Luo Fenghua closed his eyes, his eyelashes became moist: “You… How did you get to this point…”

“Heh.” Xu Shuanglin laughed sinisterly, “You only permit me to be cheated, not others? I am only allowed to let others stab my body, and I am not allowed to pull out my sword and return the favor.”

The expression on Luo Fenghua’s face was broken as he swayed on his feet. He walked up to Xu Shuanglin, but before he even opened his mouth, tears had already begun streaming down his face.

“What are you crying for? What’s there to cry about? If you want to kill me, kill me. If you want to do it, just do it. Why would you pretend to shed a few tears in front of me? In your eyes, in the eyes of the old man, in the eyes of everyone else, that piece of trash is always more important than me!”

Luo Fenghua shook his head. He did not say a word. Instead, he raised his hand and began to chant a forbidden spell.

“… I forbade the spells that you and I learned from childhood.” Luo Fenghua said, “From now on, Nangong Xu, you and I are no longer Shizun and disciple.”

“…” Xu Shuanglin felt a heart-wrenching pain, a curse, a deep pain that pierced his heart.

He rested in place for a while and then said stubbornly, “Don’t think too much about it. I’ve never treated you as my Shizun.”

Luo Fenghua stared at him blankly. After a long while, he seemed to want to say something, but from behind came a clamor. The soldiers were approaching, their swords flashing.

Nangong Liu rushed over, “Shizun!”

Seeing that Xu Shuanglin and Luo Fenghua were talking, his heart suddenly skipped a beat. He immediately said anxiously, “Shizun, don’t listen to anything he says! He’s the one who lied to you!”

Xu Shuanglin chuckled.

This elder brother of his was always so naive and adorable.

He thought that he would still bitterly pull on Luo Fenghua’s sleeve and explain the whole situation, the cause and effect? No.

To him, life was like a game of chess. With a single move, all the twists and turns in his heart were no longer important. What was important was the result.

If you kill someone, you kill them. If you stain their blood, you stain them.

He couldn’t wash it, and he didn’t want to wash it for himself.

Luo Fenghua would never forgive him.

There was no need to say anything.

He held onto a nearby tree and staggered to his feet.

Moonlight shone on his face as his skin and flesh split open inch by inch, revealing a bloody and hideous appearance.

When Nangong Liu and the surrounding cultivators saw this, they could not help but take a step back. Some of them misunderstood and said in astonishment, “This, this was caused by Daoist Luo? Thousand Knives Curse… This is too cruel…”

Xu Shuanglin grinned, revealing a mouthful of dense white teeth.

He stared outside the forest at his younger brother. He suddenly felt that he did not want to let this pair of Shizun and disciple go so easily. So he turned to Luo Fenghua and said, “Tell them to scram, I have something I want to tell you personally before I die. I just want to talk to you alone.”

He held onto the pine tree and slowly moved, arriving at a dark place with Luo Fenghua.

The moonlight was obscured by the dense shade, and Xu Shuanglin’s complexion slightly relaxed. His chapped skin also began to heal bit by bit. Although there were still many small scars, they were no longer as frightening as before.

Xu Shuanglin did not turn around. With his back facing Luo Fenghua, he first asked, “If you come here alone with me, aren’t you afraid that I’ll kill you?”

“You won’t.”

“…”

“If you wanted to kill me or Liu, you could have done it a year ago.”

Xu Shuanglin suddenly turned his head, his eyes flashing with an excited and twisted light. “How laughable. You think you understand me very well?!”

Luo Fenghua suddenly looked at his face and opened his eyes wide: “Your scar…”

“It’s not as scary as it was, is it?”

Xu Shuanglin scoffed.

“What do you think this is? Incantation of Law? Lingzhi?”

He slowly raised his hand. In his palm was a ring that shone with a ghostly light. His lips were touching each other as he said in a mocking and malicious voice, “This ring is enchanted. When you and Nangong Liu chased me down from the Sect Leader’s position, it fell from my thumb. It knows that I am no longer the leader of the Rufeng Sect. However, there are two chiefs who conspired to usurp me, so it does not know which one it should recognize.”

“If you take over Liu’s position, you should return it to him.”

Xu Shuanglin grinned. “I really did think that way.”

He placed the ring in Luo Fenghua’s hand, and patted it twice before saying, “Hold it well, hold it steady. When you go out later, give this good thing to him. Remember, you must personally help him put it on. He’s the genuine Sect Leader of this sect.”

He paused and stared at the face of Luo Fenghua that was enduring the pain.

Then he leaned over, lowered his voice, and whispered in his ear, “Next, I’m going to tell you a secret. Don’t be afraid, this secret isn’t too dark. It’s just a part of a hero’s story, that’s all.”

Slowly, in a low voice, he told the story of when Nangong Changying subjugated the Gǔn, and it attached the curse of the leader of the Rufeng Sect, which, with malice, sank between his teeth and hardened into fangs, into the flesh of Luo Fenghua.

He saw that Luo Fenghua’s expression was getting uglier and uglier, and his round eyes were growing bigger and bigger.

He saw Luo Fenghua being pressed against a tree and was trembling slightly.

He felt overjoyed.

Ha.

Aren’t you spoiling him?

You. One or two, didn’t they treat Nangong Liu as a treasure?

I want you to hand it to him.

The corners of Xu Shuanglin’s mouth slowly widened, and then revealed a snake-like sinister smile. He raised his hand and caressed Luo Fenghua’s cheek, “Shizun, the story is over. You can leave.” He paused for a moment, and then his expression became even more radiant, “Go visit the Rufeng Sect. The sixth generation Sect Leader — Nangong Liu, go.”

That day, he was covered in blood. He had escaped from the Rufeng Sect on his flying sword, and after wandering for half a night, he exhausted his

energy and landed in Butterfly Town.

He met a little girl sitting in the yard.

When the little girl saw that he was injured, he lost all his blood. She was so scared that her face turned pale and she trembled. However, she still poured a bowl of water from inside the house and passed it to him to drink. He drank the water and stared at her. Then, for some reason, he suddenly felt that the girl looked so much like his best friend, his mentor, his sworn enemy. Her eyes looked so much like Luo Fenghua's.

When he saw that the orange tree in the yard was filled with fruits, a thought suddenly appeared in his mind. He really wanted to eat it, but that little girl's words were filled with a rancid, sour smell, and she spoke with a righteous gentleman's tone. It was as if he was seeing that ridiculous Luo Fenghua saying sincerely:

"I hope that all of you will live your lives in the prime of your lives, relying on your own authority to become gentlemen for the rest of your lives."

A gentleman of his time.

…… How ridiculous.

He shook the tangerine out of the branches, cut down the orange tree, and walked away, leaving the little girl crying in the yard, but he was still angry. That night he had killed several villagers, and as his hand fell and the word "gentleman" grew farther and farther away, he felt more and more pleased.

Afterward, he left, planning to hide his identity and live his remaining life.

However, at that time, he heard from the teahouse that Luo Fenghua had usurped the throne and became the next head of the Rufeng Sect.

The customers that came and went were all saying, “Ai, I didn’t expect this. They really don’t know how to judge a person’s appearance and heart.”

“Pity Nangong Liu for raising troops to rebel this time. I never would have thought that he was actually helping others.”

“He should hate his Shizun to death, right?”

“This Luo Fenghua is truly a person whose heart is filled with greed. He is not a person to be trifled with.”

Xu Shuanglin sat in front of the greasy table, holding a cup of tea that he was about to bring to his lips.

His vision went black as the earth spun and the sky spun.

However, he never expected that Luo Fenghua would make such a decision.

That he would rather bear the blame for misunderstandings and hatred, rather be pointed at by thousands of men and despised by tens of thousands of people.

He’d rather suffer the evil curse himself, and would suffer on the night of full moon, until the end of this life.

It was impossible for Luo Fenghua to personally stab this sharp sword into his disciple’s heart.

In the end, they were still lacking one step.

“Ta. Ta. Ta.”

The sound of footsteps slowly sounded.

Xu Shuanglin broke free from his reminiscing. He opened his eyes, and in his blurry vision, he saw the face of a young man.

Mo Ran walked up to him on the empty Soul Summoning Platform and half-knelt down as he stared at him.

In that instant, Xu Shuanglin felt that this young man’s gaze was very strange. There were too many things hidden within, so he didn’t seem like a young man in his early twenties.

Mo Ran said, “… Nangong Liu, you plan to revive him?”

“None of your business.”

“Leave Nangong Liu behind and revive Luo Fenghua. From then on, there will no longer be anyone idle on this Mount Jiao. Am I right that you wish to live a peaceful life here?”

Xu Shuanglin yelled back, “It’s none of your business!”

Mo Ran picked up the broken spirit core from the ground. Inside the spirit core, there was still light flowing. He said, “You disguised yourself and returned to Nangong Liu’s side as Xu Shuanglin. You incited him to send troops to seize the position because you could not bear to see Luo Fenghua suffering from the curse. Life was better than death.”

“What right do you have to guess my intentions?!” Xu Shuanglin’s eyes were bloodshot, shining with a moist and ruthless light. “You think you understand everything?!”

“I don’t understand. I can only guess. But looking at your expression, I also feel that my guess is not too far off the mark.”

Xu Shuanglin cracked every word between his teeth and spat out these four words, “The next generation is arrogant.”

“It’s the same. When you were twenty, didn’t you go crazy?” Mo Ran looked at him quietly, “Nangong Xu, that year, you helped your brother reclaim the position of Sect Leader, but you did not expect that after being plotted against twice, for the position of Sect Leader he would be ruthless. You did not expect him to kill Luo Fenghua after taking over his position. You never expected his death.”

“You were confused, and at loss. You didn’t know what to do.” He stared at Xu Shuanglin’s face.

He knew that feeling of despair better than anyone else.

He was reading Xu Shuanglin’s heart, reading his own.

“In your despair, what are you going to do?”

Ch. 230 [Mount Jiao] Young Man

If it was him, what would he do?

Rebirth.

He would want that person to be reborn.

Mo Ran looked at Xu Shuanglin who was curled up on the ground and said softly, “You never expected Nangong Liu to be so vicious that he killed Luo Fenghua. In desperation, you decided to just do as he said, saying that the curse on the ring was left by Luo Fenghua and instigating Nangong Liu to follow the rules of the Rufeng Clan.”

“Throw Luo Fenghua’s body into the blood pool and send him to the eighteen levels of hell.”

“Is he crazy?” Xue Meng, who was at the side, was stunned, “Since he wants Luo Fenghua to come back to life, he definitely values this person. Then why did you push him into the eighteen levels of hell?”

“Because once a soul enters Purgatory, it cannot be reborn.” Mo Ran looked at him with pity in his eyes.

“This way, Luo Fenghua won’t be reincarnated immediately. You can study the method of rebirth and let him come back. Then, build an ideal state, a place where you are a god, fair and just.”

Xu Shuanglin: “…”

After a moment of silence, the man with the festering face chuckled. He stared at Mo Ran’s face and said, “Mo-zongshi, I’ve only realized today that

you are a madman.”

He paused and then said in a very soft voice, “Because only madmen can understand me.”

After he finished speaking, he burst into laughter.

The laughter was like that of a bald vulture, even though he was already old, he was still fiercely and persistently occupying the cliff face, not showing any sign of weakness even in death.

Mo Ran closed his eyes, and also softly said to him: “Nangong Xu, listen carefully, there are still people in this world who know the technique of rebirth. If you are willing, I will do my best to plead with Huaizui, Grandmaster of the Wubei Temples, and even have his life with your Shizun.”

“…”

He opened his palm and handed the broken spiritual core back to Xu Shuanglin. “But please, tell me…”

It was as if he was trying to catch the last blade of grass to save his life.

He frowned. In a place where no one could see, his eyes revealed a trace of helplessness.

“Please tell me who has been supporting you from behind.” Mo Ran said, “Who told you about such an evil rebirth technique? Who taught you how to play chess?”

Memories coincided with those of his previous life.

In the rolling beacons of the Rufeng Sect, Xu Shuanglin stood in front of Ye Wangxi, blocking his path. He had died under a knife.

Since this was the case, Xu Shuanglin in his previous life had not had a specific plan before he died. But in this life, everything was different. Xu Shuanglin had long set up a mystery in the Jincheng Lake, designed the Peach Blossom Springs shocking, Butterfly Town's Heavenly Rift, and after using the method of offering sacrifice, he quickly changed methods and went around collecting godly weapons, finally pulling Luo Fenghua out of the purgatory.

This kind of rebirth method was definitely not something he came up with on his own.

"You want to know?" Xu Shuanglin's eyes flashed with a malicious light, "My skills have indeed been taught by someone, but I am not willing to tell you."

"Would you rather die and be one of his chess pieces?"

"Chess pieces?" Xu Shuanglin smiled, "You're thinking too much. He understands me and can understand my feelings. He and I are the same person. Mo-zongshi, just give up. I will never tell you who he is. All of you have gone to great lengths to climb Mount Jiao, and all of you have contented yourself with forcing me onto a dead end, but so what?"

"…"

"In the end, the world will still fall into chaos. He would still flatten the upper and lower worlds, turning them into scorched earth. Then, the good will be rewarded, the wicked will be rewarded, and those who are able to

live in high places will become slaves.” The smile in Xu Shuanglin’s eyes grew brighter and brighter. “Truly… It can’t be any better.”

Xue Meng flew into a rage when he heard this, “What good person gets repaid for evil person! What kind of person could become a slave to a high and mediocre person?! Whether others are good or evil, whether they are honest or not, is it up to you to speak your mind? Those people you made pawns out there. And Nangong Changying… And… Also…”

He stole a glance at Chu Wanning’s face and could not help but lower his voice, “There is also Nangong Si.” Xue Meng seemed very dissatisfied and wronged. “Are they willing to control it for you? Do they deserve to die?”

“Sacrifice is always a must.” Xu Shuanglin glanced at him indifferently. “young master Xue, you are still too young.”

His expression was rather dispirited, as if he was not very willing to converse with a person with such an intense temper like Xue Meng. He once again turned his head towards Mo Ran.

“If he falls into your hands, you can kill him or cut him into pieces as you wish.” He even said in a casual tone, “I still have a Lingchi Fruit in my Qiankun bag. If you guys don’t think that’s enough, you can feed it to me.”

As he spoke, he coldly mocked, “In any case, when I was twenty years old, I had long since been outdone by those famed righteous warriors. I don’t want to miss a chance to come back again.”

Huang Xiaoyue asked, “Who was faster than you? It’s simply shameless to open your mouth to speak such lies!”

But Mo Ran was clear on Xu Shuanglin’s intentions.

The Ling Chi of the year he turned twenty wasn't in his body, but in his spirit soul.

Nangong Xu had also wholeheartedly trained in martial arts and had also thought of kindness. He had also listened to his Shizun's reminders that he wanted to be a gentleman and use his sword to exterminate evil.

However, he'd been hacked into a thousand pieces in the Spiritual Mountain Competition.

Mo Ran closed his eyes. Seeing Xu Shuanglin in such a miserable state, he did not have much time to live. Perhaps it was because he was too similar to himself in his previous life, and even though there were some grudges, at this moment, he could not help but say, "… Luo Fenghua's Soul Core is still here, if you use that rebirth incantation, you might be able to see him again."

"Again?" Xu Shuanglin smiled. He looked at the spirit core in his hand with interest, then looked at his own flesh that was rapidly festering due to the lack of spirit energy. He said lazily, "I'm going to die. If I die, there will be no justice in this world. What's the use of him coming back? He will still suffer from the bullying of you big sects."

As he spoke, his expression suddenly darkened. He had actually broken the soul core with his own hands and stabbed it into the palm of his hand, filling it with blood.

Mo Ran: "!"

Xue Meng, "Are you crazy?!"

Everyone was at a loss as to what had happened. Some of them were dumbstruck, some had ashen faces, and some had their eyes filled with vigilance as they stared at the man on the ground who was neither human nor ghost.

Xu Shuanglin ignored everyone. He looked at Luo Fenghua's last bit of evidence in this world, and watched as he completely turned into ashes. Finally, he began to laugh loudly, his face full of blood and tears.

From now on, no one will ever see him, no one will ever hate him, they will all be turned to dirt and ashes, great, great.

He slowly got up and staggered under the watchful gaze of the crowd. He walked to the front of the martial art formation, where there was a weapon.

He sat down and strummed the strings a few times with his rotting fingers.

The backlash from the Zhenlong's game was getting worse and worse. His seven orifices were bleeding and his fingers were burning. In the end, his entire body was engulfed in the fire, but he was still playing.

His expression seemed to be one of relief, of relaxation, but soon it was no longer visible, and his flesh was rapidly shrinking, curling, and shriveling.

The inferno bullied the heavens.

Xu Shuanglin's unhurried voice came from the fire. That voice was calm and unruly, as if no matter how much pain he suffered, it would not affect him. No matter how close one was to death, it would not coerce him.

"Weak crowns are the best in years. Light hooves, fast horses, see all the flowers in the world…"

There were quite a few elderly people in the crowd who suddenly thought of the young man at the Spiritual Mountain Competition in this lazy and carefree little tune.

The crane was dressed in green, with an upright appearance.

That young man walked out from the pitch-black corridor, out of the wilderness of his memories. He confidently walked into the arena, carrying his sword that he had experienced hundreds of battles on, his hands covered with calluses from practicing sword techniques.

He was so young, so handsome, so grand, even arrogant. He glanced at the Sect Leaders of the ten great sects and the noisily shouting guests. Suddenly, he grinned, his smile extremely clean. This twenty-something year old young man stopped walking, straightened his back, faced the arena that was filled with sunlight, faced the brilliant future in his eyes, and cupped his fists as he said:

“Rufeng Sect, Nangong Xu. For today’s first battle, I hope that all seniors will be generous with your advice.”

In the end, he had failed. He was just a teenager.

After a long time, the fire finally died down, and only five masterless divine mights were left on the Soul Summoning Platform. There was also a rebirth array formation that was still spinning in the air.

Whether it was Luo Fenghua or Xu Shuanglin, they were both gone.

Xue Zhengyong couldn’t believe it. He opened his eyes in a daze and mumbled, “This is… Is it all over?”

“Amitabha, Samsara of Karma, it is all retribution.” Great master Xuanjing closed his eyes and heaved a long sigh, “I hope that all the grudges in this world will be lost in the dust.”

Xue Meng’s eyes rolled back at him. This old bald donkey hadn’t put in much effort along the way, so he was quite good at shooting people behind their horses.

“What should I do next?” He turned to his father and asked, “Are we going down the mountain just like that? But he still has a colleague, we don’t even know who that person is.”

While speaking, Jiang Xi suddenly shouted, “Be careful! Everyone retreat!”

Everyone followed his gaze and looked over. When the Rebirth Array had shrunk to the size of half a palm in the air, it suddenly expanded at an astonishing speed. It seemed as if a hole had been split open in the sky, and strands of twisted black Qi poured out of it.

Xue Meng said in surprise, “What’s going on? Xu Shuanglin is dead, shouldn’t this Rebirth Array disappear along with him?!”

Jiang Xi pinched his fingers, and after staring at the formation for a moment, he cursed in a low voice, “No, no! This was not a Corpse Demon! It wasn’t rebirth! Both us and Xu Shuanglin were deceived!”

“What?” Xue Meng was surprised, “It’s not a Corpse Demon, nor is it a rebirth? What could that be!”

Jiang Xi said angrily, “What is it? It’s not important at all. The most important thing is that we can’t let this formation be fully formed.”

Other than him, the other experts were also quick to react. In a split-second, the least talkative of them all, Chu Wanning, had shot straight to the heart of the enchantment! Unexpectedly, although he was in the lead, someone followed closely behind him. A dark green shadow suddenly appeared from the crowd, like a cheetah pouncing on its prey. The dagger in his sleeve flashed with a cold light as it stabbed towards Chu Wanning's back, seemingly wanting to stop him.

"Shizun!"

"Shizun!"

The two exclamations were respectively Xue Meng and Shi Mei, but they were too far away and it was already too late for them to help.

A "chi" sound was heard.

It was the sound of the blade piercing into flesh. Xue Meng abruptly closed his eyes, and when he opened them again, his face was already devoid of color. He looked towards that direction with an ashen face.

He was stunned.

Ch. 231 [Mount Jiao] Medicine Sect Struggles

Chu Wanning was not hurt, and in that split-second, he reacted quickly.

He stood in front of the dark blue cloaked figure that was floating in the air. The man's dagger had completely sunk into his shoulder, leaving only the handle with the silver snake pattern on it. The clothes on Mo Ran's shoulder were instantly dyed red with blood. He lowered his eyebrows.

Gritting his teeth, his eyes flashed with a sharp light.

That was the ruthlessness in the eyes of the falcon when it finally pounced on the sly rabbit.

"Grandmaster Hua." He suddenly clenched Hua Binan's hand, which was still holding the dagger, and endured the pain as he pulled the dagger out of his own flesh. His forehead was covered in a thin layer of cold sweat, but he still sneered, "You sneaked an attack on my Shizun from behind, did you think I was dead?"

As the night breeze blew, Hua Binan put on the blue dress to cover his ugly appearance. After a moment of silence, Hua Binan asked, "How long has Mo-zongshi suspected me?"

"From the moment you were poisoned and left on the mountainside."

Hua Binan laughed softly: "Um… That is something that cannot be helped. After all, I was hoping to bring down a group of people in the main hall."

Mo Ran gritted his teeth. "Why did you stop Xu Shuanglin earlier?"

“Following the change in the array formation, he would have realized that the Rebirth Array that he painstakingly laid down was actually fake. Wouldn’t that be troublesome?”

At this point, Chu Wanning had shot down Tianwen, directly into the heart of this mysterious array.

However, as soon as he descended, he realized that the Spiritual Qi of the formation was extremely strong and could not be easily contained. When he turned his head to see that Mo Ran was behind him, and his shoulder was injured by Hua Binan’s dagger, he could not help but cry out in anger, “Mo Ran —”

“Don’t worry about me. Destroying the formation is more important. I’ll be watching over this place.”

Chu Wanning had no choice, inside the secret array flowed a kind of evil spirit flow that he had never encountered before, it was so powerful that even the former Butterfly Town’s Heavenly Rift Heaven Shattering Sword could not touch it. He continuously poured his spirit energy into the Heaven Seeking Palace, he could only prevent this array from continuing to evolve, but had no way of shattering it and disappearing it.

On the other side, Jiang Xi also suddenly understood what was going on. However, he couldn’t believe that the number one Saint Hand had some other plan behind his back. He couldn’t help but feel defeated. After a while, he said, “Hua Binan, you…”

At this moment, Hua Binan’s hand was tightly clenched by Mo Ran. He didn’t turn his head around, but upon hearing Jiang Xi’s voice, he faintly smiled, “Sect Leader, don’t act rashly. Guyue’ye had a rule that states that

everything must be kept in mind, and I will naturally bear that in mind. Thus, on this journey, I found an opportunity to land Heart Drilling Worms that I had meticulously raised for many years on top of a lot of people."

"AHHH!"

Everyone's faces changed in fear as they became silent. In an instant, they were making a mess with a pot of boiling porridge.

The Cold Scale Sacred Hand put bugs on their bodies?

It was clearly neither painful nor itchy, to the point that they didn't feel anything at all. However, they suddenly felt as if their entire bodies were fiercely itchy, as if every corner was hiding a soul worm that could only take one's life.

"Hua Binan, you madman!"

"What vicious thoughts!"

There were even some who cried out anxiously, rubbing their bodies, "Where is it? Where is it? Did I get it? I didn't have any contact with him, so I don't think I have any…"

Some of them were upright and hated Hua Binan the most for his despicable methods. They shouted angrily: "That guy with the surname Hua! Don't try to seduce the masses by speaking nonsense! There are so many cultivators here, and all of them are experts of the top sects, do you think they would be afraid of a threat like you?!"

Before he finished his words, Hua Binan gently waved his hand.

The provocative man's body suddenly swayed and his eyes bulged. Holding onto his throat, he suddenly fell to the ground and rolled on the ground while shouting, "Ah! "AHHHH!"

The pus and blood quickly gushed out of his nose and eyes, he rolled his eyes, violently twitched and spasmed, the feces and urine flowed uncontrollably through his crotch, giving off a terrible stench, he quickly stopped moving, he collapsed to the ground, his skin quickly lost water and deflated, his mouth was still malevolently open, a red bug full of human blood crawled out from it, shaped like a spider, but with ten legs on either side.

This sudden change of events made a lot of people who were originally filled with righteous indignation, wanting to make Hua Binan suffer. Their faces all paled and they silently looked at everything that was happening in front of them.

"Although the bugs are small, they can instantly take a person's life. If you don't want to repeat the tragic scene of the annihilation of the Rufeng Sect in one night, you'd better stay where you are. Don't be anxious and don't cause trouble. Just listen to my orders. Especially Guyue'ye's people."

His gaze landed on Jiang Xi, and he looked at the group of Medical Sect cultivators dressed in light jade-green robes behind her. He smiled and said, "In consideration of the fact that we share the same sect, I will definitely not harm any of you."

Jiang Xi said with an ashen face, "Hua Binan! You actually have such wild ambition?"

“Wolf ambition doesn’t live up to it.” Hua Binan seemed to have suddenly remembered something as he said to Jiang Xi, “That’s right, Sect Leader, you also have a Heart Drilling Worm on you.”

Jiang Xi said coldly, “Guyue’ye has not treated you unfairly for the past ten years. What are your intentions?”

“Of course I have my reasons, but I might not have to tell you.”

He turned his head to look at Chu Wanning, then looked at Mo Ran who was in a confrontation with him, and turned back around.

“Alright, you all may not know who has the worm and who doesn’t, but this is a matter of life and death. I think if you’re smart enough, you should know who you’re on.”

Dead silence.

Then, a gentle and cold voice suddenly sounded out from the crowd.

Shi Mei stood beside Xue Meng and said, “The Breach of the Heart Worm will attract fire. As long as you all ignite a fire curse or fire talisman in your hands, you will be able to see that there is a bulge under the skin. That is, you will be hit by the Breach of the Insect.”

“…” The Cold Scale Sacred Hand suddenly narrowed his eyes and said, “Shi Mingjing, you’re secretly reading my scripture?”

Shi Mei’s face seemed to turn red, but his blush was not obvious. He was not used to being the center of attention. Now that he was being watched by so many people, his expression was a little stiff.

“I once asked Shizun to go into seclusion for five years in order to learn Guyue’ye. I didn’t read any of senior’s scriptures, and unintentionally discovered this worm, so… So I did some research…”

Hua Binan said angrily: “You are so shameless to steal my writings!”

Xue Meng raised his black eyebrows and immediately defended Shi Mei. “I wonder what face do I have to deal with a person like you who only has two or three sides?” As he spoke, he immediately followed Shi Mei’s instructions. Seeing that there was nothing amiss under his skin, he said joyfully, “That’s great. It’s all thanks to you. Look, I don’t have any worms on me!”

When the others saw this, they also followed suit. For a moment, everyone on the Soul Summoning Platform followed one another: “I did not!” Or “What should I do, I have a Breach!”

Hua Binan closed his eyes and sneered: “Even if I can identify who has who and who doesn’t, so what? Those who were infected by the insect Gu, listen carefully! Come to my side and help me take down Chu Wanning and defeat Mo Weiyu. Of course I won’t treat you badly, otherwise —”

He pointed at the Warlock on the ground who had been bitten to death by the Bugs.

“This is your fate.”

Under the deterrence of others, the first one to turn the tables was a female cultivator from Guyue’ye. Under the gaze of everyone present, she rushed to Hua Binan’s side, slightly raising her head, with an arrogant expression.

Mo Ran was also amazed. Someone who had become a traitor actually still had the face to act so arrogantly.

“Apologies, Sect Leader Jiang.” She said, “The reason why I am on the side of the Sacred Hand is not entirely for the sake of protecting myself, but because I have always admired the talent of the Sacred Hand. The reason why I sought knowledge from Guyue’ye is also because of his name. Not mentioning whether I have been hit by a Soul Devouring Insect, even if I have not, I am still willing to be the lackey of the Sacred Hand.”

She then glanced at Hua Binan’s face and saw that although he was fighting with Mo Ran, his face was full of smiles. Apparently, he was satisfied with her words, so she comforted him and urged, “Senior Saint Hand has already said that he will not make things difficult for us on account of the fact that we are all from the same sect. Everyone, you should be clear about the choice you have made.”

She waited for a little while, but only three cultivators came from Guyue’ye, standing by his side.

The others glared at them, scowling.

The three cultivators exchanged words, “All these years, Sect Leader Jiang has been taking care of Guyue’ye more and more poorly. If not for the presence of the Cold Scale Sacred Hand, I would have left long ago.”

“If Hands is capable, we will only follow those who are.”

One of Guyue’ye’s people couldn’t take it anymore, and shouted in anger, “Traitor! You really can say that!”

“Exactly! Traitor!”

“Shameless, get the hell out of Guyue’ye!”

I never thought that so many people would still refuse to comply even if they were hit by the Heart Drill Bug. The woman looked extremely embarrassed, but her face was still red, and he forced herself to calm down: “No need for you guys to say, we have already given up on staying in this Broken Sect. If you follow Jiang Xi, then you’ll be like a lonely ghost following a ghost!”

She turned her head again and stared at his former Sect Leader.

“I will forever be with Guyue’ye, Jiang Xi and I —”

Before she could finish her sentence, Jiang Xi interrupted her.

Jiang Xi was expressionless, but his eyes were extremely cold. He looked at her disdainfully, “Stop slashing. Who are you?”

“I — I’m in —”

“I can’t remember your name a hundred times a day.” Jiang Xi said, “Scram.”

The female Medical Sect member was extremely embarrassed and bit her lower lip for a while, but she was still indignant. “Heh, I didn’t think that a sect head would have this kind of demeanor.”

“You only saw me today?” Jiang Xi sneered, “But speaking of this, out of the thousands of Guyue’ye’s disciples, this is the first time I’m seeing you. To tell you the truth, if it wasn’t for this scene today, just you alone might not have had the chance to speak to me in this lifetime.”

After speaking, he flicked his sleeve and a gust of fragrant wind blew. Jiang Xi had already started fighting with Hua Binan.

Hua Binan already had an extremely annoying Mo Ran in front of his eyes. Now that Jiang Xi was here, he could no longer bear the consequences. He controlled a wave of Heart Drilling Worms, causing all the people with Soul Devouring Insects to immediately bite their hearts.

“AHHHH!”

“Help, help me!”

Jiang Xi’s body also froze, but as expected of the head of the Guyue’ye Sect, he immediately pressed a few acupoints on his body to ease the pain, still wearing the same white face as Mo Ran against Hua Binan.

Hua Binan was not stupid, and with a flick of his finger, he released the three people whom Guyue’ye betrayed, and declared sternly, “Accept the fight.”

Under the pain, some of the less sane people saw that surrendering to Hua Binan would save them from this sin and rushed over. In an instant, a small part of the crowd knelt down and shouted at Hua Binan: “Please, Hands of God! Release the curse! We are willing to serve the Sacred Hand!”

“I can’t take it anymore, it’s too painful… I beg of Senior Hua…”

Hua Binan gave a faint smile in the midst of the fierce battle, and said to Mo Ran who was still engaged in a heated fight with him: “So, Mo-zongshi, look. The strongest person in the world is still the Medical Sect.”

Before he could finish his words, Jiang Xi had already pulled out his Xuehuang and said with a stern voice, “The two words ‘Medical Sect’, how

could someone like you, who is used to using underhanded methods, be worthy of saying that?" After finishing his sentence, he said to Mo Ran, "Help your Shizun before you go to the array. I'll help you block this place."

Hua Binan sneered: "Is the Sect Leader going to make me his enemy today?"

"Cut the crap."

"You dragged your body infected by the Soul Devouring Insect, and now you still want to fight with me? Sect Leader Jiang Xi, you really think you have lived a long life."

Jiang Xi said with a gloomy face, "How can you decide how long I live? If I do not stop you today, I am afraid that the reputation of the Medical Sect will be destroyed!"

With that said, the two people who were good at using poison had already dealt with it. There was even poison powder against poison powder between blade and shadow. Seeing that Jiang Xi had the strength to fight back, Mo Ran turned around to help. Halfway there, there were ten dark yellow shadows rushing towards them.

Mo Ran gritted his teeth, "Huang Xiaoyue —!"

These people were none other than the ten over high-ranked disciples of Huang Xiaoyue and Jiangdong. Huang Xiaoyue's wide sleeves fluttered in the wind as he said, "Mo-zongshi, the Heart Drilling Worm is not a joke. Man is the meat of a fish, and in the face of life and death, we can only offend Grandmasters."

He wasn't the only one. There were experts from other sects who couldn't bear the pain and all rushed over to kill.

Right now, the entire Soul Summoning Platform was a mess of fish and dragons.

The cultivators of the various sects were in internal strife. The ones that were infected with the Soul Devouring Insect and those that weren't, the ones that were betrayed and the ones that weren't, all of them were fighting against each other.

Jiang Xi and Hua Binan fought with all their might. As the last line of defense in front of Chu Wanning, Mo Ran was being attacked from the back. He was battling with Huang Xiaoyue and other cultivators, while Chu Wanning fought against the mysterious array with all his might.

On the other side, Xue Zhengyong and the people from the top of the mountain were guarding the frontline, preventing the rebel army from approaching Chu Wanning, who was sealing the mysterious array. Shi Mei was also among those cultivators who had been hit by the Heart Drilling Worm and refused to surrender, trying to remove the Insect Curse.

"It hurts…" "Kill me, please kill me!" Shi Mei bent down to pick up a young man who was rolling on the ground, that young man grabbed his hand and wailed, "It's too painful, I don't want to fall, I don't want to fall, just kill me! Please, kill me! Kill me!"

"Bear with it." As Shi Mei consoled him, he placed his fingertips on his pulse.

"I can't take it anymore!"

“Look at me. Look into my eyes.”

However, that youth didn’t listen to Shi Mei’s words. He tightly clenched his fingers, and his entire body was like a fish out of water, constantly twitching and gasping for breath. “I can’t take it anymore…”

Shi Mei had no choice but to force his cheek and lift his closed eyelids. This wasn’t easy because the youth was constantly kicking and struggling, leaving a red mark on the back of his hand.

“Look at me, look at me!”

That person had just regained some of his consciousness. He panted as he rolled his eyes. His eyes were filled with tears as he looked at Shi Mei. Shi Mei chanted an incantation and stared into the other party’s eyes. Suddenly, the young man quivered as he felt something quickly climb up his waist. Soon, it reached his chest, throat and mouth.

“Ouch!”

He flipped over, and with a strong sense of nausea, he spat out a large pool of vomit. The stench was extremely pungent, and a red worm was convulsing inside.

Shi Mei pointed at the air and the insect immediately crumbled into dust.

He suddenly stood up and said loudly: “The Drilling Heart Insect can be controlled by the eye healing technique, it can be solved! I can unravel it for you!”

He ran around, shouting anxiously, “Stop fighting! It can be undone, don’t kill each other, it can be unraveled — it can be undone!”

However, not many people listened to him in the free-for-all. His voice was not loud either. Soon, it was drowned out by shouts and wails, explosions and collisions.

However, Jiang Xi heard his shout and shivered. Eye healing technique?

Just like how many bugs converged on fire for light, some poisonous insects would only need to use the appropriate eye healing technique to guide them, and they would be lured out of the body like moths to a flame, allowing the Gu to dispel the poison.

Apparently, Hua Binan also heard it. He secretly cursed as his eyes flashed with a cold and fierce light.

“Along the way, I killed all of Guyue’ye’s cultivators who knew the eye technique. I didn’t expect that at the Sisheng Peak there would actually be such a high level technique from the Medical Sect. Really?”

The blade in his hand slashed violently against Jiang Xi’s Xuehuang, causing sparks to fly out.

Hua Binan gritted his teeth and said: “The younger generation is truly fearsome!”

He suddenly unsheathed his sword and retreated like a bat, leaping towards the middle of the battling crowd.

“This is bad!” Jiang Xi was startled. He had already seen through Hua Binan’s intention. He was about to use his Qi to keep up, but the Heart Drilling Worm’s attack stopped his in his chest. He spat out a large mouthful of blood and half-knelt on the ground.

He opened and closed his blood-soaked lips, looking at the direction where Hua Binan left. He wanted to warn the others, but he couldn't make a louder sound, "Dang… Heart…"

Shi Mei was currently detoxifying the Taxue Palace's cultivator. After that cultivator vomited the Heart Drilling Worm, he could no longer feel the pain, so he quickly stood up and shouted.

"Stop fighting! It is here to remove the Gu, it can be removed!"

Xue Meng was also busy persuading them to stop, he dragged about ten people over to Shi Mei and kept shouting: "Alright, alright, endure it, don't cry out in pain, I will immediately release you guys, I will immediately release you guys. Who is my shidi? The most talented disciple, not one bit inferior to Guyue'ye's disciple, I —"

As Xue Meng spoke, he called for Shi Mei. Just as he raised his head, his words were cut off by his lips.

"Shi Mei! Behind —!"

Ch. 232 [Mount Jiao] Insignificant Eyes

Xue Meng let out a hoarse scream and pounced towards Shi Mei, but it was too late. Hua Binan was like a demon descending from hell as his Death God rushed through the sky and grabbed Shi Mei's neck from behind.

"Shi Mei!"

"Shi Mingjing!"

Whether it was the elders on the Sisheng Peak, or Xue Meng, they all heard about it and looked back. Hua Binan had already brought Shi Mei into the air.

Xue Meng was about to go crazy. He stepped on the Longcheng to catch up, but was forced to retreat back to the ground after being pushed back by Hua Binan's killer bee.

Hua Binan held onto Shi Mei's neck, his slender finger that wore the Spirit Serpent Ring slowly caressing his throat. Suddenly, "Zheng!" With a "sou" sound, a long thorn appeared on the ring of the spirit serpent, flashing with cold light.

"Eye Healing is extremely difficult to cultivate." Hua Binan slowly said, "This young friend is still young and not a disciple of Guyue'ye. To be able to use it so smoothly, I think he must have some talent."

How could the people fighting on the ground not notice his actions?

Xue Zhengyong, Mo Ran, and even Chu Wanning, who was standing in front of the boundary, could all clearly see that Shi Mei had been captured

by Hua Binan.

In his rage and anxiety, a bloody red light suddenly shone, causing Huang Xiaoyue and the others to retreat several meters. A few unlucky ones were even knocked off the precipice of the platform. The vast sea of clouds did not even have an echo before they were swallowed up.

“Hua Binan! Let him go!”

Shi Mei’s face was pale as he looked down at Mo Ran and at Xue Meng.

He pursed his lips, and finally said, “Go and help Shizun. Don’t worry about me.”

“Shi Mei!”

In front of the array, Chu Wanning’s face was as pale as a sheet of paper. His hands that were pressed against the eye of the array were trembling uncontrollably, the veins on the back of his hands were popping out, and his heart was hanging in his throat.

Shi Mei’s gaze turned and landed on him, a trace of sadness in his eyes.

“Shizun…”

“What a coincidence.” Hua Binan was stunned for a moment and then smiled, “I just grabbed it casually, is it Chu-zongshi’s disciple?”

Chu Wanning: “…”

“Then it’s no wonder that he has already mastered it at such a young age. Such a good disciple. Don’t you feel sorry for him, Shizun?”

“Hua Binan, if you hurt him, I will make you pay in the future!”

“So the meaning behind his words is that the Grandmaster has decided to ignore him today?” Hua Binan smiled and whispered Shi Mei, “Did you hear what he said? To save you or to do the seal formation, he chose the latter.”

Shi Mei closed his eyes, his lips trembling slightly, but he remained silent.

Hua Binan laughed and said, “I feel sorry for this young friend. Having a Shizun who thinks righteousness is more important than his disciple’s life. Shi Mingjing, you are truly pitiful.”

No one answered for a long time.

Perhaps it was because his life was hanging by a thread, but in the midst of this silence, Shi Mei slowly opened his eyes and said, “Shizun, I’m sorry.”

“…”

“I know. As you will recall, I have done some things in the past out of selfishness. I still don’t know if it’s right or wrong. Actually, I am not worthy to be Shizun’s disciple. Many times, I would be unable to sacrifice my life to take justice…”

“Shi Mei…”

On the high platform, when Xue Meng heard his words, he could not help but think of the night that Chu Wanning died, when his guilt caused them to go to the Underworld to save their teacher.

Mo Ran thought of the bowl of wontons and the inn. He made an apologetic bow and told him that the bowl was made by Chu Wanning.

As for Chu Wanning?

Chu Wanning thought of him asking for a sword, and then sighing at Shi Mei's request for a divine weapon.

Besides that, he didn't expect that he would have even more flaws.

Shi Mei had always been a gentle, perfect, and obedient person. He was like a winter's new snow, pure white and unsullied. As a result, every speck of dirt and speck of plum blossoms fell from the snow was particularly eye-catching and disheartening.

Whether it was his fault or his hesitation, his occasional selfishness and insight were all so obvious and unforgettable.

However, he was also an ordinary person. He was not a statue or a silk painting, so he had his own personal feelings.

But no one really knew him.

As far as Xue Meng was concerned, Shi Mei was his friend. He felt that his friend should follow behind him, accompany him, affirm him, and support him.

To the former Mo Ran, Shi Mei was the object of admiration. He felt that this object was naturally holy, tolerant, warm and flawless.

To Chu Wanning, Shi Mei was his disciple. He was gentle, approachable, and had a tolerance that he admired and liked.

At this time, they suddenly realized that all along, in front of Xue Meng's best friend and follower, Shi Mei had been silently burning the mosquito blood on his cinnabar mole.

The only person he had never been before was himself.

Hua Binan sneered: “Do you have some last words to say?”

“Hua Binan, let him go!”

“Don’t hurt him!”

“I won’t hurt him. All of you are willing to surrender, sit still and wait for death. Naturally, I don’t need his life.”

“…”

The array in front of Chu Wanning’s eyes flickered between bright and dark. It was clear that the array was now at a critical point of existence. Whether it was sealed or exploded, it was time for another attack. He did not withdraw the strength in his hand, but it was slightly trembling.

This wasn’t the Ghost World Heavenly Rift, the choice was only made in a flash, and there wasn’t enough time to think.

It was like putting a knife on his disciple’s neck, letting him hesitate, letting him see it with his own eyes, making him feel pain that was hard to bear.

Hua Binan slightly raised his chin and said with a smile, “Well, the array is open, so you guys can continue the fight, but it will be very difficult to come back to life after this blade attack. Grandmaster, you should think about it carefully.”

At this moment, Shi Mei spoke.

His voice wasn’t very loud, but it was still audible.

“Actually, I don’t like candied fruits.”

"…" Hua Binan stared down at him as if he didn't understand what he meant.

Shi Mei didn't cry. Instead, he looked at his close friend, his old friend, and his Shizun on the ground and smiled.

"I don't like eating candied fruits, but Young Master, when you were young, you always let me help you eat them. What I wanted to learn the most was to cultivate Spirit Formation techniques, but Shizun felt that I was lacking in talent and wasn't willing to teach me too much. I…" His eyes fell on Mo Ran, "A-Ran, I actually know what you wanted to say on the day of Butterfly Town's Heavenly Rift."

Mo Ran was suddenly startled as he blankly looked at him.

Master Mo's smile was still as gentle and soft as ever "… However, Shizun came back later on and you never finished what you were about to say. In the restaurant, I saw you all eating together, and the way I looked at you, I knew you wouldn't say anything else for the rest of your life."

Mo Ran: "…"

"I'm actually very envious of Young Master, I also… I am also very envious of Shizun." Shi Mei said softly, "Can you guys not find it annoying just because I'm envious…"

"I never thought you hated it!" Xue Meng shouted anxiously, and his eyes couldn't help but turn red. "I, I didn't know that you didn't like candied fruits, I really didn't know…Shi Mei! Shi Mei!"

However, Hua Binan was getting impatient. He grabbed Shi Mei's neck, stared at Chu Wanning and said in a stern voice, "I will count to three. If

you don’t stop, I will destroy him!”

“No!” Xue Meng turned his head in panic and anxiously shouted at Chu Wanning, “Shizun, please stop for now! We can’t just watch as something happens to Shi Mei in front of our eyes! Stop!”

“One.”

The trembling of Chu Wanning’s fingers had gone from almost imperceptible to the point where everyone could see it clearly.

He looked at Shi Mei. His usually sharp phoenix eyes met with the usual gentle peach blossom eyes. The phoenix eyes became moist.

“Two!”

“Sha —”

At this moment, blood splattered everywhere.

Xue Meng and Mo Ran’s shouts seemed to have turned into sharp swords piercing through the dome of heaven. “Shizun!”

“… No need to count to three.” Blood dripped and dripped. Shi Mei raised his hand and covered his eyes.

He hadn’t cried since the beginning.

However, at this moment, blood was gushing out from his eyes and running down his cheeks.

He actually hit the cold thorn that was hanging in front of him on the second floor. Hua Binan was so shocked that he tried to pull back his hand. The sharp thorn was a few inches away from his body. The blade that was

originally about to cut into his neck slid across his eyes. In an instant, his eyes became wide open!

“Yuheng has never descended, also… There was no… Weak.”

“Shi Mei!”

“Shi Mei!”

The sound split the clouds.

Chu Wanning was also shocked. He had already used up all his strength, but now that his disciple had destroyed his eyes and face, he couldn’t help but feel his hand go soft. The backlash from the formation was so strong that it sent him flying out ten feet.

Chu Wanning coughed up a mouthful of blood, but he was too busy trying to patch up the magical formation. Hua Binan was startled and then burst out laughing. He grabbed Shi Mei’s lapel and pulled him up, his eyes shining with joy.

“I didn’t expect you to be so useful! It would be a pity if I were to kill you.”

“Hua Binan, what are you trying to do?”

Hua Binan did not answer and only glanced at Xue Meng. Then, he turned his gaze towards the mysterious black enchantment that was rapidly cracking open and smiled: “This array formation has combined the strength of so many people’s hearts and it’s finally about to open. This is the first time in my life that I have ever activated this formation, so it is only right that I give it a try.”

As he said this, he quickly lowered his sword, bringing Shi Mei with him as he rushed down the corridor towards the Soul Summoning Terrace. As he disappeared into the corridor, he threw his last sentence to everyone —

“You two can stay here and have a good time. This Mount Jiao is grand and imposing. Using it as a burial ground is not a loss at all.”

Almost at the same time, a deafening sound came from the sky. The formation was like ink that had been poured on paper, quickly spreading and swallowing up half the sky in the blink of an eye. Even the moon was covered in a dark shadow.

“What’s wrong!”

“What kind of formation is this?!”

“Is it the Ghost World Heavenly Rift?”

“But the Spirit Realm’s Heavenly Rift is not the same color!”

The group of people who had previously fought in an unrelenting manner had now become grasshoppers on a boat. They all raised their heads in alarm to look at the pitch-black opening in the sky.

Perhaps this could no longer be called a rift. On the platform, more than half of the sky had already cracked open. A dull and hurried vibration faintly came from the bottomless darkness.

Huang Xiaoyue’s face was sallow and his nostrils flared, “This is… Are there any monsters coming out from behind? How could there be such a big commotion?”

Mo Ran took the lead, holding his hand as he stood at the very front. Suddenly, a bolt of lightning flashed across the night sky.

“Rumble ~ ~ ~ ~”

Heavenly Thunder Void Break!

“It split open!”

“There’s something behind us! Something came out!”

“Is it a ghost?!”

Xue Meng saw that Mo Ran and Chu Wanning were too close to the crevice. He quickly wiped away the tears on his face and ran towards his cousin and his Shizun. However, he was held back by Xue Zhengyong and dragged closely behind him.

“Father!”

“Don’t go over, stand here!”

“I don’t want it! I want to be with Shizun, I want to be with my brother!”

Xue Zhengyong’s eyes were filled with an unprecedented sternness, he could not deny it: “You want to die?! Did you know —”

The rest of the words were like dried twigs falling from the sky. He stared blankly and did not continue.

Xue Meng began to cry.

He cried out: “Dad, I’m going to help them. Shi Mei has been taken away, I can’t hide behind you anymore to see any of them get hurt! Please!”

Before Xue Zhengyong could respond, green smoke and lightning were emitted from the middle of the black magic formation. From the smoke, one could see a rolling cloud rushing towards them.

When they got closer, they realized it was a group of masked cultivators dressed in black!

Groups after groups of people could not be seen, nor could they see where they came from. The man in the lead wore a luxurious cloak embroidered with golden threads and silver threads, wearing a hood, and also had a hideous silver-gray mask covering his face. He stood with his hands behind his back in the air, and as the wind blew in all directions, the clouds gathered, and even though he did not say a single word, there was still an immeasurable amount of killing intent radiating from him.

“What is this?”

Xue Zhengyong was stunned.

Those who had seen little of the world could not say a word and could only look up at the sky blankly.

Is it a ghost?

But no, there was no such thing.

More and more people flew out from the black cloud. Dozens, hundreds… In the end, they reached the clouds and were no match for the cultivators on the ground. There were nearly a thousand of them!

Xue Zhengyong was startled, he gathered his energy and shouted, “Are you a human or a ghost? Why not introduce yourself?!”

“…” The leader rolled his eyes. When his gaze fell on Xue Zhengyong, it seemed to have some meaning to it.

“Speak! Do you understand what we’re talking about?” Xue Meng also shouted.

The man didn’t say anything. He paused for a moment, then raised a pale, slender hand and held it in the air.

And then, with a wave of his hand, he cut to the chase.

“Kill!”

Ch. 233 If You Want to Change the Title of This Venerable One, Change It! Wayward!

In the blink of an eye, those cultivators who were covered in black swooped down from the clouds at the same time. They were like herons who were fighting for food, and rushed down towards the heavily injured camp below.

Mo Ran had already realized what was going on. As Taxian-Jun Emperor in his previous life, the auras these people had under the control of these treasured chess pieces were too obvious. These chess pieces were exquisite, perfect, strong, and completely different from the half-baked pieces that Xu Shuanglin had made.

There was no way he would be a match for them.

Mo Ran turned around in shock, shouting to those who had never experienced the true power of Zhenlong Chess, “Run!”

He held on tightly to Chu Wanning’s wrist and pulled up Jiang Xi, who was kneeling on the ground. He pushed everyone along the way, his pupils contracting rapidly.

“Run! Get out of here! Leave the Soul Summoning Platform! Don’t stay! Don’t fight! We can’t beat them!”

He didn’t need to say it again. When the first chess piece fell to the ground and swung his sword, everyone was already aware of his terrifying strength. They all rushed towards the corridor.

At the front of the pack was the timid Palace Master Ma. He was the first to reach the stone door of the passageway before stopping.

One by one, the people behind his all stopped in their tracks, falling and smashing into each other. Some of them angrily shouted: “What’s wrong?! Why did you stop?!”

The voice of Palace Master Ma was filled with terror and a sobbing tone. It came from the front of the pitch-black corridor.

“It… it’s closed…”

“What’s closed?”

“When Hua Binan escaped, he closed the stone door…” As Palace Master Ma said this, his legs went soft and he fell to his knees with a plop. His face was filled with tears as he said, “This is the Mount Jiao Stone, once it closes…”

“Without the blood of the Nangong Family, it… It definitely can’t be opened.”

Someone said anxiously: “Although Nangong Si is no longer here, there’s still Nangong Liu! Wasn’t his father, who had been made into a Zhenlong chess player, still on the mountain? Where is he?”

“In the front hall, I thought that he was useless and didn’t bring him here at all…”

Despair filled the entire tunnel, and a dark aura seeped into their very bones.

“What should we do?”

“Going out to fight head on?”

There were still unknown people squeezing in from the outside. There were even more people that couldn’t squeeze in, so they could only bite the bullet and stay at the exit to fight against the mysterious chess pieces that came out from the sky.

In the darkness, Huang Xiaoyue suddenly shouted, “Let me pass! I can open this door!”

He pushed them away with all his might, like a fish on its way to a stone gate.

Palace Master Ma raised his teary face as he said in a daze, “Leader Huang?”

“Out of the way, let me do it!”

“But you’re surnamed Huang, and you don’t even have the Nangong surname…”

Huang Xiaoyue ignored him. The golden blade horse charged towards him. He waved his wide sleeves, but fortunately, he still had some of Nangong’s blood. He had secretly saved it in order to sneak into the hidden treasure chamber. He even cast a spell on the blood to prevent it from drying up.

However, the curse would not last for long. At this moment, he could not help but be glad that all of this happened in an instant. He hoped that the blood was still useful.

Huang Xiaoyue used his skinny old hand to viciously press down on the broken rock.

Mo Long's misty voice came from the tunnel, "Who are you?"

His heart was pounding.

Huang Xiaoyue said, "The younger generation of the Rufeng Sect… The seventh generation member of the Blood Origin Sect, Nangong Si, pays his respects."

He was stunned for a moment. "Hualala! Hualahhh"

The Demon Dragon said hoarsely, "Disorders… Greetings… Maste…"

"Boom —"

Huang Xiaoyue was the first to exit the corridor as the other disciples of the Jiangdong Hall followed behind her. Palace Master Ma quickly stood up and said, "Wait for me! I'll come out, I'll come out, I'll —"

A sword was placed against his chest.

Palace Master Ma's face froze as he raised his head in astonishment: "Sect Leader Huang, what are you doing?"

Huang Xiaoyue sneered, "When I was hit by the Heart Drilling Worm earlier, my side and yours were already opposed to each other. If I let you out at this moment, the chaos in the battlefield will probably subside in the future. The people who want to settle the score with me will be like ants. I am old and cannot afford to go through with it."

Palace Master Ma said in panic, "No, no, no! What are you trying to do! Don't mess around! We can talk it over! Aiya, what kind of hatred are you looking for? We're all going to do business here. Chief Huang, quickly let us

out. From now on, all the goods from the Peach Blossom Villa are to be sold for half the price to your sect — no, half the price!”

Huang Xiaoyue’s swarthy old face revealed a trace of malevolence as he ridiculed, “Half price? After obtaining the treasure of the Rufeng Sect, how could the wealth of this world enter my eyes? It’s just the Peach Blossom Villa, what is it!”

As he spoke, he viciously pushed Palace Master Ma away.

Ma Yun fell to the ground, along with the rest of the crowd, who were squeezed together behind her.

As they struggled to get up, the last scene they saw was Huang Xiaoyue and the people from the Jiangdong Hall standing outside. Huang Xiaoyue had pulled the trigger to bring down the seal stone. Greed, desire, and schadenfreude flashed on his face…

The group of people from the Jiangdong Hall behind him even acted as if they had achieved their goals. Some of them even spoke bluntly: “Serves you right. I’ll make you look down on me for all this time.”

“We, the Taoist Huang, clearly have no faults, yet we were scolded all the way here. He risked his life to leave behind that blood of his.”

BOOOOOOOOM!

The stone door was once again sealed shut.

This time, the tunnel was filled with endless darkness and hesitation.

Dead silence.

In despair, a female cultivator finally collapsed and started sobbing. Her grief was contagious, and very soon, most of the people were feeling dispirited, losing their will to fight. They were trapped inside, unable to move forward, and also unwilling to go out.

“Sister… I don’t want to die yet…”

“Shizun…”

“Father, let’s go out and fight to the death. It’s better than being trapped here.”

The voices buzzed.

At this moment, there was a voice that had been silent for a long time. It trembled a little as it made a decision.

He said, “I’ll do it.”

The pale-faced Palace Master Ma trembled as he turned his head and saw a flame light up. His eyes widened slightly as he asked in astonishment, “Mo-zongshi?”

Mo Ran held the firework in his hand, his handsome face flickering with light. He walked to the front of the rock formation and stood still.

“You, you also have Nangong Si’s blood?”

Mo Ran did not answer. He knew that although there was someone blocking the entrance to the passageway, they would not be able to hold on for long. The chess pieces would soon charge in.

Along his way to the mountain, when Nangong Si was facing danger, there were many times when hot blood boiled in his heart. He wanted to do this, but in the end, he did not succeed.

He had originally thought that he would be blessed by the heavens, and this time he would be able to escape from everyone's eyes and escape a calamity.

But with his back to his stomach, he knew that he finally had no other choice.

There was no way out anymore.

"Mo-zongshi…?"

He didn't take care of Palace Master Ma, instead drawing out the silver short knife from his waist and fiercely slicing his palm.

In an instant, blood flowed all over his palm.

By this time, both Xue Meng and Xue Zhengyong had arrived. Chu Wanning was also there, so they stopped behind Mo Ran. Xue Zhengyong's voice was filled with confusion, "Mo'er, what are you doing? It's useless. It will only listen to the orders of the Nangong Family."

Mo Ran did not look back. His bleeding hand was trembling slightly.

In the end, it still hit the rock hard.

The tentacles were cold and piercing.

He closed his eyes.

The Demon Dragon's confused and distant voice once again reverberated in this darkness.

"Who are you?"

His throat moved.

Under the gaze of the crowd, Mo Ran slowly replied in the midst of an extremely stifling silence.

"Rufeng Sect… The seventh generation Blood Origin Sect relatives."

Xue Meng's expression suddenly changed. He staggered back a step and could not help but shake his head. "What…"

Xue Zhengyong's face was even more unsightly than his. His eyes were wide open as he stared at the black silhouette that was burning with a black flame and he muttered, "How is this possible…?"

One word at a time, just like a sharp knife.

Even though he knew that blood would flow profusely, he had no other choice.

He softly finished the last part of his sentence, "Mo Ran, Mo Weiyu, kowtow."

Xue Meng's voice was hoarse as he shouted, bare-eyed, "Impossible!"

However, the door still opened in the end.

He was lost in that thin, smoke-like voice, yet it was like a bright, piercing blade that stabbed into the heart of his eardrums.

“Lost and separated… Greetings… Master…”

“Mo’er…”

Xue Zhengyong was completely stunned and couldn’t say a word.

Chu Wanning’s mind was also in a mess. He caught Xue Zhengyong in time and raised his head to look ahead.

The door rumbled, and inch by inch, two inches, it sank back into the ground. Outside, the orange light of the Dragon Soul Pool rushed back into the darkness.

“Mo Ran! Mo Ran! How can you open it? What do you mean by ‘the seventh generation ancestor of the Rufeng Sect? How could this be?! How could it be like this!” Xue Meng seemed a little anxious and mad, “How can you be related to the Nangong Family by blood? You are. You clearly…”

Mo Ran paused for a moment. In the end, he could only see shadows swaying before he whispered, “Everyone, let’s leave this place first.”

“Mo Ran!”

His voice was hoarse.

For a split-second, Mo Ran tilted his face, as if he wanted to turn around and say something. However, in the end, he did not say anything. He did not linger, no longer hesitating. As he moved forward, the light and shadows moved with his tall figure. Finally, he disappeared at the end of the corridor.

After him, the various great sects began to fight and flee. They appeared aggressive and unstoppable, and when they went out, they were as if fish

that escaped the net.

Mo Ran walked alone amidst the rushing torrent of water and the carp's flight through the river.

He did not look back. He did not dare to.

He saw Ye Wangxi in the main hall of the Dragon Soul Pool. He walked over, picked her up since she had yet to awaken and brought her away.

Actually, the person who jumped into the Dragon Soul Pool with his life on the line wasn't Nangong, but rather, it was him.

Although at that time, Mo Ran didn't know that doing so would ensure the safety of Mount Jiao, he actually didn't have the confidence…

What if he knew? Would he really die in place of Nangong Si?

He had already lived for two lifetimes, and despite his entire body full of sins, he was still able to live on. However, Nangong Si had only lived for twenty years, and before he had even walked halfway, he had already turned into dust.

Logically, he knew that Nangong Si was far more valuable than him in this world. However, humans still desired to live.

Suddenly, he heard someone screaming behind him, "Those monsters, those monsters are chasing us!"

"How is this possible?!"

Mo Ran suddenly turned around.

The broken stone had already landed once again when the last group of people was coming out of the tunnel. It was impossible for those chess pieces to break open the rock, unless…

His face went pale.

Unless, among those chess pieces, there was someone who bled from the Nangong Family.

In that split-second, he thought back to the mysterious black rift he had just seen. He suddenly thought of the third forbidden art, the Portal of Life and Death.

Mo Ran only felt a strong chill spreading from the bottom of his feet, spreading across his entire body in an instant.

Could it be that the person who came out was actually —?

No, that's impossible.

Impossible.

This was ridiculous. Even in his previous life, no one had been able to achieve such a feat… Who could do it?!

At this moment, Mei Hanxue retreated to his side, and Mo Ran handed Ye Wangxi to him. With a crazed look in his eyes, he hastily ran in the opposite direction from everyone else.

"Mo Ran!"

"Ran'er!"

Xue Meng and Xue Zhengyong saw him in the torrent. They were shouting at him, but he really didn't know how to face them.

Paper can't wrap fire.

Two lifetimes, the same.

Suddenly, someone grabbed onto his arm. Mo Ran turned his head around. "Shizun?!"

Chu Wanning said, "You can't go. I'll handle those people. Since you are able to activate the Mount Jiao Formation, in order to be absolutely safe, you should stay together with the others and bring them away from this place smoothly."

"…"

"Go quickly!"

While he was speaking, the black clothed man in the lead had already calmly walked out of the passageway. Behind him, all the black robed Daoists with their faces covered appeared one after another.

Chu Wanning said sternly, "Hurry! Take them away!"

There was no choice.

No matter how uncertain or unstable Mo Ran was, he could only retreat with everyone. Xue Meng refused to leave, and was dragged forward by Xue Zhengyong. Eventually, only Chu Wanning and those mysterious cultivators were left in the Dragon Soul Pool hall.

The magma in the Dragon Soul Lake boiled, and an orange light illuminated the cold stone walls.

Chu Wanning stood alone, the Tianwen electric current reflected in his pair of snow-white eyes that were as sharp as a bayonet.

He looked at the mysterious black clothed man in the lead.

As for the man, he was also looking at him through the heavy veil.

The man stood there silently. Behind him, there was someone who could not control his temper and wanted to be the vanguard as he shouted: "How dare you stand alone in the way of so many people? How arrogant! Come, let me experience your powerful technique!"

However, before he could even move ten feet, he was suddenly caught by the man in black.

That person exclaimed, "Your Majesty?!"

The man in black ignored him. He didn't even turn his head around. He was still staring at Chu Wanning's face. The veins on his hand bulged and with a "kacha" sound, he broke the neck of the man who was fighting for the vanguard and threw him on the ground.

Chu Wanning's expression changed slightly.

This man actually killed one of his own?

"Who do you think you are? Do you think you are worthy to be taught by Chu-zongshi?" The man casually walked towards Chu Wanning.

No one dared to move behind him.

Chu Wanning crossed the sky and asked sternly, “Who exactly are you?”

When the man heard his words, he stopped in his tracks.

He stood not too far away from Chu Wanning, an indescribably strange feeling flowing through his eyes. After a while, he chuckled softly and said, “It has been many years since we last met. I didn’t expect that the first words you would say to me would be so bland and salty.”

“… When did I ever know you?”

“Oh, you don’t know him? Chu Wanning, you are always so heartless.” The man moved forward again, and this time he did not stop. Since Chu Wanning was adamant about it, he could not retreat.

Therefore, the man walked right up to him. The distance was extremely dangerous and abrupt.

A cold light flashed from Chu Wanning’s hand as he raised his palm to strike.

With such great agility, he was easily grabbed by the man by the wrist.

“Actually, I have experienced this move many times.” The man lowered his head and stared at Chu Wanning’s face, taking in all the details of his face. His gaze was almost lustful as he said, “But you seem to have forgotten.”

Chu Wanning felt goosebumps all over his body as he stared at him.

He had never been a person who feared the strong, but the look in this person’s eyes was too complicated and too sinister, as though he was hiding an earth-shattering truth and secret. “Who exactly is it?!”

“Do you want me to remind you?” The man said in a deep voice. He was using too much strength in his hands for Chu Wanning to break free.

“The first time you used this move was when I was sixteen. You taught me how to fight in close quarters, and you told me that although this attack seems simple, it is very difficult to learn.”

Chu Wanning suddenly opened his eyes wide and looked at him in disbelief.

There was a smile in the man’s eyes, but also a strange light.

“The second time, you used this move. Back then, when we were fighting, I was caught off guard and was struck by you. I received an extremely heavy injury.”

He held Chu Wanning’s hand and pressed it against his heart.

Chu Wanning suddenly realized that this man did not have a heartbeat.

Like a corpse.

“You… Just who are you?”

“Don’t be impatient.” The man dipped every word into his mouth and then licked his ear. He was even closer now, almost touching Chu Wanning’s face.

He whispered in his ear, “The third time you used this trick was in my bed.”

“…”

“I wanted to get on top of you. You said that it was enough, so you didn’t agree.” He held onto Chu Wanning’s wrist tightly, forcing his hand to slide

down his chest until it reached a private place.

Chu Wanning looked as if he had been stung by a snake or scorpion. His expression changed as he went all out, ready to fight to the death with Chu Wanning.

However, the man seemed to be familiar with all his movements and easily dissected all his moves. He then hugged him in his arms and spoke in a soft voice, “What do you think we should do, Chu Wanning? I should have come to kill you and destroy you, but I didn’t expect that after so many years, you would have changed, and I have changed as well.”

“You, let go of me!” Chu Wanning could not have imagined that things would turn out like this. His face was red and red, red and white. He looked like he was about to faint from anger, but he was unable to break free from the man’s grasp no matter how hard he tried.

He was like an inescapable web, like a spiderweb, entangling and embracing him.

Under the watchful eyes of the crowd, he hugged him tightly in his embrace, forcibly, domineeringly, maliciously, and crazily.

Narrow and sticky.

“Hard to the point of pain, hard to the point of swelling.”

“I’ll kill you!”

The man seemed to be amused, but he suddenly smiled and let go. Chu Wanning’s killing intent rose as he moved in a ruthless and fierce manner. He was really going to kill the man in one blow.

His cloak fluttered, and he retreated quickly, floating like a kite and landing firmly on the green brick surface.

However, his face was not spared. He was hacked into two halves by Chu Wanning, falling to the ground.

The man did not look up, his face hidden in the shadow of his hood.

He stayed silent in the shadows for a moment, then sighed and said, “With your temper of always shouting and shouting, you can’t change it. It’s the same no matter where you go. But Chu Wanning, Chu-zongshi…”

The black-clothed man raised his hand and a pitch-black wind attacked from behind.

He caught it quickly.

Chu Wanning caught a glimpse of it. It was the godly weapon blade that had appeared at the Xuanyuan Auction House. It was one of the five Hundred Battle Ferocious Blades that Xu Shuanglin had collected.

The man rubbed his hands together while speaking in a slow and unhurried, extremely vicious tone.

“Are you really willing to kill me?”

After he finished speaking, he suddenly raised his head.

He lowered his hood.

Chu Wanning felt as if a bucket of ice water was being poured over his head, chilling him to the bone. His mind was buzzing, and he was completely numb to it.

In the gloomy hall, the man in black had a handsome face and a pale face. His smile was laced with evil and coquettish emotions; he was both a disaster and a monster.

“Taxian-Jun, Mo Ran.”

Not coming out of the sheath, the frost lit up his purplish black eyes.

Taxian-Jun’s smile was like that of a demon’s, or a tiger’s.

“Please enlighten me, Shizun.”

Ch. 234 [Mount Jiao] The Emperor's Return

At the same time, at the foot of Mount Jiao, other than the people from Jiangdong Hall disappearing, all the other cultivators had successfully escaped. The moment they stepped out of the barrier, even though they knew that they were still in danger, many of them had already exhausted all their energy and collapsed to the ground.

Ma Yun rolled his eyes and lay on a big rock as he wailed, "No! No way! I can't take it anymore. Friends, quickly go back to your homes and put up your guard. We really don't have the strength to continue tormenting you."

Jiang Xi said, "The person who exited the mysterious array has not been thoroughly investigated. Are you going back now?"

"Then what can we do? If we still had the energy to fight them, we wouldn't have escaped in such a sorry state."

Grandmaster Xuanjing also said: "Sect Leader Jiang, we should just listen to Palace Master Ma this time. Rather than stubbornly resisting here and fall into a heroic and miserable situation, it would be better to go back and regroup, and then make preparations."

Jiang Xi pursed his lips and didn't say a word, as he looked at the one standing at the Sisheng Peak. However, Xue Zhengyong and Xue Meng's expressions were very relaxed. They looked at the main road of Mount Jiao until a person walked in from the thick dust cloud.

"Mo Ran…" Xue Meng muttered.

Mo Ran was the last person to come out of the barrier. He frowned as he swept his eyes across the crowd and said, “It’s Zhenlong Chess. It might be related to the first forbidden technique, the Time Death Gate.”

“If that’s the case, who do you think will be the first to leave? You all better hurry up and leave, don’t wait here for your deaths, it’s more important to keep your lives.”

He paused for a moment, and then said to Jiang Xi, “Sect Leader Jiang, may I trouble you to bring everyone to Linling Island, which is protected by the Black Tortoise Formation and can resist Hua Binan for a while. In addition, your sect is called the Medical Sect, and people who have been infected with the Heart Drilling Worm are also allowed to cure the poison.”

Jiang Xi asked, “What about you?”

“Shizun is still on the mountain. After you leave, I will go back and help him. After everything is settled, we will meet up at your sect.”

Jiang Xi did not speak for a long time. In the end, he raised his arms and made a bow towards Mo Ran. He said, “Waiting for Lord Guyue’ye. Farewell.”

Their injuries were severe, they were tired, and they were crippled. They were prepared to leave this place together with Jiang Xi. Mo Ran suddenly called out to him.

“Sect Leader Jiang!”

“Is Mo-zongshi busy?”

Mo Ran said, “Miss Ye…”

“I know, I won’t let anyone hurt her again.”

Only then did Mo Ran relax. Jiang Xi and the others had gone far away, but the people who were at the top of the mountain of the dead had yet to move. Xue Zhengyong paced around for a long time and then asked in a hoarse voice, “Chi’er, what’s going on?”

Mo Ran looked at his uncle, then his cousin, and his heart ached. He forced a smile and said, “It’s a long story, but I will tell you everything. Uncle, you will lead Xue Meng away first. Later, I will tell you the whole story.”

However, Xue Meng did not want to wait so long. His heart was burning with passion as he said, “No, how could you be a member of the Rufeng Sect? You’ve always been brought up on Sisheng, you — you —”

He repeated the word “you” for a long time. Finally, with bloodshot eyes, he squeezed out a sentence: “You are my brother, right?”

Mo Ran stared at him.

Xue Meng was trembling. Although he tried his best to restrain himself, he was still trembling.

His blank and sorrowful expression was really too pitiful. Mo Ran’s throat was sore and he didn’t know what to say.

Finally, he walked up and patted Xue Meng on the shoulder.

“When I first arrived at Sisheng Peak, you didn’t even want to recognize me.” Mo Ran bitterly smiled. He didn’t dare to look at Xue Meng’s wide, misty eyes again.

Those eyes were too clean, too hot.

And he's dirty.

He was afraid.

Xue Meng was silent for a long time before speaking, his voice hoarse. "Can you give me a definite word?"

He gripped the Longcheng tightly. The black ink had already burned his crystal stone, and the curved blade had embedded itself into his body.

He grabbed it like a lifesaver.

In just a short night, he had seen Nangong Si sacrifice himself as a dragon. He had seen how both of Shi Mei's eyes had been destroyed. He had seen Mo Ran pour his blood and unseal the seal that only the people from the Nangong family had been able to open.

He couldn't breathe. He felt like he was about to drown.

Mo Ran in his heart could not bear it, "… Good. I'll give you that promise."

He held Xue Meng's shoulder. He already did not know who was trembling, whether it was Xue Meng or himself, but it was no longer important. He looked into Xue Meng's eyes, word for word.

"Listen, I have never been a member of the Rufeng Sect. In my entire life, I have never done anything that would harm the Sisheng Peak. If possible, I am willing to serve the sect for the rest of my life."

Xue Meng's lips moved, he seemed to want to say something, but before he could finish, his tears had rolled down. He bit his lower lip with all his might, and after biting for a while, broke down: "Shi Mei said that I never understood him, but actually… Actually, I've never understood you either…

I was too willful before, I never thought about it for you, I don't know anything, I don't know anything. But… But…"

He paused, tears streaming down his face.

"But I really do care about you. I won't scold you in the future, and I won't bully you anymore… I think everything is the same as before. As long as things can be the same as before." At the end of his sentence, he sobbed, "Brother, don't lie to me…"

He pushed Xue Meng to Xue Zhengyong's side, his voice soft and moist, like the dew on a flower at dawn.

"Be obedient, go with uncle. I'll come look for you guys the moment things here are settled."

After he finished speaking, he turned around and returned to the Mount Jiao Spirit Formation. He placed the seal on the barrier and did not look back again.

The tiles and bricks within the Dragon Soul Pond's great hall were broken, and the stone pillars toppled over. The fierce battle had passed, and only the smoke remained. Taxian-Jun's Saber was placed on Chu Wanning's neck. He used a bit more force and the blood that flowed out from his skin dyed the blade black.

Chu Wanning closed his eyes and pursed his lips in silence.

"Shizun, you have been too absent-minded in this fight."

"…"

“You’re not focusing.” Taxian-Jun pulled him up from the ground and lifted his finger. Bu’gui didn’t return instantly, but at the same time, he cast his strongest restriction on Chu Wanning. The eerie green light tightly bound him, and he pinched Chu Wanning’s chin to force him to raise his head.

“Tell me, what are you thinking about?”

Chu Wanning slowly opened his eyes. The reflection of his eyes revealed a face that was extremely familiar and foreign to him.

He felt a chill run down his spine.

He knew that this was not Mo Ran, but this person’s moves were all so similar to Mo Ran. What was even more horrifying was that he suddenly felt as if he had seen this face in his dreams.

There were many times in his dreams that he would wallow in love with Mo Ran. He always seemed to have a slightly pale and thin face with an evil aura lurking within his handsomeness. His pitch-black pupils could not see any warmth, only viciousness and only madness.

“Actually, even if you didn’t say anything, I would have still known.” He spoke slowly, “Shizun must be thinking, who am I, and what nonsense I am spouting, and where did I come from.”

His fingers caressed Chu Wanning’s cheeks.

“No rush. These… I can tell you all about it. By the way…” His gaze shifted down to Chu Wanning’s left hand.

“Jiuge and Huaisha, don’t even think about summoning them. This Venerable one has long been on guard, and will not repeat the same mistakes as back then.”

Hearing him mention the names of his other two godly weapons, Chu Wanning's face turned even uglier. Although his eyes were gloomy, they were still filled with confusion. Taxian-Jun had probably been pleased by his stubborn and blank expression, to the point where he started to chuckle.

He touched Chu Wanning's face and asked, "What's wrong? Do you wonder how I know Jiuge and Huaisha? However, this is no wonder. I already received the news long before I came, so I understand this world fairly well. I know that the 'I' of this time and space 'has not finished stepping on the mountains of corpses and the seas of blood, forcing you to draw your sword against him. Naturally, he has never seen those two godly weapons before."

"This mortal world's… You?"

Taxian-Jun, the cultivator just smiled and didn't reply.

Chu Wanning suddenly felt a chill run down his spine. He felt that the way this Mo Ran was looking at him was like looking at a corpse or a dream. His eyes were too naked, too crazy, and they were filled with emotions that could drive a normal person crazy.

"The Gates of Life and Death." He slowly said, "Shizun should be very knowledgeable about this forbidden art."

"!"

"In the other cultivation world, Shizun, you have already been dead for many years."

He looked at Chu Wanning's pale face and saw that the last bit of blood had left his skin. Taxian-Jun stared at him, his eyes shining with a bright light.

Suddenly, it was as if a flood dragon had just jumped out of its scabbard and broken through the water.

This person's calm state of mind seemed to be stretched to its limits. He suddenly grabbed Chu Wanning up, and gradually became a little crazy, "Yes… That's it, that's the face."

"…"

"This is the face. I look at your face, I look at you lying like a dead man in the Red Lotus Pavilion, every night. You don't have any trace of blood on your face. Your corpse is rotten, but you will never speak or open your eyes. In that cultivation world, you have long been dead — you have taken revenge on me!"

He took a deep breath, the light in his eyes blazing.

Desperately, the flames were surging and the dragons and snakes were dancing in the air.

"Chu Wanning, I hate you. Leave me alone."

As he said this, he raised his arms and hugged him.

So hot.

It was like fire.

He was stung by the warmth he hadn't felt in a long time, and a deep sigh came from his throat. He clung to him, holding him, wishing he could rub him into his bones and blood and swallow him into his lungs and live from then on be either dead or warm or cold.

He was always accompanied by martyrs and no longer hung up.

No, no, no!

Chu Wanning's scalp was tingling and his vision was turning black. He didn't know what was going on exactly. He didn't understand, who was dead? Who left one person?

The door to the Dragon Soul Pool opened once again.

From within the moving light and shadows, a person hastily walked over. That person anxiously called out, "Shizun!"

Hundreds of soldiers were on guard, blocking the way.

When Taxian-Jun heard this voice, he was stunned for a moment, then laughed coldly. "So it's him." He lazily waved his hand and said to the chess pieces that were following him, "Disperse. It's alright. Let him in."

He felt that Hua Binan was definitely not the last person to do this. If all of this had been designed by Hua Binan, then there was no reason for him to harm Xu Shuanglin like this in front of the Soul Summoning Platform. Xu Shuanglin would not be able to recognize him.

Then, who was the last hand?

He had a crazy idea in his mind. The idea made him feel cold all over, but he didn't believe it. He didn't believe it when he ran all the way. He didn't

believe it was true.

Until he broke into the Dragon Soul Hall.

Until he could clearly see that person.

Mo Ran only felt a buzzing sound in his head as all the blood rushed into his brain. For a moment, he was unable to breathe. His lips moved, and his eyes were bloodshot.

No…

No!

How could this be true?

The man in the hall, under the crowd of people, had such a disdainful and cold expression, yet his eyes were also so disdainful and playful.

He watched Mo Ran indifferently.

They had the same facial features, nose, lips, face, charm, and physique.

The difference was within a few seconds. He looked like he was looking at himself in a mirror, but also looked like he was looking at himself through the passage of time.

The corner of Taxian-Jun's mouth quirked upwards as he let out a smile that reeked of blood.

He held Chu Wanning in front of him, tapped his lips with his fingertip and cast a silent incantation. Then, he smiled at the person at the door and said,

“Oh, Mo-zongshi, I’ve heard of Mo-zongshi’s fame and have been curious about him for a long time. Now that the Gate of Life and Death has been opened, we can finally meet again.”

He paused for a moment, his eyes flashing with a ghostly light. His white teeth knocked on his chest as he typed out two sweet and cold words.

“Nice to meet you.”

Ch. 235 [Mount Jiao] Going All the Way

“Why…” Mo Ran took a step back and muttered while shaking his head,

“How is this possible? It’s really you…?”

“Yes, it’s me.”

Taxian-Jun slowly looked at him, then smiled: “Oh… I originally thought that after you were reborn, you wouldn’t be able to remember too much of what happened in your previous life, but looking at your current state, it seems like you’re still very clear about everything.”

“…”

“And judging from your expression, you seem to have guessed at my existence. If that’s the case, then you’re not that stupid.”

Mo Ran stammered. He had many words to say. Those words were about to rush out of his throat as he bared his teeth, but in the end, the person who had rushed out of his encirclement was only an angry shout of disbelief. “But you’re clearly dead!”

“Oh?”

“You had already taken it back at the Wushan Palace. The Poison, there’s no way you could have survived! You died in front of Heaven-Piercing Tower and were buried in a coffin underneath a tree.”

Taxian-Jun smiled. “That’s not good enough.”

His eyes were like the beak of a bird of prey, ready to tear through Mo-zongshi’s body.

“How about I say one for you?” He spoke softly and slowly as if he was toying with someone. He then smiled, “Yes, I am indeed dead. The person who can best prove that I am dead is standing in front of me right now.”

Mo Ran: “…”

“Because you are the spirit soul that I just escaped from.” Immortal Taxian-Jun laughed. “The most compassionate of all, Mo-zongshi, is that even in the world of mortals, someone would frequently come to me to tell me about your… What, heroic good deeds?”

He grinned.

“You are really interesting. I thought you didn’t remember too much about your past life, which was why you acted like nothing happened. But you actually remember it.”

“…” Mo Ran gritted his teeth.

“Ah, Mo-zongshi, do you really think that as long as you remain silent, no one will know the truth? Do you think you can start over just by putting down the butcher’s knife? Most importantly, do you think that…”

Taxian-Jun’s actions became even more ruthless. He grabbed Chu Wanning by the neck, his nails digging into his flesh. He pinched his skin so hard that it turned purple. He frowned furiously, but couldn’t say a single word.

“Do you really think that now that there is no fire in my world, I will still be kind and let you enjoy the light by yourself?”

“Don’t touch him!”

Taxian-Jun laughed, “Don’t touch him? Don’t you think it’s ridiculous for you to say that to This Venerable one?”

He held Chu Wanning in his arms and slowly walked in circles.

He and Mo Ran looked at each other.

Immortal Taxian-Jun was staring at Mo-zongshi.

Mo Ran stared at him.

In his previous life, he had been staring at this life.

Taxian-Jun mocked him, “Don’t you know how I touched him? And now you’re putting on an act again, acting like a good person.”

“Don’t say it!”

“Hmm? Why not? Don’t you think those things are funny and unpleasant? It’s been so many years since we’ve last met. Don’t you think you should take it out and happily chat with me?”

Mo Ran could not help but shake his head. His face was probably even uglier than Chu Wanning’s right now. He was both angry and helpless, both guilty and desperate, “Don’t say anything.”

“Oh, so you want This Venerable one to shut up just like that? Interesting, our wise and kind Mo-zongshi seems to be…” Taxian-Jun considered for a moment before spitting out three words. “I seem to be very afraid.”

Mo Ran couldn’t wait any longer. He saw Chu Wanning being held tightly in Taxian-Jun’s embrace, and a violent surge of emotions surged through his heart. He didn’t know what to do, he just wanted to stop this demon in

front of him from speaking. He just wanted to bury all the ugly things from his past in the ground and seal them in a coffin.

The red starfire crackled in the air, the flames were even more ferocious and ruthless than ever before.

Avoiding the attack, Taxian-Jun's expression changed slightly: "… Tianwen?"

No, he already knew the answer after he finished speaking. This willow branch shining with red light was not Tianwen.

"… Your new godly weapon is quite interesting." Taxian-Jun's face was slightly complicated. He stared at the cane for a moment, then raised his head to look at Mo Ran. His expression turned even colder.

"If that's the case…"

As he spoke, he passed Chu Wanning over to a subordinate behind him. Then, he raised his hand and called for Bu'gui, "Come, let's exchange moves with me. I am curious, whether I am more powerful when holding the whip than when I am not."

As he said that, he used his finger to wipe the blade inch by inch. A green light surged out as his spirit energy was quenched to the peak.

At the same time, Mo-zongshi's fingers grazed the willow vine inch by inch. Bloody red light spewed out in all directions, and the flame was blazing ferociously.

"Fire element?" Taxian-Jun laughed, "Although I have a wood fire dual attributed Spiritual Core, I clearly remember that I'm more adept at using wood than fire. Why did your temper change?"

Mo Ran remained silent. His expression was cold and solemn. He pursed his lips and a trace of sadness could be seen in his eyes.

They were the eyes of someone standing on the edge of a cliff, on the verge of collapse.

“Clang!”

Two nearly identical figures jumped up into the air and clashed fiercely with each other.

Like a flood dragon encountering a whale, a flood struck down upon a ferocious beast. In an instant, the bricks of the Dragon Soul Hall were splattered everywhere, and rocks flew everywhere. Their surging torrent even lifted up the magma in the Dragon Blood Pool, spewing out a height of a few dozen feet in one go and trickling down onto the ground.

Everyone was attuning to the spirit, preventing the overflowing lava from burning them.

Taxian-Jun and Mo-zongshi were no exception. The two of them fought intensely while the sound of their blades clashing rang out. The black shadow pounced towards the black shadow, its bloody eyes locked onto the despairing one. Each and every move of its attack was at its peak, causing the fire lightning to surge violently!

Another sharp whistle of a weapon rang out. Both of them pointed their feet and leaped into the air. Jiangui and Bu’gui clashed against each other, causing the Spiritual Energy to splash out and reflect the two pale faces.

One came back to life.

One is nothing but death.

As he fought back with his strength, a thousand lumps of snow appeared in Taxian-Jun's eyes. He then shouted out sternly, "Bu'gui, temper your spirit!"

Mo-zongshi gritted his teeth and said in a low voice, "Jiangui. Temper your Spirit."

In the blink of an eye, their spiritual energy gushed into the Divine Martial Realm. The two godly weapons emitted a brilliant light as they clashed against each other — in the end, there was only the sound of an explosion.

Both of them groaned as they landed on the ground on their left and right sides, gasping for breath. They did not feel the pain in their wounds at all as they paid full attention to each other. They are like beasts in a cage, either you die or I live.

Taxian-Jun's eyes were dark. "The moves of your Whip of the Vines are too similar to his."

"He" naturally referred to Chu Wanning.

Mo-zongshi did not wish to waste any more time with Taxian-Jun. His eyes flashed with killing intent, "You are still not leaving?!"

"You want me to scram? Mo Xianyu, what qualifications do you have to do so? After being covered with sheepskin for so long, you can't have forgotten that your lips are still stained with sheep's blood."

He didn't even say a single word before he leaped up once again. He was going to fight to the death. However, how could he not be clear about his own movements? It was as if he was looking at his own reflection in the lake, and the moment his blade descended, he had already retreated

several meters back, and the blazing sun beneath his feet was blazing with raging flames.

As the two of them advanced and retreated, their actions were as expected of the other. In the blink of an eye, over a hundred rounds of peak battle had concluded, neither side was able to gain an advantage over the other.

Taxian-Jun was panting heavily as well. They continued to hover there, staring at each other as they continued to spin around in circles.

Sweat seeped between his pitch-black brows, and after a moment of concentration, it suddenly started dripping down.

Mo Ran gritted his teeth and whispered, “What are you doing all this for?”

“Like I said, Shizun is gone from this world. Don’t be so delusional as to take all the fire for yourself.”

Mo Ran suddenly flew into a rage, “That will also be your last strike!”

“But I can’t get him.” Taxian-Jun said, “Besides, is there any difference between us? This Venerable one’s hands are covered in blood, and you’re just clean? Why am I the only one who can fall asleep in the middle of the night, while you can only guard your Shizun’s orders, your ridiculous uncle and cousin — why is it you?”

Upon hearing his words, Mo Ran was suddenly startled. After a long while, he said, “You’ve already obtained it.”

“…”

Mo Ran gazed at his own past self. He had always thought about this, but he had never said the words out loud. He just muttered them aloud like

this, “What you got was that you stepped on him yourself. You personally extinguished him.”

Taxian-Jun’s expression suddenly became extremely dangerous. His nose wrinkled slightly, and his eyes seemed to be filled with the roiling waves of an evil Flood Dragon. He was so gloomy that even his self-proclaimed self had unconsciously changed: “I destroyed him? Ridiculous. How do you know that he didn’t destroy me?”

“You don’t know the truth about the ‘Heavenly Rift’!”

“I don’t need to know. Mo Weiyu, it’s already too late. I feel that this is pretty good. As long as he is alive, he is mine. It doesn’t matter if he is happy, or unwilling, or hating me, or resenting me. It doesn’t matter.”

He paused. “I just want to see him.”

Mo Ran’s voice was boiling with anger and pain. He trembled slightly as he spoke, “You have already destroyed him once. You still want to destroy yourself, and you also want to destroy him in this world… The second time…”

Taxian-Jun suddenly revealed a beautiful face as he looked at Mo Ran’s face from head to toe.

Then he said, “What is there to destroy? Don’t you think so? It doesn’t matter whether this person is dead or alive, as long as he is in your hands, you can do whatever you want.”

Mo Ran shook his head, closed his eyes and said hoarsely, “You are wrong. You shouldn’t have done this to him. He’s the best man in the world for you.”

“How ridiculous.” Taxian-Jun’s smile suddenly tightened, “He’s the best person in the world to treat me like this? Then what about Shi Mei? Mo-zongshi, don’t you think that you’re laughable? The person you should be thinking about is the person who has always treated you gently and has never looked down on you, Shi Mingjing. You’re telling me that Chu Wanning is the best person in the world? Do you know what you’re talking about?”

“The person who doesn’t know what he’s talking about is you!”

They stuck close together, their spirit energy hissing as they collided with each other.

Mo Ran was burning red in the eyes.

“He used up all his sincerity when he was with you, but he was very stupid. A lot of things have been done so stupidly that he won’t tell you. Wake up, the person you like isn’t Shi Mei. In all these years, when have you ever had such an intense desire for Shi Mei? Who were you thinking about when you were lying on the empty bed in the Wushan Palace?”

“… This Venerable one does not deny that he had a good fuck.” Taxian-Jun said calmly, “But so what? He will never be a substitute for Shi Mei.”

Upon hearing his words, Mo Ran, who clearly belonged to his previous life, was so angry that his blood was boiling and his head was buzzing. He gritted his teeth and said, “You are not allowed to insult him.”

Taxian-Jun narrowed his eyes, “What, you’re protecting him now, is he involved with you again?”

“…”

“You’ve been in love with him before?”

His eyes narrowed like a snake’s.

The power and spiritual energy in their hands didn’t stop. The powerful magic techniques they used made it so that the other chess pieces couldn’t even hold on. Some people even curled up on the ground.

Taxian-Jun stared at Mo Ran for a while before his eyes landed on Chu Wanning. He muttered to himself, “Mo-zongshi, I’ve heard that Shi Mei is still alive and well in this world. However, you must treat him like this.”

Mo Ran did not know how to argue with such a person who came from the Gate of Life and Death, nor did he know how to revive.

Finally he said, “What about you? Now that you’ve come to this world, Shi Mei is still alive and well. But when I came in, why were you holding onto my Shizun so tightly?”

“Your Shizun?” Taxian-Jun rolled his eyes, and said with a mocking expression, “Heh, you yourself know what sort of person your Shizun is to me.”

“…”

“Do you think I can hug him?”

Mo Ran was determined to get him to let go of Chu Wanning, so he asked, “You think you’re worthy calling him Shizun?”

“Shi Mei is such a pure and swarthy person, of course, he cannot be desecrated. But Chu Wanning is different. He looks cold, arrogant, strong

and conceited, but have you forgotten how he looks like when he is acting?”

Mo Ran did not expect him to say it in such a straightforward manner. He was stunned.

Then, he couldn’t help but think of Chu Wanning hiding underneath him and groaning. Even though he didn’t want to, he thought about how, in his previous life, Chu Wanning had finally succumbed to his desire and crazily pestered him to cater to his desires. He was soaked in sweat and had an animal-like sex.

The phoenix eyes that were filled with dissatisfaction and shame, yet were covered with mist, slightly closed. Chu Wanning’s eyes lost focus, his lips slightly opened as he gasped for breath.

He closed his eyes abruptly and reopened them again. His eyes were burning with anger, “I am not the same as you! All my life. I still haven’t…I still…”

“What do you mean you still haven’t?” This time, Taxian-Jun didn’t understand.

He felt that he had never pitied Chu Wanning, so he could not imagine the love and restraint Mo Ran showed in bed.

After a while, he finally understood from the other party’s angry and embarrassed expression. However, after realizing what had happened, he was even more stunned.

“Are you joking?”

“…”

“Haven’t you and him…”

Mo Ran gritted his teeth. The bloody red light was about to materialize at any moment, tearing the entire Dragon Soul Hall apart.

Taxian-Jun laughed out loud. “Mo-zongshi, I suddenly feel like you are not related to me anymore. Are you still me? Hmm?”

Of the two of them, one was like a mad dog, while the other was as loyal as a dog.

He bared his teeth and laughed.

The loyal ones were silent and blushing, stubbornly and resolutely confronting him.

It was just that the look on the loyal dog’s face when he was faced with the monstrous past that he had cast down was actually extremely pitiful and helpless.

It was hard to tell who would emerge victorious in this battle.

Taxian-Jun was beginning to get a bit tired.

He suddenly said, “Alright, I’ve played enough with you. Mo-zongshi, it’s time to meet with the truth.”

As he said this, he waved his hand. Those Zhenlong chess pieces that had listened to his commands to stand still at the edge of the stage rushed up one after another.

“This is your true seal?”

Taxian-Jun left the battle and strolled towards Chu Wanning. As he walked, he turned his head and said with a sneer, “The chess pieces that I made were naturally my battle prowess. How could they not be real?”

Mo Ran saw him holding the knife, patting Chu Wanning on the cheek, and then he raised his hand and pinched his face, saying something to him in a sweet manner.

He could not take it anymore. In his rage, he had forgotten that there was a connection between Chu Wanning and his Bu’gui. He shouted, “No!”

The blade flashed with a bright light and actually started to shake in the hands of Taxian-Jun. It seemed to be hesitating and struggling.

It did not know who it should listen to.

Taxian-Jun frowned, then lowered his head to look at his own blade. “Oh? Do you want to listen to him?”

However, it was at this moment that Chu Wanning suddenly felt a splitting pain in his brain.

The dreams he had experienced, the messy fragments, rolled into his mind like sand.

Scarlet red sheets, with a pungent smell of animal skins.

Intertwined limbs.

Kneeling outside the main hall in the snow, the palace maid could only mock him arrogantly.

Taxian-Jun felt his strangeness and lifted his hand to remove the silence curse. He then asked, “What’s wrong with you?”

Chu Wanning didn’t want to answer, he was in excruciating pain and his head felt like it was about to split open.

He saw the ashes of the skeletons that blotted out the sky, the crabs’ blue skies filled with dead ashes, and a man in black robes standing between the sky and the earth, with corpses all over the field.

“Shizun.” The man turned around. It was Mo Ran’s face. He had an evil grin on his face.

He was holding something bright red in his hands.

On closer look, it was a beating heart.

“You finally came. Are you trying to stop me?”

He exerted a little more force and the heart burst open in his hand, revealing the sparkling and dazzling spirit core inside. Mo Ran absorbed the spirit core into his own palm.

He walked towards him, closing in step by step.

“I didn’t expect that Shizun and disciple would be unable to escape from this battle for the rest of our lives.”

Chu Wanning closed his eyes, the veins on his forehead were popping out and there was a surge in blood flow.

Taxian-Jun felt that his expression was off. He raised his finger and touched his cheek, then turned his chin over. “What’s wrong? Pain?”

“…” Chu Wanning trembled slightly under his fingers.

Taxian-Jun got even more confused. He frowned and said, “I didn’t hurt you too much. How come you became so weak?”

Seeing that Chu Wanning was still silent, he raised his eyebrows as if he wanted to say something, but before he could open his mouth, he heard a heavy cracking sound from outside.

Taxian-Jun’s expression changed slightly. “Someone broke the barrier forcefully?”

His eyes were like lightning as he suddenly turned his head.

However, he saw an apricot-colored shadow flying over with astonishing speed. The path was strange and eerie, as though it was a ghost.

In the blink of an eye, Chu Wanning was captured by that man.

Mo Ran said, “Shizun!”

Taxian-Jun said, “Wanning!”

“…”

The two men who had shouted at the same time looked at each other with disgust in their eyes. However, Mo Ran and Taxian-Jun turned back and stared at the uninvited guest whose cassock was fluttering in the sky.

Master Huaizui.

The expression on Huaizui’s face was not that good. Compared to five years ago, his expression was much more withered, but the sharp look in his eyes

did not decrease in the slightest. It was as if the rivers and seas had condensed and rippled.

Mo Ran was relieved. He did not know why Huaizui had suddenly appeared, but since this person was willing to use the Rebirth Technique to save Chu Wanning, it was likely that he would not harm his Shizun.

However, Taxian-Jun had never seen him before, so his expression became very dangerous: “What a good little bald donkey, where did you come from? You must be another foe.”

Huaizui shot a glance at him before his gaze landed on Mo Ran.

He did not seem to be surprised by the appearance of the two Mo Weiyus. On his face, there was a look of worry instead of surprise.

“Benefactor Mo.” There were too many people here. In order to prevent Taxian-Jun Jun from hearing it, he used a voice transmission to send this message to Mo Ran, “I can’t stay here any longer. Come to Mount Longxue and see me quickly.”

He paused and then added two words, “Must be quick.”

As soon as he finished speaking, he disappeared as fast as the wind. Regardless of whether it was Zhenlong chess or the barrier that protected Mount Jiao, it seemed that they couldn’t stop him.

There was even a moment where Mo Ran could see that one of the cultivators had already grabbed his arm, but in the next moment, his figure was already far away outside the hall. The cultivator had nothing in his hand, only a lump of ice-cold air.

Taxian-Jun was about to rush out to catch up, but suddenly, a sharp whistle came from the sky. His face turned serious as he cursed in his heart: “At this time?”

The whistling sound was sharp and ear-piercing. His eyebrows were twisted into a stream as he squinted his eyes. Although he was unwilling, his finger still pointed to the sky, “Consider yourself lucky. Next time, there will be a chance for us to fight.”

As he said this, he led the rolling wave of chess pieces and quickly retreated in the direction of the Soul Summoning Platform.

The fierceness of this battle also left quickly.

There was no one left in the Dragon Soul Hall. Mo Ran rushed out of the Soul Summoning Platform, only to see Taxian-Jun leaping up and flying towards the center of the formation. The precious pawns followed him one after another, and in an instant, they were all swallowed up by the endless darkness.

After the last wave of cultivators entered, the formation immediately began to shrink and distort before disappearing into the night. Only a crescent moon remained in the sky with a hint of scarlet.

The Gate of Life and Death in Time and Space closed.

Mo Ran stood on top of the Soul Summoning Platform. Looking at the endless night and the mess on the ground, he felt a chill in his heart, unable to recover for a long time. It was like a dream, but he knew it wasn’t. He knew in his heart that everything that happened today was just the beginning.

He… It was a ghost that had been reborn from the dead.

Some things are only a matter of time, there is no escape.

The sin he had committed was like a sharp sword hanging over his head.

At last he was found guilty and killed.

He seemed to see Taxian-Jun's ferocious eyes that seemed to be suffused with red light. He laughed sinisterly: "Redemption? How to atone for it? You and I are the same. You should never even think of washing off the blood on your body."

He saw Xue Meng in his previous life shouting at him with all his might, "Mo Weiyu! I wish I could cut you into a thousand pieces! I will never forgive you even if you're reborn!"

He heard the terrifying sound of Song Qiutong falling into the boiling oil, screamed instantly. He heard Ye Wangxi say that there was not a single man in all the 70 cities of the Rufeng Sect. He saw Xu Shuanglin standing in front of Ye Wangxi with a face full of determination and anxiety.

"Foster father!"

The sound was like a sharp awl piercing into one's ears.

Blood flowed freely.

Finally, in the flickering light, in the foul past, he saw a figure in the nightmare of yesterday.

Pale and peaceful.

Standing under the haitang tree, he turned his head and faintly smiled amidst the brilliant light of the sky and the shadows of the clouds.

“Mo Ran.”

“…”

“I’ve let you down, and I don’t blame you for dying.”

He suddenly knelt down. After going through a bloody battle all night, his clothes were in a sorry state, and his whole body was covered in blood. Under the reflection of the moon, he was stunned for a while, then he curled up like an ant and started to tremble with sobs.

“Shizun… Shizun…”

He moaned, and choked with sobs, “It’s not like that… It wasn’t me. Please. Please. That’s not me…”

“I want to go back, I want to start over. I can pay any price, I’m begging you…”

“I can give my heart up, as long as you don’t let me die under the title of Taxian-Jun.”

“I really… I really didn’t want to be that person anymore… I beg you…”

He thought of Xue Meng and of Shi Mei.

He thought of the string of candied fruits Xue Meng had given him when he was young, and proudly told him if he liked it or not.

He thought about how before he left, Xue Meng tightly held onto his shirt with tears in his eyes and told him, “Brother, don’t lie to me.”

He thought of how Shi Mei had come to see him when he was a teenager, holding a burning hand and telling him, A-Ran, I don't have any parents. From now on, we are family, okay?

He thought of Shi Mei on the Soul Summoning Platform, his eyes wide open as blood and tears streamed down his face. He said, In fact, you never understood me.

Then, he thought of Xue Zhengyong and Madam Wang.

Thinking about how they died in their previous life, thinking about how Xue Meng's face was submerged in a sea of blood and deep hatred.

He thought of Chu Wanning.

He choked up.

His fingers clung to the ground, so hard that his knuckles were torn and lacerated.

"What should I do… What should I do…"

He howled in despair and grief, like a trapped beast that had been whipped to the point where its skin and flesh was torn and its bones were mangled.

At this moment, he suddenly understood. He had thought that Taxian-Jun was an outsider from the mortal world, so what about him? Isn't he the same? He suddenly didn't know how big the world was, or where it was peaceful. He suddenly didn't know who could forgive him since his old friend was still here.

He came out more.

He was curled up, trembling.

He wailed and hugged himself.

It was just like many years ago, in a place of mass graves, beside the rotted remains of his mother.

Tears streamed down his face. He didn't know where he would stop, nor did he know where his home would be.

At this moment, he was even more miserable than when he was a child.

He was suddenly not so sure. Just who was he, Mo Weiyu?

Immortal Emperor Taxian-Jun, Mo-zongshi.

The seventh generation Nangong Family bloodline, Second young master retrieved to Sisheng Peak.

An unforgivable fiend.

A master of good will.

The sharp edges of every fragment was enough to completely destroy him thousands of times.

Dead.

Alive.

He was all alone.

"I'm not Taxian-Jun…" It was cold. Every inch of his body was trembling. He closed his eyes as tears streamed down his face and he sobbed, "I am not

the emperor Taxian-Jun… What to do… I really don't know what to do. Spare me… Spare me…"

But who should he beg? Chu Wanning? His past self? The countless evil spirits that had died under his hands? It was still a matter of living in isolation.

No one could give him forgiveness, no one could.

He buried his face in his palms. In this desolate world, he finally choked with sobs:

"What the hell… Just what else can I do…"

Ch. 236 [Mount Longxue] Parinirvana

After coming out of Mount Jiao, Mo Ran was like a wooden sculpture. His eyes were a little stiff as he walked forward in silence.

He stood at a fork in the road, lost in thought.

The great battle had already passed. The rising sun had risen to the east, and the morning glow had washed away all the lead from the night. Only dewdrops and the scent of grass remained, just like greasy powder floating in the morning light.

He turned his head and looked at the lofty peaks. Then he looked at the road ahead. Straight ahead was Linling Island. Xue Meng and his uncle were both waiting for him, waiting for an explanation and an answer. But he couldn't go. He had to go to Mount Longxue.

Mo Ran vaguely understood. The things that the Master Huaizui knew were far more than he had imagined. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been so calm when he saw the Emperor Taxian-Jun. Perhaps it was because of this that he became even more at a loss.

He didn't know what was waiting for him in front of him.

At this moment, his mind was in a mess. He was not in the mood to think, and in the end, he could only numbly understand…

He had to go, because his Shizun was there.

In the early years of the old times, there were monks who would occasionally go up the mountain to meditate, meditate, and meditate.

However, there were many people who were confused. Many people said that they had encountered a matter of ghosts beating the walls, and once they entered, they wouldn't be able to leave. As a result, they gradually became a barren mountain.

After a day of travelling with the Imperial Sword, he finally arrived at the foot of the Mount Longxue at sunset. He had not eaten or drank anything the entire day, so he was already very tired. So when he saw a stream of clear spring water flowing out from the cypress trees, he walked over, scooped up a handful of water, and washed his face.

First the mud, then the melted blood, and finally his face, reflected in the rippling water.

It wasn't an ugly face, but Mo Ran stared at it for a moment, feeling nothing but disgust and hatred. He broke the surface of the water, shattering the reflection, then closed his eyes and rubbed his face against his palm, almost painfully.

Is there any way in this world that can completely separate a person's past from his present? Are there any sharp weapons that can remove the rotten memories from my mind?

Is there anyone who can save him? Who can tell him "you are not Taxian-Jun, you are just Mo Ran, you are just Mo Weiyu."

But when he opened his eyes, the water was calm again, and the man inside was still staring at him with hatred and despair.

He knew he had no way out.

He got up and went up the mountain.

Halfway up the mountain, a fog suddenly rose up. It was so thick that one couldn't see one's own fingers even though one couldn't see them.

At first, Mo Ran thought it was a sneak attack, but after sensing it, he did not feel any malice at all.

It was not early anymore. The sound of rhododendrons could occasionally be heard from the forest. The surroundings gradually became colder. The sunlight slowly disappeared, and the surroundings became dark.

"Shizun?"

His voice was a little hoarse, and he rubbed it as he walked forward.

"Master Huaizui?"

No one answered him.

Strangely, though he was walking blindly, he was not stopped. The path was creepy, as if someone had set him up in the fog and was waiting for him to fall into a trap.

"Is anyone there?"

The fog gradually dissipated.

The scenery in front of his eyes became clearer and clearer. Thick mist descended, and the mountain rocks and trees appeared before his eyes.

He discovered that he had unknowingly arrived at a flat and open area. When he turned around, the path he took was still covered in mist. Only this area was filled with vegetation, and the moon was bright and the stars were sparse.

He stepped on the dewy grass, moving forward, and then he saw the back of a person.

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment before running forward in panic, calling out anxiously, “Shizun?!”

Chu Wanning was kneeling in front of a cave covered by a Violet Vine. In front of him, the Master Huaizui was sitting cross-legged with his eyes closed. His expression was calm, and he was completely silent.

“Shizun! You…”

He was suddenly rendered speechless when he saw Chu Wanning turn his head around. His eyelashes were moist and there were tears on his face.

Mo Ran was stunned. “What’s wrong?”

Chu Wanning did not say anything. He had always been suppressing himself, ever since a long time ago. He had always been aloof, serious, and awe-inspiring. It seemed that when he was born, he was an elder, an immortal cultivator, and was not weak or young.

“Mo Ran…”

But this time, he used up all his strength, but he only said two words. He could no longer hold back his sobs and they flowed out of his lips.

Mo Ran muttered as he stepped forward, walking to his side. He knelt down and hugged him tightly. “What’s wrong? Why are you crying?”

As he spoke, he lowered his head and stroked Chu Wanning’s hair. Chu Wanning was feeling cold, but now that he found him, he could still hug him, while his heart felt hot.

His every moment of safety was stolen, and every word he said to Chu Wanning became a godsend. If he could get even a little bit more, he would treat it as a treasure, and would not dare to take it lightly.

“Alright, alright.” Even though he was helpless, he still hugged him to his warm and wide chest, comforting him, “It’s okay, I’m here, I’m here.”

As he spoke, he kissed Chu Wanning’s forehead. At this moment, he suddenly realized that even though he was hiding in his arms and restraining himself, he was still trembling and crying. His fingers tightly gripped the lapel of his shirt, looking very much like the shidi in the Peach Blossom Spring who would never appear again.

No one was born to be an expert, so Chu Wanning should also have a young face.

Mo Ran’s heart trembled as he seemed to have understood something. He hugged the trembling Chu Wanning and kissed him, stroking his hair as he looked at master Huaizui.

The old monk sat on a huge, ice-cold rock, his eyebrows furrowed, his eyelashes lowered. His half-closed eyes had no light in them, and in his hand he held a haitang flower, slightly leaning forward, as if he was giving it to someone. But that person must have refused his good intentions. The flowers had already decayed, and only a few had yet to wilt from the branches.

Master Huaizui was dead.

At the last moment, the face of this person who was hiding many myths and many mysteries was not at ease at all.

His expression was pained.

What was even more unbearable was that after his death, his face no longer retained the appearance of a thirty year old youth. He had thoroughly become a thorny old monk, and for some reason, his face was being eaten away by a golden bug at a speed visible to the naked eye.

“This insect…”

“It’s a worm.” Chu Wanning finally opened his mouth, but his voice was frighteningly hoarse, “People who hate their looks will make blood contracts with these bugs. The worm can change the host’s appearance, and in return, on the day the host dies, the worm will devour the host’s entire body.”

Listening to him trying to keep his tone even as he spoke slowly, Mo Ran could not help but hug him even more tightly. The person in his arms had probably been kneeling there for a long time, his hands and feet were cold.

From his previous life until now, it had always been Chu Wanning who was his lighthouse. His flames were dispersing the darkness of the night, giving him a feeling of warmth that was within his capabilities.

However, Mo Ran embraced him at this moment and felt that the person in his embrace was made of ice.

He was cold.

His heart ached.

“I’m here, I’m here.”

“He told me to come to Mount Longxue a long time ago.” Chu Wanning looked extremely exhausted, as if someone had drained all of his warm blood and injected it with endless pain and suffering.

“He knew that I would not speak to him face to face, and would not listen to any of his explanations, so he had left me a letter in which he had spoken with all his might, but I was still headstrong, and I refused to believe him. I was suspicious of him.”

Mo Ran touched his face. He had never seen Chu Wanning like this.

Not even in his previous life.

This did not stop him from panicking. He asked, “What happened?”

However, Chu Wanning only replied, “I was the one who suspected him…”

This person, who had always been calm and rational, had finally broken into pieces.

He was like a horned bow, and his bowstring was stretched to the point where it suddenly snapped. He trembled in Mo Ran’s arms, so desperately, so pitifully.

Chu Wanning was curled up on his back. Once a person who had been tensed for half a lifetime collapsed, the accumulated grief would be enough to burst a dam, “I should have come here a long time ago… If I had listened to him, many things wouldn’t have happened. Nangong Si wouldn’t have died, and Shi Mei wouldn’t have been blind. He would have been able to make it in time… all in time.”

“Shizun.”

“If I had listened to that letter, I wouldn’t have ended up like this…”

After a long time, Chu Wanning finally stopped crying. But his eyes were out of focus, and as he pinched the tips of his fingers, he found that they were not warm at all, just like that slight tremble.

“Why didn’t I believe him again…”

Mo Ran listened silently. Actually, on the way here, because of Taxian-Jun, Mo Ran had anticipated countless scenes where he would meet Chu Wanning again, and he had thought of many explanations and pleas.

However, he found that it was all useless.

He hadn’t expected to see this kind of situation the next time he saw him.

“He… He even left behind a memory scroll…” Finally, Chu Wanning calmed down, Mo Ran touched his face, and it was ice-cold, “… Before he left, he had always hoped that you would come and personally give it to you.”

Hearing that it was related to him, Mo Ran’s fingers froze.

Memory scroll?

What would it say? What did Master Huaizui know about him?

Mo Ran felt his hands turn cold. His hair was standing on end, and he was chilled to the bone.

Chu Wanning said hoarsely, “But he won’t be able to wait any longer. His lifespan is almost up.” After he finished speaking, he seemed to have been touched by some extremely painful scar. He frowned and no longer said anything.

He was afraid that if he spoke another word, he would collapse again.

Chu Wanning covered his eyes with his arms. He calmed himself down and slowly tidied up the mess. Calm, peaceful, cold, reliable. He picked up the pieces and slowly put them on himself.

In the end, he was not used to being a weakling.

Finally, Chu Wanning lifted up his moist eyes and took out the scroll from his bosom, handing it over to Mo Ran.

“These are all the secrets he knows.”

Mo Ran’s voice trembled a little. “…Did he show it to you?”

“Yes.”

Mo Ran’s heart quivered.

He looked into Chu Wanning’s eyes, and at that moment, he had a terrifying thought.

He felt that Chu Wanning knew everything.

He took the jade scroll.

He suddenly felt uneasy, so he held Chu Wanning’s fingers and caressed them.

“Wanning…”

“…”

“If it’s at Mount Jiao, then that person… What I’m telling you is true, will you hate me?”

Chu Wanning's face was already pale, and now it was completely drained of color. Even his lips had turned green.

"Will you hate me?"

Mo Ran held his hand. The strength was so great, so stubborn, even barbaric. However, the thing that was completely different from that force was the pleading under his soft eyelashes.

"Will it?"

Chu Wanning shook his head and didn't answer. He just closed his eyes, "… Look at the scroll."

The scroll left behind by Huaizui a very heavy Yin Qi. It was not similar to the spells of the mortal world, but it was close to the Illusory Creation Realm of the Peach Blossom Springs' Feathers.

Then, he opened the scroll and placed it between his eyebrows, letting out a bright jade-like glow.

The scene at Mount Longxue disappeared and what followed was an unfathomable darkness. In the darkness, the voice of Master Huaizui echoed in Mo Ran's ears with a few sighs.

Chu-zongshi, Benefactor Mo, this old monk knows that time is running out, but now that the world is changing, a great calamity is about to befall us. If we do not do everything in our power to inform the two of you of what we know, it will help us return to the continent.

The voice paused, then slowly spoke.

“The memories in this scroll are all outrageous. There are even old monks who were previously wrong, unable to be concealed. I know that in my half life I have committed a great sin, that I was dull, shallow, and narrow-minded, and that my two hundred years of life and sobriety have been few and far between, and that I have done very few good deeds. I have sinned all my life, and I can’t be redeemed. After I die, I will also fall into the Unbroken Hell and never be able to reincarnate. However, I still have hopes. I hope that the two of you will not dislike the old monk and think of him… Flies are inferior to beasts.”

A faint light gradually lit up before Mo Ran’s eyes. He blinked his eyes. All he could see were broken walls, old trees and crows. There were birds pecking at eyes and stomachs everywhere.

He was slightly startled. For some reason, he felt that this scene was very familiar, but he could not immediately recall it.

It was not until a group of people arrived at the city gate. They rode thin horses while holding onto their foreheads and carrying arrows on their backs. One of the young men suddenly pulled on the reins, rolled off the horse, and threw himself at a corpse at the city gate while shouting, “Father! Father!”

Mo Ran was taken aback and felt chills behind his back.

This was…

Peach Blossom Springs’ Feathered People’s Illusion Realm?

Was this the same as Gu Linan in the flames of war?

Ch. 237 [Mount Longxue] Shenmu

Unlike at Peach Blossom Springs, he was no longer involved in it. He was just a bystander, and no one in his memories could see him. He walked up to the horsemen, lowered his head, and looked at the youth who was weeping bitterly.

A blue vein was pulsing in his skull.

He felt a bone-piercing chill, and goosebumps rose all over his body.

Seeing this scene once more, he was well aware of just what sort of role this youth had played in Linan's sudden change in fortune — betraying the Supreme Guard's son, Chu Xun, in order to revive his adoptive father, he didn't hesitate to donate the entire city's life.

"Little Man, we can't revive after death, so don't be too sad. We can't stay here for long, let's go back quickly."

"No… No… I'm not going anywhere, I want Abba… He, he went to find food for me, that's why he died. I let him down, Dad! Daddy!"

Mo Ran stared at the youth.

Who was this person?

Was it his father? Or.

His gaze fell on the little man's left hand. In the palm of his left hand, there was a black mole the size of a grain of rice.

He suddenly thought of the hand of master Huaizui. It was also in this position, and in the exact same place, there was also a mole. It was exactly

the same.

Mo Ran was astonished.

At this moment, that distant voice slowly sounded again.

“Since I was a child, I was born in Lian. I had no parents and was adopted by a groom of the Grand Guard. The year I turned fourteen, when the ghost realm was in a state of chaos and suffering, when there was no rice and no food in the family, when I was hungry, my foster father took the risk to leave the city to find food for me, and he did not come back in the evening.”

His heart skipped a beat —

Was he really the same person as two hundred years ago?!

“When I came out of the city and found him, he had already been killed by evil, his intestines were overflowing, and his eyes were empty. I will never forget that scene for the rest of my life.”

His ears were buzzing as he followed Little Man into the city. Back when Linan had been in the midst of a bloody storm, the Ghost King had coerced everyone into handing over Chu Xun. He had seen all of these things before, but when he looked at them again, he still felt miserable and sad, and his heart was filled with evil.

He saw that on the night of the incident, Little Man begged everyone to not dismember his foster father and to let him wait until Chu Xun returned to see if he could leave his father’s corpse intact.

“I beg of you, wait a little longer. The young master will be back soon, I’ll definitely look at his corpse. If his corpse is found, I’ll definitely stop him, I

beg of you…”

“You can’t stop us from getting the bodies up, but you have to be clear about which is more important!”

“NO! Don’t tear him apart, please don’t tear him apart…”

In the torrential downpour, Little Man knelt on the ground and kowtowed nonstop, kowtowing so hard that his head was covered in blood, but he was still unable to stop his father’s corpse. His father’s corpse was still violently pulled out from his embrace, dragged outside the magistrate office by the steward.

Little Man’s vision was blocked. After a while, he saw blood flowing out from under everyone’s feet. The blood was instantly washed away by the rain and turned into a faint pink color.

“At that time, I was selfish. I only felt dispirited and full of resentment towards everyone. So, I betrayed Linan and recommended myself as the Ghost King’s subordinate. I wanted to take revenge on them.”

Following his narration, Mo Ran once again saw the scene that once shook his heart.

The mother ate the child’s intestines.

The citizens betrayed their hero.

Chu Xun knelt on the stone steps in front of the temple of the city deity, bent over in the mud, and sobbed.

He saw the mob take Chu Xun to the temple like a carrion vulture and surround him in a black circle. They were willing to sacrifice Chu Xun’s life

for the sake of his survival.

He saw Chu Xun pull out his heart along with his spirit core and hand it over to the scattered citizens who were crying for him. He wanted them to leave this place as soon as possible and not stay any longer…

The little one had noticed all these.

“Later on, I went to the ghost realm. No matter how many times I was alone, I would always think of the miserable state that young master Chu was in. I would think of the heart that he had given up. I would also think of his past… Be good to us. Every time I think about it, I feel uneasy, and the more I think about it, the more I can’t escape the condemnation in my heart.”

Huaizui paused.

His voice became bitter.

“I’m a traitor.”

It was hard to say what he felt in his heart.

Sometimes good and evil only in a single thought, some people stabbed down the knife, in fact, already regretted it, but so what?

There was no retreat.

“Not long after, I heard that Chu Xun’s soul was cast into the Underworld. He is a kind man, although his cultivation is not at his peak, and he cannot be dissolved into an immortal, but it is enough for him to enter the cycle of reincarnation. Because of the great catastrophe that had occurred that year, his children and his wife had had their souls confused and broken into

pieces. Thus, he had gone to Nangong to beg, willing to use the power of the Third Fu Lu in exchange for the release of his wife and children. But the end result, was not that smooth."

He was ashamed and had no face to treat Chu Xun, so he carefully avoided Chu Xun, but he tried his best to pull the ghost soldiers and ghosts to ask, "What about the wife and children? What did Yan Luo say in the end? Can you think of a way to assemble their souls and let them return to the cycle of reincarnation?"

"Can you think of something? Please."

"I beg of you to help young master Chu Xun to think of a solution, we can discuss no matter the price…"

A ghost guard mocked him, "I've long heard of your glorious past. Back then, it wasn't you who helped the Ninth King and caused the death of Chu Xun's family? Why did you suddenly change your personality when we arrived to the Underworld? Are you afraid that Chu Xun will come and settle things with you after he becomes a ghost?"

Mo Ran followed behind the culprit. Seeing how many people he begged, he knelt before him. Maybe he shouldn't have called for a person, but a ghost. But most of the time, people and ghosts were the same.

Just as Chu Wanning had said, the soul could change character, hobbies, and temperament, but the nature of the soul would never change just because of the cycle of life and death.

The nine kings soon found out that he had asked Chu Xun about his wife and son's reincarnation.

When the Ninth King had fought with Chu Xun and destroyed one of his eyes, he had already resented him. When he heard that his subordinates had helped their old master secretly ask about the art of reincarnation with Huaizui, he couldn't help but get angry.

He took back the incriminating medallion that allowed him to travel back and forth from the ghost realm to the human world, and took away his eternal life as a ghost pawn.

"Scram back to the mortal world. When all the Underworld energy in your body dissipates, you will die. After death, you will forever fall into the Infernal Realm of the Unbroken, and your soul will never be able to reincarnate." The Ninth King used his only eye that was still usable as he stared at Master Huaizui, "This is the price you pay for plotting for the old master."

The darkness of the Underworld vanished.

Mo Ran heard the patter of rain. It was spring, and the drizzle was soft, moistening the green sprouts.

He saw that he had become a monk from the start of his life. He was walking in the spring rain.

"When I returned to the world, a hundred years had already passed. Although the Spirit King took away my medallion, the remaining Yin Qi on me can allow me to return to the Ghost World when my Yin Qi was at its peak, but staying here for a long time would consume a lot of it. Actually… I'm still very afraid of death, so I don't dare to stay in the ghost realm for long. Only when I really need some clues and help do I secretly return to the Underworld."

Mo Ran listened to his low recount, and saw the stick lit before him as he walked alone in the bamboo forest. Winter plums laid on the snow, and Xia He listened to the rain. He walked alone, from the spring to the frost forest.

One pair after another.

Master Huaizui was searching everywhere, inquiring, hoping to get even a little bit of information, which would give the mother and son whose souls had been destroyed by him, the opportunity to be reborn.

“It is also an opportunity for me to redeem a little of my sins,” he said.

Perhaps others might not feel it, but it was laughable that they should feel guilty. However, when Mo Ran heard this, tears suddenly appeared in his eyes.

Atonement.

Everyone who had committed a crime and wanted to repent was like a fish that thirsted for redemption.

He was, and so was Huaizui.

They were not kind people. Their hands were covered with blood, and their feet were covered with severed heads.

How to atone for it.

With the hand that has killed before, put life into the pool of virtue, can sin be written off in one stroke? He hoped that all good and evil in this world, all blessings for karma, would be as simple as this.

But he knew it wasn’t.

“I’ve been in the mortal world for nearly a hundred years. In these hundred years, I have been in trouble and have saved you. I know that it will be useless to do so. No matter how many good deeds I have done, I will still go to hell and suffer. But I just want to make myself feel better, I just want, if young master is still in the human world, he will definitely… It will also cause people to worry, making things difficult for them, right?”

The memories of the past passed by in a hundred years.

He saw orphans with their blind eyes walking through the forest, he saw him working in the fields, he saw him sewing old clothes under a single lamp, and he gave money to repair two villages that had been destroyed by evil.

“Young master Chu has never been reincarnated. Later on, I picked a branch of haitang, and thinking that it was his and Madam’s favorite flower, I became so dazed that I mustered the courage to go to the ghost realm and see him once. As a result, needless to say, he rejected me and told me never to come back.”

On the screen, it showed the thin back of Huaizui, standing in between the streets of the ghost realm.

At this moment, his back was already hunched.

“I didn’t dare to bother him, so I never appeared in front of him again. However, he didn’t throw away that bunch of haitang. I think that he might still like this mortal world. Since he couldn’t see it in the Underworld, I picked it up and gave it to him. I hope that his hatred for me will be reduced, if only by a little bit.”

“Later on, I heard that Lady Chu’s soul could be recovered, but it would take some time. However, the young noble’s soul and spirit had been shattered, and I’m afraid that he would no longer be in this world. When I learned of this news, I felt even more guilty and regretful — until one day, I obtained something.”

Spring Moon Night Mountain, Misty River.

Master Huaizui sat in the cabin, reflected in the river and reflected in the objects in his hands.

Mo Ran walked over and looked. He sat down next to Huaizui and when he got closer, he saw that it was a piece of wood. The wood looked strange. The other branches had rough bark and fine lines, but it didn’t.

It was only the size of a palm, and its bark was smooth and exquisite, emitting a faint lustre. Even in an illusion, Mo Ran could feel a faint fragrance flowing from this piece of wood.

“Flame Emperor’s Divine Wood.”

Mo Ran suddenly opened his eyes wide and looked at the broken branch that was flowing with brilliant light in disbelief.

This was… Flame Emperor’s Divine Wood?!

The holy tree that was said to have been in the East Sea for tens of thousands of years, where no one had ever been? Mo Ran had lived two lifetimes and had roamed the martial arts world for many years. How could he not know the legend of the Flame Emperor’s Divine Wood?

It could save the flesh and bones of the dead.

It could be refined into a divine weapon that was even more powerful than a godly weapon.

It could even help a mortal ascend, directly breaking away from the suffering of reincarnation and establishing an immortal class forever.

It was clear that Huaizui knew of these rumors as well. He whispered: “The Divine Wood has a spirit. Once you refine it into a spirit core, you will ascend and become an immortal… I no longer have to suffer the curse of Purgatory. From then on, I can be free.”

Mo Ran suddenly recalled the rumors about Huaizui.

He refused the invitation from the Heaven Realm and stayed in this world forever.

Could it be that the truth was that he failed to refine the Flame Emperor Divine Wood and failed?

“I really… really wanted to use this part of the Divine Wood. For some time, I even felt that this was heaven’s will, that the heavens pitied me, forgave me, and did not want me to fall into hell and suffer. That was why I made this divine wood come to my side by chance.”

Inside the hold of the ship, Master Huaizui stroked the divine log, his eyes shining with longing and confusion. His expression was so contradictory that it was like the voice that was burning in his ears and reverberating in his ears.

“However, I once read in an ancient book that the Flame Emperor’s Divine Wood is the same as the Nuwa Tomb. With this divine wood, a living person can be created.”

Ch. 238 [Mount Longxue] No Soul

“What?!”

Mo Ran was shocked and took half a step back. If he wasn’t an empty person in this memory scroll, he would have already knocked over the fishing basket and rope beside him…

The Flame Emperor’s Divine Wood could recreate a living person?

“The Flame Emperor’s Wood, the Nuwa Earth, and the Fuxi Zither were all divine artifacts created by the Three Sovereigns.

The spiritual energy here was extremely pure. According to legends, the first batch of Immeasurable Immortals in this world were all created by these divine artifacts. I got a piece of the Fire Emperor Wood, even without the magical powers of Shennong,

It’s not hard to make a man. “Just like how, after the Grand Preceptor died, his mother reconstructed his body with lotus roots, I decided to carve this piece of wood into the shape of young master Chu.”

Mo Ran felt the world spinning around him. He felt giddy all of a sudden.

Sculpting into… young master Chu… Chu Lan’s appearance?

“I want to return a son to my benefactor,” he said.

Mo Ran’s throat was parched, as if something had blocked his throat. After a long time, he muttered, “Impossible…”

In the painting, there was no sorrowful temple bell ringing, and the color of dusk was everywhere.

The tired birds had returned to their nests. The monks' robes fluttered in the wind, and the wide sleeves of their robes passed under the veranda.

Master Huaizui sat in the meditation room with the doors and windows closed, carefully sculpting them bit by bit with the aid of the green light.

He did not dare to use his blade without thinking. Before using the Flame Emperor's divine wood to reconstruct a living person, he had already engraved hundreds, if not thousands of puppets until they were just as vivid as he remembered.

That night, he finally took out the Flame Emperor's Wood carefully. After observing it for a long time, he carefully made the first cut.

Sawdust flew everywhere, turning into gold dust when it hit the ground.

With every stroke, he did his best. With every stroke, he saw the figures of his two friends. A hundred years went by under the sword. The old monk buried his head very low, and his neck seemed to have been broken by sin.

"Thus, I went into seclusion. I spent five whole years in the temple before I finally finished inscribing Chu Lan."

He watched as the monk slowly put down the carving knife. It was the last stroke, and bits and pieces of ash were swept away by the guilt.

Huaizui trembled as he caressed the wooden sculpture's young master's face and his clothes. He cried as he knelt on the ground and kowtowed towards the wooden statue.

Mo Ran stared blankly at the small portrait on the table.

The Divine Wood as the body, and Huaizui as the blade.

The tiny figure was the same as Chu Wanning when he was a child.

It was currently evening. The bell tolled, and only the last bit of the blood-red sun remained in the world. It shone through the windows onto the few cases.

The morning bell rang throughout the temple. Outside the temple, monks were burning cypress and pine leaves. The fragrant aroma was still tainted with a bit of bitterness and coolness.

Night was approaching, and the Zen Courtyard was at peace.

“I’ll just call you Chu Wanning.”

The last strike landed as he spoke softly to the wooden statue.

He bit his finger tip and dripped a drop of blood filled with metallic spirit energy. In that instant, the entire room was filled with resplendent light.

His eyelids could not stop trembling. He tried his best to see everything in the light, but because of his tears and the bright light, he could not see clearly. He could not see anything.

When he was stabbed to the point where he could close his eyes, the thought that came to his mind was —

Chu Wanning already knew all of this. How much pain would his heart ache?

Not alive.

No parents.

It was just a piece of dead wood, a drop of blood.

He had lived for more than thirty years, unbeknownst to anyone in the world.

“The Divine Wood has a spirit. Once it has a drop of blood in it, it will truly become the appearance of Chu Lan, just as I wished. I brought him up in a monastery and took him in as my apprentice, and gradually, as he grew older, he began to ask me about my own life and where I came from.”

Seeing Chu Wanning sitting next to Master Huaizui and eating the candied fruits, he asked, “Shizun, you always said that you carried me back from the snow, where did you bring me back?”

He gazed at the distant mountain where Han Dai was. After a moment of contemplation, he sighed and said two words.

“Linan.”

“So am I from Linan?”

“Yes.”

“But I’ve never been out of the temple. I don’t even know what Linan is like. Shizun, I’d like to go down the mountain and have a look outside. I… I would like to see Linan.”

The illusion gradually faded away, and the Wubei Temple disappeared into the distance. What followed was a bright and resplendent summer scene in the southern part of the Yangtze River.

It was June, and the lotus flowers in the lotus pond were gorgeous. Fangfei pounced on Chu Wanning, who was a lot smaller than Xia Sini, and followed behind him on the bluestone path.

“A-Ning, go slowly. Be careful you don’t fall.”

Chu Wanning turned around with a smile.

It was a young and inexperienced face that Mo Ran had never seen before, a carefree smile.

“Alright, I’ll wait for Shizun.”

At that time, Chu Wanning was wearing a green and grey monastic robe, with his hair tied up in a small bun, with a lotus leaf on his head. The lotus leaf was still stained with some crystal clear dew, making Chu Wanning’s face look even more pure and bright.

Master Huaizui walked over to him and took his hand, “Alright, I’ve seen the lake. Where do you want to go next?”

“Would you like something to eat?”

“Then… Go to the city.”

They entered the city together, and Mo Ran was walking beside them. He looked at Chu Wanning, who was holding onto a lotus leaf, with a heart full of love and sadness.

He stretched out his hand, knowing that he could not touch the person inside the illusion, yet he still reached out his hand to touch Chu Wanning’s head.

“Hmm?”

However, at this point, Chu Wanning suddenly stopped in his tracks.

“What is it?” he asked kindly.

Chu Wanning raised his head and looked up. His eyes, under the sunlight, were as clear as two pools of spring water. Unbiased, they landed on Mo Ran.

Mo Ran was stunned. He could hear his heart pounding and blood flowing rapidly.

He felt that this was unbelievable, but he was also secretly anticipating it…

“What’s that?”

Chu Wanning let go of his hand and walked towards Mo Ran.

The more Mo Ran saw, the more he felt uncomfortable. He had never seen Chu Wanning without any worries. He could not help but lean over and open his arms, wanting to hug him.

However, Chu Wanning went straight through his shadow.

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment. He turned around and saw the child walk to a dim sum shop behind him. He raised his head to see the stall owner lifting the bamboo cage. Smoke rose up, revealing a pale pink cake made from flowers.

Mo Ran felt slightly relieved, but he also felt a tinge of disappointment.

It really was just a coincidence.

He followed Huaizui over. Seeing that Huaizui had arrived, Chu Wanning smiled, “Shizun, this pastry looks delicious.”

“Do you want to try it?”

“Can I?”

With a somewhat absent-minded expression, he said, “You both really like it…”

Chu Wanning heard it and his eyes opened wide. He asked innocently, “Everyone likes it?”

Huaizui pursed his lips and said: “… Nothing. Shizun has thought of an old friend.”

He paid for three glutinous rice cakes and watched thoughtfully as Chu Wanning took a bite. The steam rose and obscured the boy’s face.

The past surged past him like a river.

Master Huaizui sighed softly and closed his eyes.

Suddenly, someone lightly tugged at his sleeve. Lowering his head, he only saw the two halves of the pastry. The red bean paste inside was exquisite and soft, and it emitted the fragrance of hot air and dessert.

“Shizun is half, while I am half. The eldest is for Shizun.”

“Why would the big one be given to me?”

“Just by being tall, you eat a lot.”

“…” Mo Ran watched as Huaizui took the pastries, and the two of them stood by the stall, eating and chatting. He was quiet for a moment, standing in the bright sunlight and smiling slightly.

It hurts.

However, he could feel the spring water flowing in his heart. He felt that no one would dare to be soft-hearted and dislike a person like Chu Wanning.

He was the most obedient and best child in the world.

The sun was fading again.

This time, the new picture scroll did not appear immediately. Mo Ran stood in the pitch-black darkness, and beside his ears was the voice of a ghost of a person who had committed crimes.

“I spend my days with him, teaching him to read, reading, lecturing, and understanding. However, what I was most concerned about was his spell — I still hadn’t forgotten that I had created such a child in order to return him to my benefactor. From the beginning, I have already planned that when Chu Wanning grows big and his spirit energy and body can bear it, I will bring him to the ghost realm.”

Huaizui paused, his voice became even deeper.

“Take it with you and melt the remaining broken spirit soul of young master Chu Lan into his body.”

Mo Ran: “!”

“At that time, I did not think it was wrong. What was Chu Wanning? He is not a real living person, he is just a piece of wood, a wooden sculpture. I gave him his life and taught him the ways of the world, but in the end, what flowed on his body was not real blood, and the flesh that covered his bones was also not real flesh.”

Mo Ran had already kept it in his heart from the start. After hearing Master Huaizui’s words, he could not hold it in any longer and shouted, “No!”

But what’s the use?

Huaizui could not hear his indignant retort, but the monk's voice was still like a whirlpool, taking Mo Ran into a deeper and more painful whirlpool.

"Chu Wanning is unnecessary, he has no life and no soul."

"No! Why didn't the Divine Wood have a soul? He had life, he had soul! He wasn't anyone! He's not like anyone else!" Mo Ran howled out like a trapped beast in the illusion. "Master Huaizui, it's you who raised him. Watched over him everyday… Isn't he alive? What's the difference between him and you, or me?"

But Huaizui was still mumbling to himself, like the numbness of Buddha chanting scriptures, his words were forged from his lips. It was unknown if he was truly bent on paying respects to Buddha, or if he just wanted to numb the excruciating pain in his heart.

"He is a physical body that I carved for Chu Lan. Only his soul can be considered a complete human."

Mo Ran felt a chill run down his spine. He did not know what happened next, but he felt that he was going crazy, almost crazy, he was running in the dark, but everywhere there was an abyss, nowhere to go. He kept muttering, muttering, and then he was shouting, "No, no, no. "You can't destroy him. You have to bear the guilt, he has a soul in him, he is a living person…"

He knelt down.

He suddenly felt such fear, even more so than the fear he felt when the truth was revealed in his previous life.

He was afraid that he would see Huaizui bringing Chu Wanning to the ghost realm, cutting open his chest and merging his spirit core with Chu Lan's soul.

What about the original Chu Wanning?

The Spirit of the Divine Wood would leave Chu Wanning. With six paths of reincarnation, where could he go to a broken piece of wood?

The sky, the ground, the clouds, the Yellow Springs.

No one would want him anywhere.

"No…Huaizui… You can't…" His lips were blue and white. "You can't…"

How could he not have a soul?

Why is he not alive?

The child with the jade-green lotus leaf giggling as he ran along the road.

The child that carefully broke open the cake and gave the older one to his Shizun, the younger one had to eat it himself.

He was still so young, but he had more affection and more voice and more color than many people.

He was not inferior to any life form formed from flesh and blood.

How could this be? They weren't alive…

However, Mo Ran's desperate begging and screaming could not wake him from his stupor.

The centuries-old knot in his heart was right here. He felt that he owed the Chu Xun family a debt. He had gone through countless hardships to create such a righteous body, how could he let it slip by?

“Life goes on day by day. Chu Wanning slowly grew up. He was the reincarnated body of Chu Lan. I was worried that his life would be better than mine by a hundredfold. For all these years, when he was five or six years old, I only took him to live in Linan for a few months.

“Sometimes I would think to myself, ‘Have you ever seen the beauty of the human world?’ He lived until he was fourteen, and apart from Linan, he had never gone anywhere else. From beginning to end, he had only been to the Heaven and Earth of the Zen Temple, the size of Spring and Autumn.”

His eyes finally lit up again.

It was a moonlit night, and Mo Ran was the first to see Huaizui standing at the door of the meditation room, looking out of the courtyard.

He also hurriedly walked over. Under the frosty moonlight, he saw the fourteen-year-old Chu Wanning dancing with his sword, the haitang blossoms fluttering. The white-clothed youth looked like a goddess under the reflection of the petals and the cold moon.

Huaizui’s voice still remained, and the sharp sound of a sword breaking through the air lingered beside his ear.

“But I also feel that it is a good thing that he has seen less. There are too many sufferings in the human world. If this Divine Wood Spirit was destined to only have a short lifespan of 10 years and was then replaced by Chu Lan, wouldn’t it be much more merciful?”

The sword dance ended.

The fragmented flower fell.

Chu Wanning sheathed his sword behind his arm, his two fingers on his other hand were raised as he concentrated on calming his breathing.

He calmed his slightly rapid breathing and raised his head. When he saw Huaizui looking at him, he smiled.

The night breeze brushed against his forehead, causing it to itch. He blew lightly, trying to blow away the pieces of hair that were constantly scratching his cheeks, but it was obviously useless. So in the end, he could only use his hand to stroke it.

That was also where Mo Ran was standing.

“Shizun.”

“Yes. That’s right.” Huaizui nodded, “Come here, I’ll test how far your cultivation has progressed.”

Chu Wanning walked over unhesitatingly, stroking his snow-white sleeves, and passed his hand to Huaizui.

With a test, he said, “It’s very robust, but it’s still a bit unstable. You should be able to practice more. Before winter, you should be able to achieve great success. Mhmm… great… !”

Chu Wanning smiled, “Thank you, Shizun.”

When he said this, perhaps it was an illusion, Mo Ran saw the shoulders of Huaizui and it seemed to tremble slightly.

But in the end, he still did not say anything. He did not express anything, nor did he change.

He turned and entered the house.

Standing in his original spot, Mo Ran stopped looking at Huaizui in the room. He desperately wanted to see the young man in front of him who would disappear at any time.

He was still clean, pure, and gentle.

How could such a person not have a spirit soul?

His gaze fell onto the white chest that was moving up and down.

Mo Ran suddenly thought of something and felt as if lightning struck his chest. A huge boulder seemed to have fallen on his chest, stirring up a thousand layers of shock waves.

“No… No…”

He took a step back.

But what could he do?

His memories had already extended their ferocious claws and grabbed into his internal organs.

He remembered, there was a scar on Chu Wanning’s chest.

…… His heart was opened! He… He…

Mo Ran trembled. The Chu Wanning before him danced under the moonlight, stepping on the flying flowers.

So handsome.

However, he felt as if a bucket of ice had fallen on his stomach. He could only feel a chill run down his spine.

He was… Cut through the chest.

So in the end, did he really commit the crime?

He really did take Chu Wanning to the ghost realm, to merge Chu Lan's soul fragment into his heart. That was why the original Chu Wanning was no longer around.

He put his head in his hands and curled up on the floor.

He was trembling and didn't dare to think about it anymore.

Pain.

My heart hurts.

The one who would rather have his heart dug out was him, the one who would rather have his spirit soul taken away from him was him.

Chu Wanning.

He's so good.

Why did he suffer so much and end up with a judgement that he was not alive, that he would be treated as a lifeless shell to carry another life?

Then who exactly was the Shizun he had taken in?

Was it Chu Lan, or Chu Wanning?

Mo Ran felt like he was going crazy. His head was aching and he even felt dizzy and nauseous. He did not know how long he had been sitting there.

Then the sky darkened and the meditation room and the trees disappeared.

Chu Wanning also faded away.

The voice of guilt slowly flowed through the darkness.

He said, “By the time Chu Wanning turned fourteen, the time was already ripe. I intend to bring him to the Ghost World in another year to merge with Chu Lan’s soul.”

Ch. 239 [Mount Longxue] A Mind Is Set

Mo Ran listened, hollow and wooden.

He stopped shouting. He sat there, staring straight ahead.

“Everything was going smoothly at first, but during that period of time, the lower cultivation world was in a state of chaos.

It was early winter, and snow was falling in the leaden sky. A mountain road slowly appeared in front of Mo Ran. The road was covered with a layer of frost and was covered with fresh snow. There were also crisscrossing marks of carriages and horses.

“I never expected that one day, when we were on our way to the foot of the mountain to retrieve the spirit stones, we would run into a child who was on the verge of starving to death.”

Mo Ran continued to look on numbly.

Chu Wanning and Huaizui appeared on the mountain path. Behind Chu Wanning’s back was a basket filled with spirit energy ores. He was wearing a cotton cloak that protected him from the cold as he walked beside Huaizui.

“Shizun.” Suddenly, Chu Wanning stopped and turned around to look at the grassy slope. “There seems to be someone there.”

“Let’s go take a look.”

The two of them walked over together. Chu Wanning brushed the grass with his slender white fingers. He was surprised, but then his eyes

widened, “It’s just a child…”

He immediately turned around and said to Huaizui, “Shizun, quickly come over. Quickly look at him, what’s wrong with him?”

What’s wrong?

He could tell the culprit at a glance, be it in Huaizui or Mo Ran.

The child was dirty and smelly, and his clothes were ragged and thin. If he took them off, he would definitely be no longer wearing them. To put it bluntly, all the dogs in the temple who were eating leftovers were even more glorious than this child.

If it wasn’t for the fact that the child was still moaning and breathing, it would be no different from a pile of rotten meat.

What’s wrong? What else could happen?

Every time there was a disaster, the manpower would be tiny and insignificant. Not to mention a child, Yi Zi and his food were not a rare thing.

Only Chu Wanning, who grew up in a temple since he was young, was able to ask such a stupid question.

“You don’t need to worry about that, you can go back for now,” said Huaizui with a frown. “I came to see him.”

Chu Wanning trusted his Shizun, so he immediately stood up obediently. But before he could leave, the hem of his cloak was grabbed by a small, dirty hand.

The hand was so weak that the pulling force was so small that it was like a pup gently scratching.

Chu Wanning lowered his head and stared at the small, dirty face before him.

The child's voice was as light as a mosquito's buzz, as if another snowflake falling from the sky would crush him to death.

"Rice…"

Chu Wanning was stunned, he didn't know how to react, "What?"

"… Rice…" The child whimpered. His face was black except for two spots of white in his eyes. He made a trembling gesture that indicated he was going to eat something. "Eat…"

Outside of the painting, Mo Ran blinked once and regained half of his consciousness.

However, his mind was still numb. There was no way for him to quickly react, and only a vague feeling in his heart that this scene was very familiar, as if he had seen it somewhere before.

He stared.

Inside the painting, Chu Wanning was stunned.

He widened his eyes in shock. He, who had finally understood what was going on, was first at a loss and could not believe what was happening. Afterwards, he became flustered, his heart burning with anxiety.

He only knew that things were good in the mortal world, but he had never seen a skinny child who was only skin old. He was like a starving kitten or dog, huddled in the grass under the heavy snow, the only thing that could withstand the cold was a piece of rags that he wore during the summer. There was only one word that came out of his mouth.

Eat, eat.

“You go back first.”

But this time, Chu Wanning did not listen. He looked at the small, dirty dog like child, and his heart ached. He quickly took off his cloak and wrapped it around the child’s body.

He was burning with anxiety, as if the one suffering was not the child but himself. He said, “Hungry? Wait a minute, I have rice porridge here.”

He went to get it from Master Huaizui, but Master Huaizui frowned.

“I told you to go back, that’s not your business.”

“Why shouldn’t I?” Chu Wanning was at a loss, “He… He was so pitiful. Shizun, did you see that? He just wanted something to eat, otherwise he’d starve and freeze to death.”

When he said this, he was somewhat baffled. He muttered, “What is going on? Didn’t they say that the world is peaceful? Why would it…”

“Let’s go back.”

Chu Wanning was stunned. He didn’t know why he was suddenly so guilty. In the end, he bit his lips and said, “I want to feed him some rice soup…”

“I couldn’t force him, so I agreed.” The voice of Huaizui carried a bit of a sigh, and along with the wind and snow, it floated and drifted next to Mo Ran’s ear, “I gave him a pot of rice soup, allowing him to personally treat that unhurried child. At that time, I didn’t know what it would make Chu Wanning feel, or what it would make him decide. At that time, I didn’t know anything.”

Mo Ran stared blankly at Chu Wanning as he opened the pot and moved it to the child’s mouth.

The child hungered over, but could not suck.

He was on the verge of starving to death, so he didn’t have any extra strength left.

Mo Ran’s Adam’s apple moved.

He suddenly felt that there was a seed sprouting inside his brain, forming a layer of mud.

He suddenly felt that everything before him was so familiar…

He watched.

He was regaining his senses.

And then, at a certain point, a flood dragon broke through the waves, and the clouds and water churned.

He suddenly stood up and clenched his fingers into a fist —

He remembered!

“It’s you?” He quickly ran towards the painting, his pupils contracting rapidly. “You’re him? Was it him? You actually… You actually…”

He could not continue. Suddenly, he covered his eyes with his arm.

His throat was filled with misery.

He had never expected this to happen.

It was actually Chu Wanning.

The child who was about to freeze to death in the haystack, the child who had climbed down from the cemetery after burying his mother, begging everywhere for his life!

The illusion merged with his memories, and Mo Ran never forgot about that youth in the snowy sky who had taken off his cloak and wrapped it around his body.

Chu Wanning asked worriedly, “What’s wrong? Can’t drink?”

Little Mo Ran could not say more. He could only let out a weak whimper from his throat. He narrowed his pitch-black eyes and looked at him dispiritedly.

“Then I’ll pour it out for you. Don’t mind it.”

He opened the pot and placed the rice porridge in the palm of his hand. He carefully held it out. His expression showed some hesitation. He probably felt that this child wouldn’t be willing to drink because it was a bit dirty.

But in the end, he had been thinking too much.

Dirty?

From Linyi to the Wubei Temple, Mo Ran drank the river, the rain, the mud in the puddles. After eating wild fruits and leftovers, when he was at his most helpless, he would even swallow earthworms, lick ants, and eat dirt.

He crawled on the ground and leaned over to drink the rice soup. At that time, he only felt that the dew from a poplar branch was in his throat, and the person who brought him the soup was a fairy from the nine heavens.

“Slow down, slow down, there’s still more if it’s not enough.” Chu Wanning was both shocked and sad. He looked at that dirty little head buried in his palm, miserable and bedraggled, greedily and pitifully licking the rice porridge, rolling his tongue like a small animal drinking water.

“Where did you come from…” he could not help but ask.

Mo Ran whimpered but didn’t reply. He had finished the rice milk, and only had a tiny bit of it left in his palm. He kept licking his little brother’s palm, causing him to feel itchy and painful.

It was the hand that itched, and the heart that hurt.

“It’s fine, I’ll get you some more.”

Chu Wanning then scooped up another handful of the liquor while Mo Ran watched eagerly. When his hand reached over, he moved closer and continued licking the liquor impatiently.

The pot of rice milk was full to the brim, Chu Wanning carried it in his hands, squatting down and feeding it to him.

Mo Ran never forgot.

In fact, he had thought about this person countless times in his subsequent ups and downs — what would have happened to him if he hadn't met him at that time.

He had deduced many possibilities and come up with many ideas, but in the end, not a single one could escape.

Dead.

He was starving, frozen to death, taken away by a wild wolfhound, opened up to eat his heart, liver, spleen and stomach.

If he hadn't met his brother, he would have gone to the underworld to meet his mother.

He had specifically gone back to the Wubei Temple to look for his old benefactor, but because so much time had passed, he could not remember his benefactor's face. Facing the courtyard full of shiny bald heads, he felt an indescribable sense of annoyance, so he finally waved his hand and left.

At that time, the abbot was trembling with fear. He did not know what had happened to the Wubei Temple that offended Taxian-Jun. He had been anxiously waiting for news. However, on the second day, the Emperor ordered people to bring over hundreds of boxes over. When they opened them, there was a resplendent stream of light. The boxes were actually filled to the brim with gold.

"His Majesty did not know who an old friend was, so he treated all of them equally. He rewarded the monks of the Wubei Temple with ten thousand gold each in return for their lives."

It turned out that his benefactor, whom he had wandered around but could not find, had been trapped at Sisheng Peak, imprisoned by him all day, harassed by him?

In the past, when he was on the road, his little brother had taken off his warm cloak and wrapped it around his small and thin body.

Fate played tricks on him, but every night he roughly and mischievously ripped apart the clothes of that little brother of his. He pressed him down between the sheets of the bed that had fallen into a deep slumber, then fell in love.

He went around the world looking for his benefactor.

Without knowing it, he forced his benefactor to kneel between his legs and bow in humiliation.

Mo Ran looked at the scene before him, his eyes slowly filling with blood.

“Why… How could it be you?”

In this life, in these two lives. The deep meets the Emperor, the shallow misses the Emperor.

It was all fate.

Everything in front of his eyes turned dark once again. Only the sounds of the wind and snow could be heard, as well as the voice of Huaizui, which was still echoing in the distance.

“I asked the child if he was willing to stay at the Wubei Temple, but the child said that he would repay a favor for his mother, so no matter what, he had to return to Xiangtan first. I couldn’t let him go, so I gave him some

food and some silver. When the child staggered down the snowy slope, Chu Wanning stood there watching until his back was completely engulfed by the snow and disappeared into the wilderness. Only then did he turn around and return to the temple. I went to take his hand. I remember his hand was as cold as ice."

He was quiet for a while, but the pain in his voice was still unquenchable.

"After that day, Chu Wanning mentioned to me several times that he wanted to go down the mountain to support the road, but I refused. I even scolded him for his unsteady heart, and when a rock fell into the water, it moved his meditative heart. Therefore, I punished him to go to the face of Mount Longxue and ponder over the matter. He was captured for a full one hundred and sixty-four days."

"At first he asked me to let him out, but then he was so disappointed that he didn't say anything more. One hundred and sixty-four days. Every single day, I would ask him what enlightenment he had comprehended. Every single day, I hoped to be able to change his attitude. Huaizui let out a long sigh, his sigh was as ethereal as snow."

"Enter the mortal world."

People all cultivated outside the heaven and earth, but he was willing to be caught in a disaster because he had seen one son suffer once.

"Later, he burned me and his scripture, reversing life. I am worried that I cannot continue like this, so I ended his house arrest. I plan to find another way to teach him, and after another year, when his spirit core is stable, I can bring him to the ghost realm, and all of this will be over."

“… What I didn’t expect was that on the same night that I finished my thoughts, Chu Wanning left without saying goodbye. I found a letter in his meditation room. The letter said that although he had been gone for a long time, every time he thought about the child he had met, he still felt very miserable, so he wanted to go down the mountain and travel for ten days. He was afraid that I would lock him up again and leave by night. Back then when I was holding that letter, I was both angry and anxious, but there was nothing I could do about it.”

“I had no idea where he went.”

The new scene lit up again.

This time, it was at the Wubei Temple in the courtyard.

Chu Wanning had returned. His body was covered with blood and filth, but his eyes shone brightly under the moonlight.

At this moment, he was like an unparalleled divine weapon that had finally been unsheathed after many years of forging. No one could stop his sharp edge.

Master Huaizui stood in front of him, and neither of them spoke.

However, his voice was still slowly recounting in Mo Ran’s ears, “Ten days later, he really arrived on time. I was relieved and glad that nothing had happened. I wanted to reprimand him a few times and let him go back to his room to have a good rest. But I didn’t expect that I would be expecting a knife without a sheath.”

In the picture, Chu Wanning knelt down and kowtowed to the ground.

Master Huaizui frowned slightly. “What are you doing?”

“Shizun might have been out of the world for a long time, but the things Shizun said are very different now. I sincerely request for Shizun not to stay in the mountain and go down the mountain to have a look. This world is a sea of bitterness, and it is no longer the Peach Blossom that you speak of.”

“Preposterous! Do you know what you’re talking about?”

Chu Wanning thought that if he told the truth about himself, he would be able to change his Shizun’s attitude of listening carefully. He never expected that Huaizui would react in such a way. He was startled for a moment before saying, “Shizun has always warned disciple that it is difficult for people to worry about the safety of others… In these ten days, this disciple went to the upper and lower cultivation world where there are a total of twenty-three villages. The scene that I saw was extremely shocking. If Shizun were to go down the mountain and see it, he would also…”

Before he could finish his words, he was interrupted by Huaizui: “Who allowed you to leave the mountain on your own?!”

“There is no sun or moon in this mountain, so you should cultivate well and ascend quickly. How can you leave this mountain and meddle in the affairs of the mortal world before you reach the Heavenly Mystery Realm?!”

“The human world has never stopped suffering, how can a little cultivator like you manage it? Why do you think so highly of yourself!”

The more he spoke, the angrier he got, the wider Chu Wanning’s eyes widened.

He watched his Shizun pace under the moonlight. He flicked his sleeves, pointed at the tip of his nose, and loudly berated. He sternly berated, and the haitang tree cast a deep shadow. Mo Ran looked at Chu Wanning with a puzzled face. Then, it turned into shock, then into disappointment, and finally into pain.

Chu Wanning closed his eyes.

“You know you’re wrong?!”

“…”

“Say something!”

“This disciple…” Chu Wanning paused, his voice hard as iron, “…doesn’t know.”

“How dare you!”

A red blush immediately appeared on Chu Wanning’s cheeks, but he immediately turned his face back, his eyes flashing with puzzlement and resentment, “Shizun, all these years you have taught me to behave properly and worry about the world. Why do you want me to stand by and ignore such a catastrophe?”

“… It’s not the same thing at all.” Huaizui gritted his teeth, “You… What could they do if they left the mountain at this moment? You are indeed endowed with extraordinary talent, but the dangers in this world are beyond your imagination. In order to let me down on my fourteen years of upbringing, you want me to give up my life in order to do what you want?”

He paused for a moment. Each word rang out loud and clear as metal and stone fell to the ground.

“Chu Wanning, you can’t do it yourself, what do you have to do with it?”

At this moment, Chu Wanning looked at his Shizun with both anger and sadness.

He slightly raised his chin, his phoenix eyes gradually becoming misty.

Master Huaizui had probably never seen Chu Wanning cry before, but the light in his eyes had extinguished the anger in his heart. He was startled for a moment and then said hesitantly, “You… Ai, whatever, did you feel hurt?”

But the onlooking Mo Ran knew very well that it was not.

Chu Wanning was no longer in pain from that slap. He had been the Shizun of his heart since childhood, how could he have spoken in a way that did not match the lofty image in his heart?

Chu Wanning slowly closed his eyes. After a while, Mo Ran heard those familiar words.

He said, “If you don’t know to save others, how will you save yourself?”

His body was like a statue of clay in a Buddhist shrine, immobilized by the worship.

Chu Wanning’s voice was slightly hoarse as he said, “The suffering of the mortal world is right in front of me. Please forgive this disciple’s stupidity. I don’t know why Shizun sits up all day with his eyes closed.”

He got up slowly.

Under the moonlight, his clothes were no longer pure white. There was mud and blood.

But he was so tall and dignified.

“This Immortal… it’s fine if he doesn’t want to cultivate.”

With a dazed look, he said in a stern voice, “Traitor, do you know what you are saying?!”

“I just want to do what you taught me since you were a child.” Chu Wanning was also in a state of tension, but his eyes were filled with sorrow and he was shivering slightly, “You taught me that. Is your morality only on paper?! Could it be that millions of victims were homeless, and orphans were dying day and night? What I should do was not to walk out of the mountains to support the path, but to train in Zen Buddhism along with the green light and the ancient Buddha?!”

“After you ascend to the Dao, you will be able to do many good deeds!”

Chu Wanning glared at him as if he had never seen this person before.

Mo Ran’s chest heaved up and down as he clenched his palm into a fist. Ripples surged through his eyes as he thought that he would leap into the air in the next moment. Like a flood dragon breaking through the water, he raised up and set off a violent storm.

However, Chu Wanning trembled for a moment and did not do anything.

Finally, his eyes turned red and he hoarsely said, “Shizun, I’m not cultivating for the sake of being carefree and transcending the mortal world. Could it be that cultivation can only be used to achieve Immortal Ascension? If so, I’d rather not. I’d rather give up halfway, I’d rather do nothing, I’d rather stay on earth.”

“With all my strength, I will exhaust myself to death.”

“…”

“Shizun, you can ascend. Once I’ve crossed all the people I can, I’ll come and follow you.”

“Chu Wanning!”

Even in an illusion, Mo Ran could still feel the rage that overflowed to the heavens at the time of Huaizui. The hidden chestnut in his heart, as well as the deep-seated disappointment.

This wooden sculpture, how could it dare to stare coldly at the person who gave it its life? What did “it” count for?

With bloodshot eyes, Huaizui’s eyes shone with a bloody light.

He was unwilling, he became angry from embarrassment, who should he tell about the bitterness and secret in his heart?

He had no place to vent.

Finally, he called out to Chu Wanning, who was about to step out of the courtyard. His voice was icy cold as he said, “You unfilial disciple, stop right there.”

Ch. 240 [Mount Longxue] Human Being

This sound was like the sound of an apocalypse.

Mo Ran seemed to know what he was going to see next. His hair stood on end and his blood and bones surged. He wanted to escape from the illusion and escape, but he also wanted to rush into the past to protect Chu Wanning.

“No… Huaizui… You can’t…”

However, he couldn’t stop anything. All of this had happened a long time ago.

He could only watch the scene in front of him with his scalp numb. He could only watch as Chu Wanning, with his black, sharp eyebrows, unyielding face, calmly met the gaze of Huaizui.

Mo Ran could not help but shout at him, “Run! Run!”

The young man, Chu Wanning, had always trusted his Shizun, who had brought him up as a sacrifice.

Trust his adoptive father and benefactor. Therefore, even though he was extremely disappointed, he couldn’t see the killing intent in the eyes of Huaizui. Mo Ran stood in front of him – he knew it was useless, but he couldn’t just stand by and watch.

“I beg of you, run…”

Chu Wanning didn’t leave. He walked towards Huaizui like cypress, and finally stood still. His ponytail was messed up by the wind, and his

bloodstained robe was messed up by the wind.

“If you want to leave the temple and go down the mountain, you can.”

“Shizun?” Chu Wanning’s phoenix eyes widened. He didn’t know how to deal with people, so he could only use the executioner’s blade as a crescent moon by the window. For a moment, he was grateful and happy.

He thought Huaizui finally understood him.

However, his killing intent was already apparent. He said guiltily, “When you walk out of this courtyard tonight, you will no longer be a person of the Wubei Temple. Your relationship with me as Shizun and disciple for fourteen years is thus, cut in two.”

“…” The phoenix eyes were still wide open, but the content within them was pleasant, and it slowly turned into astonishment and grief.

Chu Wanning probably did not expect that he would be so adamant. He stood frozen in place for a long time before moving his lips. Mo Ran stood at the side anxiously, muttering to himself, “I beg you, please leave, leave this place, don’t say anymore, leave this place.”

Her lips moved, but he could not speak the entire sentence.

This was the most important bet he had placed on him, the most important one at night. They had been his companions for the past fourteen years, and if he broke his Shizun’s and disciple’s relationship, it would be like cutting his heart with a knife.

Chu Wanning knelt down.

“…” Huaizui was stunned.

He was still numbly thinking, no, how could he be so decisive and stubborn?

Chu Wanning knelt down and kowtowed.

One kowtow, two kowtows, all the way to nine kowtows.

He lifted his face again. His eyes were clear and devoid of moisture, but his cheeks were moist.

“This disciple Chu Wanning thanks Shizun for his guidance. From then on…” His Adam’s apple bobbed up and down. He didn’t know. He couldn’t continue.

Perhaps it was because the wind was cold, because his body swayed in the wind, causing his cassock to flutter, filling his sleeves with strong gales. His face grew darker and colder, and his lips lost all color as he stared at the person kneeling in front of him.

That…

Wood! Wood!

He carved and engraved, made a blood oath and gave his life, taught with all his heart and thought with all his heart.

He had waited for fourteen years to send this piece of wood to the ghost realm so that it could become the shell that carried Chu Lan’s spirit.

— A scrap!

Chopping firewood!

The fire in his chest burned into his eyes. It was devastating to the point of recklessness.

This kind of crime was too dangerous. Mo Ran bent down to hug Chu Wanning, but he couldn't catch him, he couldn't touch him. He was still as stubborn as before, kneeling obediently in place, stubbornly because he had his own plans, and also because he felt guilty inside.

Chu Wanning's face turned even more sinister as he reflected the look of Huaizui in his eyes. In his chest, there was a burning passion that couldn't be quelled.

He was born for someone else. This wood chopping, this wood, this thing without a spirit soul.

He was kneeling on the ground, and the only thing he had never thought of was himself.

"Wanning…" He raised his hand to touch his face, which he could not touch, "Please… go… go…"

"Clank!" It was the sound of metal hitting the ground.

Mo Ran slowly turned his head. There was a scimitar lying on the green brick floor.

Under the moonlight, the butcher's eyes were filled with endless bloody light. He kicked the knife and sent it flying towards Chu Wanning's knee.

"No, no, no, no."

Mo Ran was panicking. He tried to grab the blade, but the tip of the blade went through his fingers. He couldn't grab hold of it. No matter how much

he tried, he couldn't grab hold of it.

Finally, a slender and well-proportioned hand reached over and grasped the blade that no matter how hard Mo Ran tried, he could not hold onto.

At this time, Chu Wanning's expression was calm. The initial shock had disappeared, and the great pain was gradually subsided as he threw the curved blade at Chu Wanning.

He looked relieved.

"If Shizun wants my life, then so be it. To live fourteen years, or a hundred and forty years… if one only sits here in this world, there really will be no difference at all."

The guilty look in his eyes suddenly did not resemble that aloof monk at all. For a moment, Mo Ran clearly saw Little Man's shadow on his face.

The shadow of that youth who had appeared on the eve of the mutiny on that rainy night.

"Chu Wanning. If you want to end this with me, I won't ask you to stay. For the past fourteen years, he had not cared about food or clothing. But you must return to me what you have learned."

"…"

"I want to take away your spirit core."

Spirit cores were the purest form of crystals for cultivators. If it were divine wood, it would also be the same. As long as one had a spirit core, it was possible to reconstruct Chu Wanning.

This time, he definitely could not teach him about morals and the common people. He definitely could not let him learn about kindness and kindness.

He wanted Chu Wanning's spirit core.

The heart of the living.

Chu Wanning looked at him for a moment. The light and shadow of the Zen Courtyard flickered. There were monks attending evening class in the Great Hall of Magnificence. The sounds of praise came from afar, just like the fragrance of sandalwood.

The voice that bore guilt suddenly resounded in Mo Ran's ears. However, this time, he only said two sentences. These two sentences seemed to have exhausted all of his courage and strength.

His voice seemed to have aged a hundred years in an instant.

"He knelt on the ground and looked at me. I suddenly felt that when the Buddha was forgiving those mortals who hurt him, wasn't that kind of gaze?"

"He is pitying his executioner, the creature under the knife, the bloody butcher."

"No!" Mo Ran hissed.

However, when the saber light flashed by, he suddenly closed his eyes. With a clear piercing sound, Mo Ran curled up on the ground.

"Don't…"

Hot blood spewed out as his bones and flesh separated.

Mo Ran wailed in pain as he crawled over to Chu Wanning's side. He could not help but shake his head miserably. He tried to stop the bleeding by infusing his spiritual power into Chu Wanning's wounds.

Nothing was of any use.

Nothing was of any use.

He watched helplessly as Chu Wanning endured the pain and used a technique to prevent himself from fainting from the pain. He watched as Chu Wanning stabbed the knife into his chest inch by inch, blood flowing everywhere.

Hot, running, hot.

How could he not be a living person?

Meat. What was torn was meat.

It was bright red, sweet, and broken.

How could he not be alive? How could that be!

Huaizui stood there stiffly, his expression still fixed at the last moment, looking ferocious and cruel. However, the light in his eyes flickered, trembled, trembled, and was at a loss…

Was that really what he wanted?

At that moment, the scroll suddenly became unstable and blurry. The scene before Mo Ran's eyes became distorted and messy due to the emotions he felt when he was creating the scroll.

He had seen so many old things spring up in his blood, all of them soft and real.

Mo Ran saw that the eleven year old Chu Wanning had been summoned by Jincheng Lake. Just as he was about to leave, a wooden zither emerged from the lake. The instant it floated up, Chu Wanning's body emitted a dazzling light, as if it resonated with it. He touched the zither string in confusion, "What's going on?"

Huaizui immediately guessed that this zither was probably cut down by a section of the Flame Emperor's Divine Wood. Since it and Chu Wanning came from the same bloodline, they would naturally be able to sense each other. His expression was very excited, somewhat surprised, and also somewhat happy. "This should be your destiny to become a Martial God."

"Destiny Grasp?"

Huaizui was pleasantly surprised, but his eyes were dodging: "… That's right, someone with Heaven Rooting Bone Clearing Qi was born with a mysterious connection to the Divine Martial Art."

Chu Wanning laughed, "My Innate Ability is Qi?"

"…" Huaizui avoided answering, and only caressed Jiuge's wooden body, sighing, "This guqin is fated to be yours, I'm afraid it doesn't need a spirit core to summon it… It is related to your blood vessels."

The scene changed, and Mo Ran saw two people walking outside of Linan city. They were following behind Little Wanning, and they kept telling him to walk slower.

He saw the steaming hot cake and the happy smile on Chu Wanning's face through the steam.

In the inn, he saw Chu Wanning holding a small fan, trying his best to cool down Huaizui while he was meditating.

He saw Chu Wanning laugh at Guihua Sugar Lotus for the first time, the sweet juice had filled his mouth.

Finally, the illusion was fixed at the edge of a lotus pond in the summer of this year. The lotus leaves continued to fall as the lotus blossoms bloomed brilliantly. Red dragonflies rose and fell in spirals. It could not have been a better evening.

The five to six-year-old Chu Wanning sat cross-legged in meditation, imitating Huaizui. His black eyes were warm as he looked at his Shizun, "Shizun, let's play again, we'll play again."

Huaizui said, "I won't play anymore. Shizun will go to the Ramadan Hall to recite scriptures, to help an old friend transcend the class."

"Play again, go again. Last time, it really is the last time."

After that, without waiting for the monk to speak, the little guy had already rolled up the sleeves of his green and gray monastic robe, causing the lotus flowers to sway.

"You against one, I against one, what blossoms in the water? Lotus blooms in the water.

You against two, I against two, what blooming string? A string of blooming elms."

There was nothing he could do about it. Looking at his smiling face, he could only shake his head in the end. Then, he clapped with him while smiling, playing an extremely childish game.

“You against nine, I against nine, what blossoms with the wind? Dandelion blossoms with the wind.

You against ten, I against ten, what flower has no leaves? La Plum blossoms without leaves.”

Blood stained the front of his clothes, causing his to be drenched in blood.

In the Zen Courtyard, Huaizui closed his eyes.

It was… A log was cut off.

In the past, Lang Lang’s laughter was still resounding in his ears.

Yes, a person without a soul.

“What blooms in the water? Hahaha, Shizun is so stupid. The lotus blossoms in the water.”

It was an empty shell! The body that he was going to sacrifice to Chu Xun was the Wood of Atonement that he had spent a hundred years of his life for! Not a living person! No soul!

“Shizun, I’ll give you half of the cake. You eat the big one, I’ll eat the small one.”

Tears of guilt streamed down his face.

Trembling and trembling, he ran toward the child who had already driven the blade into his heart and whose core was beginning to crack and was

about to be dug out.

He knelt down, he cried miserably, he screamed with all his might, he was like Mo Ran, who could only pass between him and Chu Wanning. The weeping in his throat was like blood, as if the knife was not stabbing Chu Wanning's heart, but his voice, his soul.

How could he not have a spirit soul…

He was the one who closed his eyes and refused to listen.

He had known it all along, he had always known it.

He could see that person's soul through his smile, his seriousness, his tolerance and gentleness, his stubbornness and persistence.

But for his own sake, for his so-called atonement, he pretended to be deaf and dumb, he paralyzed himself.

Chu Wanning had never been a wooden sculpture or an empty shell.

He was a person of flesh and blood. He would cry and laugh…

"I've watched him grow up day by day ever since he was a child. He was like Chu Lan when he was young, a bit older, and also like Chu Xun. However, I've never been mistaken between him and any of them."

The guilty voice sounded like a broken gong, hoarse to the extreme.

"It was he who gave me half of the cake and dragged me along to call me Shizun. It was he who secretly brought me a palm-leaf fan to help me and thought that I did not realize it at all. He was the one who accompanied me

at the Wubei Temple for fourteen years, smiling at me, trusting me, saying that I was the most benevolent Shizun in the world."

It was like swallowing gallbladder.

"The most benevolent Shizun…" he mumbled to himself.

In the painting, Huaizui had restrained Chu Wanning's hand and stopped his spiritual energy. The instant the curse failed to work, Chu Wanning fainted in pain.

Huaizui held the living, bleeding body in his arms. It was as if he was carrying Chu Xun, who had illuminated everyone's escape path two hundred years ago when they were about to return to the Calamity Calamity Calamity Calamity.

But it was different.

Chu Wanning was very stubborn and proud. He had his own little hobbies, such as sleeping without a blanket, biting his chopsticks when he was tired from eating, and never washing clothes. He would just immerse them all together.

It was all his own habit, his own love.

Not like anyone else.

The image went black again.

It wasn't a bad thing to be in such a situation, but if he were to look at it again, he would probably go crazy.

In the darkness, there was a faint sigh.

“Actually, when he coldly glared at me and told me that he wanted to go down the mountain to help with the road and that he didn’t want to sit down and ascend the mountain, I knew that he was a living person.”

“I was weak and selfish. I almost destroyed the child I raised with my own hands.”

“He’s not Chu Lan, he’s not my sin offering.”

“He is Chu Wanning, because the hour when I woke him up was a peaceful evening. The bell of the Zen Temple rang out and he was born under the gaze of the Celestial Buddha. I gave him his name.”

“But what I gave him was only a name. I have always considered myself to have created him, and have therefore decided that he should belong to me, to be mine, to be mine, to be my sacrifice. But when I looked at him, just like you, Young Master Chu, for your own morals, you didn’t hesitate to cut off your own heart to prove yourself…”

The guilty party choked on his words, unable to speak. Only after a long time did he mutter.

“I finally understand. I’ve never given him a spirit soul, not even a life. It was all his own, because. Because a dirty, weak sinner like me will never be able to create a life as clean and resolute as his.”

“Never.”

Ch. 241 [Mount Longxue] The Truth

The painting once again lit up. It was a rainy morning, and he was sitting in the meditation room, holding the Bodhi Pearl and chanting a Buddhist scripture. Suddenly, there was a flash of light at the door. He didn't turn around, but only dropped the wooden fish.

He sighed, "You're awake?"

Mo Ran turned around and saw Chu Wanning standing outside the door. His pretty figure looked like it was melting into the thin sunlight.

"Why did Shizun still save me?"

"Blood is not to be seen without the Wubei Temple."

"…"

"Since you've already cut off your own heart and testified, I understand your meaning. You can go down the mountain yourself. From today onwards, you must not return."

Chu Wanning did not take any luggage. He looked at the familiar figure in the candle, and said after a while, "Shizun."

Shizun.

And then what? So they said goodbye? Thank you for your kindness?

The gauze on his chest was still bleeding, the knife had been pulled out, but his heart was still throbbing.

After fifteen years of trust, the last thing he received was a sentence from Huaizui: “I want your spirit core.” For the past fifteen years, he had always thought that Huaizui was the most benevolent, that he would worry about the grass and trees.

Pitiful ants. He had always thought that the entire world was as peaceful and peaceful as Linan city and the Upper Cultivation World.

But that was all fake. It was all a crime against him.

This was a tribulation that was tens of thousands of times more painful than having one’s spirit core shattered.

Chu Wanning closed his eyes, and finally he said to him, “Goodbye… Shizun.”

He had left his gentleness, trust, and innocence in this solemn temple, which Huaizui had once given him.

He turned and walked away.

“I knew he would hate me. Even if I followed him down the mountain, he would never be able to get past this barrier in his heart. I let him go. From then on, an ungrateful and selfish image of myself was left in his memory. He no longer recognizes me, and I no longer have the face to call myself his Shizun.”

“At that time, shortly after his birth, he was fifteen years old. Fifteen years of being a duckweed, spring, summer, autumn, winter, joy, anger, sadness, from that day onward, I will never look back.”

Huaizui swept his gaze across the steps of the courtyard. The leaves turned from green to withered yellow, and finally, there was not a single strand of

life left on the branches. Another year's worth of winter snows had fallen.

The monk stood under the eaves, wrapped in a thick robe, squinting at the snow.

His face was still young, but his eyes were filled with a certain age. He was like all the other old people, fond of staring blankly. As long as he sat still for a while, he would unconsciously fall into a deep sleep.

"I am already very old, two hundred years old. The memories of my youth have already slowly faded from my mind, but I still remember more and more clearly the years when Wanning was by my side. I sometimes wonder if this is how the elders feel about their children… But what kind of elder am I? I'm just a butcher who doesn't have the courage."

"The yin aura in my body is becoming thinner and thinner. I probably won't have any hope of atoning for my sins for the rest of my life. I don't want to go anywhere else, I just stay in seclusion in the Wubei Temple all day long. I only fold up the best one when the haitang blossoms bloom and take it to the ghost realm, and hand it over to Chu Xun as usual."

"I have never been a broad-minded person, so the only thing I can do is a tiny bit. If I have more, I can't do it well, and if I encounter a choice, I won't know whether I'm right or wrong. I'm going to spend the rest of my life like this. Until one day, a person suddenly came to my courtyard."

It was late at night, and the door was being knocked.

Huaizui stood up to open the door, and he was suddenly stunned.

"… It's you?!"

Following behind him, Mo Ran saw the man's face clearly.

It was Chu Wanning.

Chu Wanning was very anxious and his complexion was very bad. The weirdest thing was that even though it was winter and the moon, he was only wearing a thin summer shirt.

Mo Ran's first reaction was that he gave his jacket to some refugees who were on the verge of freezing to death, but he soon realized that was not the case. Chu Wanning was dressed very properly, and with the permission of Huaizui, he entered the bedroom.

There were so many kinds of words that were stuck in his throat, but he could only ask one last question: "You… What's wrong?"

"I can't sustain my spiritual energy for too long, I can't explain it to the master one by one. This censer is very important, I really don't know who to give it to. There are too many unknowns in this world, I don't know what 'he' will become in the future, I don't know who will be able to survive and protect this secret, so I have no choice but to come and bother you."

"… What are you talking about? Are you sick?"

Huaizui did not manage to react, but Mo Ran, who was standing by the side, felt his head buzz as his vision turned black! He suddenly realized what was wrong with "Chu Wanning".

Ear hole!

Chu Wanning had a hole in his left ear, and he wore a scarlet earring, looking like cinnabar.

It was just a tiny detail, but it made Mo Ran feel as if it had been struck by lightning, rendering him unable to speak.

This was not Chu Wanning at all… Or perhaps, this was not his world's Chu Wanning at all!

He… He was from his previous life, the time when he was Taxian-Jun, otherwise he would not have possessed this imprint. Mo Ran clearly remembered that this earring was made from his own spirit blood. It had a love curse attached to it that made Chu Wanning more sensitive to his touch and invasion.

It couldn't be wrong!

He could clearly recall what kind of thoughts he had, how he had created this needle, and then when he had absent-minded Chu Wanning, he fiercely licked his left ear, feeling the trembling release of the man below him, while taking advantage of the spasms of Chu Wanning to pierce through his earlobe without saying a word.

Chu Wanning groaned. His brows were furrowed as he grabbed the blanket, but he could not get rid of the man who was lying on top of him.

"Does it hurt?"

He licked the blood from the tip of his ear, his eyes shining.

"Is it pain or pleasure?"

The earring pierced through the soft flesh, as if it were a different level of subjugation to this man. It was always painful when a foreign object stabbed into the flesh, no matter what it stabbed into.

Seeing Chu Wanning trembling and whimpering from the pain, Mo Ran felt even more excited. He stroked his chin, and kissed him hot and wet, gasping for breath.

“It’s just an earpiece, why are you trembling?”

He knew what he was doing, so he used force in his hand and roughly broke the earlobe with the needle. He did not pity him at all. He was vicious and crude.

“Look, it pierced you.” He stroked the earring that Chu Wanning had just put on his ear and said hoarsely, “It went in.”

“…”

“It’s in your flesh and blood. From now on, you’re mine.”

In his previous life, Chu Wanning came into this world.

This knowledge caused Mo Ran’s heart to palpitate. His scalp tingled and his vision blurred. He felt like he couldn’t even breathe. He looked at everything in front of him with a blank expression on his face. Just what was going on?

He tried his best to focus his mind and listen to the conversation between Chu Wanning and Huaizui, but the excitement was too great, he could not recover his wits immediately. He only knew that Chu Wanning had said something to Huaizui, and from time to time, he had heard the words ‘Door of Life and Death’ and ‘Forbidden Destruction’ and ‘Unstoppable’ from time to time.

He saw Huaizui slump into a chair, his face sallow, his eyes narrowed.

“How do you prove that what you said is true?”

“… I can’t prove it.” In the end, Mo Ran heard Chu Wanning’s words, “I can only ask for your trust in me, Shizun.”

“… This is ridiculous. You said that you came through the Gate of Life and Death from another world, and in that world, there is a person called Ta Ta… Tax…”

“Taxian-Jun.”

“There’s a Taxian-Jun emperor who is destroying the heavens and the earth, turning the entire cultivation world upside down. You discovered his secret, so you found a way to open the Gate of Life and Death to come to this world? In order to change rewrite the past?”

“Not rewrite, but stop it. If this goes on, sooner or later they will learn the curse of the Gate of Life and Death. When that time comes, our world will not be the only one to end.” Chu Wanning paused for a moment, his eyes reflected in the dim candlelight, “No one can escape.”

“Ridiculous. How can that be… This was simply… Nonsense…”

From time to time, Chu Wanning would look at the water leak in front of the door to recrimination. He held on to the time, his eyes gradually filled with anxiety, “Even if Shizun doesn’t believe me now, he will understand in the future. Before this, please seal this censer in the cave of Mount Longxue. I have set up the most important spell in the censer to let it slowly evaporate in the cave. The only thing to do is…”

Huaizui raised his head and looked at him like a madman. A dream-like expression appeared on his face as he looked at Chu Wanning.

“The only thing to do is to not let anyone near the caves of Mount Longxue. Until Shizun believes what I have said, and then think of a way to bring this world’s ‘I’ and that person called Mo Ran together to Mount

Longxue — for the rest of the matters, the censers have already set up the Incantation of Law, so there is no need to worry."

Huaizui weakly moved his mouth as if he wanted to say something, but suddenly, a shrill whistle came from outside the window.

This whistle sound was exactly the same as the sound of Taxian-Jun's disappearance.

When Chu Wanning heard this, his face turned even paler. He stared at Huaizui's eyes anxiously, "Please, other than you, there is no one else in this world who I can entrust this to."

Hearing the word 'trust', Huaizui was stunned.

Within his pupils, it was as if there was suddenly the muddiness and vicissitudes of old age within him.

Finally he took the censer and gave a slight nod.

The whistle grew sharper. Chu Wanning looked out the window at the night sky, then said to Huaizui, "Please Shizun, you must guard this cave well. Also, if there is a Taxian-Jun in this world, perhaps… Just as I said, with the appearance of a great Heavenly Rift, the situation will definitely change — at that time, Shizun should be convinced that what I have said today is definitely not a lie."

The shrill whistle almost tore his eardrums.

Chu Wanning turned and ran into the night, only able to take one last deep look at Huaizui. He originally wanted to be a Shizun and disciple, but his hand stopped halfway. He closed his eyes, bowed deeply, and bid them farewell.

At that moment, without knowing where, Huaizui got the courage to stand up and shout at Chu Wanning, “You… Do you know what I did? Didn’t I do the same to you in that world? You won’t believe me anymore!”

Chu Wanning just shook his head. His face was blurred in the dark.

“Shizun…” His figure was getting further and further away, “I don’t have time anymore… Please, think of a way…”

“No matter what you do, this matter is too important. Please persuade me to listen to you and let me come with him to Mount Longxue.”

He was finally gone.

The night was dark and the stars were shining.

After being chased out of the courtyard, he only saw a flash that was even heavier than the dark night. Chu Wanning was nowhere to be seen, only the censer in his hand was still there, full of spiritual energy, which he held tightly in his palm, confirming that this was not a dream.

The scene before Mo Ran’s eyes began to shake violently. The scenes he had seen earlier were like an avalanche as they fell apart like broken bricks.

“He said that no matter what method he used, it would be fine. But, what could I do? He no longer trusts me,” he said, sighing. “Furthermore, I still have some reservations in my heart, and I do not dare to believe that all of this is a conspiracy.”

“It wasn’t until Butterfly Town was split and Wanning died that I made up my mind. After reviving him, I would cultivate and deal with him.”

“I have hesitated for a while over that letter. Because I do not know how powerful the person behind this letter is, I did not dare to say the truth in it. I really had no other excuse to find him. Moreover, his cultivation was strong, and he was also at the Sisheng Peak, an important position for Elder Yuheng. It was impossible for me to force him to leave. In the end, I thought that it would be inconvenient for him to not have completely restored his Spiritual Core in all these years. So I used this as a reason to invite him to come to Mount Longxue.”

“But I lied to him for fourteen years. So no matter how sincere my words are, he still doesn’t want to believe me…”

A long, faint sigh, the sound almost perplexed.

“I’ve been waiting. Just like nearly twenty years ago, when I imprisoned him on the mountain, I would come to him every day, hoping that he would change. After that, I went to Mount Longxue every day to look for him, hoping that he would come back.”

“If only he would give me another chance.”

The old monk’s voice sounded like a kite with its string cut as he floated far away, “My days are numbered, I know I can’t wait any longer. So in the end, I made this scroll. In this, I have a lot of thought, several changes, put in a little bit of memory once did not want to put in. But in the end, I’m still a coward. I don’t really want him to see this scroll while I’m still alive… I couldn’t stand his sad eyes. When he was fourteen, I had seen enough of that look.”

“So, Wanning…” He sighed softly as if he was weighed down by a heavy burden, “When you get here, I… It should be already lonely.”

“I am still a very selfish person. In order to not see that you hate me, only before I leave did I dare to give you the entire truth, to the child called Mo Ran that you spoke of. I’m sorry, that year, Shizun was wrong. You’re a living person, always have been.”

Huaizui stopped for a moment before suddenly becoming hoarse. He said the last words that he had left behind in the world.

“Young Master Chu, can you forgive me?”

It was unknown if the name “Young Master Chu” was this “him” or “him” from a hundred years ago.

At the end of his speech, a wind suddenly blew. Countless memory fragments, like the bright snow, drifted past one another. At this moment, the two hundred years of sin and punishment, the fourteen years of joy and sorrow, all intersected.

The child laughs: “You against one, I against one, what blooms in the water? The lotus blossoms in the water.”

The young man was arguing, “Since you don’t know how to treat others, then why should you? This Immortal… it’s fine if he doesn’t want to cultivate.”

In the end, his phoenix eyes closed. “So long… Shizun.”

All of this happened in succession like a passing lantern. When the light was at its brightest, Mo Ran saw the stooped figure of Huaizui appearing in front of him. He leaned over the table and carved the last line for the Divine Wood.

The clock struck midnight.

“I’ll just call you Chu Wanning.”

As soon as he finished speaking, Mo Ran floated in waves around the torrential stream of memories. Then, he was suddenly pushed out of the scroll, falling onto the sandy ground in front of the cave of Mount Longxue.

Time passed differently inside and outside the scroll. At this moment, it was already dusk, and the world was filled with a majestic red glow as the sun set peacefully. As he lay there, Mo Ran felt like he had returned to that night many years ago. He felt guilty and blood dripped from his wounds. From then on, there was a child called Chu Wanning.

He lay on the ground, his eyes unfocused.

“Shizun… Wanning…”

He finally understood why such a strong man like Chu Wanning would cry in his arms.

It was just that the price he paid was too high. It was as though he was hacking away at it with thousands of blades.

Was it all his fault?

It was the fault of Taxian-Jun in his previous life, Chu Wanning had spent two lifetimes trying to stop him from making a mess of the world.

Chu Wanning’s spirit core had been dug out.

The big brother who saved his life before the Wubei Temple.

Not human… It was the Spirit of the Divine Wood…

Every single strike was like a brick smashing down. Just the truth alone was enough to cause one's muscles and bones to shatter, causing them to be badly mutilated, let alone so many piles of them.

For a moment, Mo Ran felt as if he was lying on the ground. All the bones in his body seemed to have been shattered, and he was unable to do anything else.

It was all a mess.

He looked around and saw Chu Wanning sitting quietly with his eyes closed. Suddenly, his regret turned into a bone. His love and compassion turned into a meat, and the pain turned into blood. He wanted to protect this person's desires, to let him struggle free from the extreme feelings of helplessness and blankness, to free himself from the mud.

He slowly stood up and walked towards Chu Wanning.

Chu Wanning opened his eyes and looked at him.

Neither of them spoke first.

In the end, Mo Ran bent down and embraced him, "Shizun, it doesn't matter if you are divine wood or human. As long as you are willing to take me…" He tried to hold it in, but he choked. "I'll always…"

How are things?

Standing by his side?

He wasn't worthy.

So at last he said, humbly and painfully, "I will always stand in front of you."

I can’t accompany you, I’m not worthy of you, I’m so cheap and dirty, so destructive, but you’re pure.

I can’t stand by your side anymore, Wanning.

Let me stand in front of you and protect you from the blood and the knife.

Until the day of my death.

Ch. 242 [Mount Longxue] Imperial Consort Chu

Chu Wanning did not confirm the matter of Taxian-Jun again, nor did he speak much.

Actually, the uneasy look on Mo Ran was the best answer. There was no need to ask anything else. What's more, he felt extremely tired at the moment, and his mind was numb after being hit one time after another.

It took him a long time to break away from Mo Ran's embrace and get up slowly. Instead of looking directly at him, he closed his eyes and opened his mouth, with a chillingly calm voice. He said, "I want to go to the cave."

"…"

"Since the other me has worked hard to set up this setup, I want to see it."

"… Do you know the truth and hate me?" It was almost childish, but Mo Ran asked, and then he muttered, "You'll hate me."

Chu Wanning's eyes moved slightly, and eventually he turned around and looked at him: "Taxian-Jun… What on earth have you done?

He didn't ask "you". He used the name "Taxian-Jun".

Mo Ran felt a ray of vitality because of this title, but this line of vitality is too dim. On one hand, he wants to grab it, on the other hand, he is frightened.

Chu Wanning's lips moved slightly, eyes slightly raised.

"Killing?"

Mo Ran shut his eyes. He was silent.

“Slaughtered a city?”

Mo Ran remained silent.

Chu Wanning thought of the dreams he had made before, those spring dreams that had once felt absurd and ambiguous, and the man in the Dragon Soul Hall who spoke and behaved towards himself. He had already understood the original idea implicitly, but when it came to his mouth, he could not ask, and finally only said, “What about me? What on earth am I beside him?”

The knot in Mo Ran’s throat rolled, trying to answer, but he couldn’t.

He ran away and ran away for so long. Now he couldn’t speak. He feels that he is a sinner standing on the platform to die. He kneels on the ground and can see the shadow of the executioner’s knife.

When does he drop dead? When does his head fall to the ground?…

Suddenly he did not want to wait any longer. He didn’t want to run away. The process of waiting for the knife to fall was too long. He would rather touch the wall and die.

Mo Ran opened his eyes and said, “Go into the cave.”

He moved his fingertips as if trying to pull Chu Wanning’s hand, but at last he hung down and only rubbed his clothes in front of him.

Before entering the cave, he hesitated for a moment, then turned his head and grinned at Chu Wanning.

“Shizun.”

Chu Wanning rather looked at him, the man suddenly laughed so brilliantly and so warmly. It seems that all hope and happiness will be squandered at this moment.

The rest of his life is no longer needed.

Chu Wanning was suddenly awakened by the sting of this smile. He walked over, but he did not know what to say. He was so distracted that he raised his cold hand and touched the other side’s equally cold face.

“…” Mo Ran was stunned and opened his eyes slowly.

Chu Wanning sighed, pulled Mo Ran and dared not take the initiative to hold his hand again, as if to say to Mo Ran, as if to say to himself: “I… I watched you grow into what you are today. So it’s you, not him.”

“You are not the same as Taxian-Jun.”

Mo Ran was still, stiff for a long time, before laughing, his throat choking: “Hmm.”

But now it’s wet.

How can it be different?

He’s the worst man in the world. He’s a ghost who escaped from his previous life.

But before all is over, he can get such a recognition. He thinks God is serious to him. No matter what happens after Chu Wanning’s memory is restored, he has no complaints.

He closed his eyes, took Chu Wanning's hand, took a deep breath and went into the Longxue Cave.

After stepping in, all the scenes outside were invisible.

Looking around the cave, they found that it was very narrow, about the size of a disciple's bedroom on Sisheng Peak. Inside the empty four-walled place, there was only one small case with a rusty smoking stove on it, the one that appeared in the picture scroll of Huaizui. Smoke was waving in the smoking stove. Mo Ran didn't like smelling incense, but the smell in the stove was not pungent. There was only a faint taste of haitang flower.

"What kind of curse is this?"

Chu Wanning shook his head: his voice was low and slow: "… I don't know. This "I" is not what I am today. I don't necessarily know it because of the magic he learned by chance. Like how Taxian-Jun may not use Jiangui as a weapon, unlike you."

His eyes turned to the smoking stove. "Perhaps you have to touch it to find out what's coming?" When he finished, he raised his hand and lightly touched the hearth with his fingertips, but there was still no movement.

Mo Ran had watched Chu Wanning warmly and sadly ever since he entered the cave. Although he did not want Chu Wanning to recover his memory, he still said, "Since it is the illusion left by the Master for us two, it may be useless for one person to touch. To open it, we both need to be here."

"… Uh huh. Try it."

Two people, left and right, touched their fingers on the fine twining patterns of the stove, the flower fragrance inside the cave was instantly

fragrant, smoke like a wave, instantly filled the whole cave. Mo Ran did not expect the abnormal changes to happen so quickly, and was ready to grab Chu's hand, but the rolling clouds immediately swallowed him up.

Mo Ran was stunned in surprise: "Shizun!"

It was too late. There was a spiritual force in the clouds. It was different from the ordinary spiritual core force, but it was very clear and powerful. He seemed to be floating in the sky, followed by all the limbs and bones as if they were frozen, and no longer under his control. Before even his voice left him, he tried his best to call out, "Shizun, are you okay?"

He could let out is just a vague statement, and then it can't move any more.

The situation on Chu Wanning's side was not much worse than that on his side. He called Mo Ran's name in the fog, and at first he heard some responses, but soon it became a dead silence.

"Mo Ran?"

Chu Wanning rubbed in the smoke and tried to touch the edge, but there seemed to be some kind of magic spell in the incense stove, which made the space here infinite and he could not reach the end.

"Mo…"

Suddenly his throat was suffocated and Chu Wanning, like Mo Ran, was shocked to find that he could no longer make a sound, and soon he found that he was restricted not only by the sound of speech, but also by the movement. He could not even control his body. It felt like a dream, in which he was still him, but he was no longer free to act and speak, and

could only watch everything in front of him with open eyes. Without mak any changes.

His mind, which had been messing around, became more and more confused. If there was anything to say, would it be better to set up an axis of memories? Why do you want to do this?

It took a long time for the smoke to dissipate.

When he opened his eyes, he found that the original scene had disappeared. In his eyes, red candles flickered. He sat at a familiar yellow sandalwood table, which was neatly packed. There were not many things placed on the table, but there was a deep mark on the table. It was accidentally cut with a knife he used to make the Night Guardian.

… The cave turned into the Red Lotus Pavilion.

Chu Wanning sat stiff and his body was still uncontrolled. It looked like the Peach Garden's illusion. The only difference is that he can't control the development of things. He can only stay still and repeat some of the past events that have happened.

Why did he set this spell? What does he want him to see, and what does he want him to repeat?

It was late outside, and two servants he had never seen stood behind him, helping him to comb his hair.

He was manipulated by the illusion, raised his hand, stopped their movements, and said, "Don't comb, I'll do it myself."

He heard a "Crash!" Suddenly, the door was pushed open roughly. Chu Wanning felt that he seemed very unwilling to see the person who pushed

the door. So he just sat at the desk with his back straight, without turning back, and even closed his eyes.

“Get out of here.”

Behind him came a familiar voice.

The two servants immediately put down their combs and basins, looked respectful and bowed their heads for blessings.

“Yes, Your Majesty.”

The two attendants went out, Chu Wanning still did not turn back, nor did he open his eyes, but of course he knew who was coming and, how could he have heard the voice wrong?

Chu Wanning has a beast-like alertness. He feels that the man was approaching him, step by step… Suddenly breathing is on the temples of his ears, with a strong smell of alcohol, hot.

“Why haven’t you slept yet?” Mo Ran asked mutely behind him.

Chu Wanning heard his own indifferent reply: “Preparing to sleep.”

“Uh… I see that.” Mo Ran said in his ear and smiled gently. “The outer gown is off, besides the hair crown, why don’t you like this suit? This Venerable One made it of the finest gold wire and inlaid with exquisite jade. What this Venerable One gives you is better than that for the queen. Why do you look down on it?”

“…”

“Nevermind.” Without waiting for Chu Wanning to speak, Mo Ran said to himself, “Anyway, you don’t like anything I give you. You look down on me from the bottom of your heart.” He said this and sneered, “But what about that? You see, you’re going to be mine in the end.”

Mo Ran said, extending his hand gently and wrapping Chu Wanning in his arms from behind. Chu Wanning’s body could hardly withstand such stimulation and anger. Eventually, he opened his eyes, so he could continue to see everything in front of him.——

In front of him was a bronze mirror, in which Mo Ran and his figure were reflected. Mo Ran wore a golden red dress, wearing nine beads crown. Unexpectedly, he was in a wedding uniform. The man hugged him behind him. His face came down and he began to kiss his earlobe and neck.

Chu Wanning shivered slightly, because of anger and also because of something else.

“Don’t make a fool of yourself.”

“Ah, don’t make any rash remarks. How does Shizun want me to move?”

Threats are useless, instead of being ridiculed, Chu Wanning had to bite his teeth fiercely and say: “evil beast!”

Mo Ran smiled lightly. His look was very obsessed, his handsome face has a half-awake and half-drunk lustful gaze, lips constantly rubbing Chu Wanning’s side face, murmuring: “What beast? You see now, at the end of the day, you belong to me…”

He didn’t know where the killing intent came from. Chu Wanning felt that his body had picked up something from the previous case, and thrust it

back at the back of the Mo Ran's hand.

Mo Ran grunted with pain and snorted.

He took the opportunity to break free and stared angrily at the man in the lamp.

"Get out of here."

Chu Wanning, who was under his body, saw clearly that he had just used a golden hairpin to stab him, which was the ornament of a man when he gets married.

"Tsk…" Mo Ran raised his hand and looked at his bleeding wound. He laughed coldly at it first, then put out his tongue, like a poisonous snake spitting out letters, licking the blood across the length and breadth, and rolled it between his lips and teeth.

There was a crazy light in his eyes, which was full of beastliness. For a moment, it made his face not so handsome, but rather a bit grim.

"I can't believe that your soul and spirit core were scrapped and you can still hurt this Venerable One." Mo Ran's lips stained with blood, laughing and laughing out loud, "Chu Wanning, you have sharp fingers and claws, this Venerable One is really small in front of you."

"… Get out of here."

"'Get out of here', do you only know how to say one sentence?" He seemed to be enjoying the pain. His expression is somewhat abnormal and pleasurable. "How do you like to cast aside your Venerable One? Why don't you keep silent in front of all the guests in the hall today?"

“…”

“This Venerable One can block your actions, but not your voice, you can yell angrily, this Venerable One will not touch you.” Mo Ran approached him again, and stood close to him, holding Chu Wanning’s hairpin wrist with a tremendous twist.

He grinned, and there was blood between his teeth.

“But what you have done is to wash the half sleeves of this Venerable One with the water of the bath when you untied your hands.”

Mo Ran paused and then laughed. “Shizun, you were so angry. Why didn’t you call me that time?”

“You… Shameless!”

“This Venerable One is shameless, but who is a gentleman? Xue Meng? I sent him an invitation to the banquet today, but he didn’t want to come himself. What would you feel like if he came?” Mo Ran said with a light laugh, “Would you ask him to take you away when you are in the hall?”

Although Chu Wanning, caught in the clouds of recovery, could barely hear him, his body obviously understood the words of Mo Ran, and bitter with hatred he refused to say a word.

Mo Ran looked at him angrily and suddenly reached out the tip of his blood-stained tongue, turned his face, and gently licked his ear.

“…”

“Chu Wanning, do you know when you are most in trouble? That’s when you stare at me with such angry eyes.” He pulled his hand and went down.

“If you don’t believe it, touch it. Is it very big and hot? Shizun, elder Yuheng and Master Chu— One title is more respectful than another, but at last it is full of moisture.”

“Look, it wants you so much.”

“Get out!”

“You’ve said that for the third time.” Mo Ran stared at him, the malice in his eyes growing deeper. “Today is the day of this great celebration, climbing to the top, marrying a beautiful wife and a concubine… This Venerable One even left the queen to accompany you. Why are you still so fierce?”

He paused, full of malice, and finally quenched out two words:

“Concubine Chu?”

“!!”

Chu Wanning felt like he was killed by thunder, and he could not move. He seemed to be nauseated to the extreme by these two words, and his whole body started shaking.

But Mo Ran laughed and his eyes sparkled. “What’s wrong? You can’t speak happily when this venerable calls you so? Somehow I slept so long with you. If you were a woman, you would be playing with me endlessly every night for fear of having a baby for me because you were already unmarried and pregnant. If this Venerable One gave you a place, shouldn’t you be happy to wait in bed? This Venerable One is not an unreasonable person, ha ha ha ha.”

Chu Wanning was so angry that he couldn’t say a word.

Is this anger and nausea physical?

The controlled body and the free soul are strongly disgusted. Chu Wanning was full of nausea and disgust, but also creeped out and shocked.

Taxian-Jun…

The past of Mo Ran.

What on earth have you done?!

Madman! Crazy!!!

Mo Ran laughed enough, suddenly pinched Chu Wanning's chin, kissed him fiercely, and his mouth smelled of blood. He roughly turned Chu Wanning's wrists with one hand, pushed Chu Wanning down to the couch and then bent over.——

Chu Wanning closed his eyes and shivered.

The fiery and strong man's body pressed him down hard and held tightly.

"Do your duty as a gentleman. You and I are married now. You are my man. You can't escape anymore."

Ch. 243 [Mount Longxue] Third

>>noncon warning

The red-gold pillow rustled beneath him, and there was a fishy smell in his nostrils.

Chu Wanning looked at Mo Ran's face. The dreams he had, at this moment, overlapped with reality. It turned out that these were not dreams, but actually real.

He and Mo Ran had actually already been intimate with each other. They had actually already been married. He was imprisoned by Mo Ran, and he knelt in the frozen snow, begging to see Mo Ran face to face…

It was all true.

At this moment, Chu Wanning did not know what he was feeling. Perhaps under the influence of the intoxicating fragrance, his consciousness had become one with the Chu Wanning from another world.

He felt what it felt.

Knew what he knew.

Chu Wanning closed his eyes as his clothes were torn off and a kiss fell on his lips.

He felt very miserable. Who was he?

Was he the Immortal master Chu who relied on his sword, or the laughable consort Chu? Was he the one Mo-zongshi loved sincerely, or was he the one hated by Taxian-Jun?

Everything was no longer clear. Piles of memories floated before his eyes like falling flowers in a stream. He tried to catch those memories, but he could not see them clearly.

In the end, only the space between the beds was visible.

In this illusion, he was brutally clamped down by Mo Ran, pants were hastily and cruelly removed, there was no lingering foreplay he was once familiar with, only brutal intrusion.

Although the scene was false, he and the same manipulated Mo Ran were repeating the real action of the previous life. He was pressed into bed with Mo Ran, without even a caress or kiss. He heard the rustle of his clothes behind him, and then a hot sexual organ came behind him.

“Shizun, do you feel it well? Do you feel its desire? Thank you for this Venerable one.”

“You… Sinful beast!”

He answered with a sneer: “Don’t you want to stretch your legs open for this beast?” Then there was the tearing feeling, the entrance of a hole that had never been invaded was opened, and a fierce pulsating cock came in fiercely.

Pain.

It was really painful.

He was in a trance, thinking of Mo Ran’s soft eyebrow, kissing him in the hot spring torrent at night, and saying to him: “If it gets inside, you won’t be able to bear it. Listen to me, we can do it next time.”

But Taxian-Jun would not have pity on him. The terrible size seemed to break his internal walls. It was so hard and hot, it was so fierce, so thick and long that he almost felt that it would poke directly out of his abdomen, open his stomach and pierce him.

Chu Wanning was like a fish on the shore struggling, in exchange the Immortal Emperor raised his hand, slapped him on the face, gritted his teeth and said: “It’s not like I haven’t been in you before. We’ve been doing it so many times.”

A slap down, his cheeks flushed.

He turned his face away, his hair was chaotic, his eyes were red, he was silent and he did not cry. Tonight he was more humiliated than ever, but he was lonelier than ever.

Mo Ran held around his waist, hitting his hip incessantly. The place where they were joined was terribly hot and humid. Mo Ran tried to look at his face, wanting to see his humiliated expression. The thrusting stopped, and the handsome man who was on top gasped, his eyes darkened. He held his chin to force him to see him.

“You…”

He seemed to want to say some insulting words, but in the candle fire, those eyes that were obviously in extreme pain, but couldn’t bear to cry, were beautiful. Mo Ran stared for a moment, suddenly leaned over and caught his lips, wet sticky hot tongue intruded, rolling in his mouth. The fierceness of the man above grew. He became more and more vigorous, faster and harder, then deeper and deeper. The hot and thick cock beating in the body of Chu Wanning.

When the kiss ended, Mo Ran's behavior became more intense. His eyes were vague about whether what he felt was sexual desire or love. "Don't grab the quilt, you are my man, you can hold me."

This is the only sentence that resembled compassion in the whole sexual intercourse. Chu Wanning didn't listen. He did not embrace him as he wished, or fell in with him. As Mo Ran's face became cloudy, the coupling became even more wild.

Chu Wanning held the mattress tightly with his backhand, and his wrists were full of blue veins. He couldn't stand such abuse at all. But Mo Ran could not let him go. His rough palms rubbed his waist, buttocks and Chu Wanning did not know how long such a pull had lasted. The man suddenly got irritable and pulled himself out from his body violently. Chu Wanning heard a hoarse hum from himself. He turned over, the place where they were connected was sticky and lustfully stretched, it spasmodically contracted. The edge seemed to have the sticky fluid hanging from the sexual intercourse, before it could flow out, the man's ferocious cockhead pressed against his hole again, and he pushed his huge cock inside and trusted twice.

He heard Mo Ran say, "Big or not?"

"…"

"Did your husband make you happy? Uh huh?"

Chu Wanning heard his own voice, which sounded almost defeated: "… Get out of here…"

"Get out of here!"

Mo Ran cursed, and he seemed to be looking for something from the side. Chu Wanning felt that his legs had been opened even more, and there was a tube of cold paste that squeezed into his body.

Chu Wanning heard himself choking and scolding: “Mo Ran… Mo Ran, you beast…”

Mo Ran…

Mo Ran.

No, it isn’t him.

Mo Ran is the person who gazes at him with a smile under the flower tree.

“Shizun, I want to protect you with an umbrella for a lifetime,” Mo Ran said.

Mo Ran rubbed his hair and said gently, “You’ll hurt.”

Mo Ran is the person who holds a golden wheat straw in the corners of his mouth and spread his arms, will give him milk candies, will look down and smile because of a simple word, and blush slightly.

So shy and honest.

No, this isn’t him.

There was a sudden panic.

Later, perhaps because the incense has been put here for too long, the effect was not as good as the first time, so it slowly goes dark, Chu Wanning’s brain was also faint, he can’t see anything, he can’t speak yet,

the only perception is that he is still trapped, Mo Ran's cock is still buried in his body. The hot, huge hardness made his scalp feel numb.

It was dark for a long time before it began to light up slowly.

After Chu Wanning's recovered his consciousness, the first thing he heard was an almost twisted curse from Mo Ran. The burning pain of the ear-slap fan on his face, and the seemingly insertion of a cold object in his lower body to alleviate the near-crazy spring tide in his body.

This was still the love affair of the newly married officials, Chu Wanning can clearly recall the details of this incident at this time.

He was constantly reminiscent of his past life.

He knew that he was later squeezed into an aphrodisiac ointment, and that Taxian-Jun, who drank too much wine, became more and more irritable, bloodthirsty and gloomy in his intense sexual affairs.

Alcohol and desire burned red eyes, hatred and pleasure controlled the young emperor.

Chu Wanning's throat was strangled. Mo Ran said in anger: "Chu Wanning, would you rather be like this? You think you are tough? Ah? When the fuck are you going to stop acting tough? Do you want to play yourself to death before you become willing?"

Chu Wanning heard himself say: "… I… Don't want… You…"

The voice was almost broken, and if he didn't feel his lips moving, he didn't even believe it was his voice. Chu Wanning felt tears falling down his cheeks.

“Mo Ran… You spare me…”

The man in front of him howled almost madly. He shouted at him and said, “Who’s going to spare me? Ah? Chu Wanning, have you ever wondered who will spare me? Who can spare me!!!”

The man pressed him on the bed and pulled out the hard object in his body and threw it aside, listening to the sound, it seemed to be a candlestick. Only then did he realize he was fucking him with the handle of Baozhao or a candlestick…

The man touched his face, his voice was anxious and crazy, but he did not know if it was an illusion. He actually heard a trace of sadness: “Chu Wanning, I hate you thoroughly.”

“You killed the person I loved most in my life. What can you do? What do you say? I can only let you make it up to me, let your life be destroyed in my hands… Chu Wanning…”

The man held his weapon. Because he was too crazy and too eager, he couldn’t push inside the first time. The smooth and hot stem hit the inside of the hip, and slipped out. The man gasped, straightened up, grasped Chu’s waist and inserted it again.

“Ah-”

Chu Wanning heard his mute moan and seemed to end up stretching to the extreme. There are also men’s heavy breathing, coated with love medicine, his walls eventually opened again by the hot cock, seamlessly filled, Chu Wanning constantly trembling, sweating all over, eyes out of focus… Desire finally engulfed him.

It was getting dark again.

Once again, he could feel endless bliss.

The body in the illusion and the body in the reality seemed to be inseparable from each other. He and the strong man struggle against each other. Mo Ran pressed him on the bed and wildly manipulated him. Looking in, he cried under the man, chokes and lies on the couch with his fingers deep in the fur of the beast.

Every time the man thrust, he wanted to press him to death against the bed. It was so fierce and powerful that he could feel the sweat gathering in his abdomen, dripping on his waist and flowing into his waist.

“Say… You want me to fuck you? How can you stand obstinately after all this lewdness? Fuck, I’ll come inside you…”

At this time, Chu Wanning seems to be defeated at last. His soul has been killed by the crazy lust. He only has a body that is played by men. It is lewd and sensitive, and he is not satisfied.

“Say ah…” Behind him, the man gazed at him with rapture and gasped roughly.

“Hah…”

Mo Ran groaned deeply and his huge cock pulsed in the wet entrance. He gasped, red-eyed, and grasped Chu Wanning’s buttocks up to thrust deeper. Then he inserted himself deeply, twitched and twirled slightly to stimulate the man who had been smeared with an aphrodisiac.

In fact, Mo Ran knew that he lost.

He almost squeezed inside half the tube of the strongest aphrodisiac in the world, which made the internal walls sticky. Only then Chu Wanning would submit to him.

He lost.

But what about that?

He had acquired what he wanted, and his noble master had finally become his consort Chu, breathless and lustful under him.

Nothing was more exciting than this.

As he thought so, the hard cock hardened again.

“Say it. Say you’re going to be fucked by me. Say you’re my man.”

Under such repeated torture and humiliation, Chu Wanning eventually heard himself muttering hoarsely, repeating in complete confusion: “Yes… I am yours…”

His consciousness has been separated, his expression has been broken, his pride, leaving only the body surging in horrible desire.

“Not for me. What you should say is to fuck you.” Although Mo Ran spoke so maliciously, he could not help but endure to the limit. His throat was gathering and he couldn’t help fighting against Chu Wanning’s buttocks fiercely and violently. He was full of beastly confrontation and agitation.

Chu Wanning was so weak that he did not even have the strength to kneel and lie on his knees. He was soft and dirty. His eyes were closed and he could not help but breathe heavily.

The ancient love poison, this aphrodisiac, used even a little bit, could turn anyone into a beast of desire.

Mo Ran had squeezed almost half the tube in his body.

“Pleased? Did I make you happy?” Mo Ran held the bed pillar with one hand, while the other hand touched Chu Wanning’s chest and waist incessantly.

The bed squeaked violently, Mo Ran’s eyes were intense and hot, his expression was sexy and intoxicated.

“Say, you want me to fuck you.”

Mo Ran’s thrusts were so urgent and fierce that they made the other tremble and get out of control. Chu Wanning eventually collapsed. He gasped roughly and finally almost cried out in a hoarse voice: “Ah… Ah…”

“Ask for it.” Mo Ran closed his eyes and looked up. His throat knot rolled. He patted Chu Wanning’s buttocks fiercely. “Say it out loud, I’ll make you feel even better.”

“Ah… Ah… I want to…”

“What do you want?”

Chu Wanning has been tormented to a point of insanity. He sobbed and shuddered in despair: “Fuck me…”

Mo Ran’s eyes burst into darkness, his lower body filled with excitement, the amplitude of the suction was too large, and when he pulled out, the wet sticky glans were slipping away, and he was holding fast to the heat and sticky insides. He pressed Chu Wanning under his body and looked

closely. He murmured, “Shizun, you are so hot, humid and hot inside, sucking this disciple. It’s addictive.”

“Ah… Um… Don’t stop… Ah, pull harder a little, and then… Ah!” He gasped, “Quicker… A little deeper… Ah…”

The trembling arm was caught, and the man held him from behind, seemingly infinitely gentle. Suddenly, he called to him in his ear, “Wanning, today is our wedding night. I’ll cum on you, I will cum in you, and I will leave my seed in your stomach… Shizun… You’re really tight…”

“Ah…”

“Why do you have to force me to give you the medicine to do that?” The man said, licking his earlobe, “You obviously like how I treat you… Is that right?”

“I… Ah…”

Mo Ran’s cock was so long. When it reached the depths, it almost broke his belly through his core. Chu Wanning was unable to speak, but shook his head and tears shed from the corners of his eyes.

“Like it or not?”

“…”

“Don’t you like it?” Suddenly he stopped the fierce intrusion and buried himself in his body. Chu Wanning could feel that the tip inside it was beating angrily with the intense heartbeat of the two men. This subtle feeling made him more tormented. His throat was dry, but his soul was already very cold.

In his slippery body, he gently twitched a few times, which were like the roots of giant trees puncturing the soil, and the tender spring tide bursting out.

Chu Wanning convulsed violently and was soft on the couch.

The man said in his ear, “If you don’t like it, I’ll just…”

He opened his eyes sharply and his heart ached, but he almost abandoned himself. He said, “No… Don’t…”

His eyes trembled again, slowly closing: “I can’t stand…”

But it’s thousands of times more than the average person’s dose of aphrodisiac.

The voice was so chaotic and low-pitched that it was hard to distinguish, “So what do you want me to do?”

“Come in… I can’t stand it. Help me…”

The man behind him seemed to sigh, but at last he was satisfied. He picked him up, sat him in his crotch, and thrust into him fiercely from bottom to top. He had never gone so far. The hole squeezed in every time he went inside. Their flesh and blood could not fit any more. Chu Wanning would not stop moaning and panting, and he was soft and dirty in Mo Ran’s arms. The man who could not stop thrusting licked his face, his wet lips clipped him, and there seemed to be a vague gasp between his lips and teeth.

Mo Ran’s throat knot rolled in a low way: “Really good…”

And he muttered, lost in his mind, that his soul was no longer there. There was only one body drowned in the sea of desire: “Ah… Don’t stop… Ah…

It’s hot. Quicker…”

“I won’t stop, I’ll satisfy you… Chu Wanning… Wanning…”

He thrust for a long time, and after a long time inside Chu Wanning, he felt as if he would die in that person’s arms like this. Body fluids and melted paste flew out, foam was inserted, and ran to the root of the leg.

Suddenly, the man hugged him, pushed him back on the bed, raised his legs and thrust fast. The speed and strength were terrible. Chu Wanning opened his eyes suddenly and keep calling “Ah… Ah…” The man was anxious, unreasonable, thrusting in, pulling out, leaving only the head of the cock in the entrance, and thrusting in again, so fast that their voices were trembling.

“Wanning… Wanning…”

He was not shouting, but suddenly he looked at his face, which was opposite to his forehead.

“Baby, I’m going to come. Let me be in you…”

Chu Wanning opened his mouth desperately. He didn’t even know what he was calling for. He moaned only in his desperate desire and pleasure. He breathed heavily with desire. He intermittently said, “Come inside me… Ah! Ah… Uh-huh!”

The thick and sticky semen gushed out in a big stream. Mo Ran closed his eyes and growled. His crotch kept moving forward, the top of the bedclothes sliding down. Chu Wanning’s head kept hitting the bedpost, and the person who held him was still on top of him unconsciously, shooting the gushing stickiness into his entrance and thrusting in. Chu

Wanning was convulsed by the strong prick, and his white toes were tightened. Eventually, his hands could not help but hold the man's neck.

Each other's rough breathing intertwined, he was humming at his climax, and he was screaming hoarsely under him. Such a fierce tide of desire… He did not know if it was because of the world's most exhilarating aphrodisiac, or because of the two people's hearts. Their own hidden desires they were not aware of…

A hidden desire that even he himself could not sense…

It was only after a long time that Chu Wanning's spiritual sense finally returned.

For some reason, it wasn't just perception that returned with it, but memories of his past life flooded in like a raging river.

After he combined with Mo Ran, they came in a flurry.

He thought of the time when the Heavenly Rift came and Shi Mei had died. Mo Ran was kneeling in the snow, heartbroken.

He thought about how the blood of the Rufeng Sect flowed into rivers and the color of the sky and earth changed.

He thought of how he had been made into a drip of blood, how Mo Ran had woken him up, yet had put him under house arrest, no longer able to do anything.

He remembered everything.

He could feel himself lying on the cold ground, stripped of his clothes, his body wrapped in Mo Ran, the young man's arms trembling, his body

covered in sticky sweat, the air full of the scent of blood.

He remembered everything.

Chu Wanning did not move. He did not speak nor did he get angry.

His head hurt, almost splitting. He felt that in the process of their union, something invisible had passed from Mo Ran into his body.

It was that thing that had allowed him to regain the memories of his previous life.

But what was that?

There were too many memories to be received at one time. Chu Wanning's head hurt so much that he thought he must know what it was, but he could not make sense of it at the moment.

"Shizun." Mo Ran's voice resounded in his ears. It was so careful, like the tender stamens of a branch at the beginning of spring, and without the tyrannical appearance from before. "I'm sorry…"

He was enveloped in Mo Ran's embrace. He did not turn around, but from his voice, he could imagine Mo Ran's wet and red eyes, an expression of heartache and guilt.

"Sorry, I still… I still hurt you…"

Just now, under the control of the smoke furnace, Mo Ran was like Chu Wanning. Although he was clear-headed, he could not control his own movements. When he roughly grabbed onto Chu Wanning's waist and impatiently took over this man, he was in pain.

He didn’t want to do this at all… He looked down at Chu Wanning, whose eyes were bloodshot. He wanted to kiss him gently, comfort him, and let him be. But the words were so mean, and the hands so fierce.

His heart was in extreme pain. But what could he do? He couldn’t control himself at all.

Chu Wanning laid prone on the cold stone surface, a splitting headache coming his way. He didn’t even have the strength to lift a finger. Listening to Mo Ran’s apology, he felt his ears buzzing. He felt dizzy, as if he would lose consciousness at any moment.

He opened his mouth, and because the scream he made just now was too pathetic, his voice was extremely hoarse. “You first… You can leave first…”

Mo Ran pursed his lips but didn’t say anything.

He regained his consciousness earlier than Chu Wanning. Actually, he had already retreated when he was in control of his own body. However, despite the miserable state he was in, he still felt as if the weapon made from flesh and blood was in his body.

The pain in Mo Ran’s heart grew even more.

Before entering the cave, he had thought that he would see a spell similar to the memory scroll, but he didn’t expect that he would once again return to the Sisheng Peak, the wedding night. Dressed in red and gold, he pushed open the door to the Red Lotus Pavilion.

Of course, Mo Ran knew what he had done, but he had never thought that he would be able to recreate the situation in such a manner.

He did not want to do anything that would harm Chu Wanning, nor did he want to become the Emperor of the Immortals — but he could not help it. What was even worse was that he could clearly feel that his heart was throbbing with excitement as he did such a tyrannical thing.

Regardless of whether it was Taxian-Jun or him, both of them yearned to bite and subdue Chu Wanning.

So what if he was patient? In the end, he was still Mo Ran.

It couldn't be changed. He couldn't escape.

When he had invaded him rudely just now, Mo Ran had been listening to the groans of pain coming from the person beneath him. It filled his mind with pleasure along with a strong sense of guilt.

He suddenly couldn't tell who he was, whether he was Taxian-Jun or Mo-zongshi, whether he was good or evil, loyal or evil.

Between the sheets, he caressed Chu Wanning's face and said the dirty words he had said… Concubine Chu?

Yes, in his previous life, he had done three things that were too excessive. One was to kill him, and the other was to use a killing move. The second insult was to force Chu Wanning to have sex with him.

Third, marry him. That is, taking his identity, trapping him for life, a jade falling to the underworld, all for him. Because of this selfish desire, he made that proud and upright cultivator his legal concubine.

Although in this world, not many people knew the true appearance of the "consort Chu" that year, it was an indisputable fact that he was forced to cover his face with a red veil and marry him in front of everyone's eyes.

He also did not know what the meaning of what he had done in the past was.

In fact, if he really wanted Chu Wanning to suffer, he could cause a huge commotion and let the whole world know that he had married his Shizun, and let everyone know that Immortal Elder Yuheng had become Taxian-Jun's.

Why not?

He even kept it a secret for a long time, so much so that even Empress Song Qiutong did not know who the mysterious 'consort Chu' was. He was vindictive, he made a fool of himself, and in the end he only acted out a play where there were no spectators.

But he sang it with relish.

Why?

He even remembered that after Chu Wanning died, he wanted to set up a monument for him, but was afraid that the whole world would see through him and laugh at him, so he could only hold onto a pick and dig a grave himself in front of the Heaven-Piercing Tower.

Emperor Taxian-Jun sat in front of the monolith. He rested his chin in his hands and thought for a very long time. He really wanted to write:

The Tomb of Chu Wanning

However, he felt that if he were to write it like this, he would end up in a miserable state. He would end up like a woman who had nothing but regrets. That scene was truly laughable.

After strolling around for a long time, his eyes finally lit up. He thought of a naughty and intimate way to go about it, and he laughed. Using his knife as a brush, he wrote it down one by one.

The Tomb of consort Chu

But he still felt that it was not enough. He thought of Chu Wanning, that aloof and serious person, who did not like to look directly at his face, and felt angry and coquettish in his heart — he would never see such an expression again, so the Emperor Taxian-Jun still had no way of saving his wife, so he viciously thought to himself.

Chu Wanning abandoned him and left.

Left him alone.

Chu Wanning was so determined to take revenge on him with his death.

Too much.

His eyes were red with resentment.

Yes, too much.

Therefore, he wanted to humiliate Chu Wanning and bully Chu Wanning. He wanted Chu Wanning to die with his eyes open, and when he went to hell in a hundred years, he could laugh and ridicule that guy. He wanted to tell this to the innocent man in white.

You didn’t win, I won.

Look, you’re dead, and I can still talk to you.

Emperor Taxian-Jun, holding the saber in his hand, thought for a long time. He thought of the sunset, the color of the sunset. He thought of the descending night, the shining of the silver hook.

Under the moonlight that was as white as ice and frost, Mo Ran finally made up his mind. With a stroke, he added another four words onto the tombstone:

Grave of the Steamed Consort Chu

The carvings were done. He held his cheeks and laughed, thinking to himself, “This is a perfect name, confirming that Chu Wanning is his man, whether he wants to or not, he has to be innocent and perfect.” It would be even better if Chu Wanning could be rejuvenated from his anger.

With such expectations in his eyes, he happily ran to the Red Lotus Pavilion.

Chu Wanning had the worst temper.

How could he be willing to suffer such humiliation?

So wake up quickly and fight him again after waking up. In terms of strength, seeing that his injuries had yet to recover, he could still give him a move.

If it really wasn’t possible, ten moves wouldn’t be out of the question.

Wake up.

He stood in front of the lotus pond and looked at the undamaged body inside.

I’ve already given you ten moves, you have to be tactful. Look at the monolith I’ve erected for you, aren’t you angry? Don’t you want to grab onto my clothes and shout at me? You were willing to clear your name, and ended up with those ridiculous words — “Grave of the Steamed Imperial Consort Chu”?

Wake up.

Wake up.

His expression changed from expressionless to savage.

But Chu Wanning just lay there, not saying a word or moving at all.

After a long time, Mo Ran finally understood that he had finally gotten what he wanted and won the obedience he had always wanted.

His Shizun, his enemy, his teasing companion in bed, his Chu Wanning.

He finally obeyed.

Within the icy cold silence of the cavern at Mount Longxue, Mo Ran held his scarred lover in his arms and didn’t say anything for a while.

Then, he suddenly thought of that rainy night in the inn in the Wuchang Town. The person in his embrace had once been so young and yet so passionate, rolling around with him. His ears were red, and he whispered to him, asking if he was feeling well.

At that time, he swore in his heart that he would never hurt Chu Wanning again in this life. He wanted to take things step by step and let the fire simmer slowly. He wanted to let Chu Wanning get used to it little by little.

He had made many plans and many thoughts.

He had even imagined countless times when and where their first true union would be, whether it would be under the light of the morning sun or the stars, and whether it would be an apricot blossom falling from the window.

But the only thing he did not expect was this.

For their first time in this life, their union was absurd, painful, and crazy.

Mo Ran laid beside him, a special feeling gradually appearing in his chest. It was as if there was something white violently trembling in his heart, and then the earth cracked and the sky collapsed. It was like a hundred-year-old tree had been uprooted, bringing with it a rustling sound.

That pure thing seemed to wrap itself around something dirty and terrifying in his heart. It struggled madly outwards, and a black and a white thing quickly broke free from his body.

He did not know what the two things that escaped from his heart were. He did not have the leisure to think about it, because Chu Wanning said, “You pull out first.”

Mo Ran did not say anything, nor did he know what to say.

Without saying a word, he endured the pain in his heart and slowly picked up the clothes scattered on the ground, silently helping Chu Wanning to put them back on.

These clothes took a long time to be worn because he almost didn’t dare to touch the place below Chu Wanning’s waist. The bruises on his thighs

were a clear indication of what he had just done and how much pain he was currently suffering.

He did not dare to look at Chu Wanning's face.

What could be in those eyes now?

Disappointment, resentment, emptiness……

He didn't want to think about it.

It took Mo Ran a while to get Chu Wanning's clothes on. At this time, his head was already hurting and his whole body was covered with cold sweat.

He did not know where this pain came from, but it was probably related to the two things that were missing in his heart. He endured the pain and held onto Chu Wanning's cold hands.

He really didn't have the courage to look at Chu Wanning's face, so he just stared at that hand. After hesitating for a long time, he asked softly, "Shizun, you remembered it already?"

"… Yes."

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment.

There was a kind of blankness on his face. It was like being a homeless abandoned dog. He just stared blankly for a while and then closed his eyes.

He had feared this matter countless times before, but when the judgement really came, he was surprised to discover that he was actually so calm and tranquil.

Like an anxious fugitive, he was finally taken to prison.

He stood in the miserable cell on the other side and looked around. The nightmare he had once feared and avoided had finally come true, and he felt as if a stone had fallen from his heart.

There was no peace during his escape.

After falling into the net, he finally had a good night's sleep.

There was no need to run anymore.

There was no hope, no apprehension.

He felt relieved.

"I'm in a mess right now, there are a lot of things… I'm not sure yet." Perhaps it was due to the intense shouting, or perhaps it was due to the tiredness of the past, but Chu Wanning's voice was hoarse and his expression was uglier than Mo Ran's, "It's too messy."

Mo Ran gathered up his courage and rubbed his pale cheeks.

Even though his own hands were shaking badly.

"Mo Ran…" He muttered to himself in an almost empty tone, "Taxian-Jun…"

"…"

He suddenly closed his eyes, his eyelashes trembled, and the space between his eyebrows became smooth.

"Then don't think about it. Let's sleep for a while." Mo Ran's eyes were red and his fingers ran across his face and hair. "I'll accompany you."

Chu Wanning seemed to tremble slightly.

Mo Ran felt an excruciating pain in his heart.

“Shizun, don’t be afraid. It’s me, not Taxian-Jun… I will never hurt you again. Never again.”

Chu Wanning lifted his eyelashes slightly. There was a glimmer of moisture under his dark eyelashes. For a moment, he felt like he wanted to say something to him.

However, the words did not come out in the end.

Chu Wanning closed his eyes, turning his face away at the last moment as his body subconsciously curled up.

“Shizun…”

“I have something to ask you.”

“…”

“… If… You had known earlier that the person who gave you a pot of rice milk outside the Wubei Temple was me.” Chu Wanning’s voice sounded exhausted, “… During those years at the Wushan Hall, would you have let me go?”

This question was like a sharp knife, piercing straight into the heart of the listener. Mo Ran trembled as he choked with sobs. He did not know how to reply, but he stretched out his hand to embrace the person in front of him. However, just as he touched his shoulder, he felt his shoulders tremble slightly.

He was crying.

However, Mo Ran knew that he no longer wanted to see it for himself.

After a while, Mo Ran could no longer hold on. Although he did not know why Chu Wanning had set up such a maze in his previous life, the peculiar feeling in his heart became more and more distinct.

At this moment, he suddenly discovered that there seemed to be a thin wisp of smoke drifting from his chest, drifting all the way to the back of Chu Wanning's chest. That thin wisp of smoke was too light that he did not notice it at all.

If one looked carefully, one would notice that the smoke was black in one moment and white in the next. It flowed endlessly from his heart into Chu Wanning's heart.

What are these?

He noticed that the black substance was being absorbed into the incense burner on the side as it converged into an ink-black substance.

What was it?

He wanted to remind Chu Wanning, but he found that he had fainted again. The huge amount of memories from his past life was unbearable, not to mention the fact that these memories were messy. They had to be reconstructed in Chu Wanning's mind.

"Shizun."

Pain… Why was it so painful? It was as if there were two forces in the heart doing the sawing. Black and white, pure and dirty.

Mo Ran frowned and struggled to his feet. He walked over to the smoker and shakily lifted the lid.

Before he lost consciousness, the last thing he saw was the black gas that was flowing out — it gradually condensed into the shape of a black heavy flower in the incense burner.

Ch. 244 [Mount Longxue] Snake

Guyue'ye.

The cultivators that had escaped from Mount Jiao had all pulled out the Heart Drilling Worm and bandaged their wounds under the treatment of the Medical Sect's disciples. However, the depressed atmosphere was hard to handle. The air was filled with a deathly heavy scent.

Xue Meng sat on the beach at Linling Island. He put the Longcheng scimitar on his leg and watched the tide rise and fall, moving up and down.

Suddenly, he heard footsteps behind him. He turned his head around, his eyes wide and full of hope. However, when he saw who it was, he immediately became disappointed and cast his gaze back at the vast sea.

Mei Hanxue sat down beside him.

"Your father received a message that he had to return to the Sisheng Peak. He left in a hurry and asked me to come over and tell you."

"…"

"Your father and you don't seem to be in a good mood."

"If you know, then scram."

Mei Hanxue didn't roll around and threw him a sheepskin flask. "Do you want to drink?"

Xue Meng angrily turned his head around, like a hedgehog with its needles erected. "Drink! I am not that corrupt!"

Mei Hanxue smiled. His golden hair looked especially gentle in the sea breeze. His eyes were like pale green jades, but also like two pools of green water, full of fragmented flowers.

“It’s just drinking, why did you decline?” Mei Hanxue raised his hand and stroked his hair, revealing a silver bell tied around his wrist. “I’ve heard that the Sisheng Peak is not for people to speak of, but it’s good enough to get drunk, right?”

“…”

“I’ve heard that Immortal Chu was in love with Pear Blossom White. You’re his disciple, so why can’t you learn half of his magnanimity?”

Xue Meng fiercely glared at him. He opened his mouth as if he wanted to curse something, but in the end, he did not curse anything. He grabbed the wineskin and untied it, drinking a large mouthful.

“So generous. This is the Taxue Palace’s wine, it tastes the most —”

“Pfft!” Young Master Xue spat out more than half of his mouthful in one go, his face green. “Cough! Cough! Cough! Cough! Cough!”

“…” Mei Hanxue pursed his lips as if surprised, “Can’t you drink?”

Xue Meng was embarrassed. He pushed away the hand that he was trying to take back the wineskin and gulped it down. This time, it was even more powerful. After swallowing it, he immediately turned his head and spat it out.

Mei Hanxue was momentarily at a loss as to what to do. “I didn’t know you… Forget it, let’s not drink anymore.”

“Scram!”

“Give me the jug.”

“Scram!” Xue Meng was anxious. He angrily glared at Mei Hanxue and said, “If you tell me to drink, I’ll drink. If you tell me to stop, I’ll stop. What about my face? Do I have any shame?”

As he said this, he slapped his own face. He was already feeling a little drunk.

There was a rumor on the Sisheng Peak: Chu-zongshi was not intoxicated from a thousand cups, and Young Master Xue was drunk from one cup.

Mei Hanxue was not living at the Sisheng Peak, so he naturally did not know these words. Even if he did, he would not pour wine on him.

After throwing up, Xue Meng drank from his wineskin. This time around, he gulped down four to five mouthfuls before he let out a deep breath. Immediately after that, his expression turned even uglier.

Mei Hanxue immediately retrieved the wineskin and said with a frown, “Stop drinking and go back to rest. You’ve already been alone by the sea breeze by yourself for a long time.”

However, Xue Meng stubbornly said, “I want to wait for someone to come back.”

“…”

“I… I…” Xue Meng’s eyes stared straight at him. After staring for a while, he suddenly cried, “You don’t understand, you don’t understand. I’ll wait for my brother, I’ll wait for my Shizun, I’ll wait for Shi Mei…… You know what?

Four people, it's not right to have one person missing. One person missing, it's not the same anymore…"

Mei Hanxue knew how to comfort a woman.

They just have to say a few words of their own, and under the moon, present flowers and swear an oath to each other. With the right method the heart is comforted.

But he had never comforted a man.

Xue Meng also did not need to be comforted. He had just held it in for a long time and finally broke through after drinking heavily. He only wanted to vent his anger.

"Of the four of them, I am the only one left, and now I am the only one left — I feel very bad. Damn, do you understand?!"

Mei Hanxue sighed. "I understand."

"You are a liar, what do you know?" While crying, Xue Meng suddenly lowered his head and wailed. He tightly hugged the Longcheng saber, as if he was holding the last dead tree and floating grass.

The swindler didn't know how to persuade her, so he said, "Alright then, I don't understand."

"Heartless dog, why don't you understand?!" There was no reason to argue with drunkards, so Xue Meng suddenly raised his face and fiercely stared at him. His teary eyes were filled with hatred as he said, "What don't you understand? Isn't it very easy to understand?"

He extended his finger and said, "Four!"

One off, one off, and when he removed the third he broke down again, as if the third finger were his tear gland, and Xue Meng said, “There’s one left, I’m the only one left. Do you understand?”

Mei Hanxue: “…”

He did not want to be a swindler, nor did he want to be a heartless dog. Therefore, he could not answer even if he knew or didn’t know. Thus, he simply did not speak.

Xue Meng stared at him for a while, then turned his head again. “Oh —!”

He was the most flirtatious Young Master Mei. In the past, other people would stare at his face like they were lovestruck, but this was the first time. After staring at him for a while, he actually threw up.

Mei Hanxue felt a slight headache. “What’s wrong with you? When I was young, I fed you fishy grass, you vomited. When I grow up, I’ll give you some Kunlun wine, and you’ll puke again. It’s really harder to serve you than a lady.”

He looked at the person who vomited until he could not even breathe. His pale green eyes were filled with helplessness: “Alright, finished with the scolding, finished with the vomiting, and will go back to rest. Whether it’s your brother, your Shizun, or your friends, none of them would like to see you like this.”

As he spoke, he stood up to support Xue Meng.

Xue Meng felt a little weak after spitting it out. His footsteps were floating, and he no longer attempted to struggle free from the arms of others.

Mei Hanxue had brought him from the long coast, entering through the back door of Guyue'ye's room, preparing to let him in to rest.

However, before he could enter the parlour, Mei Hanxue suddenly felt a strong killing intent spreading in the air.

He suddenly restrained Xue Meng, and the two of them immediately hid behind the corridor. Xue Meng was caught off guard and let out a "Ah!", but Mei Hanxue tightly covered his mouth.

"Don't say a word."

"Hand… Move your hand away… I… I feel like vomiting…" He could barely hear the humming sound.

Mei Hanxue said, "Swallow it."

Xue Meng, "…"

Afraid that this drunkard would cause trouble, Mei Hanxue put his hand on Xue Meng's lips and cast the Silencing Spell. Then, he turned his face to the side, his pupils turning as he looked into the parlour.

The scene in front of him gave him a shock.

Mo Ran?

At this time, most of the Sect Leaders and Elders had already returned to their respective sects. Mount Jiao had changed dramatically; they urgently needed to reinforce the barrier around their territory.

However, Guyue'ye still left behind quite a few injured cultivators, all gathered in the parlour, staring at the man standing in the center with a

face full of fear.

“Tsk tsk.” He squinted his eyes and looked around, “Look at these familiar faces, I didn’t think that after so many years, I would be able to see all of you standing here full of vitality.”

Someone gathered up his courage and shouted at him, “Mo, Mo Weiyu! What the heck are you doing! Were you stung by the Nightmare?!”

“Crazy?” Mo Ran’s lips slightly parted as he sneered, “Speaking to me like this, the one who’s going crazy is yourself.”

As soon as he finished his sentence, everyone saw a black light flash past. That person was stunned where he stood. Puff! Blood gushed out from his chest straight to the top of the sky.

“KILL, KILL!”

“What did you do, Mo Ran?!”

There was even someone who shouted with a heart wrenching voice, “Quick, go find Sect Leader Jiang! Quickly go and find Sect Leader Jiang!”

“Oh?” Mo Ran slowly lifted his eyes. “Sect Leader Jiang, is it Jiang Xi?”

“…”

“This person’s skill level is not bad. Among all the people I’ve killed, he can always rank in the top ten.”

“What the hell are you talking about?!”

Mei Hanxue also felt that something was amiss. This was not the Mo-zongshi he had seen before. This man was filled with resentment that

soared into the sky as his entire body exuded a baleful aura.

However, no matter how one looked at it, it looked exactly the same as Mo Ran, and its voice was also exactly the same — Who could completely imprint another person's appearance and voice in such a short period of time?

In the parlour, an elder of Guyue'ye said, "Mo-zongshi, I'm afraid that you have been cursed by the Devil Dragon Curse of Mount Jiao. Please sit down first and wait for this old man to examine your pulse…"

He was interrupted before he could finish his words.

"What do you mean?" Mo Ran narrowed his eyes, "Old fool, you beat around the bush and scold me, is there something wrong with you?"

The Elders: "…"

"Since you want to be cured so much, I'll help you. There are no patients in this world, so I understand the principle of starving to death and becoming a doctor." As he spoke, the black shadow plundered everything. In an instant, the entire hall was filled with screams as blood splattered in all directions.

When Mo Ran brushed his black robe and calmly returned to the center of the hall and stood on the dark red carpet, the entire hall was filled with arms that were missing, legs that were broken. Some people were even more miserable, having their hearts, lungs, and stomachs pulled out and dying abruptly.

Mo Ran looked at the elder who had fallen to the ground and said, "How is it? I have sent so many patients to be treated by you. Are you happy?"

“Mo… Mo Weiyu…”

“The opening ceremony is grand, I congratulate you on getting rich.” Mo Ran revealed a smile and then walked out of the group of corpses that were either rolling on the ground or dying with grievances. “Oh, right.”

When they were at the entrance of the hall, he turned his face sideways and said to them, “I almost forgot to tell you, the Upper Cultivation World has been waiting to die for hundreds of years. Remember to inform your Sect Leader that sooner or later, I will raze all the sects in the Upper Cultivation World to the ground.”

The person with a tough personality said hoarsely, “Mo Ran, you don’t have the balls! You only dare to come to the Flower Hall to treat heavily injured cultivators, you are basically afraid of meeting the other sect leaders!”

“Afraid of them?” Mo Ran narrowed his eyes. “Even if all of you join hands once again, the army will suppress the world. “As long as I don’t want to die, which one of you can hurt me?”

“Mo Ran, are you crazy?! Are you in cahoots with Hua Binan?! You, what exactly do you want to do?!”

Mo Ran’s dimples were deep and his eyes shone with a ghostly light. After a while, he slowly said, “… “You’re asking me what I want?”

A strange glow flashed across his handsome face. Then, he closed his eyes.

“Even I myself do not know what I want. In short, no one in this world can give it to me, and no one can coax me to be happy again.” He blandly said,

“I have been a walking corpse for so many years, I have already lost all my desire. However, if you have to ask one —”

He suddenly smiled.

Opening his eyes, his black pupils seemed to shine with a scarlet radiance.

“To watch you die.”

Everyone was stunned. Mo Ran’s eyes swept across the deathly pale faces, and he could no longer hold back his laughter. “It’s been a long time since I’ve seen such an interesting scene. It’s quite lively.”

“Mo Ran… You’re really crazy…”

“You’ve said this a second time.” Suddenly, his smile tightened as he heard an explosive sound! In the blink of an eye, Mo Ran had already appeared behind the man like lightning. His hand swatted down and instantly, brains were splattered everywhere!

“AHHHHHH!”

Amidst the screams, Mo Ran raised his bloody handsome face, revealing a pair of extremely strange and beastly eyes. He swept through the crowd like a sparrow dispersing.

“If I’m not crazy, I’m afraid I would have spoiled your plans.”

The head of the person he addressed as ‘Esteemed One’ shattered as blood dripped all over his face and face. Mo Ran didn’t even bother to look at him, as if he had eaten an extremely ordinary meal. He calmly and coldly looked around at everyone.

“Alright, I’ve already killed enough idiots today.” The corner of his mouth slowly curled up into a smile. He casually pushed the corpse aside and kicked it away, “As a human, killing the whole thing in one go is always boring. If I kill too many people, This Venerable one will be lonely again. I’ll let you live for a few days.”

After a pause, he continued, “When my hands get itchy again, then I’ll crush your head again to have fun?”

He slowly walked out of the hall, and when he reached the door, he cast a sidelong glance at them. “Before that happens, remember to keep your heads with you.”

After he had finished speaking, he broke into a loud laughter. After wrapping himself in his cloak, he suddenly swept across the edge of the ground, and his figure quickly disappeared behind the battle arch.

Three days later.

Inside the chamber of the Mount Longxue, Mo Ran and Chu Wanning were still unconscious due to the effects of the Incantation of Law. As for the censer, black smoke and blood suddenly gushed out, followed by a shrill scream that echoed within the cave.

Mo Ran suddenly opened his eyes and woke up.

There was no longer any pain in his heart, nor was there any injury. The mysterious smoke that had been between him and Chu Wanning was also gone.

“Shizun!”

He immediately stood up and saw that a third person had already entered the cave.

That person was standing in front of the stone table with his back facing him. He was carefully examining the censer that was emitting a burning smell. His figure was slender and handsome, an indescribably beautiful figure. He lifted the lid, and with one slender white hand, he took out a thousand odd flowers and held them in the palm of his hand.

“What a thorough destruction.” He softly said, and with the strength of his two fingers, he crushed the black flower into powder.

The person looked at the white light with his hands behind his back, feeling somewhat relieved, “Well, fortunately, when I first made this flower, a piece of my soul was also fused into it. If it wasn’t for that soul guiding me, it wouldn’t be so easy to find this cave in this vast world.”

The white light seemed to understand his words, slowly coiling around the man, but the color became fainter and fainter, eventually disappearing completely.

Mo Ran said hoarsely, “You are…”

Hearing the noise, the man put down the smoker and sighed. “You’re awake?”

“Who are you?”

That person lightly said, “Who else do you think I am?”

His voice sounded very familiar, but Mo Ran had just awoken. His consciousness was still somewhat dazed, as if he had just had a long dream, and he actually couldn’t react for a short while.

Who could this person be?

Listening to what he said just now, it seemed to be related to that mysterious black flower, refining the flower Soul Devouring Insect was Guyue'ye's greatest specialty. It was… Hua Binan?

When he thought of Hua Binan, he immediately thought of Shi Mei. Mo Ran felt a sudden surge of hatred, but before he could say anything, that person turned around.

The light in the cave was dim, but as the man turned around, the room was filled with light. He was truly beautiful.

The long hair that this man was used to letting loose was tied up high in the air. A cloth with fine embroidery was placed in front of his forehead. His appearance was very different. He no longer had a soft and weak temperament, but had a pair of peach blossom eyes that were bright and clear.

Such a beauty, yet he was as shocked as thunder. The two words came out like sharp arrows cutting through the dead silence:

"Shi Mei?!"

The one who came was Shi Mei… The one who came was actually Shi Mei!

This peerless beauty stroked his hair and said, "A-Ran, are you that surprised to see me?"

Blood rushed to his skull and his brain buzzed. Mo Ran was quivering so hard that his brain could not process what had happened. He had no idea why Shi Mei had suddenly appeared here and why he had such a strange expression on his face.

His entire body was frozen, all sorts of words stuck in his throat. In the end, he first hesitantly said a sentence: “… Your eyes…”

“I’m not injured.” Shi Mei smiled and walked towards Mo Ran, “I’ve come to meet the person I admire. If I’m blind and look bad, who would like me?”

“…”

Mo Ran slowly recovered from his playful demeanor and was unable to speak for a while. He was shocked as if a black cloud was pressing down on the city and his mind went blank.

“You… How could it be you… Where’s the Cold Scale Sacred Hand?!”

The anger in his heart suddenly surged.

At this moment, Mo Ran finally understood the feeling Xue Meng had in his previous life. There was nothing more painful than being betrayed and plotted by an old friend one day.

“Where is the Cold Scale Sacred Hand?!”

“Oh, him There’s still a long way to go, so there’s no rush to explain.”

As he spoke, he moved forward step by step until he was right next to Mo Ran.

Shi Mei laughed: “Compared to talking about the Cold Scale Sacred Hand, after going through such a huge upheaval, I still want to talk about my heart with the person I love.”

Mo Ran was both angry and cold at the same time, his face grew increasingly livid. “What is there to talk about between you and me?”

The handsome and cultured man chuckled, “Hm?” The corners of his eyes were soft like the glow of smoke as he stared at Mo Ran’s face, “… You and I have a repulsive nature, so we really don’t have much to talk about.”

As he spoke, he walked past Mo Ran until he was right in front of Chu Wanning. Before Mo Ran could react, Shi Mei gently reached out a slender hand, lowered his head and touched Chu Wanning’s face.

“…” Mo Ran’s mind was blank, but he still did not understand what he was doing.

Shi Mei stared at Chu Wanning and spoke softly as if no one was around, “Shizun, that boorish fellow hurt you, right? What a pity… But then again, are you going to recover your memories?”

Pointing his scallion like fingertip at the lower lip of the sleeping person, Shi Mei squinted his eyes. His beauty was still the same, but it was like poison.

“It’s good to recover my memories. Some of the things that you did before, I still can’t figure out. If you wake up, we can still learn from each other.”

He paused for a moment before continuing with a smile, “In your previous life, you calculated everything using all of your abilities, hiding things from the world, and bullied your disciple to such an extent. If it was someone else, even if they were to torment me like this, dying a hundred times wouldn’t be enough. But if you go against me, I’ll still love you and love you.”

As he spoke, he glanced at Mo Ran, then leaned over to kiss Chu Wanning on the cheek. He lowered his eyes and sighed, “Who told me to like you. My good Shizun.”

Ch. 245 [Mount Longxue] Rival

“…”

It was as if a thunderbolt had struck the sky as it froze in place.

Unbelievable… Unbelievable… What was Shi Mei talking about? What was Shi Mei doing?! What, what was going on?

Mo Ran was unable to swallow this shock. He didn’t even feel like Shi Mei was kissing Chu Wanning. This scene was too horrifying that he thought he was hallucinating when he saw it with his own eyes.

He covered his forehead with his hands as his temples throbbed. In his mind, he could only see the warm smile from when he was a teenager. He gently called out, “A-Ran.”

But the person in front of him… He actually… Unexpectedly…

His hair stood on end.

Shi Mei likes… Shizun?

How is this possible?!

Shi Mei had never shown any signs of liking his Shizun. To say that Xue Meng liked Chu Wanning was more convincing than Shi Mei liked Chu Wanning. How could Shi Mei like him? He had always been cautious and respectful, and he had rarely spoken.

He didn’t even stick to his Shizun.

After the lesson, he would just leave like that…

How is this possible?

Shi Mei straightened his body, narrowed his eyes, looked at Mo Ran, and chuckled: “It seems like there is someone here who was frightened by me?”

“You… It was simply… Ridiculous…”

“Ridiculous?” Shi Mei continued, “My junior brother, what is so absurd? The person who bullied Shizun to such a miserable state, could it be me?”

Mo Ran’s face suddenly turned red. His eyes were filled with anger and confusion.

If anyone else were to appear here, he would have reprimanded them. However, the person standing here was no other than the person he had mistakenly thought to be in love with for two lifetimes, Shi Mingjing.

For a moment he was speechless.

On the other hand, Shi Mei was much more thick-skinned than before, and said lightly: “However…”

“It’s not like there are none of the nonsense I’ve done. For example, pretending to like you, treating you well for so many years, even going through such a damned interrogation, forcing himself to endure the pain, lying to you… I like you.”

Pausing, a hint of ridicule appeared in his eyes. “Stop fooling around. If I were to fall in love with a person like you who has nothing better than your face, I could really die just by poking my eyes.”

Mo Ran: “…”

“Why aren’t you saying anything? Are you unconvinced?” Even if he was sneering, his poise was still extremely beautiful. He squinted his eyes, then went to touch his chin.

Mo Ran burned with fury, about to summon Jiangui.

However, there was only a scarlet flash from his palm and the spiritual flow immediately disappeared.

Shi Mei didn’t even bother to look up as he said, “Don’t waste your energy. In your previous life, Wanning set up this trap and used half of his soul to pull out the Gu Flower for you. You will no longer be under control, but your body will need at least ten days to recover. If you want to fight with me now, you have to fight with an egg against a rock.”

“Who are you calling Wanning!”

“You’re such an unreasonable person. Don’t tell me that you’re the only one who can bully your Shizun and destroy our ancestors, while not allowing me to love and love your Shizun?”

“You-!”

“You’ve already tasted it countless times.” Shi Mei chuckled, “It should be my turn, right? fuck, I’m actually feeling a bit wronged. But seeing that it’s him, I have to endure it.”

Mo Ran was enraged to the extreme. He did not have a divine might, but he was able to engage in close combat.

“Sigh… That’s why I said, what I hate the most are people like you who don’t even know how to fight.” Shi Mei let go of Chu Wanning and started fighting with Mo Ran in the stone chamber.

The cave was dark, and the two tall men's figures were thrown against the wall. They were like two dragons soaring through the clouds, entangling each other in a fierce battle. Flames surged within them.

Shi Mei was not good at offense, so no matter how much of an opponent he was in close combat, he was not a match for Mo Ran. Seeing that things were not going well, he waved his sleeves, and a rolling spirit snake appeared, locking onto Mo Ran. He took the opportunity to rush to the side, lifted Chu Wanning up in his arms and flew out of the cave.

"Shizun!"

Mo Ran barely managed to shake off the cold, sticky snakes and followed closely behind. However, he saw that Shi Mei was standing on top of a tree branch with a bright moon shining behind him.

Shi Mei laughed: "Stop chasing. You just recovered. Even if you throw away your life, you won't be able to catch up to me."

"Why do you… Why are you doing this?"

"Mo Ran." Shi Mei smiled, "Did I tell you that I hate Shi Mei and Shi Mingjing?"

"…"

"So if you don't mind, you can call me by my real name from now on."

"… What?"

"My surname is Hua and I have no courtesy name. My given name is Binan."

Hua Binan!?

Seeing Mo Ran's eyes widen, Shi Mei laughed even more brightly, "That's right, on account of the fact that we are juniors, I have a very important piece of news for you — Don't go to Guyue'ye, you will be torn to pieces by Jiang Xi if you go to Guyue'ye now. Don't try to follow me anymore. Be good and return to Sisheng Peak as soon as possible."

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment before his face turned pale white, "What do you want to do with the Sisheng Peak?!"

"You're not stupid in this life." Shi Mei smiled, "Senior Brother gave you a small surprise, you'll know when you get there."

He was not even sure if he was more sad or angry at this moment, and he shouted sternly: "Shi Mei, what exactly do you want to do?! What the hell are you doing?! Didn't you tell me that the Sisheng Peak is your home? You're not the one who told me. Your uncle saved you from exile… Didn't you tell me that the most important person to you is us?!"

In the end, his voice trembled as his fingers clenched into a fist.

"… Are you lying to me? "Could it be that after so many years, after two lifetimes —" Mo Ran stopped abruptly.

A bone-piercing coldness.

"Could it be that for two lifetimes… It's all because of your scheme?!"

Shi Mei didn't make a sound. He was wearing a wide robe and big sleeves. He was floating on top of a tree, smiling at him. The peach blossom eyes curved, the jaw was sharp, and in the dense fog of the mountain, it was like a midnight fox.

“You…” Every word quivered between his teeth.

Mo Ran’s mind was in a mess. His gaze was crazed.

“Shi Mei, say something…”

From that year by the candlestick gently exhort, to the later companion, inseparable.

“Say something!”

From the elegant, jade-like youth to the later Seamless Heavenly Rift, lying in his arms in the snow, telling himself, don’t hold grudges, don’t blame Shizun.

Mo Ran was about to burn up to pieces. “You clearly died… I saw it with my own eyes. I was the one who brought your body back to the Sisheng Peak… It is impossible for you to be Shi Mei… You. How is this possible…”

“Because you’re stupid.”

A clear and elegant voice rang out. Shi Mei finally opened his mouth, but it was filled with mockery.

“You bunch of boorish fellows only know how to cultivate your spirit cores and look down on the Medical Sect. Be it you or the Sect Leader… Even our wise Shizun.” When he said this, he laughed, “The preface is wrong. Shizun is not a boor. However, people like you all are people who don’t like medicine Gu.”

Mo Ran muttered, “Medicinal Gu…”

“It’s hard to keep a dead man alive. But I have a lot of ways to fake the death of a living person.”

If Mo Ran was clear-headed, he would have been able to hear the flaws in Shi Mei’s words.

Even if using medicine could fake the death of a living person, in his previous life he had been inside the Frosty Heaven Palace for seven days and then watched Shi Mei die with his own eyes. At that time, the coffin was on the third floor. Layers of Longevity Nail were sealed, and the sealing soil was even thicker. Without alerting the mausoleum watchers, who would come out of such a tomb alive?

As a result, there were only two possibilities: Firstly, Shi Mei was lying. Secondly, in his previous life, there had been a person who had sneaked into the tomb area at the Sisheng Peak, opened the coffin and the cover, and let out the fake corpse inside…

However, Mo Ran’s entire body was in a mess. With an invisible hand, his internal organs, spleen and stomach had all been turned into the wrong place. He did not have the heart to think too much about it, and upon hearing what Shi Mei had said, the pale and bloodless face in his memory suddenly appeared before his eyes.

In the midst of the falling snow, Shi Mingjing died. From then on, he hated himself for being powerless, hated Chu Wanning for not doing anything, stepped into the abyss and fell into darkness…

But who knew!

Fake… It was actually fake!

He had actually gone crazy for half a lifetime for a person who faked his death, was obsessed with it for half a lifetime, killed all of the people in the world, and ultimately caused the death of the man who loved him the most in this world.

Ridiculous.

Ridiculous!

His anger and pain had caused his scalp to go numb, his pupils had constricted, and he said in an almost tyrannical manner: “You… How can you actually feel at ease!”

“My heart is at ease. What about you, Taxian-Jun?”

“…”

As soon as the four words left his mouth, it was as if he had pinched seven inches.

“Whatever the reason for your holding the butcher’s knife. It’s fine if it’s hatred or unwillingness, but your hands are already stained with blood.”

As he spoke, he held the unconscious Chu Wanning even tighter, as if he was showing off his spoils of war.

“Taxian-Jun whose hands are covered in blood, how can he be together with the impeccable Immortal Elder Yuheng?”

The last trace of blood on Mo Ran’s face faded.

However, Shi Mei knew his weakness very well. He brandished his scorpion pincers and continuously stabbed the venom into his opponent’s body. He

narrowed his eyes and pressed on.

“Are you worthy?”

“Don’t you think you’re dirty?”

“You’re stealing.”

The wind blew and the mist dispersed. A bright moon peeked out from behind the clouds.

He cut straight to the point, “Taxian-Jun, all your days with him were stolen. You yourself know what kind of trash you are, so you don’t need me to mention it.”

Mo Ran’s lips were white. He was angry, sad, afraid, and full of remorse and hatred. No one would be able to accept such an emotion without going insane.

“I…”

“Don’t bother.” Shi Mei let out a long sigh, “What about you? Do you really think that after half a lifetime as a Mo-zongshi, saving a few lives, you will be able to erase all of your sins?”

He looked at Mo Ran’s face and chuckled. “You’re thinking too ideally.”

Mo Ran had misspoken.

“Now, Shizun already has the memories of his previous life. All of the ridiculous things you did, the people you killed, the cities you slaughtered, and the ancestors you bullied — you hurt his heart. He will remember them all. All will come back to you.” He paused for a moment, and seemed

to be examining the expression on Mo Ran's face with great interest. Then, with a satisfied smile, he said, "Mo-zongshi, it's time to lower your head. You have to admit your mistake."

Keep your head down.

Plead guilty.

His life was ridiculous, and he was extremely poor and cruel. It was all wrong.

Mo Ran's throat rolled, his eyes were red, staring at the man in the treetop, but when his eyes came in contact with Chu Wanning who was in his arms, he could not help but feel pain, his vision was shrivelled and curled up like cattails.

He jerked his head away.

"Think about it. When he wakes up and knows that you've lied to him for so long, how angry will he be?" Shi Mei gently caressed Chu Wanning's face. His slender fingers slid across his lips, "Shizun's strong personality. You know that. Do you think he will forgive you?"

The one who spoke pierced the vital part, while the one who listened felt as if he had fallen into a cave of ice.

Forgive.

He had never asked for it, but he had never wanted it to happen. He had never dared to imagine it would happen.

Mo Ran closed his eyes, his eyelashes trembling.

Shi Mei voice sounded ethereal and serene in the Misty Sky Mountain, as if it was a divine Buddha advising people to turn back their heads in the Sea of Bitterness: “Don’t chase me anymore, go back to the Sisheng Peak. When you get there, you’ll know what surprise I’m talking about.”

The sound echoed in the air.

“Just accept the surprise and don’t resist.” Pausing for a moment, he seemed to have thought of something. His eyes shifted as he stared at the person under the tree.

“Besides, A-Ran, we are completely different people after all. You can’t understand what I want.” He spoke warmly, as if he had been asked in the disciple’s room whether it was delicious to copy and if there was enough chili oil, “I am not as crazy as you are. I would not want to frame a close friend or family member easily. But…”

He changed the subject, but didn’t say much.

Mo Ran turned his head abruptly, “What do you want?!”

Seeing his gaze sweeping over Chu Wanning, Shi Mei couldn’t help but smile, “Don’t worry. With Shizun here, I will only love him and not hurt him. Since he is such a pure white person, naturally, I know how to take pity on him more than you…”

Every accent was soaked until it was soft between the lips before it was lightly spat out.

Mo Ran trembled from the excitement. If he still had his spiritual energy, then Shi Mei would have been torn to shreds by him long ago.

However, he did not have any Spiritual Qi, and Shi Mei had also calculated that he did not have any Spiritual Energy at the moment, which was why he was willing to do whatever he wanted.

Shi Mei chuckled: “But the fellow disciples at the Sisheng Peak, or even uncles, aunts…… There’s also the Young Lord.” His eyes moved around and he slowly finished what he was saying, “If you don’t handle that surprise well, they will die a second time. Look, if Shizun wakes up and finds out that you’ve once again hurt everyone, that you’re selfish, and that you’re living a life without doing anything — will he even look at you one last time?”

Ch. 246 [Mount Longxue] Binding

Mo Ran gritted his teeth to the point that they were about to shatter. His eyes were bloodshot. “Shi Mingjing!”

With a flick of his sleeve, the Moon Shadow caused his robes to flutter.

He stood on top of the trees, turned his face, and said with a beautiful face, “Go, if you don’t leave now, Shizun will wake up. If he wakes up and sees us standing here arguing, I’m afraid he won’t be happy.”

After pausing for a moment, he smiled and added, “That’s right, A-Ran. The next time we meet, remember to call me Hua Binan or shigong - if there is ever a next time.”

After he finished speaking, he jumped into the air. With a light step, he disappeared into the dense forest of the Mount Longxue, and his figure could no longer be seen. Only the pleasant yet cold laughter remained, like a spider’s web descending, suffused with a ghostly light, lingering for a long time.

“Shi Mei! — Shi Mingjing!”

Under the cover of the mountain mist, Shi Mei didn’t turn around to look at Mo Ran. Instead, he carried the person in his arms and quickly flew over the cliff. His cloak fluttered in the wind and his clothes flapped.

His heart was filled with an indescribable joy as his eyes lit up. He was like a hunter returning home full of harvest. However, when he was flying at a low altitude, he suddenly heard the person in his embrace call out hoarsely because of the nightmare from his previous life, “Mo Ran…”

The happy expression on Shi Mei's face froze for a moment, and then he squinted his eyes. His eyes turned cold and angry.

"… What's so good about him that's worth you doing something for him?"

However, Chu Wanning could not hear him. He had a high fever, and his handsome face was as white as a frozen lake. He could even see some light green blood vessels underneath.

Chu Wanning said softly, "Mo Ran…"

Shi Mei stopped in his tracks. It seemed that he had been enduring for too long and was impatient. However, he hesitated for a moment and then restrained himself.

In front of the unconscious Chu Wanning, he was not as relaxed as he was in front of Mo Ran. He stared at his face for a while and said, "Stop thinking about it. Just follow me from now on."

Pausing for a moment, he continued, "But I know that you owe him a great favor. If you can't forget him for a while, it doesn't matter. When I have accomplished my task, I will have enough energy to slowly wear you down."

After saying this, he once again flew into the air. Summoning his sword in midair, he flew straight in the direction of the Mount Jiao Hero Tomb.

It was late at night, and the burial ground of Rufeng Sect was quiet. Moonlight shone on one grave after another. Those that had been made into pieces by Xu Shuanglin earlier could no longer move due to the loss of their spiritual force circulation. They could only poke at their own positions blankly, not moving at all.

Shi Mei used the stored blood of the Nangong Clan to open the gate. He turned his eyes and saw Nangong Liu standing blankly at the foot of the mountain.

Nangong Liu could not be considered a complete chess piece. He was only half finished and still had a bit of his Essence. However, this person had completely lost his mind. His brain was only that of a five-year-old child, so Shi Mei didn't have the leisure to kill him. Moreover, he could at least be of some use to him.

"My dear brother, you're back." When Nangong Liu saw him, he smiled. His slightly plump face was filled with sincerity.

Xu Shuanglin had once considered Shi Mingjing to be his best friend, so Nangong Liu had also called him his best friend, his big brother.

This form of address caused Shi Mei to pause for a moment. He then narrowed his eyes and said, "Don't randomly call me that."

"Ahh…" Nangong Liu looked at him blankly, "You don't like me to call you that?"

"No, just call me Hua Binan," Shi Mei said with a gloomy face, "Go, walk forward and open a path for me."

"Where are we going, dear friend?"

"…" There was nothing to argue about with someone who was only five years old, "Take me to the secret room where Xu Shuanglin used to stay."

Nangong Liu would bring him right away.

In fact, that secret chamber was not a secret to Shi Mei, but it required too much of the Nangong Family's fresh blood along the way. Although he had stored it, he still carried Chu Wanning in his arms.

After they walked for a distance, Nangong Liu suddenly turned around. As if he couldn't hold back his curiosity, he asked, "Is my dear friend big brother bringing friends to spend the night with you?"

"Overnight?" Shi Mei seemed to have been pleased by these two words. His eyebrows relaxed and he smiled, "Pretty much. Just like that. But he's going to stay here for a lot of nights. He should be staying for a long time."

Nangong Liu became even more curious, "Who is he?"

Shi Mei thought for a moment and suddenly laughed: "You really want to know? I'm afraid children mustn't know."

Nangong Liu opened his eyes wide. This middle-aged man's face had the look of a child. It was both disgusting and funny.

They walked all the way to the door of the chamber, which was open and lit by a lamp. The interior of the room was quiet and concise. There was only a single bed, covered with the thick skin of a saber-toothed tiger, covered with a snow-white veil. There was a small table next to the bed, with a handful of brocades. The walls were empty, and there was nothing else.

Shi Mei put Chu Wanning on the bed while he sat by the side of the bed, staring at his face. The candle flame was very bright, illuminating that familiar face.

When he woke up, his sword-like eyebrows were in his temples, and his phoenix-like eyes were filled with vigor.

At this moment, his face was haggard, and the line that was drawn down to his lower jaw looked like it was the end of a cigarette…

Shi Mei didn't care. He only felt that after two lifetimes, both Chu Wanning and Mo Ran were defeated by him. At this moment, Chu Wanning was lying beside him. Mo Ran's Spiritual Energy was temporarily lost and he would soon obediently walk into his trap. His plan was finally coming true.

Just as he was looking at the spirit, he suddenly heard Nangong Liu come over and say, "Huh? This person looks really familiar."

Shi Mei cast a sidelong glance at him: "Do you remember who he is?"

"I can't remember."

"This brother has reprimanded you before, and embarrassed you before."

"Eh? Where is it?"

"In the main hall of the Rufeng sect."

Nangong Liu said in a daze, "Ah, really?… But how come I don't remember anything at all?"

Shi Mei was silent for a moment. Then, he smiled gently: "you just don't remember."

Nangong Liu did not know what he meant by that. He tilted his head and looked at Chu Wanning for a bit before suddenly saying, "But he looks really good. He looks pretty with his eyes closed and without a smile."

“He’s the favorite concubine of Emperor Taxian-Jun. Do you think he’ll look bad?”

“Pet Consort… What does that mean?”

The smile in Shi Mei’s eyes became even more pronounced, “You’ll know when you grow up. Now, you go get me some oranges and heat up some hot water. He has such a bad temper. If he doesn’t have some good food to serve after he wakes up, he would probably be even more angry.”

Nangong Liu prepared to go.

But when he reached the door, he hesitated. Seeing that, Shi Mei asked him: “What’s wrong?”

“Tangerine…” Nangong Liu bit his finger and asked hesitantly, “Do you know when His Majesty will return?”

The ‘Emperor’ he spoke of referred to Xu Shuanglin.

Of course, Shi Mei would not tell Nangong Liu that Xu Shuanglin was dead. He smiled and said, “Be good and listen to me and do things properly. His Majesty will be back soon.”

Nangong Liu’s eyes lit up. He immediately picked up the small bamboo basket that was placed beside the door and went out to pick the tangerines.

The Shi Mei looked at the direction he left in and laughed, “Interesting. When he was in his right mind, his brothers had lost their mental faculties. Instead, they had become more respectful… Indeed, there are many things in this world that are the cleanest when you are young. Once you grow up, you will become dirty once you start scheming and arguing.”

As he spoke, he turned around and caressed Chu Wanning's cheeks.

"Look, most people in the cultivation world are people like him. They aren't worthy of your protection." As he traced his fingertips across that handsome face, Shi Mei sighed and said, "Why do you have to spend so much effort, cut off your soul, tear through time and space, and endure all kinds of humiliation just for these people… Fighting with me for two lifetimes?"

Naturally, the sleeping Chu Wanning would not answer him.

His past life had been filled with pain and nightmares that had tormented him, making his cheeks feel hot and his brow knit tightly together. After staring at it for a while, he took out a silver bottle filled with Tapir Fragrance dew from his Qiankun bag.

"This is for you to drink. I know that you will definitely dream of the events of your previous life. Back then, when they were at Xuanyuan Pavilion, I knew that you would be here, so I asked them to take Tapir Fragrance dew to sell… I wanted to make you feel better, but I didn't want to arouse suspicion. So you see, it's better to follow me than to be with Mo Ran? As long as you make me happy, I can give you a taste of this worthless thing every day. But what can he give you, he can only fight."

The fragrant dew was poured into a small white porcelain cup, close to Chu Wanning's lips.

After feeding him the medicine, he stared blankly at his hard-earned victory for a while. Suddenly, he thought of something and his eyes lit up. He rummaged through his Qiankun bag and finally found a pitch-black silk

ribbon. He placed the silk ribbon over Chu Wanning's eyelids and cast a Congealing Spell, completely covering his eyes.

After doing all this, he slowly got up and pinched Chu Wanning's chin to size him up. He was very satisfied with the result.

"Yes, it is indeed beautiful. No wonder Mo Ran liked to tie you up like this in his previous life. It's not bad to learn from him occasionally. At least he's a bit interesting in this area."

His smile had always been very gentle, no different from before. His fingertips slowly caressed Chu Wanning's chin, lips, and nose. Finally, they landed on the black silk belt that covered his eyes.

He said in that soft voice that made people shudder, "Shizun, wake up quickly. Me… I just thought of a very interesting trick. When you wake up, why don't we play it together?"

Ch. 247 [Mount Longxue] Hongyan

Chu Wanning lay on the bed, his mind was in a daze. His consciousness was sometimes clear, and sometimes blurry.

In a trance, he seemed to hear two people quarreling. It seemed to be Shi Mei and Mo Ran, but the sounds of their quarreling disappeared and the only sound that could be heard was the whistling of the wind.

Later on, it was as if he was lying on a warm quilt. Someone was talking to him, and the sound of breaking flesh seemed to come from a distance. He couldn't hear it clearly, but he would occasionally hear a few words, such as 'past life' or 'past life'.

What Shi Mei — He vaguely felt that this was the voice of Shi Mei, but he did not have much energy to digest it. The words quickly dispersed like the morning mist.

His memories were slowly becoming complete, gradually becoming clearer. The memories of his past life were like rainwater that had flowed into a river, finally rushing towards the sea.

The first thing he dreamed of was a serene corridor, built on the Sisheng Peak in a Red Lotus Pavilion, covered with vines and flowers, the wind blowing the snow down, the paper filled with flowers.

He was sitting on the porch, writing a letter at a stone table.

It was impossible to send the letter out. Taxian-Jun didn't allow him to interact with outsiders, nor did he allow him to raise pigeons or any other

animals. Even outside the Red Lotus Pavilion, countless hissing forbidden spells were placed on top of each other.

However, Chu Wanning still wrote.

It was so lonely. If he was alone, he would be able to live his entire life like this.

It would be a lie to say that he wasn't bored.

The letter was written to Xue Meng, but there was nothing much to ask about. It was simply a question of how things had been recently, if everything was going well, if the sun, moon, and people outside were all right.

However, there were actually no old friends.

Thus, a letter was slowly written all afternoon without much content. When he finished writing, he was slightly lost in thought. He absentmindedly recalled the days when his three young disciples were by his side, when he had taught them how to draw and write poetry.

Xue Meng and Shi Mei both learned very quickly. Only Mo Ran failed to write a word three or four times. He had to teach him personally.

What was written then?

Chu Wanning was in a daze as the brush and ink slowly spread out on the paper.

He first wrote, "the body is a Bodhi tree, the heart is like a mirror," and then he wrote, "Life has no roots, floating like a stranger in the dust", a single stroke, the work was complete.

Be it writing a book or writing a letter, his calligraphy was always clear and correct. He was afraid that those who read could not understand it, or their disciples would follow his example and learn to read the wrong words.

The words were appropriate, and the spine was extremely proud.

He wrote “Where is the Old Friend” and “The Great Sea and the Mountain”.

Later on, the wind blew the purple rattan flowers down and settled them on the note. He couldn’t bear to part with it, so as he watched the light and magnificent purple, he wrote, “Waking up from the dream to see the drizzle, the rivers and mountains still seem old and gentle.”

It was very normal.

May I be like the moon and the stars, and the light of the night.

As he continued to write, his gaze couldn’t help but soften, as if he had returned to those peaceful days back then.

The wind had picked up, blowing the paper over and over. There were those that had not been pressed down by the paperweight that were blown up, scattering all over the place in the dappled and fragrant afternoon sunlight.

Chu Wanning put down his brush, sighed, and went to pick up the letters and poems.

One by one, they fell onto the grass, the stone steps, and the withered leaves. He was about to pick up a piece of paper that was floating in the fragrance of a falling flower.

Suddenly, a slender and shapely hand with distinct joints appeared in his field of vision, picking up that piece of paper before him.

“What are you writing?”

Chu Wanning was stunned. He straightened his body and saw a tall and handsome man standing in front of him. It was Taxian-Jun, Mo Weiyu who had arrived at the pavilion some time ago.

Chu Wanning said, “… Nothing.”

Mo Ran was dressed in a black Jinhua robe and wore a crown on his head. His pale and narrow fingers were also adorned with a Dragon Scale Ring. It was obvious that he had just returned from the imperial court. He first shot a cold glance at Chu Wanning, then shook the paper and read it twice. His eyes narrowed as he said, “I’ve written a letter, it’s a letter for you…”

After a moment of silence, he raised his eyes. “What does that mean?”

“Nothing.”

Chu Wanning wanted to take the letter back, but Mo Ran blocked his with his hand.

“Don’t. What are you nervous about?” After saying this, he carefully looked down again. His gaze swept across several lines as he calmly said, “Oh. To Xue Meng?”

“It was written casually.” Chu Wan didn’t want to implicate anyone, so he said, “I don’t plan to send it out.”

Mo Ran sneered, “You don’t have the ability to reach the heavens to send it out.”

Chu Wanning had nothing else to say to him, so he turned around and went back to the table to clear up the ink and paper. However, Taxian-Jun had followed along. His black and gold robes fluttered as he pressed down on the piece of paper that he was about to put away.

He raised his phoenix eyes and looked at Taxian-Jun's mischievous face.

"…"

Forget it, if he wanted it, he would give it to him.

He withdrew his hand and reached for the other one, only to be caught by Mo Ran.

Just like that, he took one, and with the help of Mo Ran, Chu Wanning finally lost his patience. He did not know why this person was so mad, but he opened his eyes and said gloomily, "What do you want to do?"

"What do you mean by 'seeing your letter is as good as seeing you'?" Mo Ran looked at him with a deep and serene gaze, his thin lips slightly parted, "Speak."

The flowers and leaves rustled, and in the midst of the mottled light and shadow, Chu Wanning couldn't help but think back to how he had just become his disciple, Mo Ran. His smile and words were very gentle as he respectfully smiled and asked, "Shizun, you are a Bodhi tree, and your heart is as clear as a mirror, what does that mean? Shizun, can you teach me?"

When the two of them compared themselves, Chu Wanning felt pain in his heart when he saw how aggressive Taxian-Jun was. He lowered his head suddenly and stopped talking. He then closed his eyes.

Without a word, Mo Ran began to grow gloomy. In this silence, he picked up the letter on the table and read it one by one. The further he read, the more dangerous his eyes became. He murmured thoughtfully, and a man who could make the year number “Halberd” looked around the stone table for a sentence and racked his brains.

In the end, with a malicious expression, he suddenly slapped the stack of letters to the ground.

He looked up coldly.

“Chu Wanning, you miss him.”

“… No.”

He didn’t want to waste time with him and turned around to leave. However, before he could take two steps, his sleeve was pulled back and a violent force grabbed his chin. In the time it took for the world to spin, he was suddenly pushed onto the stone table.

The strength of Mo Ran hand was so great and so fierce. In the blink of an eye, it had already left a purple and green mark on his cheek.

Sunlight shone through the vines, shining into Chu Wanning’s eyes, which reflected the somewhat crazed and distorted face of Taxian-Jun.

Handsome, pale.

The word ‘shameless’ caused the world to tear at Chu Wanning’s clothes. If there was another possibility for him to push him down on the stone table, then there would be no way for them to return to the world after tearing his clothes. Chu Wanning almost flew into a rage out of embarrassment. He shouted in a low voice, “Mo Weiyu!”

The tone filled with anger and disappointment did not extinguish the evil fire ignited by Mo Ran, but instead, like hot oil pouring down, it created a dense torrent of flames.

When he suddenly pushed in, Chu Wanning only felt extreme pain.

He didn't want to touch Mo Ran's back, so he just grabbed the edge of the stone table with his backhand while panting heavily, "Evil beast…"

Mo Ran eyes were covered with a layer of blood aura, but he did not judge the word evil beast, and instead said sinisterly: "You don't have to explain. I really shouldn't ask you again. You can no longer be considered my Shizun."

His movements were fierce and ferocious, seeking only his own pleasure. Chu Wanning, on the other hand, felt as if he had been struck by grass.

"What is it now?" He gritted his teeth and said, "you're just a side concubine, a forbidden mistress… spreading your legs for me."

As they fought, Mo Ran turned him over. The ink and paper on the table were all disorderly from being beaten, and the brush fell to the ground. Chu Wanning was pinned to the side of the table by his hands. He was in endless pain as the world before his eyes became vast and limitless.

He looked at that line of words, at the strokes.

His body was like a Bodhi tree, and his heart was as clear as a mirror…

Where was the old friend?

The sea was vast… Far away in the mountains.

Every word struck the heart.

In front of him was the smile of a teenager Mo Ran, the black curtain of his eyelashes gently quivering like a black butterfly.

On the back of his ears was the sound of Taxian-Jun. He was insulting Chu Wanning as he said in a hoarse voice, “Chu Wanning… Heh, my consort Chu is actually thinking about others?”

“What wish? I’m like the moon or the stars. I shine brightly every night. Do you really think I don’t understand at all?”

Chu Wanning gritted his teeth and laid himself on the stone table. Those who were bitten and pinched were all wet red marks, but his eyes were stubborn, “You don’t understand.”

Even though he knew that speaking out against others would result in a more vicious treatment, he still stubbornly said, “You don’t understand.”

You don’t know who your old friends are, and you don’t know why the vast sea and the distant mountains are like that.

You don’t know who the Emperor is or who the moon means.

You. You wouldn’t understand.

After a long moment of absurdity, Mo Ran finally let him go.

Chu Wanning’s clothes were in disarray. He was lying in the middle of the Violet Vine, in the middle of the poems and ink. There were red marks on the corners of his eyes, like rouge on his fingers when it was squeezed off.

His lips were bitten and covered in blood.

He got up and slowly dressed. He had been under house arrest for so long, from the first time he had his heart pierced and his bones gouged out, to his current grief that was greater than his heart's death.

What could he do now that his spiritual core had been destroyed? What was called dignity, however, was only after the event. He had to stubbornly put on his clothes, unwilling to leave it in his hands.

While he was doing all this, Mo Ran was sitting at the stone table, reading the letters he had written.

When he saw the one who watched the light rain, his hands seemed to freeze, but he quickly flipped over the piece of paper. With a mocking tone, he said, "My bones have gone soft, but my writing is still as good as before."

He put the stack of letters into his robes and stood up.

The wind blew through his clothes, and the gold threads of his dark robes flowed with splendor.

"Let's go."

Chu Wanning did not say anything.

Mo Ran glanced at him, and the shadow of the purple-vine flower made his black eyes seem even darker. "You don't want to see me off?"

Under the cover of the trees, Chu Wanning slowly said in a low and hoarse voice, "I've taught you before."

Mo Ran was stunned. "What?"

“Seeing the letter is like seeing you, seeing your comforting face.” After he finished this sentence, he finally raised his eyelashes and glanced at the man who had achieved greatness. “I taught you to write, you forgot.”

“You taught me to write?” Mo Ran frowned, he was not teasing Chu Wanning at all. From the looks of it, he had no impression of him.

The man stopped again.

Mo Ran asked, “When did it happen?”

Chu Wanning looked at him and said, “It was a long time ago.”

After saying this, he turned around and walked towards the house in the Red Lotus Pavilion.

Mo Ran stood at his original spot and did not leave for a while. He also did not enter. Afterwards, Chu Wanning caught a glimpse of him returning to the stone table from the window. He held the letter and started flipping through it.

Chu Wanning closed the window.

That night, he was tormented and didn’t know how to properly clean himself, so he felt a chill.

Originally, it was not a big deal, but he did not think that Mo Ran would know either. But for some unknown reason, from what Liu-gonggong had said, it seemed like Song Qiutong cooked a bowl of wontons, and for some reason, it angered Taxian-Jun. Not only did he not stay at the Queen’s place, he did not even eat his dinner, and just left.

Deep into the night, heavy rain began to fall. At this moment, someone came into the Red Lotus Pavilion.

“His Majesty has ordered for Chu-zongshi to move to his sleeping quarters.”

Although his followers were clear about the relationship between Mo Ran and Chu Wanning, Mo Ran still asked them to call him zongshi.

If there was not a trace of kindness left in him, it would be malice and viciousness.

Chu Wanning’s body was in great pain. His face was pale and his face was gloomy. He said, “No.”

“His Majesty has —”

“No…”

“…”

Getting into bed with a patient was naturally not something interesting. In the past, his body was especially out of place, and Mo Ran basically wouldn’t force him to do anything.

However, not long after, the dismissed servant returned. He entered the Red Lotus Pavilion, bowed in front of the coughing and coughing Chu Wanning, and said with an indifferent expression, “His Majesty has ordered that it’s a minor indisposition, and would like to invite Grandmaster to head to the Wushan Palace to serve in his bed.”

Ch. 248 [Mount Longxue] Oblivion

Chu Wanning knew that he had no other choice. In the end, he put on his fox fur cloak, held up his oil-paper umbrella, and went to the Wushan main hall.

The ninety-nine lights inside the hall were shining brilliantly like silver lanterns. They were like rivers of stars, reflecting the brilliance of the entire Wushan Palace. It was a common occurrence for servants on both sides to serve Chu-zongshi.

Upon seeing him enter, all of them lowered their eyes in respect. Chu Wanning walked expressionlessly through the side door of the veranda and towards the resting area of the back hall. When he reached the lacquered door, he stretched out his hand and pushed it open.

The interior of the house was very warm. It was different from the cold rain that flowed across the river, and there was even a strong aroma of wine that assailed his nostrils. Mo Ran was lazily lying on the couch. His jade-like fingers were holding a red clay teapot as he drank wine.

“You’re here.”

“…”

“Sit.”

Chu Wanning walked to the bamboo mat furthest from him, sat down, and closed his eyes.

Mo Ran did not force him to get close. He was already drunk, and his pale face had a tinge of red to it. His eyes were narrowed, and there were bits

and pieces of radiance flowing through his dark, purplish pupils. With another dull breath, Mo Ran raised his head and looked at the peaks of the dragon and phoenix.

He tapped his fingers on his knee.

He suddenly asked, “Do you still know how to cook wontons?”

Chu Wanning’s eyelashes twitched, but he eventually said, “No.”

Mo Ran was a little unrelenting. “You did it. It was that year… The year he left.”

“I can’t do it.” Chu Wanning didn’t have much of an expression on his face, “You’re right, that was just a mistake.”

“Are you trying to remind me of my hatred?”

“No.”

“Then what if I order you to make one now?”

Chu Wanning did not say anything, his eyes burning with anger as he stared at him, “I’m asking you a question. If you were to make one now, would you be willing to do so?”

“Even if I did.” Chu Wanning finally opened his eyes and looked at him coldly, “Would you even eat it?”

He did not expect to be rebelled against like this. A layer of blood immediately appeared on his face. It seemed as if the smell of alcohol was rising, but also seemed to be due to anger. In short, the emotion in his eyes suddenly became very blank. Only after staring blankly for a while did he

manage to react. As a result, he gnashed his teeth, and with a violent “hualala” sound, the fine pear blossoms scattered all over the floor.

Mo Ran stood up maliciously, his figure was like a mountain. He strode across the broken pottery, walked up to Chu Wanning and grabbed him by the collar.

“Both you and Song Qiutong.” Immortal Taxian-Jun gritted his teeth. “All of you… let me down.”

He let go of Chu Wanning and started walking back and forth like an eagle.

Suddenly, his footsteps stopped.

He turned his head and glared at Chu Wanning, asking, “When did you teach me this sentence, seeing this letter is as good as seeing you?”

At this moment, Taxian-Jun was already half drunk. He didn’t have the slightest rationality to speak, so he couldn’t think of anything to say.

“How come I don’t remember at all?”

His wrist was grabbed by a big, cold hand. Mo Ran pulled him to the front of the desk. He spread out a pile of books and started grinding them. Mo Ran said, “Write it for me to see. Teach me again.”

Chu Wanning was already suffering from a low fever, but being forced like this, he felt even more stifled in his rage. His face was flushed red and he started to cough.

Mo Ran put the pen in his hand and said sullenly and irritably, “Write.”

He impatiently urged, “Hurry up.”

Chu Wanning's spirit core had been broken in the previous battle between Shizun and disciple. His body was still in a bad condition. As he coughed, blood gushed out from his throat.

Mo Ran was stunned as he stared at the specks of blood. Then, he slowly let go of his hand.

"It's just a casual conversation in a letter, what's the point?" Finally, Chu Wanning stopped coughing. He let out a long sigh and wiped the blood off his lips with a handkerchief.

He raised his eyes, let out a breath, and looked at Mo Ran, "In the past, you would have written this beginning for every letter. But I'm afraid you haven't written for too long, so you forgot."

"I… wrote a letter?" The pitch black eyes stared at him. "To whom?" He said almost sullenly: "Who should I write to? Who else can I write to in this world? You made it up. You made it up. What nonsense!"

When Mo Ran said these words, he felt dejected and his eyes flickered with a hazy luster.

It was at that moment that Chu Wanning vaguely felt that something was amiss. However, he didn't think too much about it at the time. He only thought that Mo Ran was drunk and had a bad memory. Thus, he only frowned and didn't reply.

There was a letter box in the study of the Wushan Palace. All the letters on the Sisheng Peak were sealed in a Qiankun bag. Mo Ran moved around like a trapped beast in a cage. Suddenly, he remembered the existence of the letter box. It then took out the sealed box and opened the ancient letters one after another.

Most of the letters had been written by the disciples of the sect, categorizing them according to the elders under their tutelage. Most of the people who wrote the letters had already died in the year of Mo Ran's betrayal. Amongst them, Elder Yuheng had the least disciples, and there were only three of them. Soon, Mo Ran found a stack of thick letters.

Trembling, he tore it apart.

His handwriting was not bad, it was young and crooked, but it was written with extreme seriousness. As he looked at the letters, he saw that each of the letters had the words, "Seeing your letter is as good as seeing you, seeing your comforting face."

Every one.

Mo Ran's fingers were trembling, and his eyes shone with a strange color.

—

"Mother, the letter is as good as ever."

"Elder sister Xun, if you see the letter, I will show it to you."

The old names made him shudder. His eyes were narrow and small, and clouds were gathering on his handsome face.

Chu Wanning stood aside. Initially, he didn't pay much attention to it, but as time went on, the look on his face of Mo Ran only made him feel that something was amiss… He couldn't help but lock his eyes onto the study table. It was the man who was flipping through the old letters in a crazed manner.

A kind of minuscule terror extended its sharp beak, knocking on Chu Wanning's heart.

Something was wrong.

He walked over slowly and looked at the blank and crazy look on Mo Ran's face as he read the letter.

…… What was wrong?

"My mother is dead…" Suddenly, Mo Ran opened his mouth and muttered, "Why would I write to her?"

Chu Wanning stood at the side watching his every move. The fear in his heart was like a bloody darkness was about to break out.

Dark clouds descended.

It was strange to forget the words "see the letter as it is", which had been written so many times, but it was not impossible.

However, he had forgotten that he had written so many letters and had no impression of them. This was too strange.

Mo Ran was still reading the contents of each letter. "Spreading the letters to Shuyan…" The gloss that shone in those eyes that were black to the point of purple was so painful, so contradictory.

It did seem to be missing some important memory.

It was as if he could hear the cracking sound of a hard shell.

Chu Wanning held his breath, his spine was almost numb. Other than the two of them, there was no one else in the study. In the dead silence, Chu

Wanning moved his lips and said softly, “Don’t you remember? You said before that even though your mother could no longer receive the letter, you still wanted to write to her.”

Mo Ran suddenly raised his head.

Chu Wanning could only feel his blood cooling down bit by bit as his breath turned to ice.

“The first name you learned to write was not your own.”

Mo Ran asked in a low voice, “why is that?”

“The first address you wanted me to teach you to write was ‘Mother’.”

Lightning flashed and thunder rumbled outside. The wind howled mournfully, like countless ghost claws slapping against a window, causing the window frame to vibrate with a rustling sound.

A bolt of lightning struck down, illuminating the world with its desolate light.

Emperor Taxian-Jun muttered, “…… You taught me? Why didn’t I have any impression of him at all? Not at all.”

The wind blew the trees down and their shadows swayed, filling the courtyard with the ghosts and wraiths.

Chu Wanning’s face was pale as he stared at Mo Ran. His eyes were like that of a falcon’s. “You, you don’t even remember?”

His heart pounded like a drum.

After a moment of silence, Mo Ran asked in confusion, “Remember what?”

The drum stopped.

The tiny beak finally broke through the outer shell. Terrifying emotions filled the sky as it swept towards the only sober person in the room, striking the shore with great force!

Chu Wanning felt his scalp go numb. He couldn't remember? How could he not remember?

When Mo Ran said that he would write his mother a letter, he wrote over three hundred letters. He said that he would write a thousand letters and burn them down with the Underworld's mother during the Mystic Orchid Festival…

How could he so easily forget three hundred letters!

His lips trembled slightly as he suddenly came up with an extremely terrifying guess. Chu Wanning said hoarsely, "You… Do you remember what you said the first time you saw Tianwen?"

"What did I say? How could I still remember such a long time ago?"

"You said that you also wanted such a godly weapon." Chu Wanning said, "You wanted to have Tianwen too…"

The drunk person asked him, his eyes revealing a trace of ridicule: "What would I need Tianwen for? A murder or an interrogation?"

Chu Wanning replied in a low voice, "Earthworm."

In the past, outside the Red Lotus Pavilion, there was a young man. He was still smiling as he held up an oil-paper umbrella and said, "It can save earthworms, ah."

But at this very moment, the Emperor Taxian-Jun, with his wolf-like eyes, showed no confusion. “What earthworms?”

Outside, the sky was filled with thunder and purple lightning piercing through the night.

A loud rumbling sound could be heard.

Chu Wanning pursed his lips, his brown pupils slightly quivering.

The coldness of a needle.

That night, Mo Ran didn’t actually do anything to Chu Wanning. He really did drink a little too much, and later on he held the letters in a daze.

Then, before he fell asleep, Mo Ran muttered, “What earthworm? No earthworms…”

Suddenly, a strong wind blew open the window, and with a bang, the wind mixed with the heavy rain poured in, suddenly extinguishing a few lights by the window.

The room was suddenly dark.

Chu Wanning stood by Mo Ran’s side, his lips and teeth chilled. He lowered his head to look at the sleeping man. The uncertain thoughts in his mind became clearer and clearer – why didn’t Mo Ran remember these scattered memories? Why did he selectively forget about the pure past?

Was it because he was drunk? Because of a coincidence? Or… Who had deliberately erased the kindness in his heart?

Taxian-Jun, who was sleeping on the table, softly muttered: “Cold…”

Chu Wanning's blood was already cold and numb. When he heard Mo Ran say it was cold, he instinctively walked slowly to the window.

He raised his hand and closed the window, blocking the wind and rain outside.

After doing all of this, Chu Wanning did not leave. He was confused as he pressed his forehead against the window that was carved with the pattern of a Bat-Deer, his knuckles white.

After a long while, he slowly took out a crumpled spirit rune from his shirt.

Ascending Dragon Talisman.

He no longer had a spiritual core, so Mo Ran felt that he could no longer use any spells. Therefore, he was too lazy to take away the talisman papers that Chu Wanning once used.

Actually, what Mo Ran did was right. Chu Wanning bit his finger and dripped more than ten drops of blood onto the Ascending Dragon Talisman paper. Only then did the little dragon float out listlessly.

Its entire body emitted a weak light, and weakly raised its head, "Ah… Chu Wanning… Long time no see…"

The little dragon could not stand still. He took a few steps on the paper with his dragon claw and then collapsed back onto the paper with a 'pa da' sound. It was both wronged and at a loss, "Why haven't you been looking for me for so long? Why did you only give This Venerable one a tiny bit of spiritual energy… Ugh, it really was spiritual qi… It couldn't even be considered spiritual energy… What's the matter with you?"

“It’s a long story, let’s not talk about it.” Chu Wanning gently picked it up and placed it on his palm, “Please, do me a favor.”

“Going to Zhong Wuyan when there’s a problem, going to Xia Yingchun when there is none.”[169] The little dragon sighed, but his strength was closely related to Chu Wanning, so he did not even have the strength to complain. His head was downcast as he said, “Tell me, what do you want me to do for you this time?”

Chu Wanning brought it along with him and placed it near the sleeping Mo Ran Hair.

Zhang Xuan clenched his fingers into a fist and sent it straight into the palm of his hand. Chu Wanning’s originally unsightly face turned even paler, “Go and try your best. Let’s see if he has any incantations that he shouldn’t have.”

In reality, that brilliant and obedient youth who even the earthworms could not bear to kill actually became a devil in the end.

As his Shizun, how could he not have any suspicions?

They could only watch as their disciple killed Xue Zhengyong, Madam Wang, Jiang Xi, and Ye Wangxi.

He had slaughtered all the members of the Rufeng Sect.

He stepped on the dried up bones.

He looked at Mo Ran Slaughter, at his hands covered in blood, at his face covered in blood, and at the people standing in the pile of corpses looking back at him with an evil grin.

He was heartbroken, but how could he not feel strange?

Mo Ran was not such a person.

But when he tried his best to paint a spell on the paper, even though he was prepared, he was still shocked.

Affection Spell.

Mo Ran actually had the love spell on him?!

After drawing the charm, the little dragon lost all of his strength. He turned into a wisp of green smoke and disappeared into the Ascending Dragon Talisman. On the other hand, Chu Wanning held onto that thin piece of paper. It felt as if a mountain had been cracked inside his brain, as if it was being crushed like rotten weeds.

However, after calming down with difficulty and looking at it again and again, Chu Wanning found that the image was not right.

It was actually upside down.

Ch. 249 [Mount Longxue] Authentic

The next day, Mo Ran woke up. He did not remember what happened after he was drunk.

However, he could not remember, but Chu Wanning would never forget.

After that day, he made a few insinuations and confirmed that Mo Ran had indeed lost his memory of many past events, making him even more uneasy. It took him a long time,

In the end, he managed to find records of this formation in a book of the Medical Sect's scriptures on the Sisheng Peak.

Light poured in from outside the window, "Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred…"

His fingertips caressed the black markings on the scroll, then Chu Wanning took out the runes drawn by the dragon. The two of them looked exactly the same.

It was a black heart. At first glance, it looked easy to recognize it as the love formula. However, the love formula was that the heart would have a sesame seed sized white to the left, and this one was upside down on the right.

The mark shown by the dragon and the effect of the spell were corresponding, from the looks of it, this was a kind of flower Gu that was similar to the love chant, but had the opposite effect?

It was not that easy to understand the ancient scripture and the ancient demonic language inside the empty, deserted scripture pavilion. Although

Chu Wanning had some knowledge of magical runes, he still found it hard to understand.

He read it slowly, word for word. However, every time he read a sentence, the shock in his heart increased.

“Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower, Magic Seed.” His thin, watery lips parted slightly as he said in a low voice, “Rumor has it that thousands of years ago, Gouchen brought in from the Demon Realm into the human world.”

There was a strange seed in the book, and next to it a drop of blood and a wisp of smoke.

“This kind of cultivation is extremely difficult. It requires ten years of drinking demonic blood, and then fusing it with a wisp of the owner’s soul before it can bud and blossom.”

Chu Wanning mumbled, “You need demon blood and the soul of the owner to grow? However, the world… There are no more Pure Demons.”

However, the literature may not be entirely correct, and there is no need to delve into it.

He looked down and saw a heart painted on the silk book. On the right side of the heart, there was a flower with a heavy petal blooming in full bloom. Beside the map, there was another complicated magic word, “This demonic flower cannot be raised by the earth, it cannot be raised by water, it cannot be raised by the sky, it cannot be seen by the earth, only the human heart can support it.”

Chu Wanning was shocked. This flower could only grow in the heart?

Looking further down, it was even more shocking.

The meaning of the silk book was that once a person's heart had been planted with the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower, they would go through three stages.

In the first stage, the host was not too different from the previous days, but they would gradually start to feel anxious and it was easy for them to use their malicious intent to guess at others, and they would also gradually forget some beautiful memories. At this stage, although the flower was difficult to remove, as long as it was discovered in time, its effectiveness would be slowly suppressed. If the situation was good, the flower would fall into hibernation, and it would be hard to be effective again.

However, if it wasn't discovered at this time, then according to the host, it would take at least eight years to complete. And to expedite its growth it will require the emotional intensification of a certain major event, and the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower will grow to the second stage.

At this stage, the host will begin to quickly forget all the pure memories related to "kindness" "gentleness" and "hope". Instead, he will recall the obstacles and frustrations, malice and bullying in his life.

Life eight sufferings[170] will be remembered by the host.

Deep into the bone marrow.

At this point, Chu Wanning's face was already as white as snow.

Mo Ran… Wasn't that true?

He had forgotten the wishes of his youth. He had forgotten the letters that had been written one by one. Even his impression of his mother was no

longer so clear.

He continued to read. By the third stage, the host would be bloodthirsty, irrational and violent.

Will retaliate back thousands times for the sufferings suffered in the past.

Chu Wanning could not believe his eyes as he saw Mo Ran grinning in the bloodbath of the Rufeng Sect. His hand was filled with spiritual energy as it pierced into the cultivator's body.

Fingers full of blood, he pulled out the heart forcefully and crushed it.

Many people cried and begged for mercy. Corpses littered the ground, but Mo Ran only laughed loudly, his eyes flashing with an excited and crazy luster. He kept chanting a line from his mouth.

"To hit three feet, you can't ask for ten feet… You can't ask for more than three meters!"

Ruthless, crazy, malicious, hideous.

Why did Mo Ran become like this?

It wasn't that he didn't have the slightest doubt about it at the time, but the effect of the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower was slowly deepening, layer by layer. And the most important point was — it was also written in the silk book — this kind of demonic flower would not breed violence for no reason, but would instead enlarge the hatred and desire of the host.

In other words, this hatred and desire really did belong to Mo Ran. No one had wrongly accused him.

It was true that Mo Ran wanted to slaughter the entire Rufeng Sect, and he did want to walk the world alone. He did hate Chu Wanning, but this emotion might only last for a moment, or it might be a wild thought that he had almost forgotten.

It was just that the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower would dig out all the grudges in his heart and put them into practice.

As a result, in the eyes of outsiders, even though the owner of the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower was insane, he still hated with cause and reason. Instead of suddenly changing his temperament, he became a completely different person. People would think, “He is slowly becoming like this because of hatred,” and not think, “He is slowly becoming like this because of a curse.”

Because of this, almost no one would be able to detect Mo Ran’s Flower. When it was discovered by others, it would usually be in the second or third stage. It would be impossible to remove or suppress it.

Chu Wanning read through this passage of information and was unable to recover from it for a long time.

What kind of feeling did he have in his heart?

Surprise? Regret? Anger? Fear? Or perhaps it was regret…

He didn’t know.

He sat on the floor of the Compendium Pavilion, which had become dilapidated due to its lack of repair. It was afternoon and the sun was still warm, but when it shone on him, not even the slightest bit of heat could be felt.

Chu Wanning sat in the book section for a long time. He felt that there was someone standing behind him that he couldn't see or touch. That person was smiling, like a ghost, observing their every move from behind the scenes.

He lowered his head again and looked at the words written on the silk —

"In the first stage, if it is discovered in time, although the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower is difficult to remove, it can be contained and the host will not lose his heart."

This sentence, Chu Wanning repeated it countless times.

In the end, he was stunned to find drops of water dripping down and slowly dying on the silk book. He reached out his cold hand and tried to wipe away the water.

But before his hands could touch the silk, he instinctively turned his face to hide his wet eyelashes and trembling eyelids.

It was his fault, it was his fault. He was the one who had always been proud and reserved, the one who cared more about his face than anything else, the one who didn't want to say anything openly.

If you found out in time.

If he didn't arrive, he would lose his heart.

However, after all these years, he had discovered nothing. Even his disciple, the so-called Immortal Shizun Yuheng, had not realized that he had become the host of a demonic flower. It was because of his isolation and bad words that Mo Ran had ended up travelling on his own.

How could he have the face to be called “Shizun” by Mo Ran?

If you found out in time.

His words were like a curse that lingered in his ears like a nightmare. He felt as if he had been choked to death. He was extremely shocked — he was truly not a human master.

Looking back now, how long had it been since Mo Ran? It was not just one or two years. In the many years that they had been together, Mo Ran had started off as a shy and brilliant teenager. He had been swallowed up by darkness, bit by bit, by the bloody wind.

As his Shizun, it was only until today — until everything was irreparable and it was hard to look back. It was only now that he found out… He hated the fact that he was in turmoil, his body felt like a floating boat — he was truly unworthy of being called Shizun!

That day, Chu Wanning did not know how he had tidied up his emotions and slowly walked out of the Compendium Pavilion, walking in the empty bamboo forest at the Sisheng Peak.

He didn’t know how he managed to return to the Red Lotus Pavilion. Under the purple-colored vines, everything was in chaos. He sat there alone, from the sun to the dusk.

Afterwards, a person entered his field of vision.

The man had broad shoulders and a narrow waist. Stepping on the sunset glow, he carried a piece of floating light and slowly walked towards the pavilion.

Due to his absent-mindedness, Chu Wanning could not react in time to see who the person was. That tall and handsome man overlapped with the youth in his memory.

He remembered that when he had completed a month of apprenticeship, Mo Ran had excitedly come to the Red Lotus Pavilion to look for him with a small clay teapot wrapped with bamboo vines in his hand.

The youth ran too fast. His face was slightly red as he panted. His eyes were astonishingly bright.

“Shizun, I tasted an especially good wine at the foot of the mountain. I ordered some, and I’ll treat you to some.”

Chu Wanning asked, “You haven’t accepted the assignment yet, where did the money come from?”

“I borrowed it from uncle.”

“… Why should we waste his money?”

“Because Shizun likes me.” He held the wine jug with both hands and held it in front of Chu Wanning, “I also like Shizun.”

Chu Wanning still remembered how embarrassed he was at that time.

The young man’s goodwill was too blazing. He felt like a hot potato in his hands, unable to hold on.

He flicked his sleeves and scolded, “What nonsense are you talking about? What do you like? From now on, you can’t talk about this anymore.”

“Ugh… Alright then.” The youth scratched his head, “But I’ll definitely think of Shizun after I’ve eaten and drunk well. I want to have a taste with Shizun.”

“… I’ve never had a drink.”

Mo Ran laughed, “Then let’s give it a try, right? Maybe Shizun is really just a huge figure.”

Chu Wanning pursed his lips, took the wine pot and opened it. He sniffed it and slightly widened his eyes.

“Does it smell good?”

“Yes.”

“Haha, let’s drink and have a look.”

Chu Wanning took a sip. Although it was strong, it was mellow and fragrant. Chu Wanning could not help but take another sip, “That’s right, what’s it’s name?”

Mo Ran grinned brightly. “This is called Pear Blossom White.”

This was the first time in his life that he had drunk wine, and he mumbled to himself, “Pear blossom white… That’s a good name.”

Mo Ran was very happy. “If Shizun likes it, then when I can take over the assignment in the future and earn two taels of money, I’ll buy it for you every day.”

Chu Wanning took another sip and looked at him sideways with his phoenix eyes. His expression was still the same, “Then I’m afraid you won’t

be able to save your money."

Mo Ran smiled happily, "There's no need to save it. All the money I earned is used to buy things for Shizun and Aunt."

Chu Wanning did not utter a word, but a faint feeling of sweetness exuded from the gap in his heart. In order to prevent Mo Ran from seeing his happiness, so as to prevent others from thinking that "Elder Yuheng could actually buy it with just a single glass of wine," he continued to hold the wine jug and drink in a cold and indifferent manner.

Beside him was his new disciple, chattering nonstop. Chu Wanning was sometimes surprised to see that his indifference was like a wall to anyone.

Only this guy happily climbed over the wall and was still looking around as if nothing had happened.

I'm afraid he's a fool.

On this side, Mo Ran calculated what kind of filial piety he would buy for his Shizun in the future, and asked, "Does Shizun like osmanthus cake?"

"Yes."

"What about the Lotus Blossom Sesame?"

"Yes."

"And the osmanthus root?"

"Yes."

Mo Ran's dimples grew even more deep and sweet. He smiled and said, "Shizun really does like sweet things."

This time, Chu Wanning was not convinced. He finally understood that the sweets did not match his usual cold demeanor.

He took another sip of the wine. Due to his vexation, this sip was rather bold. Although the wine was sweet and mellow, it was still a little strong. He choked on it.

Helpless and ashamed, Chu Wanning choked on his alcohol and decided to keep it to himself. His throat was burning, and his eyes and nose were red from the excitement.

The youngster beside him was still full of ambition. He said that he did not have a grand future, and he seemed to have some heroic intentions, “Then I will buy everything back for Shizun. I will collect all sorts of delicious foods from all over the world, make up a book, and then accompany Shizun to eat all the good food in the world, all the good things in the world, and after that…”

He turned his head with a smile and was suddenly startled.

“Shizun, you, what’s wrong?”

Chu Wanning: “…”

As a human master, if he choked on the wine that his disciple brought to him, wouldn’t it be a huge joke?

Hold on, he can’t cough.

As a result, his eyes turned even redder, and a layer of misty vapor even appeared in them.

Mo Ran was at a loss for words. “Did I say something wrong? Shizun, why are you crying?”

“…”

Chu Wanning glared at him, his long eyelashes quivering with anger.

Mo Ran did not feel his anger and was stunned for a while. Only then did he somewhat understand what was going on. His tone suddenly became very gentle, “Is it because no one bought it for Shizun before?”

Chu Wanning was even more infuriated.

Mo Ran muttered to himself, “Actually, I used to not be able to eat for a while. I almost starved. Then I met a little brother on the way and he gave me a pot of sweet rice porridge. I like sweet things too, but no one bought them for me before.”

This young man was rather talented, and he was even sure that Chu Wanning’s eyes were red because of his emotions.

He held onto Chu Wanning’s hand.

This was really out of his expectations. With Chu Wanning’s upbringing, aside from teaching other people spells, the only other thing he could do was hold his hand in his own. He was surprised to find that he was suddenly stopped by a new disciple who had recklessly and unscrupulously followed the rules.

Just as he was about to get angry, he looked up and saw this little surprise. It was a young face with a handsome and still childish face. He said earnestly:

“Shizun, when I’m done, I’ll buy you some candy.”

The youth’s eyes were filled with gentleness.

“I’ll buy you the best candy, just enough. My mom taught me to repay favors.”

He hadn’t gone to school properly, and he had been hanging around in the music hall for a long time. His speech was always so weird, but there were always some words that didn’t make sense that were laughable.

However, Chu Wanning knew that he was scalded that time. He stared at him and suddenly lowered his eyes, not saying a word.

After a long while, the alcohol finally calmed down. Chu Wanning then coughed uncomfortably, and lightly said, “Don’t say any more nonsense in the future. Also…” It was also because of his sudden curiosity that he asked, “There’s something I want to ask you.”

“Please speak your mind, Shizun.”

Chu Wanning hesitated, but eventually asked awkwardly, “At that time, there were so many people in front of Heaven-Piercing Tower, why did you bow to me?”

The teenager Mo Ran opened his mouth to speak —

But at this moment, his memories were suddenly interrupted.

Taxian-Jun brought up his wine jug and stood in front of the stunned Chu Wanning. He raised a finger and poked his forehead.

“What’s wrong?”

Only then did Chu Wanning's eyes start to focus. He looked at Mo Ran in front of him.

His face was pale, and his expression was sinister. Although he was still handsome, it was hard to conceal the cruelty hidden within. A pair of eagle-like eyes.

It was no longer that passionate youth from before.

It's all over.

He suddenly felt very, very tired. It was an extreme loss and pain that he had never experienced in his life as a prisoner for such a long time.

He was so conflicted that he did not know how to face the man in front of him.

Chu Wanning turned around.

A large, slightly cold hand grabbed his chin and pulled his face back. Light flowed within his phoenix eyes, reflecting the last bit of red light. In the darkness, Taxian-Jun asked with a gloomy expression, "Are you still angry?"

Chu Wanning closed his eyes for a long time, then said hoarsely, "No."

"The heat has subsided?" Before Chu Wanning could reply, Mo Ran loosened his jaw, looked at his forehead, and said, "En, I'm leaving."

He sat down, and as he removed the mud from the jar, he said, "Now that you are well… Today, you will accompany me to a drink."

"…"

He knew that there was an invisible mastermind behind Taxian-Jun. He knew that this seemingly calm and peaceful Sisheng Peak was in danger from all sides. He knew that he shouldn't alert the enemy. He shouldn't do anything strange.

However, when the wine was poured out, Mo Ran said calmly, "Pear Blossom White, your favorite wine." When he did, he was still in a daze.

The fragrance drifted out, as though it was separated from the mortal world and seemed to be surreal.

It was the first drink of his life.

Never forget it.

Chu Wanning raised his eyes and looked at the person pouring the wine. He knew that Mo Ran would not remember this incident. He suddenly felt dull pain in his heart and his throat felt sore. He picked up his wine cup and drank it all in one gulp.

The liquor was too strong. If he drank too much like this, he would choke.

However, this time, Chu Wanning didn't have any scruples. It was like grabbing a blade of grass in a torrent. He began to cough violently, his eyes turned red, his eyelashes became wet, and finally, tears began to roll down his cheeks.

Mo Ran was startled for a moment, and his eyes glazed over for a moment.

However, he quickly narrowed his eyes and leisurely grinned. "What's wrong, Shizun? Why are you crying?"

Even if he had to suffer to the extreme, even if the truth was known, there was nothing he could do.

Or pull out the hate flower.

Or find out who the mastermind is.

Or his own death.

Before that, he knew he had to endure.

Pretending to know nothing, pretending to be extremely angry, Chu Wanning closed his eyes and said hoarsely, “Wine.”

Mo Ran asked slowly, “Is the alcohol too strong?”

Chu Wan didn’t answer, he just poured herself another cup and poured it into his lungs, boiling it all the way.

“Why did you bow down to me?”

He opened his misty eyes and looked into the distance. In the twilight, Heaven-Piercing Tower still stood tall and dignified like before. However, that year, he had said with a smile, “Because I like you. I think you’re very gentle.” The youth, however, would never come back.

There were eight sufferings in life.

Birth, aging, sickness, death, the parting from loved ones, not obtaining what one desire, the meeting of disliked people and the five components of one’s body and mind.

It was called Long Hatred.

There had been so many opportunities to see the truth, but he had missed them all, and when he had finally discovered the true cause of the distortion of Mo Ran's mind, he had become a cripple and could do nothing.

At night, Chu Wanning slept soundly beside his pillow. His once innocent face was now covered in a layer of chilliness, it was as white as paper.

He had hated it, hated it.

When Mo Ran had cut off his relationship with his own saber, his heart had also been chilled. When Mo Ran had forced him to sleep with him, his heart had also died.

But in the long night, sad and clear in the curtain.

As he lay beside Taxian-Jun, Chu Wanning, who finally found out the truth, felt that his past hatred, resentment, and even death were all ridiculous.

Mo Ran had long since been poisoned by the Gu poison. All of these things he had done were not his original intention.

That heaven-shaking emperor Taxian-Jun had long been imprisoned by iron shackles and iron chains. As his Shizun, there was nothing he could do.

Because he didn't know how many pairs of eyes were watching from behind him, he couldn't tell anyone the truth.

He couldn't even show the slightest bit of mercy and gentleness towards Mo Ran. The only thing he could do was to hate, complain, and die with a cold heart.

Only when it was deep into the night, in the depths of cover in Wushan Palace, when Mo Ran was asleep, could Chu Wanning get up and caress his pale face.

Only then could he softly say: “I’m sorry, it was Shizun that did not protect you well.”

Ch. 250 [Mount Longxue] Obsession

>>dubcon warning

Only when it was deep into the night, in the depths of Su Mu's palace in Wushan, when Mo Ran was asleep, could Chu Wanning get up and caress his pale face.

Only then could he softly said: "I'm sorry, it was Shizun that did not protect you well."

I didn't protect you.

I made you someone else's pawn.

He had become a tyrant that people cursed.

No one in the world knows your true appearance, does not know that you were good, you were innocent, they do not know that you were troubled by the rain to save little earthworms, you were filled with smile for blooming lotuses.

Everyone in the world resents you for being cold-blooded, but they don't know that you once shyly scratched your head and said, "I… I don't have much ability. If I have some spare money in the future, I should build more houses and settle down with people who live in the same condition as I was before."

Everyone hates you for killing and slaughtering them, but they didn't know that you had told me before, "Shizun, I want a divine weapon that is like Tianwen. It can distinguish between black and white, and can save lives."

Everyone was cursing you, they want to punish you.

I know the truth, but I can't give you back your dignity.

Mo Ran was always very sensitive to the eyes, even when he was asleep. His eyelids twitched, and before Chu Wanning could react, his eyes were already open, "You…"

They looked at each other.

"What are you looking at?"

At this point, Chu Wanning's emotions had already reached their peak. He didn't know how to respond, so he turned around to avoid eye contact with Mo Ran, and said, "It's nothing."

Mo Ran didn't say anything. After a while, a warm body embraced him from behind, his sturdy and broad chest was pressed against Chu Wanning's back.

In the dark of the night, Chu Wanning opened his eyes. Behind him was the warm bosom of Taxian-Jun. The man's voice sounded neither mocking nor lazy as he said lightly, "You're feeling really cold and sweaty."

As he spoke, he leaned over to sniff the side of his neck.

"Did you have a nightmare?" Mo Ran chuckled with the ease of a person who had just awoken. "I smell a little bit of fear."

Chu Wanning did not answer, but he was trembling uncontrollably.

It wasn't because he was afraid, but because the pain and self-blame almost destroyed him. He had used up all of his strength just to maintain

this final bit of calmness.

In the end, he managed to feign ignorance under Mo Ran's eyes. Mo Ran did not notice his abnormality and yawned, gradually becoming more and more clear-headed. He sniffed Chu Wanning's shoulder and hair again, and let out a "oh" in satisfaction.

"But then again, with your body, why is it that you even smell like flowers when you're sweating? Just like a man made of wood and grass."

If he were to make fun of him like this normally, he would definitely end up scolding him out of shame and anger.

But that night, Mo Ran waited for a while, but Chu Wanning did not reply. He was a little surprised, so he got up and flipped Chu Wanning over. Once again, he firmly pressed down on him. His strong and broad body was completely enveloping the person beneath him.

His eyes met his.

He lay under him. They were looking at each other.

The unextinguished candle flame inside the hall penetrated through the layers of cloth. Under the dim light, it stared at the handsome face that was just inches away from it.

He still had sharp sword-like eyebrows, slanted eyes, a straight nose, and a natural prideful look in his eyes.

But for some reason, he felt that something was wrong tonight.

"What's the matter with you?" He reached out his hand and touched his cheek. The tip of his finger trembled, and the person beneath him abruptly

closed his eyes.

Mo Ran had completely awoken from his slumber.

He felt a thrill.

It didn't matter if it was Chu Wanning's frowning forehead or his thin pale lips, his fragile face… All of this gave great satisfaction to the desire to conquer in his heart.

However, there was a faint sense of unease. Mo Ran impatiently asked him again, "What happened to you?"

Chu Wanning opened his eyes. Within his half-closed eyes, a glimmer could be seen.

The pain and frustration in his heart had nowhere to vent, finally turning into a hoarse voice. "We… How did we get to where we are today?"

"…"

"If I stopped this earlier, would it have been different?"

Mo Ran did not answer. He thought it was laughable that Chu Wanning had been defeated by his men for so long. He had become a wife, a concubine, and a mistress.

Everything was a foregone conclusion, so why was he having such wild thoughts tonight?

There was no one else in the Wushan Palace at night. There was only the couple naked on the bed. The fragrance of flowers wafted in from outside

of the Xuanyuan window made Mo Ran feel relaxed. He didn't really want to get angry at this man who didn't know what was good for himself.

His patience with Chu Wanning was much better than his patience with the empress.

As such, he watched the pain with great interest. As he watched, his heart started to itch. It was so hot that it felt like there was a fire burning again.

Therefore, it was rare for him to joke with him, so he lazily said, "If Wanning found out earlier, how would he stop me?"

His fingertips touched him inch by inch. Taxian-Jun was sexy and lethargic. "Do you want to take the body?"

Looking at the complicated emotions in Chu Wanning's eyes, Mo Ran's eyes turned moist and gloomy. After a while, he cursed in a low voice.

He could not stand any of the temptation Chu Wanning gave him, whether it was intentional or not.

There was no explanation, nor was there any foreplay.

Like a wild beast, he lifted up Chu Wanning's long and tight legs and pressed down.

If hatred was born from desire, could this broken body of his somehow ignite the fire of Mo Ran?

He didn't know.

The semen of their previous session had not been removed, and even his entrance was used to the stimulation of being taken by a man, so it

accepted his cock smoothly.

When he poked into it, he and Chu Wanning could not help but gasp and moan.

Chu Wanning opened his eyes and saw a bright, broad chest, a handsome face immersed in sexual stimulation, beautiful and full lips slightly open, breathing deeply because of pleasure…

If the curse of bitterness and long hatred originally arise from desire, can his broken body arouse the fire of Mo Ran?

He didn't know.

This night, he had sex with Mo Ran in bed. His mind, however, was very confused, and he had no strength to resist as fiercely as usual.

Either because Mo Ran was quite turned on by this unusual performance, or because Chu Wanning was not in good health, but that day there was some low fever in the inside of his extraordinary heat. Mo Ran held him in his arms. He thrust quickly and deeply, constantly kissing Chu Wanning's lips, pumping his waist and buttocks or lifting one of his legs and thrusting into Chu Wanning harshly from the side.

Chu Wanning's heartbeat was chaotic, his throat knot rolling, and his self-control was not as good as in the past, occasionally letting out moans and groans.

His response made Mo Ran more and more excited. When he was in the middle of the pillow, he breathlessly asked: "Is this here?"

As a matter of fact, Chu Wanning's sensitive spots were very known by Mo Ran, after how many times they did it. But Chu Wanning's endurance was

astonishing. He rarely called out in bed, so Mo Ran was not that sure.

He changed his angle or posture, and every time he adjusted his position, he went to see Chu Wanning's beautiful face with frowning eyebrows.

"Where do I fuck you? Where does it feel the best?"

It was very messy.

Everything was in chaos.

Chu Wanning listened as Mo Ran kept groaning in his ears, kissing, gasping for breath, the pain and passion mixing like a torrential downpour.

For the first time in his life, he felt like a duckweed, unable to grasp anything, unable to control anything, unable to change anything.

For the first time that night, he was weak.

Even worse was that although he did not answer, Mo Ran was able to quickly discern from his trembling and his expression the angle and position that he could not endure the most.

So he was fiercely and quickly thrusted into. Whenever his sensitive spot was hit, Chu Wanning could only bite his lips, but then Mo Ran's thrusts would become more violent and urgent. Mo Ran's ballsack would collide with his buttocks each time, the sound of their coupling making him blush and turning his heartbeat into a mess while their love liquids came out along with a large amount of wet stickiness…

Chu Wanning was still strongly holding on when Mo Ran lifted his hand and took his chin. He was still fiercely struggling under him, but his lips sucked thirstily and wetly.

His eyes suddenly became moist.

When the kiss ended, he wanted to hold back, but he didn't know why he couldn't hold it anymore.

He groaned and gasped helplessly under Mo Ran as he was penetrated.

He tried to grasp the mattress with the back of his hand, just as he tried to grasp his destroyed pride. But it was no use. Mo Ran's thrusts were too fierce and deep.

His legs were trembling and his toes were curled. He couldn't restrain his murmuring and groaning. Even at the time when Mo Ran's movements were the most violent, he was distracted, his legs were stretched, his toes were taut, and he was gasping under him a bit silently: "Ah… Hmm… Ah ah…"

At that time, Mo Ran's eyes were very dark.

The louder he shouted, the more turned on he was, the more fierce Mo Ran became.

As a result, the bed almost flipped over. The bedding and pillows were all misplaced, sliding to the floor. However, the two people who were fiercely entangled with each other could not care about anything else.

This sort of coupling could even be said to be very intimate.

That sound even made the night watchman's face turn slightly red when he saw Chu Wanning the next day. His eyes were full of curiosity.

He had lost it to him, and he had also been stimulated to the point of orgasm and the mattress became sticky and wet.

In fact, it could be said that this was the first time Chu Wanning released after being placed under house arrest without being drugged.

In a trance, he heard Mo Ran say in a low voice, “It’s only natural for us to arrive at today’s stage. Do you know why?”

“…”

“I wanted you a long time ago. I hated you for being so high and mighty with your cold expression. No matter what I did, I wouldn’t be able to persuade you.”

Chu Wanning’s eyelashes trembled. It was almost a sharp pain.

The man was still muttering at his temples. He was the one who had been humiliated, but the guy who got the advantage was thinking about the past instead. “No matter how good I am or how hard I work, you won’t even look at me.”

No.

Between you and me, there was once a gentleness, there was also once a pot of wine between the flowers, there was also an umbrella in the rain, a moon in the middle of autumn. But you’ve forgotten, and I can’t bring it up now.

“So, look. Only by breaking your hands and feet, pulling your bones out, pulling out all your claws and teeth will you be able to obediently lie under me. Only when I become the Emperor would I be able to bully you, torture you, force you, trample over you.”

The released area was still hot, pulsing between the flesh.

“To see you like this.” Mo Ran said softly, “It is worth it even if you are sentenced to death in hell for not being able to surpass the heavens. It’s exciting enough.”

He stroked Chu Wanning’s hair but did not pull out.

It was from this day onwards that Mo Ran started to have the habit of not coming out even though he knew that Chu Wanning would be sick.

His heart was filled with a scorching hot fire. Desire splashed in all directions, and the nature of beasts was ferocious.

Only Chu Wanning was his water, his box, the person he wanted to tear to pieces and kiss.

As for Chu Wanning? After the initial pain, he finally began to slowly sink. He slowly began to be alone, sorting out all the clues he knew, thinking about who behind the scenes had planted the hate flower on Mo Ran. What exactly was he plotting, and what he ultimately wanted.

On the other hand, even though it was written in the book that it would be impossible to pull it out once it reached the third stage, Chu Wanning was still unwilling to give up.

He had always been adamant in not admitting defeat.

He did not accept fate.

Just like this, day after day passed.

Without spiritual energy, Chu Wanning would have to suffer a lot of hardship, not to mention the fact that he couldn’t let a second person know about it.

It was very hard to find the Mastermind, and it was even harder to find the culprit. However, that person's purpose in controlling Mo Ran was getting clearer and clearer —

This was because Mo Ran had begun training in the Gates of Life and Death.

"I won't be able to practice the rebirth technique."

He still remembered the day Mo Ran stood at the window with his hands behind his back, looking outside at the chirping oriole, and said lightly, "I read the file and said that only people with heavy Yin energy would be able to learn to use it." With that, he turned around and glanced at Chu Wanning, "I plan to practice the first forbidden technique."

"The Gate of Life and Death in Time and Space?"

"What else could it be?"

"… You can't learn it."

Mo Ran smiled, "You have to try before you lower your head. If you don't do anything, it might not be possible to say anything."

Chu Wanning shook his head and said, "The first forbidden art changed fate, tearing apart two different worlds. It's been forbidden by the Heavens…"

Before he could finish, his words were cut off.

Mo Ran's expression was very lazy, "So what if it's the heavens? Why does it have to accommodate me? In my life, the thing that I don't believe in is fate."

He began to put it into practice. The first forbidden art had been lost for a long time, and Mo Ran was the supreme expert of the nine to five years. With great difficulty he finally received the ancient scroll, but the most important chapter was missing. Without a complete secret manual, no matter how fierce Mo Ran's spiritual energy was, it could only be used to cultivate just the Space Gate. But was impossible to truly tear time and space apart.

It was from then on that Chu Wanning began to understand the intentions of the person who planted Mo Ran Flower Gu.

It definitely wasn't for the sake of dominating the world. His guess was that that person's ultimate goal was to open the Gate of Life and Death. And it was not just a small rift, but a complete blending of the two worlds.

Only a very small number of people, such as Mo Ran, who was born with a strong and overbearing spirit energy, were able to do this.

Ch. 251 [Mount Longxue] Regression

“What do you want to do with the first forbidden technique?”

He didn’t know how many times he asked this question. Mo Ran was in a good mood on this day, so he finally answered slowly, “Go back to the past.”

“And then?”

Taxian-Jun raised his eyelids: “Save him.”

It was self-evident who “he” is.

Chu Wanning’s white clothes like snow, standing in front of Mo Ran, said: “If you carefully turn over the books related to the first forbidden technique, you should know, no one who practices the technique of opening the portal of time and space can come to a good end. The last master tried to bring his daughter back to him from another time and space, and he and the other him living in another time and space tried to kill each other. Don’t you know how it ended?”

Mo Ran frowned, changed his sitting position, overlapped his long legs and looked at him with his cheek in hand: “This Venerable One doesn’t know.”

“…”

“What are the examples of such failures?”

“No one has ever succeeded,” Chu Wanning said.

“That Venerable One will be the first successful person,” Mo Ran said.

Chu Wanning said again, “Once space and time are in disorder, you have no idea what the consequences will be.”

Mo Ran almost sneered: “Even if the world is in disorder, the flood is raging, what does it have to do with this Venerable One”

Chu Wanning was still unwilling: “Even if you really brought Shi Mingjing back from another time and space, what about the other you? He won’t allow it. If that happened, what would you do?”

Mo Ran sneered: “It’s just another rendition of me. If he stops me, I’ll kill him.”

Chu Wanning suddenly shut his mouth, suddenly feel thrilled.

Mo Ran was really crazy.

“If so…” Almost stubbornly, Chu Wanning slowly said, “The mistake of taking a woman by the master who first tried this technique will be repeated. In the process of taking Shi Mingjing between you and yourself, there will be an accident, and Shi Mingjing of that world will probably be crushed in the space-time crack, you…”

Before the answer was finished, there was a clatter.

Mo Ran got up and kicked the fruit tray case in front of him. Grape, orange, litchi and sweet were like the heads of the people he killed, and the bones are rolling all over the ground.

Taxian-Jun stepped forward, embroidered dark dragon pattern red scoop stepped on the ground, broken a fruit, grapes cracked like blood, litchi broken like brains - in this sea of corpse blood filled with sweet fruit

fragrance, he suddenly grabbed Chu Wanning's robes, eyes like tigers and wolves.

"I know look down on him and hope he dies." Mo Ran said, in a gloomy way, "But you are too vicious. How can he say that he is also your apprentice? He has worshiped you and believed in you, Chu Wanning, yet you curse him like this."

"I did not curse him. What I said is true."

"Who wants to listen to your facts? This Venerable One wants people who tear up time and space and turn the tide back! Let the mortal worlds tear each other apart, I will block it myself and kill the other me- if you stop again, how…"

He gasped for a moment, but his eyes were wet with madness. So what? Crush him? But he has broken Chu Wanning's back. Humiliation? Chu Wanning was a man who had already married him against his will.

So, kill him? Suddenly his heart was so sad that he couldn't speak out and he didn't know what was going on.

Mo Ran turned away, leaving Chu Wanning standing alone in the hall of emptiness, surrounded by the darkness. He knew somebody was planning and hiding behind the scenes.

But what should he do?

Once the first prohibited technique is used, it's not a big deal to tear a tear, just like a scar can scab, space and time can heal themselves. But if the opening is bigger, the variables are more, and the two worlds could be

intertwined in disorder. It may eventually become as recorded in ancient books.

Crack.

“The mortal world is orderly, if the order breaks down, natural punishment will come, all will return to the primal state of chaos.”

—— Chu Wanning would rather not remember where he read this sentence, but the impression is very clear, talking about the consequences of time and space out of control.

The so-called “Heavenly Penalty” is coming to Hong Meng, that is to say, God will punish the world by grinding the two disordered time and space into powder and returning to zero.

The first forbidden technique is out of control, and the cost will be the complete destruction of both space and time. So in any case, he can’t let this happen. He can’t let Mo Ran go on like this again.

That evening, Mo Ran was busy dealing with the files of Kunlun Dynamics and Chaos, so he did not find Chu Wanning. He went to the library with a wind lamp.

This is also a little kindness of Mo Ran. He knows that Chu Wanning is no longer a master, so he does not set up obstacles at Sisheng Peak except when he is provoked. He doesn’t mind Chu Wanning going to the library, the back hill and even the god’s arsenal.

It’s the same as keeping cats.

If the sharp teeth are smoothed and the sharp claws are cut off, that’s enough. It would be too boring to restrict it’s movements and keep your

cat motionless and tame.

Chu Wanning combed all the books of his acquisition in the library, combined with the current situation, and finally concluded two things: first, the people behind the scenes were extremely good at using medicines, but their spiritual power is not strong enough. This is understandable, because if the person's spiritual strength was strong, there would be no need to borrow people to do these things. Secondly, the death of Shi Mei must have been planned by the people behind the scenes, in order to stimulate hatred in the heart.

This point is also evidenced in the ancient books of Chu Wanning.

"The bitterness and long hatred can erase all gentleness in people's hearts, but they can also retain the warm memories of one person." The complex magic text is decoded by the words, "Therefore, the performer often makes the flower owner keep his normal memories, so that the flower owner identifies with the performer, relies on the performer, and is willing to die and be born for it."

Shi Mei has already passed away. He saw it with his own eyes. It couldn't be fake. Therefore, Shi Mei must not have been a practitioner of the art, but Mo Ran obviously remembers all the good memories related to Shi Mei, and the people behind the scenes take advantage of Mo Ran's only pure warmth to tempt him to touch the three prohibitions.

From the control of the world's Zhenlong chess game. To the resurrection of the dead. To turn the tide of time and space, life and death door.

Mo Ran did try one by one, whether successful or not. Why are people so eager to control the three doors at the same time? What kind of person

would want to rip apart time and space, risking that that both worlds would return to zero to satisfy their own selfish desires?

Chu Wanning thought that the answer to this question was not the most important at that moment. What matters is how he can prevent this from happening before Mo Ran opens the door of birth and death.

After reflecting for a while, he finally understood that there was only one way ahead of him— he had to kill Taxian-Jun, and then go back to the past to contain the flower curse in his heart. Try to pull it out. The man who has suffered the bitterness and hatred for a long time can't suffer it the second time. In this way, even after the death of Taxian-Jun, if the black hand behind the scenes still manages to open the door of life and death in time and space, can't get the strongest combat power.

Kill Taxian-Jun…

At night, there were moths and fires in the library. They plunged into the wind lamp brought by Chu Wanning, and were swallowed up by the tongue of fire in an instant. There were no remnants left, only a burnt odor.

Chu Wanning watched the candlelight alone and the silly moths.

The fire was bright, but his heart was cold.

Kill Taxian-Jun… Kill Taxian-Jun…

Kill Mo Ran.

Kill that poor man who is being controlled, used and has few good days.

Formerly a shizun, he did not protect him well, but now he has to plan to bring him down personally.

Chu Wanning suddenly closed his eyes, slightly threw his head back, resting his head on the bookshelf. The lights were shining, and he would fly to the fire like a moth.

He must kill Mo Ran.

It's raining.

The incessant drizzle lingered in his bones.

Chu Wanning is his favorite man, waking up from his shallow sleep.

Mo Ran's desire and energy are always amazing. Chu Wanning didn't know whether this person would be so endlessly entangled with Song Qiutong, whether the way he vented out was a simple animal desire or only his own thirst.

It wasn't important.

Mo Ran lay beside him at this time, sleeping soundly, not much different from the previous many long nights. During this period, he became more and more absurd and demanded more and more. It was common for him not to pull out after he had finished. When he woke up the next day, before holding court, he would have another round of sex. He had to kill him.

However, the disparity of strength is so great that Chu Wanning didn't feel that he would win, even if it was just beside his pillow.

Wait a second. He told himself so.

Ultimately, there are two things to be done. One is killing. The other is to open the door of time and space before he grabs behind the scenes, to

prevent the past Mo Ran from being swallowed up by the flower of long hatred. Since the first one can't be finished immediately, he will do the second one. —— Open the first forbidden art, the door of life and death.

Regarding the first technique, he always had some vague impressions in his mind for some reason. Combining the rubbings found by Mo Ran, after numerous failures, he finally roughly restored the original form of the spell. But because there is no spiritual core, it is very difficult for Chu Wanning to perform magic. Fortunately, he and Jiuge (Nine Songs) were born with compatibility, even if there is no spiritual core, he can use it. So although it's very difficult to find out, it's not necessary to say much about the setbacks he's experienced. But all things considered, Chu Wanning finally ripped a tiny space-time gap with the help of Jiuge.

That's the real gap to the past.

As he approached, he heard a whistle coming from the gap.

The time and space, life and death door, opens the door with a whistle, closed the door with a whistle. It's exactly the same as in the books.

He heard a distant, empty voice asking him, "Where are you going?"

At first his heart was beating like a drum, but when he arrived at the bridge, it was suddenly calm.

"Where are you going?"

When that voice repeated its inquiry again, Chu Wanning looked at the Wushan Palace, where singing and dancing had already risen. Today, he provoked a fury from Mo Ran. Now Mo Ran has summoned Song Qiutong to accompany him, so he shouldn't look for him again.

He took a deep breath. His eyes opened bright. “I want to go back to the year when Mo Ran had just been inflicted with the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower.”

He tried to speak more clearly.

“That is the year when the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower was still in its first stage and everything can be saved… Do you understand?”

No one spoke in the crack, but when Chu Wanning was about to be disappointed, a brilliance suddenly lit up and the time-space tunnel slowly opened.

Step by step, the heavens and the Earth spin dizzily. When everything was calm again, he opened his eyes and saw just a few peach blossoms falling in front of him.

He… He really went back many years ago!

At this time, Sisheng Peak, the white moon, is the late spring season.

“…” Chu Wanning stood for a moment, tried to calm his mind, and then pulled away the heavy flowers and walked out of the cracks.

He found himself in the back of the school. The fragrance of the flowers and plants planted by Madam Wang was striking. The distant lights were sparkling. It was the light from thousands of disciples’ rooms, which converges into a quiet galaxy in the night.

It was like a dream to revisit his old place.

Chu Wanning stood in place. Although there were not too many expressions on his face, his mind is full of mixed feelings. He walked slowly

down the road and watched the younger disciples happily pass by. He saw the elder Jing Rong on Wu Jianping trying to negotiate with the Lucun Elder. He passed a corner and even saw the fat cat named “veggie bun” raised by Madam Wang, squatting on the wall, stretching out its plush head and sniffing the roses blooming on the wall.

He was wrong, it wasn’t just a dream. These past years, even in his best dreams, he hasn’t been able to return to such a Sisheng Peak.

Chu Wanning looked at the next step and went forward alone.

He knew that he has no habit of leaving Red Lotus Pavilion at night, so he is not too worried about meeting himself in this time and space.

Walking along, he suddenly saw two teenagers coming face to face. One was bright and beautiful, the other was dazzling as phoenix. He had been walking very slowly, but at last he couldn’t help stopping.

That was Xue Meng and Shi Mei in their childhood.

Ch. 252 [Mount Longxue] Split Soul

The two of them were talking about something interesting, and both of them had a carefree smile on their faces. Xue Meng even raised his hand and placed a small flower with yellow and white petals on Shi Mei's hair, but Shi Mei didn't know whether to laugh or cry as he let out a laugh.

"Ah, Shizun?"

It was already too late to dodge. When Xue Meng turned around, he caught a glimpse of him from the corner of his eye. He was stunned at first, but soon after, he joyfully said, "It's rare to see Shizun so late." As he spoke, he stepped forward to welcome him.

Shi Mei also smiled as he followed, and gently bowed, "Greetings, Shizun."

Chu Wanning didn't know what to say. He wanted to reply, but before he could do so, his eyes turned red. Fortunately, it was late at night, and he had enough darkness to cover his face.

Xue Meng was curious like a cat. "Where is Shizun going?"

"I'm going…" His voice was hoarse. He coughed for a while and said, "I'm going for a walk."

After a while, he couldn't help but ask again.

"What about you?"

"Shi Mei and I just came back from Wuchang Town. I bought a lot of delicious food." At the mention of this, Xue Meng seemed very happy. "There's a temple fair today, it's very lively."

If it was the current Chu Wanning, this conversation would have ended here.

Chu Wanning would not have much interest in understanding what these youths gathered for, what kind of food they bought, and why they were so happy.

At that time, he was bland and distant from everyone, not liking to look at other people's private matters.

However, the current Chu Wanning felt that whether it was Xue Meng, Shi Mei, or even the light in their eyes, every word, expression, or even their eyes was extremely precious.

He wanted to take a few more glances and hear a few more words.

This was something that he would never be able to obtain in his own world.

So he asked, "What did you buy?"

"Does Shizun want to see it?" Xue Meng happily rummaged through his Qiankun bag as if he was offering a treasure. "Fruit Core Peel, Pine Seed Sesame, Osmanthus Sugar…"

After counting for a while, he suddenly brought a handful of osmanthus candy to Chu Wanning.

"I bought too much. I'll give these to Shizun."

Shi Mei also rummaged through his own bag, but he didn't seem to be able to find anything useful, so his ears started to turn red.

“…”

“You don’t need to give anything to me,” Chu Wanning said. He picked up two or three candies and returned the rest to Xue Meng. His eyes were almost moist and gentle under the moonlight.

“That’s enough.”

He knew that the Time Death Gate would close at any moment. He had already overdrawn the power of Jiuge, so it would not be easy for him to open it again. Furthermore, there was only one night time chance. If he went back too late, he was afraid that Taxian-Jun would notice.

Holding back his emotions, he asked, “Where’s Mo Ran? Isn’t he with you?”

The two of them looked at each other. Xue Meng said, “I haven’t seen him since after lunch.”

Shi Mei also said, “He hasn’t been with us for the past few days. He probably has something to do.”

Thus, Chu Wanning went to the disciple’s room, but there was no one in there, so he went to the temple to look for him. Seeing that he was running out of time, he became even more anxious.

After frowning for a long time, he suddenly recalled something.

He thought about it.

Could it be that Mo Ran had gone…

He stopped thinking about it after a while. This idea that seemed like a flame was not comfortable to him at all. His expression slowly darkened, and he could not help but pinch his knuckles.

—

He remembered a place where Mo Ran used to go when he first went astray.

Less than an hour later, Chu Wanning stood outside a wooden building decorated with red and purple engravings.

This was the slightly famous Pear Garden Immortal Peach Pavilion. At this moment, it was already deep into the night, but the resplendent splendor of the Flower Pavilion had just begun. There were people coming in from the left and right. Most of them were men who looked greasy. Chu Wanning, on the other hand, had a cold face and a straight back. He looked out of place in the crowd.

“Guest, please come inside.”

“Let’s take a walk and take a look. There’s a famous actor playing today. A famous person from the Xiangtan Lake won’t lose to Xun Fengruo in singing and Duan Yihan’s dancing. One round of eighty words, with ten words in the front row…”

At the door, a young boy who was waving a scholar’s fan happened to pass by and ridiculed them: “What shameless boast, what great fame, to actually dare to challenge the two immortals Duan Xun.”

“That’s right, a match of eighty words still has the face to be equally famous as Xun Fengruo. Xun Fengruo being weak in a play of eight hundred

gold coins isn’t enough.”

“This lousy theater is cheating again!” A husband passed by, scratching his armpits and giggling.

Chu Wanning did not understand, but hearing that gave him a headache. He lifted his hand and entered the building. That was where the silk lanterns were high and noisy. Some of them were listening to the show, some of them were drinking wine, and some of them were drifting in and out of the charm and gentleness of the rouge paint.

The filmmaker’s golden voice and jade-like muscles gave birth to spring.

On the stage of the first floor, the Imperial Consort was currently drunk on alcohol, his face filled with flowers and flowers. The actor’s every move was soft and mournful, even the audience was filled with endless sighs and feelings of gratitude.

“Good —! Alright!”

“Let’s do another part!”

The pungent smell of the powder made Chu Wanning frown and his face darken. He scanned the area with his phoenix eyes, but couldn’t find the boy anywhere.

Was he wrong again, he wondered?

At this time, the Madam, who was too busy to leave, noticed him. Like a colorful butterfly, she gracefully walked towards him, opened her mouth which was smeared with scarlet rosy clouds, and smiled as she invited him in.

“Young Master, please take a seat and enjoy the show.”

Chu Wanning looked at her, “I’m looking for someone.”

“Looking for someone…” The madam’s smile fell as her gaze turned cold. “Go on and find someone for yourself then.”

Chu Wanning let out a sigh and removed the ring from his waist. It was a beautiful piece of jade given to him by Taxian-Jun. It was warm to the touch. He handed the jade to the madame and repeated, “Find him.”

The madam took it and looked to her left and right.

She coughed lightly as he kept the jade and returned the smile. It was even richer than her head. “Who is Young Master looking for?”

“A young man of about fifteen or sixteen years of age. Mo Ran.”

On the third floor of the Scarlet Beauty Pavilion, there was a graceful and elegant carving. It was no wonder that so many people would be willing to spend their nights drinking so much. Just by throwing the silver into the pot, the beauty of the theater could make up a beautiful dream that was like a poppy flower, and many heroes could turn it into nothing. If the night could be passed like this, be gently dismissed, who would be willing to face the destruction of life, the pain of reality?

“This is it.” The madam lifted a long, narrow finger stained with cardamom and turned over the wooden sign carved with the words “Rong Jiu” on the door.

She raised her eyes and looked at Chu Wanning thoughtfully, “Sir, please wait for me to call out Jiu’er, and then I will invite you to our room to have a chat with your friend.”

“…”

Even the bawd could see how much he cared about him.

Chu Wanning closed his eyes, “Sorry for troubling you.”

She then entered. There seemed to be someone speaking in the room, and it was broken and unclear.

After a while, he came out with a servant following behind her. Chu Wanning glanced at the servant named Rong Jiu, whose cheeks were still flushed red. He looked familiar, as if he was someone else.

Rong Jiu bowed to him in a low voice and left with the madam.

Chu Wanning pushed the door open, and what entered his sight was a red and purple color, causing people’s scalps to go numb. There was no incense in the room, but the smell of wine. Mo Ran lay on his side on the bed, his cheek propped up. His slender fingers were still playing with the red tassels tied to the small clay pot. The bed was also red and messy. It’s best not to think too much about what happened here.

He walked over, and as cold as snow, he stood in this bright lustful room that was out of place for him.

“Ugh… Shizun is here?”

“…”

“Sit down and have a drink? Pear blossom white, good wine. I’m sure you’ve never tried it.”

“You’re drunk,” Chu Wanning said.

Mo Ran chuckled as he watched the man in white walk to his bed. He was indeed drunk. Suddenly, he reached out his hand to pull on Chu Wanning's waist.

"Drunk, alright? Drunk, you are not afraid of anything. Come, come, it's a long night. Why don't you just mess around?"

Chu Wanning did not say anything else. He simply lifted the youth from his bed, which was as red as a sea of desire, as the veins on his hands bulged. He was a man with the bearing of a Grandmaster. At this time, he was still solemn and determined. The trembling of his fingertips betrayed his inner feelings.

He closed his eyes and whispered, "Mo Ran."

The young man let out a cry, but he still did not understand. There was even a heartless smile on his face.

Chu Wanning said hoarsely, "I'm late."

He pressed his forehead against it and slightly moved his fingers. In that instant, the pain was excruciating.

In the midst of this tearing pain, a godly weapon appeared in the world. It was a haitang tree. Its tail was curled up as seven strings of flowing light. What a great Divine Wood Ancient Zither.

Chu Wanning clenched his teeth and allowed the Divine Martial Saint to temporarily transfer his strong spiritual energy onto his body. This kind of spiritual energy was a joke against Taxian-Jun, but it was enough for him to cast many spells.

He pressed Mo Ran's forehead against his own and closed his eyes.

Then he felt… Mo Ran's body did indeed have the aura of the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower. In front of his eyes, it was as if a black, heavy flower was taking root in his heart, burying deep into his veins and vessels.

This was the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower.

It was the source of his evil.

Chu Wanning took a deep breath and chanted the incantation according to the ancient book. Then, he shouted with all his might.

"Soul-Breaking Strike!"

Chu Wanning suddenly opened his eyes, and a cold light shone from the depths of his pupils.

The Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower could only be suppressed by the soul force. Just as mentioned in the book, he cut off half of his soul and passed it from their foreheads into Mo Ran's body.

A fierce wind suddenly blew around him, and Jiuge actually made a phoenix cry.

Spiritual energy was blazing.

Mo Ran… Mo Ran…

In the past, it was Shizun who did not protect you well.

Now, I'll save you.

I'll take care of you.

The torn soul fragments turned into wisps of white dust that kept flowing.

Mo Ran was absent-minded and Chu Wanning was in extreme pain.

There was no end to it.

I'll go with you.

When the last ray of light disappeared, the two of them suddenly lost all their strength. Chu Wanning let go of his hand and Mo Ran fell back into the bed.

Jiuge was also gone, hiding in Chu Wanning's blood and bones.

Having lost half of his soul, it was extremely difficult for him to maintain the stability of his martial spirit.

Chu Wanning sat beside the couch, slowly closing his eyes. His face was so pale that even his lips were bloodless. However, his heart was at ease and relaxed.

He had finally completed the first step of changing his fate.

He used his soul power to interfere with the flower, which had yet to be deeply rooted. He didn't want Mo Ran to lose his mind again.

Time went back. He had finally protected him.

Chu Wanning could not stay any longer. The first thing he needed to do was to prevent Mo Ran from being devoured by the hate flower. He had already done this and was going to do the second thing.

He did not know how powerful the person behind the scenes was. Although that person could not tear open the space crack, caution was

always right.

— He needed to make sure that he could recover the memories of his previous life and fight back in time the moment disaster struck again.

Therefore, the second thing he had done was to find the him from back then.

All of the Forbidden Spells in the Red Lotus Pavilion were useless against him. He easily entered it. He stood by the half-open window and looked at the man in white who was fast asleep on the table.

There was an half-done drawing of a Night-Holy Guardian.

…If only the troubles of the human world could also be dealt with the same way it deals these imps and demons.

Chu Wanning transferred the torn strand of his earthly soul into his body.

Originally, this soul belonged to him, so he didn't feel the slightest bit uncomfortable with it. He watched as the wisp of pure white light floated past, enveloping the 'other him' in a layer of warm light. Slowly, the light dimmed and a wind blew the blueprint on the table to the ground.

"If there is another catastrophe, Mo Ran should not make you his enemy." He stood against the window and whispered to the person inside, "Now that my spirit core has been shattered, my soul has been separated. I can only do this, I can't change our era, but you can."

The person in the room was still unconscious.

"I divided the weakest of the three souls into two, giving half to you and the other half to Mo Ran. If your life goes well, these two halves of the soul

won’t affect you much. However, if this grievance continues to invade or if there is chaos in the world, then I will find a way to merge this strand of soul back together.”

If his prediction was not wrong, the moment his soul and spirit merged, the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower in Mo Ran’s body would be completely destroyed. After merging two souls into one, he would regain the memories of his previous life.

Chu Wanning said, “Don’t blame me for giving you these things. If it’s possible, I also hope that you won’t have to think about it, but…”

He did not continue, only sighing softly.

Then he did the third thing.

This matter was the last barrier — he had gone to find Huaizui. He handed over the censer that he had started refining long ago.

In that censer, he had used the Art of Soul Harmony. This secret technique would absorb the deepest part of his subconscious memories and stimulate the two halves of his soul that had been torn apart to merge back together.

Chu Wanning was not sure what his deepest memories were. He felt that there were too many. Perhaps it was the battle when Shizun and disciple had broken up, or perhaps it was because of the blood dripping from Mo Ran’s hands, or perhaps it was the pain of being humiliated by Mo Ran for the first time.

Too much.

Sometimes people can’t even see themselves clearly.

He urged the censer to be sealed in the caves of Mount Longxue. If he saw anything different about the mortal world, he must bring Mo Ran along with him to this place.

After all this, it was time for Chu Wanning to return. Space and time had the ability to repair themselves. If it wasn't for the destructive tearing process, the cracks would have closed.

In fact, he really wanted to stay here, in this clean and peaceful place where nothing had happened.

However, Chu Wanning knew that he did not belong here. He would never do something that went against the rules of the forbidden martial arts just for his own selfishness and warmth.

He left.

Left a good dream far behind, didn't look back.

"Chu-zongshi."

Returning to his own era, Chu Wanning had just come out of a crack at the back of the mountain to cover up the traces of spiritual energy when he saw a man dressed in red walking towards him on a bluestone path. It was none other than the old servant, Elder Liu, who had served Mo Ran closely.

"Where did the Grandmaster go? Your majesty's Shizun isn't easy to find."

Chu Wanning asked, "Where is he?"

"In the Red Lotus Pavilion."

When he walked over, Mo Ran was sitting under the wisteria pergola with his eyes closed. Seeing him push open the door, he slowly lifted his face. He waved at him.

“Come here.”

Chu Wanning pursed his lips, his expression as indifferent as usual, “Listening to a tune is not good? It’s over so early.”

“There’s nothing to be disappointed about.” Mo Ran said, “Listen carefully, there are only a few notes. I’m tired.”

He opened his sleeves and pulled him into his embrace. Mo Ran did not ask where he had gone to. After all, Chu Wanning had never been obedient. It would be strange if he stayed in the pavilion all the time without moving.

He forced Chu Wanning to sit on his lap and kissed the man’s cheek before burying his face in his chest.

“I just had a dream.”

“Hmm?”

“… In the dream, it was you who taught me how to write.”

Chu Wanning was stunned, his heartbeat suddenly slowed down. However, at this moment, Taxian-Jun was immersed in his own memories. He was unable to extricate himself from them, so he didn’t notice anything strange about him. He only continued speaking in a light and sad tone that he had never even noticed before.

“I didn’t write a single word four or five times. You were very angry, but you didn’t give up on me either. Then when you held my hand and there were flowers floating in through the window, I saw…”

He was too addicted to that big dream that he no longer called himself “Venerable one”.

Mo Ran paused for a moment. In that moment, his expression was actually young and immature.

“I saw something written on the paper. It was nice to see the letter.”

He grinned. It was a smile of pleasure or malevolence.

“This sort of thing can only be seen in your dreams.”

He raised his head and looked at the eyes filled with thoughts. Slowly, the coldness that belonged to Taxian-Jun returned. “Do you know why I wanted to see you all of a sudden?”

“…”

His hand reached out and touched Chu Wanning’s slightly cold face.

“In that dream, you looked good.” Taxian-Jun said blandly, “So that I can see it and not even forget it. So I want to see the real you.”

Chu Wanning lowered his eyes.

“I’m afraid I don’t hate you. I want to hate you. Otherwise, I…”

He was suddenly at a loss for words. Otherwise, what?

Otherwise, I will no longer be able to be magnanimous, or I will not know how to continue forward, or I will not know how to continue this broken life.

I have to hate you. I haven't changed.

"Wanning." He finally closed his eyes and sighed. "In the end, it's just you and me."

For a moment, his heart felt like it was being stabbed by knives. Just as Chu Wanning was about to speak, he suddenly felt as if he had missed his footing and fell from the cliff, waking up from a dream!

—-

Chu Wanning suddenly opened his eyes. What entered his vision was pitch black, he could hear his beating drum-like heart, cold sweat pouring down his body, as if the gloomy and cold face of Taxian-Jun was right in front of him.

His entire body trembled as he panted slightly. The memories of his past life made the hairs on his back stand on end, making him quiver in fear. These memories did not stop there yet, continuing to crazily pounce on him.

His Adam's apple moved, he… Where is it?

Where is he…

Why can't he see anything? Why was everything in front of him black?

His mind was in a mess. After a while, he finally remembered the matters of the Mount Longxue.

He slowly recovered and murmured, “Mo Ran…”

At this moment, his cheek was suddenly touched by a warm and soft palm.

The hand took his chin in its hand and rubbed its thumb against his lips. Chu Wanning heard a voice that had obviously used a voice changing technique, smiling at him.

“I’ve been waiting for you for a long time. You’ve finally woken up.”

Ch. 253 [Mount Longxue] Bastard

“I’ve been waiting for you for a long time. You’ve finally woken up.”

In the quiet room, the voice was strange and distorted. If Chu Wanning could open his eyes, he would find Shi Mei sitting by the bed, staring at him with a smile, like a spider staring at a creature caught in its web.

“How was it? Did you sleep well?”

Chu Wanning didn’t answer immediately. Instead, he moved a little and found that his spiritual energy was only less than 20% recovered. Furthermore, his hands were tied with the Immortal Trapping Rope, and a black ribbon was tied around his eyes.

“…”

There was no use panicking now. Chu Wanning had always been fearless. He knew what kind of ending he wanted, so he knew how to deal with it calmly. In his two lifetimes, he had only been at a loss in front of one person.

Other than that person, no one would let him get into trouble.

Thus, Chu Wanning remained silent, slowly stroking his fragmented memory and the situation before he fainted. Previously, when his consciousness was floating, he had heard some of the sounds coming from the surroundings, but now, he was trying his best to piece together the fragments of words that he had just heard.

Right at this moment, the door to the secret chamber rumbled open. Nangong Liu had returned. He was holding a pile of fresh oranges and

shouting as soon as he entered the room, “My dear friend, brother, the oranges are here! I picked out small circles at the bottom.”

“This kind of taste is exceptionally sweet…” Before he could finish his sentence, he saw Chu Wanning on the bed, “Ah? Big Brother Fei woke up?”

Hearing this form of address, Chu Wanning’s already pale face turned even more gloomy.

Concubine… consort Chu?

Then the so-called brotherly brother was…

Shi Mei took the tangerine that Nangong Liu handed to him. With a smile, he rubbed his head and said, “You did well. But, Imperial Consort Chu and I have something to say to each other. You can go out first and play for a while.”

“Can’t I stay here and play? I can peel the oranges for you.”

“It’s not good for you to stay. There are some things that adults can listen to, but children can’t.”

Nangong Liu naively mumbled and turned around to leave.

For a moment, the room was very quiet. Only the sound of breathing could be heard, and the occasional sound of candlelight crackling could be heard.

Shi Mei picked an orange, skillfully peeling it off and stripping it of its white silk. As he was doing this, he chatted with Chu Wanning as if it was a common occurrence, “Do you know who that person was?”

“…”

“You should not be unfamiliar with his voice.”

After peeling the tangerine, he handed it to Chu Wanning. “Taste it. The tangerine on Mount Jiao was personally planted by Xu Shuanglin. He is very proficient in this path, so it should be very sweet.”

Chu Wanning turned his face away.

Shi Mei leisurely said: “Look at you, once you wake up, you lose your temper.”

Chu Wanning was silent for a moment, then said coldly, “Where is he?”

“Who?”

“You know who I mean.”

Shi Mei raised his eyebrows: “You want to see Mo Ran?”

“…”

Seeing him fall silent, Shi Mei smiled gently: “You sure are considerate towards him. When I woke up, the first thing you said was to find him. I didn’t even need to ask who that was. It’s not worth it to do this for someone who has despised you for half your life.”

The blindfolded man pursed his lips, and the line of his chin became even more gaunt.

Shi Mei stared at it for a while and felt the evil fire in his chest grow stronger. But he boasted of being unhurried and would not rush anything.

People should eat elegantly, without showing their teeth, without any residue. The way of eating was too hasty, like the way Taxian-Jun’s meat

and bones were devoured together. Before the deliciousness of the food could even be chewed on, there was only an empty bowl left.

It was the reincarnation of a hungry dog.

So he got a fire going down there, but he slowly sprinkled his own vegetables with fresh juice and rubbed the texture of his meat. He only needed to cook it until it was fragrant, then take a small bite and put it into his stomach.

“Another piece of gossip. Don’t you want to eat the oranges that are brought to your mouth? You’re so stubborn. In the past, how did you serve Emperor Taxian-Jun?”

“Take it away.”

“I think it’s better for you to eat. Your lips are already cracked from the lack of water these days.”

Chu Wanning, however, could only grit his teeth and asked, “Where’s Mo Ran?”

Shi Mei stared at him for a few seconds, and slowly, he stopped laughing.

“Whether in this life or the previous one, whether you have memories or not, your eyes will only look at Mo Ran. Shizun…” he have not spoken the word, known aphasia, he immediately stopped.

However, it missed a slight tremble on Chu Wanning’s face. “…”

Shi Mei narrowed his eyes, “Tell me, what’s so good about Mo Ran?”

He looked down at Chu Wanning and saw that the last bit of blood on his lips was also slowly fading.

“That person is impulsive in his actions and has no brains. His thoughts are naive and ridiculous, and his character is not good either. What do you like about him?”

“…”

“Face? Spiritual force? Taste?”

In the end, he had endured for so long. The more he spoke, the more the fishy smell in his voice became more obvious.

Especially when he saw Chu Wanning biting his lips as if he was trying to suppress his emotions, his mouth grew even more dry.

Words began to move in a more intimate direction.

“Or his ability in bed?”

Anger appeared on Chu Wanning’s pale face, and it made him blush. “Shut up.”

Shi Mei didn’t intend to shut his mouth. He had finally gotten his hands on this man. If he didn’t play with him thoroughly, then why would he stop? He said with a smile, “Concubine Chu still doesn’t know that after you died in your previous life, Mo Ran gave you a noble title.”

His interest was piqued as he observed the expression on Chu Wanning’s face.

“It does sound a bit funny, but it’s quite appropriate. At the end of the day, you were indeed clean and clean in your previous life. However, this way, there’s actually no comparison. Since you have never tried anyone else, you will only think of him as the best.”

The tips of his fingers were sliding down.

Nose tip, lips, chin, Adam’s apple.

Chu Wanning was trembling slightly, the veins on his wrists bulging as he tried to break free from the immortal binding chains, but he could not move in the end.

“Don’t waste your energy. It’s fine if Imperial Consort Chu wants to untie it, or if you want to know where Mo Ran is, I can satisfy you.” He changed the subject, “But, you are my spoils of war after all. You should at least play with me for a bit, right?”

“… What do you want to do?”

Shi Mei laughed: “I want you to stop being distracted by that person. Don’t keep thinking about him, just think about me, okay?”

“You are the one who planted the curse in my previous life. What else is there to think about?”

If you listened carefully, you could hear the pain in Chu Wanning’s voice.

Chu Wanning seemed to be doing his best to suppress his emotions, but he couldn’t stop himself from bursting out.

Shi Mei laughed: “That’s right, it’s me. But why doesn’t Concubine Chu try to guess who my real identity is?”

“If you want to say it, then say it, if you don’t want to say it, then don’t say it.”

“Sigh, when can you not be fierce?” Shi Mei sighed and said, “How about this, Imperial Consort Chu, it is said that a big gamble can hurt your health, but a small gamble will make you happy; if you really want something, you have to hurt yourself. So, why don’t we take a gamble?”

“…”

“However,” Shi Mei paused, “before we begin, I still have to slightly offend you, so I have to take a look at how many pieces of clothing you are wearing.”

Seeing Chu Wanning remain silent, the lower half of his face was tense, making his expression softer. He counted them one by one, and finally he counted out a total of five clothes.

“In that case, I’ll give you five chances. If your answer is correct within five times, I’ll tell you where Mo Ran is.” After a pause, he continued, “However, every time you make a mistake, I will remove one of your clothes. If consort Chu hasn’t answered all five of his clothes, then…”

He didn’t finish his sentence. He just smiled, subconsciously licking his lips with the tip of his pale pink tongue. Then he just sat there quietly, waiting for Chu Wanning’s guess. Chu Wanning did not say anything. He was not in a hurry and continued to wait patiently.

Right now, he was very free. He had plenty of time.

However, as time passed, Chu Wanning still did not respond. Shi Mei raised his eyebrows. He had plenty of time, but he might not be as patient.

“Guess.”

Chu Wanning finally said, “Scram.”

Shi Mei’s face darkened: “… Now that you are in my hands, you should be clear about what can and cannot be done.”

“…”

“Chu Wanning. You have no bargaining chip with me. Taxian-Jun might be unable to handle you, and might let you go at times. However, I am different.”

Shi Mei said coldly, “In my hands, it’s better if you behave yourself.”

He waited for a while longer, but seeing that Chu Wanning was still silent, his tone became harder and harder, “Don’t ignore me! Don’t think that I won’t be able to do anything to you just because you don’t say anything.”

As he spoke, he placed his hands on Chu Wanning’s waist. Then, he slowly stroked the seal, his fingertips sliding past it like a knife cutting through fish.

“Listen, I’ll count to three. If you don’t speak now, you’ll bear the consequences.” As he spoke, his eyes lit up.

He actually didn’t know whether he wanted Chu Wanning to guess or not. But no one could guess that this time was no longer important. Nothing could be turned back, and all he could think of was how to reveal himself.

After all, the man in front of him had fought with him for two lifetimes. Now that he had won, he had to carefully lick the fruits of his victory.

“One.”

In front of his eyes, a glimmer of victory could be seen.

“Two.”

What would happen to Chu Wanning? Anger? Grief? Fear?

He waited with open lips.

“Three… Alright, consort Chu is truly fierce, it’s no wonder that Taxian-Jun wants you to the point of being addicted.” Shi Mei half-jokingly half-seriously said, “Since you’re not going to guess, then we’ll do something crude. You…”

“Hua Binan.”

His voice was cold.

Shi Mei’s finger paused slightly, his attempt to break the seal on Chu Wanning’s waist froze. Then, he smiled: “You guessed half of it right. Continue?”

“…”

He revealed a fox-like slyness. This slyness might seem vulgar in others, but Shi Mei was so elegant that he was like a lotus flower in water no matter what time it was.

He firmly believed that Chu Wanning would not be able to guess the final truth. He was very proud of himself.

“I’d rather you were dead.”

The smile on Shi Mei's face froze. After a while, he asked, "What did you say?"

The voice of the person on the bed was very cold, lacking even the slightest bit of heat.

"In my previous life, that time when the sky split and the snow fell… I'd rather you were dead."

Shi Mei stared at him. The words he had prepared suddenly spilled out of nowhere and became incoherent.

He had already raised his hand halfway up in the air. He didn't know where to go, so he suddenly didn't know what to do.

"Shi Mingjing." A soft sigh, like a bee hibernating in a trance, sounded, "It's you."

"…"

Although it was a sentence filled with doubts, there wasn't a single sound that could be heard.

For a moment, no one was able to see his expression. After a while, he chuckled, "I didn't die. I let you down."

He didn't want to admit defeat, but there was a certain lack of interest in his tone.

Shi Mei said: "I am indeed the Shi Mingjing from your previous life. I came from your previous life, the world of Taxian-Jun. I'm not the same person who has always been by your side." He paused for a moment. "I'll keep my word and help you untie it."

As he spoke, he untied the Immortal rope and placed his hand on Chu Wanning's silk ribbon. With a slight force, he removed the silk rope.

Peach blossom eye to phoenix eye, two look at each other, ancient well no waves.

"Greetings, Shizun."

Chu Wanning was prepared for this, but the gloom only grew deeper. He looked at him and said, "You even know that I am your Shizun."

Hearing him say this, Shi Mei gently smiled. Only now did he realize what kind of sharp dagger was hidden beneath his gentleness.

"Well, of course. I have never forgotten to hold an umbrella of my own."

Chu Wanning looked very weak, but it didn't change the determination on his face. He stared at Shi Mei like this for a long time, his lips parted and his words crushed. He coldly said, "You bastard."

Shi Mei smiled: "It's a good thing you let me win." Pausing, he continued, "But Shizun, when did you guess my identity? In his previous life?"

Chu Wanning didn't answer, only coldly looked at him.

There was resentment in those eyes, but disappointment was the most abundant.

Shi Mei thought: "No, it can't be your previous life. If you knew in your previous life that I was Hua Binan, you would've told Huaizui when you tore the Gate of Time and Space."

He lifted his eyelashes. “It was in this life. Or was it just a short while ago? When you were at Mount Longxue, did you hear the conversation between me and Mo Ran?”

“…”

“Never mind, it’s not important.” Shi Mei smiled, “No matter what, you’re in my hands now, you’ll never be able to escape.”

Chu Wanning became increasingly silent.

In fact, out of the three disciples, the one he could not see through the most was Shi Mei. At that time, he was willing to accept this disciple because he was respectful, gentle, anxious, worried, and kind to others. This was a demeanor that Chu Wanning admired a lot. He couldn’t do it himself, so he admired it greatly and accepted this disciple.

However, there were times when he felt that something was wrong. For example, Xue Zhengyong said that Shi Mei was an orphan he had picked up during the war, but when Shi Mei talked about his background, he would occasionally be a little incoherent. It was like someone had lied and then forgotten the details.

There were also times when Shi Mei’s attitude towards things would suddenly become a little strange — he was like a domesticated ferocious dog, seemingly obedient. However, whenever he smelled the scent of blood, he could not help but reveal an ominous glint.

However, after observing for a few years, he had never seen Shi Mei do anything unrighteous, and Chu Wanning thought that he was seeing things. He saw the flowers as a bunch of green flowers and saw them as fangs.

He was like a hedgehog. His whole body was very sharp, and only his abdomen was soft.

He hid his apprentice, and all those who were good to him, under a soft belly.

Regarding Shi Mei, he had once wandered between trust and distrust. He had held back in the past and tried to test him, but he eventually chose to trust him. As a result, the knife stabbed into the porcupine's abdomen, causing hot blood to flow everywhere.

"How much do you remember from the past?"

"…"

Then he asked, "Weren't you willing to stand by and watch without doing anything? Why do you have to stop me?"

"…"

In his previous life, he had been filled with too much resentment and was finally able to ask about it in his current life. However, Shi Mei was unwilling to stop at this point and continued on endlessly, "Why didn't you kill Taxian-Jun in the end and even helped him reincarnate?"

Hearing the last sentence, Chu Wanning finally raised his head, "He is different from you."

Shi Mei paused: "What's different? If you say that my heart is vicious, then isn't his hand covered in blood?"

Chu Wanning stared at him, "You should be clear about the curse you planted."

“So what? Even if it’s my curse, isn’t he the one who killed them?” Shi Mei said, “In my previous life, you saw it with your own eyes. Half of the mountains were destroyed, Xue Zhengyong, Wang Chuqing, Jiang Xi, Ye Wangxi… From whose hands did these people die?”

Slowly he raised his hand and watched his slender fingers and his smooth nails.

What a pair of delicate and clean hands, delicate and meticulous, spotless.

Shi Mei blinked and laughed: “Could it be me?”

“…” For a moment, he was speechless.

“I didn’t want to slaughter the people from the Rufeng Sect, nor did I want to kill Xue Zhengyong. So you shouldn’t have come looking for your life. What did I do? All I did was plant a Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower for him. In my entire life, I’ve never killed anyone with my own hands.”

Shi Mei continued to smile merrily: “So in the end, he was the one who took the knife, and he was the one who stabbed you. It’s not much to do with me. The Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower can’t bring him any new hate. All of his desires belonged to him, and the spell could do is only amplify them. If this debt is to be held against me, I will feel wronged.”

With every word he said, the disgust in Chu Wanning’s heart increased. In the end, when he heard him say that he felt wronged, Chu Wanning suddenly raised his head, his eyes were as cold as ice, “What are you wronged about?”

“It was him who did it. What right does Shizun have to blame me?”

“Don’t you know who he is?!”

“Of course I know who he is. The person I’m not sure about is probably you, Shizun.”

The orange had strands of white silk stuck in his fingers. Shi Mei felt that it was too dirty, so he took out a piece of white silk and carefully wiped it, then said, “Why would Mo Ran slaughters Rufeng Sect Gate? Because he had hatred in his heart. How could Mo Ran kill Xue Zhengyong? Because he had fear in his heart. Why did Mo Ran humiliate you? Because he has desires in his heart.”

As Shi Mei spoke, he glanced at Chu Wanning and said, “If someone stabbed him, he wouldn’t be able to forgive them. If someone gave him the benefits, he wouldn’t be able to refuse. For a beauty, he cannot be a man of little desire — that is his nature.”

Chu Wanning gritted his teeth and said, “Shi Mingjing. Don’t you think it’s ridiculous for you to erase his most pure thoughts, to inflate his hatred by a thousand times, and to say that everything he does is his own desires? Whose hatred will not destroy the heavens and the earth after it has been amplified, you?”

“Then who let him have his own hatred? Who let him have ambition in his bones? Who let him have his own desires?” Shi Mei laughed, “If he has such skills, then he would be like a pure child with no evil intentions. But even if he has that kind of talent, he wouldn’t be able to cause much trouble. Therefore, it was still his fault for not having a clean mind. He’s just a normal person.”

Hearing this, Chu Wanning’s face turned ugly. He was about to speak again, but then he heard another sentence from Shi Mei.

“People are responsible for one’s desires, that’s nothing to argue about.”

“…”

If Chu Wanning had wanted to talk to him earlier, then he suddenly felt that it was not worth it to say something after what he had just said. Chu Wanning turned his head away.

Seeing his expression, Shi Mei shook his head, “Shizun, you’re too biased towards him.”

“…”

“In your eyes, he has a reason for everything. It’s understandable.”

“Then tell me, who should I understand?” Chu Wanning was as cold as ice, “You?”

“…” Shi Mei was quiet for a moment before smiling, “So Shizun still likes him?”

Chu Wanning’s gaze was akin to the reflection of the moon in an icy lake.

“Thus, in my past and present lives, I have competed with him in two lifetimes. Even if I won, I would still be inferior to him.”

Chu Wanning coldly replied, “What are you going to use to compete with him?”

Shi Mei narrowed his eyes, “Do you really only have these few words to say about me? Is there nothing else?”

Chu Wanning did not reply immediately. Looking at his expression, it seemed that he was seriously considering the question. Then, he lifted the

curtain of his eyelashes. It was extremely cold and quiet.

“Yes.”

Shi Mei laughed: “What is it?”

Chu Wanning said expressionlessly, “You don’t even have to compare yourself to Mo Ran. You can’t even compare to Xu Shuanglin. At the very least, he still had feelings and dared to admit it. He’s not like you, Hua Binan.”

In the end, he no longer called him Shi Mingjing.

“You are such a bastard,” Chu Wanning replied.

Ch. 254 [Mount Longxue] Missing You

Shi Mei suddenly stopped. His snow-white face was slightly twitching, as if he had been slapped in the face. However, he still pursed his lips, “You really didn’t leave me any face at all.”

As he said this, he touched Chu Wanning’s lower jaw, but Chu Wanning avoided his hand like a scorpion.

Shi Mei squinted his eyes. For a moment, the storm was on his face, but in the end it died down to nothing.

“Let’s not talk about this anymore.” After he had calmed down, Shi Mei’s face was still warm and gentle, “Anyway, you are just an single-minded person. You wanted to kill him in your previous life, right? However, in the end… you didn’t have the heart to. You even injected all of your broken soul into his heart before you died.”

Shi Mei was not wrong. That year, in the life-and-death battle in the Snow Region of Kunlun, the last time Chu Wanning touched Mo Ran's forehead lightly with his fingertip, the remnants of his own fragmented soul transferred.

In his life, in the end, his soul had spilled out. One strand of it had remained in the body of the past Mo Ran of the past, one strand had been left to his past self, and all the rest, he held a slim hope and transferred it to the Emperor Taxian.

Chu Wanning had no idea how to break through the third stage of the flower, but since the flower needed the spirit of the caster to bloom, perhaps his spirit soul would change…

He was no longer a mummified body. He had done his best to do what needed to be done and what could be done. He had never been decisive in killing. The only thing he was soft-hearted about was Mo Weiyu.

Because there was still a glimmer of hope to save him, he did not kill him in the end. He did not hesitate to sacrifice his fragmented soul, hoping to bring back the Mo Ran from before to the world.

Although at the time he wasn't sure if it would work.

Seemingly seeing through his thoughts, Shi Mei laughed: "Although you can't remove the curse in his chest by doing that, it can indeed disrupt his state of mind and make him think both good and evil, ultimately killing him like a mad demon."

"…"

Chu Wanning's expression changed slightly as he looked up.

In fact, he had already guessed the ending of Mo Ran from his previous life when he contacted Taxian-Jun, who had no heartbeat, in Mount Jiao. However, when he heard the words "his own death", his heart still ached.

Shi Mei looked at him and continued, "Shizun, you did it. You did protect him. Sigh, I still don't understand. At that time, you were just a cripple. How did you ruin my plan? You… You surprise me."

His soft eyelashes, which were as soft as cattails, fell down. It was as if he wanted to kiss Chu Wanning.

Chu Wanning suddenly snapped out of his daze and raised his hand to grab his throat as fast as lightning. The veins on the back of his hand bulged.

Shi Mei's expression didn't change at all. He carelessly pinched Chu Wanning's wrist, as if he had already expected such a reaction from him.

He laughed. "What? Shizun still wants to destroy me a second time, and a third time? Unfortunately, it's already too late. It's already impossible."

As the sound of his voice faded, the hissing of a snake could be heard. A Golden-Ringed Snake flew out from Shi Mei's sleeve, and bit down on Chu Wanning's arm.

It was unknown what kind of quenching and feeding the snake had done. It only pecked at it, but the pain was unbearable.

Chu Wanning was too weak to hold on to his wrist, so he was tied to the bed pillar in an even more humiliating manner than before.

"Don't worry, this snake is not poisonous." Shi Mei tied his hands up and sat up. His cold white fingertips caressed the Golden-Ringed Snake, and his peach blossom eyes slanted, "This snake is specialized. After it bites you, you will only feel weak all over. I respect Shizun, so this is the only way I can do it."

Shi Mei raised his hand and the slithering snake disappeared into his sleeve.

"Speaking of which, I was forced by helplessness in my previous life to have you accompany Mo Weiyu for so long. I'm actually very unwilling." He stood up and with his fingertips he calmly began to unbutton his cloak, then his outer robe, and then…

The look on Chu Wanning's face suddenly changed to one of disgust. "Shi Mingjing!"

Shi Mei smiled gently and walked towards Chu Wanning, “Let me tell you a little secret. When you were married in your previous life, I even attended the banquet as Hua Binan.”

“Although Taxian-Jun has his own selfish thoughts and was covering you with red silk so that the guests couldn’t see your appearance and could only know that he married consort Chu, I knew that it was you. So that day, after the banquet ended, I didn’t leave. I went to the Red Lotus Pavilion—and then he came in.”

Shi Mei’s eyes flashed.

“At that time, although he was already controlled by me using the curse, his thoughts and emotions couldn’t all be controlled by me. Thus, I could not let him discover me. I hid and did not leave.”

Chu Wanning was trembling in rage and disgust.

Shi Mei sat down and slowly caressed his chest with a pair of slender hands: “Did you know?”

His voice was a little hoarse, and there was a hint of greed in his eyes.

His fingertip moved inch by inch until it stopped on Chu Wanning’s abdomen and began to unseal his waist.

“That night, when you were lying under him and had your body smeared with aphrodisiac… Tsk, tsk.” Shi Mei’s eyes reddened in desire, “I’ve been thirsty for two lifetimes.”

Chu Wanning felt extremely humiliated, but the merging of his memories of his two lives was extremely taxing. After being bitten by the Golden-

Ringed Snake, he did not have any strength left in his body, so he gritted his teeth and shouted, “Shi Mingjing, fuck off!”

Shi Mei chuckled: “It’s just going to bed, there’s no need to be so fierce. Your disciple already slept with you. Let’s stop pretending to be reserved.”

“Get out!”

“Lie down and serve one disciple, or two. Both are the same. If I don’t mind, why don’t you enjoy yourself? Maybe my skills are not any worse than his.”

“You give me —”

Before he could finish his sentence, he heard a cold voice coming from the door.

“Get the hell out of here.”

Chu Wanning looked as if he had been struck by lightning. Suddenly, he raised his head and saw that the stone door had already been opened. A man with an unknown face was holding a black gold blade. He was standing outside the half-open door of the secret room, looking cold and tall with a straight back.

Shi Mei narrowed his eyes, “It’s you…? So fast?”

That person took a heavy step forward, bringing with him a cold aura. For a moment, the lights in the room flickered, and the candlelight shined on his black armor suit, making it very cold. At this point, he could finally see his appearance clearly. He had a pair of long, skinny legs, and was wrapped in combat boots. He wore a silver dragon head belt around his skinny waist, a

silver concealed weapon case, sharp bracers on his wrists, and a pair of black dragon scale gloves.

Above that was a handsome face, with an heroic air to it.

The emperor Taxian-Jun!

The Emperor's body emitted a terrifying cold and bloody aura, as if he had just returned from a battlefield.

He raised his eyes, his pale cheeks still stained with blood. His eyes were like bayonets as they stared at the two people on the bed.

To be exact, he only glanced at Chu Wanning, and his eyes glinted with a cold light.

"Fuck off."

When Shi Mei saw him enter the room, his face first turned cold. Then, he straightened his body and slowly sat up.

"Did you kill all the people that I told you to kill in Guyue'ye?"

"Not yet." Taxian-Jun walked towards them while gritting his white teeth. He bit the edge of the glove and removed it, revealing the well-manicured hand beneath. He threw the blood-stained gloves on the table, stared at Shi Mei, and said maliciously, "Be tactful. You're not the only one under this Venerable One command."

Shi Mei's face didn't look good either, "You'd better be clear about who you're talking to."

“This Venerable One can only tell if he is happy or not.” Taxian-Jun said coldly, “You got on the wrong bed. Rise.”

“When did it become your turn to shout at me?”

Taxian-Jun said dangerously, “This Venerable One has always been like this.”

Shi Mei seemed to be slightly angry, his eyes flashed: “… I am your master!”

“So what if you are? Mount Jiao belongs to this Venerable one, and the person on the bed is mine.” Taxian-Jun looked down at Shi Mei with clear eyes and a mocking smile, “Master. Please get lost.”

Taxian-Jun Emperor and Shi Mingjing exchanged a few words, exchanging tit for tat, and fireworks flew in all directions. As for Chu Wanning, he did not know what was going on, so he stood aside and observed quietly.

Shi Mingjing had just said that Taxian-Jun was dead. Then, who was this person in front of him? A Chess piece? A living puppet?

Also, back then he tried to suppress the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower on this life ‘Mo Ran’. As for the Emperor in his previous life, because the parasite had entered too deep, he had long since been unable to recover from its effect. Therefore, logically speaking, he should have loved Shi Mei to the point where he was unable to extricate himself.

However, from the tone of his voice, the Emperor Taxian-Jun actually didn’t treat Shi Mingjing as such.

…And, what about the so-called Master?

Shi Mei stared at Taxian-Jun for a while, then sneered and stood up to put on his clothes.

He was very clear about what Chu Wanning did not know.

In his previous life, Mo Ran had died by himself and he had immediately lost his lackey. Thus, he used Mo Ran's corpse along with the remnant soul consciousness in his body to refine it, turning it into a living corpse. This living corpse was very similar to Zhenlong Chess. It was also willing to listen to his commands, and retained all of its consciousness while it was still alive.

Perhaps it was because he had suffered too many setbacks while he was still alive, or perhaps he had suffered too many setbacks in his life and his body was already in tatters. All in all, in the heart of this living dead Taxian-Jun, his understanding of Shi Mei, was extremely chaotic.

As a result, even if he were to look at Hua Binan's face, he wouldn't realize that he was Shi Mei. He simply thought of his as him "Master".

Moreover, he wasn't too willing to listen to his words.

"I really can't do anything to you."

Shi Mei walked up and poked Taxian-Jun on the forehead, "Soul-shattering!"

With a shout, Taxian-Jun froze. His eyes that were originally sharp as a rhinoceros suddenly became dull and lost their focus in the blink of an eye.

"It was clearly a puppet made by me, and it's becoming more and more disobedient. It always disagrees with me, and even tried to counterattack

me.” Shi Mei patted his cold face, “But forget it, I won’t blame you. You are not a complete ‘person’ to begin with.”

Taxian-Jun: “…”

“Just bear with it. In a few days, when I get that thing and bring you back to your original world, you will be a good boy.”

As he finished this sentence, his control over Taxian-Jun had reached its limit. This speed of recovery caused the expression on Shi Mei’s face to darken. He didn’t think that in such a short period of time, Taxian-Jun’s pupils would regain their former brilliance and become even more resolute and cold than before.

This cold and oppressive gaze was focused on Shi Mei. Taxian-Jun paused for a moment, his eyes slightly narrowed, and his nose wrinkled. His expression was similar to that of a cheetah serving its food: “Hm? Why haven’t you rolled away yet?”

As he spoke, his fingers gripped onto the hilt of the knife.

“You want to use this Venerable one as a target?”

Shi Mingjing didn’t want to talk to him anymore, or rather, the malevolent aura of the emperor Taxian-Jun was so profound that even though he was the “master”, he knew that he couldn’t tighten the reins on his neck.

If this Lord of Darkness were to go insane, it would be terrifying.

Shi Mei left.

After he left, Taxian-Jun stared at Chu Wanning on the bed for a good while with a strange and subtle look. It was as if he was doing his best to restrain

himself from wishing for something.

Finally, he sat down, reached out his hand and held Chu Wanning's waist.

"I…"

He paused, not knowing how to continue. He pursed his lips and changed his words.

"You…"

Chu Wanning looked at him for a long time, but his eyes were still locked on his. Then, he slowly blinked his slightly sore eyes.

"Ahem, this Venerable one has something important to tell you."

"Go ahead."

Taxian-Jun hesitated for a moment, then said resolutely, "Actually, it's not that important. I'd rather not talk about it."

"…"

After a while, he spoke with a more determined tone, "It doesn't matter whether it's important or not. Since you want to know so badly, I don't mind telling you."

Chu Wanning: "…"

"Actually, this Venerable one wants to say…" Taxian-Jun took a deep breath, closed his eyes, and spoke in an extremely stiff tone, "This Venerable one wishes to say, after so many years, it seems… I did miss you so much…"

He quickly added, “But I didn’t think too much about it, just a little.”

He had only said these two words when his handsome and pale face immediately revealed an extremely regretful expression.

Chu Wanning stared at him blankly. With two lifetimes’ worth of memories and souls intertwined together, he didn’t even know what kind of mentality he should have to face this man.

However, Taxian-Jun did not give him much time to think.

He seemed to be irritated, so he simply untied the rope and pulled him over. A big hand touched the back of his head, and then a kiss came down.

Taxian-Jun’s lips were icy cold, but his desire was fiery.

In this intrusive and anxious kiss, the past came back to haunt him.

As he kissed him, the two of them, the two missing pieces of his spirit souls, finally kissed again after two lifetimes of being separated by the mundane world, entwined together.

While he was being hugged and kissed by Taxian-Jun, Chu Wanning seemed to have thought of many things. However, at the same time, his mind seemed to have gone blank, unable to gather his thoughts.

But in the end, he knew his eyes were moist.

It didn’t matter if he was right or wrong, good or evil, everything was difficult to define. Everything was no longer clear.

But he knew when he kissed the man who no longer had any warmth.

Taxian-Jun did not lie to him.

Mo Ran had not lied to him.

He really did miss him.

Ch. 255 [Mount Longxue] Convicted

It was unknown how long the kiss lasted before Taxian-Jun let him go. Chu Wanning thought that he would just let the matter go, but unexpectedly, his lips just left his and touched him again.

After repeating this a few times, Taxian-Jun was finally satisfied. He licked his lips and stared at Chu Wanning's face with his dark eyes.

"It hasn't changed. It's you."

There were too many things to ask and too many unforeseen events. Chu Wanning was quiet for a while, then he said in a hoarse voice: "…You still remember the past?"

"Naturally."

"Do you remember how you died?"

"The ten great sects had joined hands to attack me, I was very tired of them."

"Do you remember how I died?"

The gloominess between Taxian-Jun's brows faded slightly, but it was replaced by a layer of grey: "Taxue Palace, you were preventing me from taking actions. I hated you."

Chu Wanning asked again, "Then, do you remember how you came back to life?"

"Hua Binan saved me."

“What are the specifics?”

“This is…” He didn’t say anything else though. A look of surprise appeared on his face. However, this feeling did not last long. He closed his eyes, and when he opened them again, they were clear.

Taxian-Jun frowned, “What did you just say?”

Chu Wanning kept quiet.

He almost knew what Shi Mei had done to this body. Since ancient times, people had always had a hard time controlling it. After Mo Ran died, Shi Mei could not completely control this corpse’s emotions, nor did he dare to break the chaotic memories of Mo Ran to such an extent.

Therefore, he could only choose to erase the important matter that would affect Mo Ran’s listening ability in a very small way.

This Taxian-Jun Emperor in front of him was most likely just a walking corpse.

Chu Wanning closed his eyes. After a while, he seemed to want to say something, but before he could speak, a sweet taste rushed to his throat. He coughed violently.

“Mo Ran…” His lips were stained with blood. He raised his misty eyes. “Stop working for others. You are already a shell, rest in peace. You. Cough, cough.”

Everything in front of his eyes turned dark, and the scattered fragments began to surge again.

You should go back to the past. You have already been buried underground for a long time, and this place does not belong to you.

However, he didn't have the energy to say that sentence again. Chu Wanning only moved his lips before losing consciousness again.

In the end, he only saw Taxian-Jun frowning as he talked to himself. His handsome and pale face seemed to be somewhat anxious.

"Chu Wanning." He heard him call out to him, just like in his previous life, "Wanning…"

He closed his eyes, and the pain of his soul merging invaded him again. What happened next, he did not know.

Outside the Thousand Mountains, the forest was bleak.

It had been raining heavily for the past few days, and even the wooden frame of the relay station was covered in a fine mildew. Looking out from the window of the relay station, one could see streams of water dripping from bamboo leaves into the pond, creating ripples.

Suddenly, a pair of shoes stepped into the water, shattering the clouds and sky.

Mo-zongshi appeared in front of the winding mountain path leading to the Sisheng Peak.

Ever since the upheaval at Mount Longxue, his spirit energy had yet to recover and he was unable to control the sword. Because he was worried about the safety at the Sisheng Peak, he rushed back from Mount Longxue without stopping and spent a total of four days.

Along the way, he actually thought of many things.

For example, the reason for his rebirth, or the reason why Chu Wanning set up such a mysterious formation in the cavern in his previous life, or Shi Mei's reason.

After thinking for a long time, he could not find any clear answer.

He was not an intelligent person, and now that he was suffering and worrying, he could not calm down and think about it carefully – Shi Mei knew him, and Chu Wanning was his weakness. As long as Chu Wanning recalled the past, he would be sentenced to death. His mind was in a mess.

The rain gradually grew heavier, and Mo Ran stood in the wind at the top of the mountain steps. He raised his head, and wisps of silver frost landed on his face. In front of him, there was a winding stone staircase leading to the peak of the mountain.

This mountain path was a path of life and death. It was a path of sorrow and joy. It was a path that had been trekked countless times in two lifetimes, from youth and inexperience to the end of time and the end of time.

It was very cold. Rain mixed with snowflakes fell, wetting his black clothes and dyeing his hair.

The youth should have no worries, the wind blew white on his hair…

Mo Ran closed his eyes and walked up the long stairs, heading up the mountain.

A sound finally "creaked" as he pushed open the door to the Loyalty Palace.

The door slowly opened. His two lifetimes of madness and glory, his nightmares and darkness, were all fated for this.

He thought back to his previous life, when he was twenty-two years old and had changed Loyalty Hall to Wushan Hall. He stood in front of the old signboard and swore to step over all the deities to rule the world.

This is where that life fell, and this life should end.

The Loyalty Hall was densely packed with people. There were even more reputable people gathered here than when Mount Jiao went against Xu Shuanglin.

Hearing the door open, everyone turned around to see a tall man in black clothing standing at the doorstep. His face was pale and there were a few strands of wet black hair on his forehead. The light was behind him, the dome leaden, the rain and snow falling.

No one had expected Mo Ran to appear so suddenly.

Was he the hero that used his life in exchange for everyone's safety, or was he the bloodless devil at Guyue'ye? What kind of person was he?

For a moment, no one made a sound. Everyone's eyes were fixated on the man that just returned.

Those who trusted him found him pathetic, wet and cold, like a dog coming home out of the rain. Those who did not trust him only felt that he was very terrifying. He was gloomy and deep, like a ghost that had crawled out of hell.

The rain drummed on the roof's green eaves, seeping into the cracks in the stone in front of the steps and covering them with moss.

Mo Ran lifted his pitch-black eyes. Under his fan like eyelashes, his eyes were moist. He said softly, “Uncle, I’m back.”

“Ran’er! How — how can you be alone?”

Xue Zhengyong was sitting in the seat of honor. His face was pale and he had a rare slovenly look. His iron fan was casually spread out on the table. “The world is ugly.”

“Where’s Yuheng?”

Mo Ran walked into the hall. He was like a drop of water, falling into the oil that burned to a hundred percent and was instead tranquil. He stirred up a crackling sound, and almost everyone took a big step back while he walked.

“Mo Ran!”

“Demon, you actually have the face to come out!”

“You killed so many people at Guyue’ye’s place, yet you still dare to show your face!”

On the way here, he had long heard about the bloody incident that happened at Guyue’ye. He was also very clear on how crazy Taxian-Jun would be. What did dozens of people count for? Hundreds, thousands, and tens of thousands. In his eyes, the people of this world were nothing more than corpses.

“Madman… You and Hua Binan are in cahoots!”

“What else do you want? Today, the experts of the various sects were here, and the Pavilion master of the Tianyin Pavilion would soon arrive. Even if

you are crafty and extremely fickle, you will still not be able to escape from this inescapable trap!”

“Mo Ran, you’re too cunning. Sing ‘Red Face’ and ‘White Face’ for a while, make everyone confused so that your scheme will succeed. How vicious are you!”

Surrounding them were waves of attacks and questions, as angry faces surged one after another. Mo Ran ignored everyone and continued walking forward. He had more or less understood the meaning of Hua Binan’s words — forgive him for not wanting to call him Shi Mei.

Hua Binan dug a grave for him. Even the inscription on the tombstone has been written down. Hua Binan calculated it very clearly, he would jump in by himself.

This was because from the moment Chu Wanning recalled his past life, Mo Weiyu had already turned himself into a corpse that could not be saved.

It was over.

“No matter how many fake masks you have on your face and how many heroes gathering today, I will expose your true appearance.”

“You must be sent to the Tianyin Pavilion to be punished!”

The din was deafening. The words that pierced the eardrums the most were three: “Tianyin Pavilion”.

Mo Ran did not expect that Hua Binan would involve the Tianyin Pavilion. Coincidence? Or had he planned this long ago?

The Tianyin Pavilion was passed down from an ancient sect in the cultivation world for thousands of years. The Sect Leader was first the descendant of God and immortals, and later was passed on by blood from generation to generation. After many generations, the Tianyin Pavilion Master's divine blood had thinned out, but it was still rich in spiritual energy. Even though the Tianyin Pavilion did not concern itself with the mortal world, it was just like how mortals believed in cultivators. Cultivators also believed in the justice of the Tianyin Pavilion.

A hundred years of authority was already hard to overthrow, not to mention a thousand years. Therefore, even Taxian-Jun Lord Ascended the Heavens in his previous life, in the end, he still left behind a Pure Land for the Tianyin Pavilion. Shi Mei was very smart. It was best to hand Mo Ran over to the Tianyin Pavilion for punishment. No one would refuse to accept a verdict.

The main hall was filled with clamor. Mo Ran walked along the carpet embroidered with pollia, walked to the front, and then stood still.

"I…"

The man only said one word before the commotion died down. They stared at him, and many of them had hate and vigilance in their eyes.

They waited for his excuse and his insolence and his fault, and stretched their necks ready to pounce and tear the devilish demon to pieces.

This person's good or evil was hard to determine, and his actions were unfathomable. However, he would rather kill by mistake than let it slip by him. He had to –

"I'm here to receive my punishment."

It was absolutely silent, even more so than before.

It was like sharpening one's blade and preparing to engage in a great battle. The sound of the drum of gold beating against the enemy could shake the heavens, only to suddenly find out that the enemy general had already committed suicide.

Ridiculous.

"What did he say?"

After a long while, some people finally reacted, but they still didn't dare to believe that this demon would confess so easily. As a result, they quietly asked the person next to them: "Does he mean that he came to receive the punishment?"

Mo Ran lowered his eyes and knelt down, facing his uncles and aunts, as well as the pale Xue Meng. His handsome, thin face was reflected in the dim light.

He really wanted to kill him, but he wouldn't let that man feel good because of what Hua Binan had done to him. There was one more thing he needed to do before he could confess.

He would do his last bit of strength to protect the people he could no longer protect.

Thus, Mo Ran slowly spoke, his voice was filled with a fiery heat.

"My hands are indeed full of blood because I have killed many people with my personal grudges. Although I had wanted to repent in the past few years, it was still an unforgivable sin. Chu Wanning is also aware of this…

Today, in the presence of all the cultivators, I have another matter to declare besides the sins."

He paused for a moment, his words were as sharp as knives piercing his heart, "I no longer have a Shizun and disciple relationship with Chu Wanning."

Upon hearing these words, most of the people present were shocked, "What's going on?"

It had to be known that the Shizun and the Disciple publicly breaking off all ties was a huge scandal in the cultivation world. In this kind of event, whether it was the Shizun or the disciple, they all felt embarrassed. Therefore, as long as there was no blood feud, even if their relationship was not harmonious, they would still show their prowess.

After the astonishment, many people began to whisper: "Wasn't it fine before? Why is it suddenly like this? It can't be that you're trying to trick us, right?"

"It doesn't look like it. Could it be that something happened to them after that?"

"It's possible… Chu Wanning didn't seem to care about his disciples at all. When Shi Mingjing was captured by Hua Binan, didn't he not let go to save him? He had even blinded the other party… If I were his disciple, I would also feel bad looking at him."

The voices rose and fell like the tide.

Amongst these voices, Mo Ran continued, "He won't tolerate me killing and committing arson. But all this while, he has been treating me coldly

and insulting my dignity. This person was full of compassion about all the people in the world, but he treated all of his disciples lightly. How hypocritical was that! Back then, if it wasn't for him, I wouldn't have reached this stage."

It was too painful.

He stopped. His lips were trembling, but he still wanted to finish his sentence, one word at a time. He would hack himself into a thousand pieces.

"He was the one who harmed me. He was the one who mistook me. I did not conspire with him; I was ashamed to have taken him as my Shizun. Now that I have broken off all ties with Chu Wanning, if anyone considers me his disciple from now on…"

He raised his gaze to resemble that of Taxian-Jun.

"That is to disgust me. I hope you don't bring it up again!"

Xue Zhengyong was frightened, "Mo Ran —!"

Xue Meng's face became pale. "Brother, are you crazy?! Do you know what you've said!"

Mo Ran closed his eyes. He was unwilling to look at Xue Meng or any of his family. That "brother" had already pierced through his heart like a sharp claw.

Mo Ran continued, "Other than that, I have another matter to attend to."

"If you're guilty, then plead guilty. Where did all these things come from? You —"

Before that person could finish complaining, they were stopped by Jiang Xi, the current head of the immortals. “Go ahead.”

Mo Ran said, “My previous sins were too grave. It wasn’t bad for me to admit my mistakes. But the matter regarding Guyue’ye is not what I did.”

Many of the people present were here to collect their debt of blood, and their emotions were already stirred up. Now that they heard him deny the murder of Guyue’ye, they couldn’t help but feel extremely angry. They all said:

“Ha! What a joke! This is a fact that is absolutely certain, what else do you have to say for yourself!”

“That’s right, who else could it be if not you?”

Mo Ran replied, “At that time, I was not even at Guyue’ye’s place. At that time, Chu Wanning and I were at Mount Longxue. It was done by someone else. And that person, if I’m not wrong, should be…”

He hesitated and didn’t immediately reveal his identity.

It was not because he was afraid of the anger of the crowd, but because he believed that no one present would believe that the Gate of Life and Death had already opened.

“Who is it?”

Mo Ran pursed his lips and decided to temporarily wait until later to bring up the matter of Taxian-Jun. He did not reply immediately and instead said, “Who is it? In short, that person colluded with Hua Binan. One of them was framed by Guyue’ye, and the other took Chu Wanning away.”

As he finished his sentence, the crowd split into two voices.

The sound of the first wave was weak, but it could still be clearly discerned. Most of them were called out by the disciples at the summit of life and death, “What happened to Elder Yuheng?!”

“Where did the elder go?!”

The other group was the group of people who had come to denounce them.

“Mo Ran, do you think we would believe you?”

“You don’t know what kind of medicine you’re selling! What do you mean by ‘someone else’? I see that you and Hua Binan are in cahoots! On Mount Jiao, the two of you colluded and acted well! You did not hesitate to kill so many people, even to the point of wasting the friendship of fellow disciples, and caused Shi Mingjing to die. You, you, you are a liar!”

Hearing Shi Mei’s name, Mo Ran slowly raised his head and looked at Xue Zhengyong, who was seated on the seat. He then looked at Xue Meng and said, “Shi Mei, he…”

Xue Meng was confused because of his concern. He quickly stepped forward and asked, “What happened to Shi Mei? Is he okay?!”

Mo Ran couldn’t even look him in the eye.

Seeing a person’s broken appearance, it was enough as long as he could only use it once.

Mo Ran closed his eyes and said, “Shi Mei is Hua Binan.”

Dead silence.

After a long while, Xue Meng suddenly fell back into his seat and muttered, “What a joke, how could it be possible…”

Indeed, if not for witnessing it personally and hearing it personally, Mo Ran would have already said that it was impossible. The three of them had experienced many trials and hardships together, and to him, Shi Mei was the first true equal friend he had ever had in his life.

But this friend was a fake. It was just a scene out of a mirror.

Ridiculous.

The surrounding people started to discuss, “What is this nonsense?”

“Has he gone mad? How could a little cultivator be the number one Saint Hand under the heavens?”

“If Shi Mei is Hua Binan, then why would he help us remove the Heart Drilling Worm at Mount Jiao?”

There were also those who had been saved by Shi Mei in Mount Jiao, and they were deeply grateful to Shi Mei. At this moment, they pointed at him and said angrily, “Mo Ran, in order to wash away your sins, you actually said such preposterous words. You’re spitting blood!”

At this moment, Jiang Xi, who had been silent all this time, also spoke up.

“Do you have any proof that Hua Binan is Shi Mingjing?” Jiang Xi said, “Hua Binan has been under my tutelage for many years, and has almost never left Guyue’ye. If you were to say that he is Shi Mingjing, how would he be able to appear in two places at the same time?”

Ch. 256 [Tianyin Pavilion] Life and Death

“Hua Binan is covered with a black veil all the time, and he stays shut in the alchemy room all year round, so he has little contact with the outside world, so it is difficult to detect people as long as they control a person of similar size.”

Jiang Xi frowned. “What do you mean, Hua Binan is a fake?”

“Sometimes it’s true. Sometimes it’s false. If you want to avoid being discovered, the best way is to mix the true with the false.”

Jiang Xi thought, “In this way, Shi Mingjing should be able to use Zhenlong chess games, but our medicine sect is not strong in spiritual power, and it is impossible to master this technique.”

“Sect head Jiang said it very well. Zhenlong chess needs a great loss of flexibility. Hua Binan knows this very well too, but because of his weak core, he can’t do it alone. So he had to conspire with Xu Shuanglin before.”

Jiang Xi shook his head: “No. Xu Shuanglin once said that the man behind the scenes was his friend. He was unwilling to betray his friend, so he didn’t tell us who he was even after death. If, as you said, Shi Mei is Hua Binan, Xu Shuanglin should recognize him. So why did Xu Shuanglin not rebel after the rebirth was destroyed by Hua Binan?”

“Because Xu Shuanglin didn’t know that Shi Mei and Hua Binan were the same person,” Mo Ran said.

Next to him, Great master Xuanjing twisted his beard: “Since they are close friends with each other, how could he not know such a great thing…”

“It was Xu Shuanglin who took an accomplice despite his ignorance.” Mo Ran said, “But Shi Mei didn’t really talk to him. On this chessboard, Xu Shuanglin is just an important chess piece, that’s all.”

He paused and continued, “At the Mount Jiao Hall, Hua Binan was injured and took off his veil. The face was so ugly that it looked like a seastar.[171] Now I think it’s just a delicate human skin mask. For Xu Shuanglin, he may have seen only this face of his “close friend” in his life, that is, the fake appearance. He would never associate Hua Binan’s face with Shi Mei’s. So he did not think that he was framed or used by his partner until he died, and naturally he would not reveal the truth behind his back.”

Jiang Xi said, “In your opinion, Shi Mingjing and Hua Binan appeared at the same time on Mount Jiao. Do you believe one of them was a Zhenlong chess piece under control?”

“I guess so. But there is a second possibility.”

“What?”

Mo Ran shook his head. “I want to talk about that matter later.”

Master Xuanjing said, “Even if the first guess from Mo Ran was right, this poor monk still feels that there is one thing that does not make sense. Hua Binan has no reason to interrupt Xu Shuanglin’s rebirth law formation. Does he have an enemy with Xu Shuanglin? Is it harmful for Xu Shuanglin to get what he wants and Luo Fenghua to be reborn?”

Mo Ran sighed, “Did the Master forget the final result of Xu Shuanglin’s spell?”

The old man did not respond for a moment and shook his head.

“From the crack that day opened, Shi Mei did not teach Xu Shuanglin the real art of rebirth at all.”

“Ah…”

“He has been deceiving Xu Shuanglin. Xu Shuanglin took great pains to think that he was arranging a rebirth battle, but in fact he was making a magic formation for Hua Binan, who lacked spiritual strength.”

“What did Hua Binan teach him…”

“It’s the biggest forbidden art in the world.” Mo Ran paused and finally said, “What he taught Xu Shuanglin is the door of life and death in time and space.”

“!”

Those who participated in the battle of Mount Jiao couldn’t help but remember the black holes in the sky and thousands of mysterious men coming out of them.

Is that the door of life and death in time and space?

“That’s the second possibility that I just mentioned,” Mo Ran said. “As long as the door of life and death exists in time and space, Hua Binan and Shi Mei may be true, but one belongs to this timeline, while the other comes from another realm of truth cultivation.”

When the crowd heard this, they were silent, and then someone clapped their legs and laughed, “Master Mo, do you coax the children to sleep with

stories like this? Take this mythical forbidden art to bluff people. There are also two Shi Mingjing… Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha! I'll laugh to death."

"Yes, how could it be? That's the prohibition that was lost thousands of years ago… Who could learn to use it?"

"The most important volume of the door of life and death of time and space, legend has long been sealed in the Yandi Shenmu, even if someone was studying this prohibited spell, what they could learn the most is space, but not space and time. Otherwise, if one world overlaps with another, the world will be chaotic!!"

Instead of arguing with them, Mo Ran spoke out all his ideas on his own. He knows that this is probably his last confession as Mo-zongshi. After today, these people may not give him any chance to explain anything.

He used his confession as a bargaining chip in exchange for a little calmness from those who demanded their lives, hoping only to tell everyone what he had guessed and what he knew. Believe it or not, what he said is an alarm bell. If there is turbulence in the future, it may not be too late for somebody to think of his warning today.

"Imagine, if I were Hua Binan, I had mastered the essence of the Zhenlong chess game and the door of life and death in time and space, but I was born with insufficient vitality and had no position to act accordingly. What should I do?"

Most of the people here are disgusted with Mo Ran and are unwilling to listen to his advice.

However, Jiang Xi appreciated Mo Ran because of some previous events. Moreover, he also had doubts about the murder case of Guyue'ye, so he

thought about it carefully for a while and said: "… I'd get help."

"Who would help you?"

"Nobody."

Mo Ran said, "Yes, there is no one, so he could only deceive. Deceive a person like Xu Shuanglin who has a great wish to help him complete his plan step by step."

Master Xuanjing said, "It's ridiculous, so there's no possibility that the circle array is anything else? The door of life and death in time and space is really not something that ordinary people can learn. For thousands of years, no one has ever learned it. The most important book has been lost. Who can practice it?"

"Yes, it's just fantasy."

"You simply say that the great God Fuxi descended to the world, which is no different from the time and space of life and death."

"It's so absurd that not even a storyteller dares to say so."

At last, someone sneered and said, "Master Mo, after such a long period of preparing the ground. Do you want to tell us that the person who killed the heroes in the lonely night, is someone who came to this world through the prohibited art of life and death in time and space?"

Mo Ran: "…"

Seeing that he was silent, some people in the hall laughed loudly and said, "It's terrific. It's terrific. In order to excuse himself, Master Mo Ran made up all kinds of stories."

“Dare to go around for half a day, is it to wash the accusation for oneself?”

Jiang Xi couldn’t stand such a noise. He turned around and brushed his sleeves and angrily said to the leading people, “Speaking, what does yin and yang do?”

Master Xuanjing said, “Sect Leader Jiang is not a stranger, but Master Mo’s story is too ridiculous. According to this old monk, it would be better to invite him to Tianyin Pavilion for interrogation before making a decision.”

“Yes, the head of Tianyin Pavilion will be here in a minute. When she comes, let Master Mo come with her.”

Before Jiang Xi had time to speak, Xue Zhengyong opened his mouth. Although he was in a complicated mood, he still said, “I think what he said makes sense. Maybe the door of time and space has really been torn apart. Tianyin Pavilion is a place for interrogation of the absolute evildoers. He can’t go with you until things are clear.”

“Yes!” Some disciples from the top of life and death stood up and said, “Mount Jiao is on the front line of life and death. If it hadn’t been for Brother Mo who saved you, would you stand here well? If only he wanted to subvert the upper and lower circles, he would have trapped everyone in Mount Jiao!”

Great master Xuanjing was stunned: “This…”

Someone said, “That’s true. When we were trapped in Mount Jiao Yongdao, it was Master Mo who tried to let us out. If he wanted to harm us, then we could start.”

That’s true. Many people thought about it and were silent for a moment.

But silence is not equal to approval. Many of the people present are still in mourning, friends and relatives are newly bereaved and they feel extremely sad. What's more, the survivors of Mount Jiao Flower Hall saw Mo Ran kill with their own eyes, and the eyewitness, except for Mei Hanxue who expressed doubts about the situation, were all certain that it was really Mo Ran. Under such circumstances, it was not easy for them to give up looking for Mo Ran to collect their debt and ask for his life, but to believe in the appearance of mythical Gate of Life and Death in Time and Space.

So soon someone retorted, "But I don't think it's very uncomfortable. Don't you remember? On Mount Huang, Master Mo was very precise in controlling the whole situation and the Zhenlong chess game. He said that Shi Mingjing would treasure chess games, but I think the one who knows a lot about this technique is himself.

"Yes." After the rebuttal, someone immediately echoed, "There's one more thing, don't you think it's very strange? Why could Mo Ran open the Mount Jiao borders? He is not the heir of the Nangong family."

At this time, a loud and clear female voice came from outside the Loyalty Hall.

"It's nothing strange. Because it is the blood of the Nangong family that runs through Master Mo."

Everyone turned their heads abruptly, but saw a captain wearing a silver and blue outfit and wearing a silver medal with the name "Heaven" written on it. The leader was a beautiful woman who looked up to 27 years old, with bright eyes, white teeth, and a beautiful face. She was born extremely

beautiful, even comparable to Song Qiutong, the number one beauty of the cultivation world. Despite her beauty, her temperament was very cold.

Most of the crowd changed color when they saw her, and even a few of the masters had a look of awe on their faces.

Only Jiang Xi did not react much and nodded: “The head of Tianyin Pavilion finally came.”

This elegantly dressed woman was the master of the Tianyin Pavilion, Mu Yanli, who had been absent from the cultivation world for a long time.

Mu Yanli ruled the Tianyin Pavilion, and all the serious unsolved cases in the upper and lower cultivation worlds would eventually fall into her hands, and she would preside over the trials - but there weren’t really many cases that required the presence of the Tianyin Pavilion, so the master of the Pavilion often didn’t appear in front of the public for ten or twenty years.

Because Mu Yanli didn’t often go out, her skin was extremely white, and pale blue blood vessels could be seen through it. She stepped into the palace, stopped and said softly, “I’m sorry to have kept you waiting for a long time.”

Great master Xuanjing asked, “The master of the Pavilion came a little later than the expected time. What delayed her appearance?”

Mu Yanli shook her head and said, “No, Tianyin Pavilion can never be empty-mouthed. So before I came here, my sect was thoroughly investigating some of Master Mo Ran’s past actions at Sisheng Peak.”

She paused, a pair of apricot eyes looked coldly at Mo Ran, red lips lightly opened: “This investigation found that things are not so simple, the identity of Mo-zongshi… It involves an old case in Xiangtan from many years ago.”

Everyone looked at each other and wondered, “What’s the old case?”

Only Mo Ran paled, palms sweating.

He had no idea that the matter should be told at this moment.

Mu Yanli was like an executioner, looking coldly at the man kneeling in front of the temple and saying, “Mo Weiyu, don’t talk idly. Do you know your own life and your own mind, whether you want me to invite witnesses to the temple or not?

“…” Mo Ran closed his eyes.

As early as the beginning of his rebirth, he knew that if he wanted to live a safe life, there were several people in the world who had to be killed forever. But at first, he had no strength and no chance. Later, when strength and opportunity were available, he was no longer willing to take the lives of others for his own sake.

He killed enough people in his past life.

When Mu Yanli saw him silent, she said, “It seems that Master Mo does not intend to confess himself.”

After she had finished, her cool and beautiful face showed an undisguised contempt, and then she turned around, facing the guests, her voice rang like a bell and penetrated the hearts of the people.

“Let me say it, then. Listen, everyone. This famous master, before he ascended to Sisheng Peak, had already the murder of dozens of lives on his hands. Such a ferocious person should have been brought to justice long ago!”

“What?!”

“Dozens of people had been killed before the beginning?”

Xue Meng opened his eyes wide and looked blank. He murmured, “Brother…?”

This sound was not light but not loud either, and it fell into Mu Yanli’s ear.

Xue Meng: “…”

The rain and snow outside grew heavier and heavier, and the sky grew darker and darker. Even if the candles in the hall were bright, he could not breathe.

Mu Yanli looked at Mo Ran look full of contempt. She looked at Xue Meng’s look, her face immersed in cynicism. Her lips red as she said, “Knowing your enemy as your brother, it’s really pathetic.”

Xue Meng did not respond to the meaning of this sentence, but his brain has been in a thunderstorm, as if there was a crack in the sky. He opened his clear eyes and stepped back: “What… What did you call my brother?”

He trembled all over. “What are you talking about?” he said.

Mu Yanli no longer payed attention to him, turning around and saying, “Mo Ran, is not Sect Leader Xue’s nephew at all. What’s more.” She paused, a pair of beautiful and ruthless eyes like a sharp knife, passing through the

faces of Xue Zhengyong and Madam Wang, not without justice, not without cruelty, said:

“Xue’s relatives and nephew, as early as eight years ago, have died in the hands of Mo Ran!”

Ch. 257 [Tianyin Pavilion] Linjiang Fairy

“What?!”

The room was full of pale faces!

Only Mo Ran closed his eyes, calm as water.

The crowd made a mess: “What the hell is this?”

“What was the old case in Xiangtan then?”

“Why did he kill people…”

Mu Yanli continued: “It’s a long story, and because of age, many people who know the inside story are no longer there. However, people won’t know if they don’t investigate. Tianyin Pavilion found some evidence.”

In this piece of smoke, which is interwoven with people and thrillers, Mu Yanli looked back calmly. “Have you brought all the witnesses you have found in Xiangtan?”

The attendant looked out and answered, “All of them are waiting outside the temple.”

“Then invite the first witness in.”

The first witness came into the temple. He was an old craftsman. He was very old, hunched, shivering and submissive. The first reaction he saw was that he fell on his knees with a thump, kowtowed, and stuttered in his mouth, “I have worshiped you fairy lords… I have paid tribute to you, Lord Xianjun…”

Mu Yanli slowed down her tone: “This old gentleman went through a lot of trouble to arrive. You don’t have to be nervous. I’ll just ask some questions, one answer, two answers.”

The old man couldn’t get up from the shivering. The monk of Wubei Temple walked over and gave him a seat to sit on. But he was afraid. He only touched a small corner and tried his best to shrink himself to a minimum.

Mu Yanli opened her mouth: “The first two questions. Where does mister A come from? What did you do?”

The old man’s teeth trembled. When he opened his mouth, he had a strong accent: “I… I’m from Xiangtan, I sell lanterns on the street…”

Everyone looked at him curiously, from his sparse crane hair to his broken shoes. They don’t know what the lantern seller can shake out from the past.

“How many years have you sold lanterns, sir?” asked Mu Yanli.

“Most of my life… Fifty years, probably. I can’t remember exactly…”

“It’s been long enough. I’m not going to ask you that far in fifty years.” Mu Yanli told him and pointed at Mo Ran. “Do you recognize him?”

The old man looked up at Mo Ran and saw that he was tall, brisk and magnificent. He did not dare to look any more. He immediately turned his eyes away. After a while, he hesitated to steal a glance at him again, and then whispered, “I don’t recognize him.”

Mu Yanli said: “It’s not surprising if you don’t recognize it. Then I will ask you again, when you used to sell lanterns near the drunk jade building in

Xiangtan, did you always have a child who liked to stand by your stall and watch you paste the lanterns?"

"Ah…" The old man's eyes were cloudy, but he was very clear about it. He sighed and nodded. "Yes, there is such a child. He looked at it almost every night. He liked the Lantern I made, but he was poor and couldn't afford it… I had a few conversations with him at that time. He didn't like to talk. He was very timid."

"Do you remember his name, sir?"

"Well, he seemed to be called… Mo… Mo Ran?"

Just then, everyone was still listening to the old man's words. At this time, all the eyes fell on Mo Ran.

The old man sank into the memories of the past and muttered, "I can't remember clearly whether that was his name or not. I only know he's the man in the House of Drunken Jade…"

Xue Zhengyong calmly interrupted, "Mo Ran was originally the offspring of a brother of mine and a mother in the building. What's the meaning of Palace Master Mu inviting this old gentleman to prove it again?"

"Mammy?" The old man was stunned and waved, "Oh, No. Although Mammy's son was also named Mo Nian, he was a famous little overlord in the streets and alleys at that time. The old man said, bent his head and pointed to an old scar on his forehead."

"I was smashed by him with bricks. The child was fierce, wild and skinny."

Xue Zhengyong's face has changed: "Mo… Nian?"

Madam Wang said anxiously, “But the old man misremembered it? After all, there is a word difference. Is that mother’s child called Mo Ran or Mo Nian?”

“… It’s Mo Nian.” The old man thought about it and nodded again. “You can’t miss it. How can you miss it? It’s called Mo Ran.”

Xue Zhengyong himself leaned forward slightly. When he heard this, he was stiff for a moment, then collapsed in his seat, his eyes were stunned.

“Mo Nian…”

Mu Yanli continued to ask: “The child who came to see you paste the lantern, he was in the drunken jade building, what was he doing, you know?”

“Well, I don’t know exactly. I vaguely know that he helped to cook in the kitchen.” The old man said, “His reputation was not very good. It is said that his hands and feet were not clean. He always stole things from guests.” He tried to think about it, and then seemed to think about it. His face changed a little. “Ah, remember, that kid was hopeless. He grew up worse and worse, and later humiliated a yellow flower girl. She couldn’t stand it, and finally she committed suicide.”

“What?!”

If swapping out a raccoon for the crown prince was already shocking, it is even more outrageous that the good girl had been defiled before Mo Ran.

There are many parents of monks here, immediately angry crown, gnashing teeth and grinding teeth: “unexpectedly! Master Mo Ran is such a beast dressed in human skin!”

“It’s disgusting!”

“Death sentence would be a pity!”

Mo Ran kept silent and only looked at the old artist quietly.

In his previous life, he was on the verge of overturning the cultivation world, smelling blood, and Tianyin Pavilion tried to stop him. At that time, the old man was brought over by Mu Yanli and identified him. What did he do at that time?

How did he do that?

Laugh heartily and accept it.

Turning his head to Xue Zhengyong and Madam Wang, he said with a distorted smile, “What? Do you hate me? Resent me? Is it the same as my good Shizun, saying that I am deficient in nature and beyond remedy?”

At that time, the secret learning of Zhenlong chess games by Mo Ran was almost revealed, but Xue Zhengyong initially chose to believe him. It wasn’t until he heard this that Xue Zhengyong got up angrily, and he was so angry that he wanted to vomit blood, and he shouted, with his eyes like a tiger, “You are a wicked animal! You are just a wicked animal!”

Mo Ran listened to these two words and laughed, laughing more wantonly and happily.

Every corner of the eye was wet with laughter.

Abused the girl?

Xue Zhengyong.

Xue Zhengyong actually believed.

Ha ha ha ha

“Yes, I did these terrible crimes. I killed your nephew and killed the poor girl—what? My uncle is going to kill me for heaven’s sake?”

Before he could finish his words, there was a sudden sharp pain in his chest.

Xue Zhengyong was fierce in temperament. Before he could finish speaking, he was angry and mad. His eyes were filled with hate and tears, and the tip of his fan pierced his chest.

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment, and then a slight smile opened at the corner of his mouth. He lowered his head, looked at his mind gradually bleeding, sighed:

“Uncle, I have called you uncle for so many years. But in the end, you won’t believe me.”

“Shut up!”

Mo Ran smiled and his shoulders trembled slightly. “Forget it, after all, we don’t bleed the same blood. So, this false home, Sisheng Peak… What else do I hate?”

Blood splashed, splashed all over the face.

He watched Xue Zhengyong fall in front of himself, his brain tingling slightly. He didn’t want to kill him originally. It was his temper to rush up and start… It was he who sought his own death. Mo Ran stood quietly for a while, raised his bloody eyes, looked quietly at Madam Wang, who was

deeply distressed. He licked his lips, stepped over his uncle's body and walked towards his aunt.

Xue Zhengyong had not given up yet. He clutched his clothes tightly and refused to let go until he died.

The half-old man seemed angry, and sad and heartbroken more than angry.

At that time, with a crazy mind, saw his uncle's eyes and wondered what was the meaning of the tears in his eyes. He did not understand, didn't want to understand.

Mo Ran heard Xue Zhengyong say, "Don't… Don't harm…"

"She saw it. So she is going to die." Mo Ran acted very nice and calm. "But Xue Meng is not here, so… See how many years you have brought me up, this life, I have the right to stay."

What is Madam Wang's struggle in the dark?

Besides, she was no longer able to struggle at all. She just cried. Like her husband, she said, "Beast…" But when the knife went in and blood came out, her consciousness gradually dissipated. She looked at him and finally murmured, "Mo Ran, why are you…"

Mo Ran's hand was shaking and trembling at that time, and finally it was pulled out. He looked down at the palm of his hand, which was wet. The scarlet dagger grabbed the palm and smelled slippery.

The blood has hot.

But it will soon be cold.

Like his so-called family, his so-called relatives.

From the beginning, he was worried because he knew that Xue Meng, Xue Zhengyong and Madam Wang were all right.

They were not his relatives at all.

Their biological nephew had already died by his hands.

“Absurd!”

A loud shout interrupted the memory of Mo Ran.

Mo Ran almost raised his head in a daze and looked around the hall before finally falling on Xue Zhengyong.

It was Xue Zhengyong who was talking.

“I raised this child, I would know if he could bully innocent girls, don’t throw false accusations!”

“…”

Suddenly he felt his heart filled with some sour and bitter feeling.

His eyelashes rustled and his eyes closed.

It’s different.

Two lifetimes… Many things have changed.

The old artist was so frightened that he rolled down from his seat and kowtowed on the ground: “No, no, I’m not deceiving, Xianjun is quiet, I’m just… I’m just… I really…” He was just a poor craftsman. He had never seen

such a scene. He was accused by the leaders of the faction. He was so frightened that he couldn't say a complete word in the end.

Xue Zhengyong shouted as if he were a ready beast: "Get out of here."

"…"

"Go away!"

The old artist immediately got up to rolled off, but the people of Tianyin Pavilion stopped him. He couldn't move forward or backward. He fell on the ground and was shaking like a sieve chaff. He said, "What's all this about?"

Mu Yanli said, "Don't be angry at Sect Leader Xue. Don't be afraid of the old gentleman. What Tianyin Pavilion seeks is to make all the injustices of the world clear. It will never frame or harm innocent people."

She paused and lifted up the old artist.

"Please finish it, sir."

"I have nothing to say…" But the old man was really frightened and never said a word again. "Please let me go. I really don't have anything to say anymore. I don't remember well. I don't remember well."

In this stalemate, the silent Mo Ran, suddenly looked at Xue Zhengyong, bowing to him.

The meaning of this action is self-evident. Xue Zhengyong and Xue Meng could not say a word in an instant. Madam Wang muttered incredibly: "… Mo Ran?"

Mo Ran said, “When I was in Mount Jiao, I wanted to come back and confess to my uncle. But I didn’t expect this to happen.”

“…”

Mo Ran eyes were very clear. Because of this, they even seemed a little dead: “Witnesses came today, people’s evidence must have been collected. There’s nothing to say. Yes, I’m not one of the top two masters of Sisheng Peak.”

He paused, and a sighing remark fell into the hall, with a soft voice like feathers and a thousand stories of waves.

“I am the son of Nangong Yan of the Rufeng sect, the lord of the Ninth City.”

“What?!” The crowd was horrified.

“Don’t you want to hear the truth of the matter?” Mo Ran closed his eyes and said, “… The fire in the House of Drunken Jade was set off by me, and dozens of lives were destroyed in my hands.”

Madam Wang said tearfully, “Ran’er, how do you do… How can you…”

“But in Xiangtan, the little girl of Tofu Square was humiliated to death.” He said here in a slight silence.

In his last life, no one wanted to hear him tell the truth.

They were angrily accusing him and abusing him, so he didn’t want to explain. Anyway, he was in the eyes of others, that is to say, such an absolute evil head, adding a bloodstain would be all right.

But in his life, he finally wanted to talk.

“About that girl… It wasn’t me.”

There was a silence in Loyalty Hall. Everyone was watching Mo Ran, waiting for him to open his mouth and tell the unknown old dust-laden cases.

Mu Yanli raised her eyebrows: “Oh? Is there anything else in that case?”

“Yes.”

“Please make a statement.” Mu Yanli spoke. “We are ready to listen at any time.”

Mo Ran shook his head. “Before we talk about the murder of the tofu shop girl, I want to talk about a more important person first.”

“Who is it?”

“A songstress.”

Mo Ran said, eyes, lost in contemplation, staring through the open window at the distant horizon.

“… At that time, there were two young pipa girls in Xiangtan, one with the surname Xun, Xun Fengruo, one with the surname Duan, Duan Yihan.”

Many of the people present heard him mention these two names, and they all looked knowingly at each other.

“… Xun Fengruo is weak… Duan Yihan… Ah! Is it difficult to teach in the two-digit music hall?”

“It’s them. I remember that they were both entertainers in Xiangtan and are called Linjiang Shuangxian.”

“Yes, the wind is weak, and the spring is coming. The clothes are cold, dancing flowers blooming all over the sky.” Someone twisted his whiskers and sighed, “I was only in my thirties at that time, and the fame of these two was widely recognized. But it’s difficult to ask them for a song. I heard that every time they perform, the music hall will be surrounded, as if even water couldn't leak out[172] and their limelight was very strong, very popular.”

Someone else said, “It seems that the two of them had fought over music at that time.”

Mo Ran said, “There was a fight. Xun Fengruo was two years younger than Duan Yihan and two years later entered Yuefang. At that time, she was arrogant and dissatisfied with Duan Yihan’s fame, so she sent out flower posts and invited Duan Yihan to play trilogy and dance trilogy on the drunk jade tower to determine her skill level.”

“Who won in the end?”

“A draw.” Mo Ran said, “But since then, they have cherished each other. Although Xun Fengruo and Duan Yihan are not songstresses together, they often walk with each other and regarded each other as sisters.”

Someone said impatiently, “Stop talking nonsense and get to the point! What do these two women have to do with you?”

Mo Ran looked at him and said, “Duan Yihan is my mother.”

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“…!”

“What?!”

That year when Duan Yihan came out with her pipa, she was a young woman from the Wuling County who fought with her head and played a song with an uncountable amount of red silk — That peerless singing immortal was actually his mother?

“At that time, by chance, my mother got to know Nangong Yan, who was also the Ninth City Lord of the Rufeng Sect. He knew some poetry, he had a sweet mouth, and he was pretty.” Mo Ran paused, “My mother misjudged him and fell for him.”

At the side, Xue Meng could not help but shake his head as he muttered, “How is this possible…”

“With a beauty throwing herself into his arms, how could Nangong Yan refuse? But after all, he has status and reputation. He didn’t dare casually tell the truth about himself to a musician. He lied to my mother and said that he was Linyi’s businessman. A guest living there.”

“They’d been in contact day and night. Your mother didn’t notice?”

Mo Ran sneered, “If she had noticed, then there wouldn’t have been so many things after that. Nangong Yan was very good at making up lies, not to mention that he had only lived in the Xiangtan Lake for a short period of time.

My mother had no time to discover his true identity. Later, a letter came from Linyi. After Nangong Yan received that mysterious letter, he hurriedly left Xiangtan."

"Didn't your mother ask him where he was going?"

"He left in the middle of the night and didn't even say goodbye to my mother. They were lovers for several months. In the end, Nangong Yan only left behind a stack of silver leaves and a piece of paper with the word "Do Not Remember" written on it, and it disappeared from the face of the earth."

A female cultivator sighed and said, "Sigh, these music industry singing girls, these Pear Garden waitresses, the hardest thing to find is a sincere person. "It's also quite pitiful."

After sighing, she could not help but ask curiously, "What happened next? Was your mother not willing to be abandoned by her lover and sent to find him?"

Mo Ran shook his head, "My mother had a gentle and kind personality, so she was a bit timid. Being abandoned would only result in her swallowing bitterness and not seeking trouble. But not long after, she discovered that she was pregnant."

When Madam Wang heard this, she could not help but let out an "ah". Her eyes were actually quite mournful as she looked at Mo Ran, not knowing what to say.

"The music industry was willing to continue taking her in. But only if she didn't have a baby. Dancing is no longer so beautiful for a woman who has had a baby. They didn't want to lose money."

Mo Ran closed his eyes.

“My mother refused, and the woman in charge asked her to pay a large ransom. Thus, she gave all of her savings, all of her thin and soft jewelry, and even her embroidered shoes to the marketplace to earn her freedom. She planned to go to Linyi to find my father.”

Madam Wang said softly, “She was just a penniless woman. How did she get from the Xiangtan to Linyi?”

Mo Ran said, “Someone was helping her.”

“Who is it?”

“Xun Fengruo was weak. Sister Xun knew that my mother had left the music shop and had chased her all the way out of the city. She gave all her remaining money to my mother and told her that if she couldn’t find my father, then he might as well come to the House of Drunken Jade to look for her and the two sisters could live a good life.”

Xuanjing sighed and said: “To have such loyalty, I have underestimated these weak women.”

Jiang Xi asked, “What happened next? Did your mother find Nangong Yan?”

After a moment of silence, Mo Ran sneered, “She found him. Although Nangong Yan’s identity and name were fake, it was not difficult for my mother to find him.”

Someone exclaimed, “Eh? Is there really such a heaven defying talent?”

“He doesn’t have the ability to transcend the heavens, it’s just because of a coincidence.”

People looked at each other with doubt on their faces, “How could there be such a coincidence? The Mayor of the Rufeng Sect rarely shows his face.”

“Indeed, they rarely show their faces…” A layer of gloom covered Mo Ran’s face. “However, the grand marriage and the full moon of the children were held, and the Rufeng Sect had a feast to celebrate on the city wall.”

Everyone was stunned when they heard this. “Could it be that the letter that Nangong Yan received was to urge him to go back and get married?”

Another person recalled, “Ah, I remember now. Nangong Yan’s wife seemed to be the daughter of a rich and powerful family. Could he be forced to give up on his love affair and go back to marry that rich girl…”

Mo Ran said with an extremely indifferent expression, “He was not forced to. It’s not like he was going back to get married. The mysterious letter that he received back then was actually a good piece of news — the Sect Leader of the Rufeng Sect had told him that his wife was about to give birth and wanted him to go back and accompany her.”

This caused even the silent Xue Zhengyong’s expression to change. He said, “So when Nangong Yan was playing in Xiangtan, he was actually a married man?!”

“Yes.” Mo Ran lowered his eyes, it was really hard on him. Speaking of this matter, his face no longer had an expression of extreme pain, and he said calmly, “Nangong Yan’s wife was in poor health because of the pregnancy and it’s easy to miscarry. That’s why he came outside to relax. When he

met my mother, he liked her, so he lied and said that he had never married, which made my mother happy."

Someone stomped his feet in anger and said, "This is worse than an animal!"

"His wife was pregnant, but he came out to sightsee and had another child out there. Sigh."

"This Duan Yihan is really lucky. Could Nangong Yan recognize her?"

The answer was obvious. The crowd became agitated and indignant as they threw a pitying look at Mo Ran. However, Mo Ran did not care about what others thought of him. He just continued narrating what happened to his mother.

It was the first time in his two lifetimes that he had spoken of this secret openly. In addition to the pain, he also felt a sense of relief.

Mo Ran said, "At that time, Linyi was holding a large feast to celebrate the birth of the young master of the Rufeng Sect over Lin'er. When my mother arrived at the turrets of the Ninth City, she saw Nangong Yan hugging his wife and children while the people bowed to him and sprinkled the Jichi cake. My mother… She did not look for him again. "At that time, she had already used up all her remaining money and couldn't even afford to pay for her journey back to Linyi. After half a year, she gave birth to me in an abandoned woodshed in Linyi."

Jiang Xi asked, "Did you guys return to Xiangtan House of Drunken Jade afterwards?"

Mo Ran shook his head, “When I was born, my body was very weak. In less than a month, I became ill and was completely unable to go anywhere. In order to treat me, she asked all of the doctors in the city’s infirmary, but no one was willing to help her… Later on, when she was forced into a corner, finally she held him and tried to find a way to enter the Rufeng Sect and find Nangong Yan.”

That year, a frail mother appeared in front of her lover, carrying a newborn baby that looked like a kitten in her arms.

That man did not have any joy, only endless astonishment, fear, and even anger.

He had a lovely wife and child, his wife was the daughter of a promising family, he had a son, chubby and healthy — Duan Yihan was like a piece of rat shit in his eyes, she wanted to ruin his good reputation and his family reunion.

She was uneasy and kind.

Why should he recognize them?

Afraid that she would make a big fuss out of this, Nangong Yan gave her enough money to get her and the child out of Rufeng Sect. Holding onto his last hope, Duan Yihan said with tears in her eyes: “The child still hasn’t given a name, can you……”

He glowered, his face as pale as steel. “Scram! Get lost! This is not my child, so don’t be so shameless, get out of here!”

She was shoved roughly out the door.

There was no time for sadness. The baby in her arms was crying so weakly, its hands and feet were ice-cold. It was like a dying cat curled up in her arms.

When she called to him, he opened his dark eyes and looked at her, not at all mischievous, very obedient, very quiet.

She held back her tears and carried him to the infirmary.

The doctor in the infirmary shouted at her, “How many times have I said this? We are not the Hall of Relief. If there’s no money, then —”

She quickly gave him the money that Nangong Yan had given her. She was flustered, afraid that others would scare the child in his arms.

Her eyes flashed with sadness, and he kept bowing and bowing. “Rich, doctor, rich. Please, please, save my child. Look, he… he’s still so young…”

The infirmary wasn’t completely heartless, it was just that he had been pestered by this woman in front of him, and the ointment for his child’s treatment was not cheap, so he rudely rejected her. Since this woman was able to pay enough money, their attitudes were better.

Herbs, acupuncture.

He was too ill and had to live in the infirmary.

The condition of Mo Ran was alternating between good and bad. He had lingered for several months before finally recovering his health. At this time, Duan Yihan didn’t have much silver left on her. She thanked the doctor and left with the baby. Seeing that winter was approaching, she was afraid that his son would freeze over again, so he went to cut a small jacket and a small blanket.

After doing all of this, the money would be gone, and she wouldn't be able to return to Xiangtan. However, while sitting in the abandoned woodshed and looking at the little fellow giggling at her with his fingers in his mouth, Duan Yihan felt very happy and peaceful.

She had always been a contented person.

"What should I call you?"

The child was babbling and could not speak.

Duan Yihan made a fire and held her child by the fire to keep him warm, teasing him.

The child laughed, and she laughed with him.

The fire flickered on and on, the house was destitute and old, but because of the fire, he felt very warm. She rubbed his little face, making him kick his feet and laugh out loud.

She thought for a moment, then said, "Why don't we call you Ran-er?"

Mo Ran sucked on his fingers and looked at her blankly.

Duan Yihan's face looked lonely for a moment: "I don't know what your surname is, you can't have the surname Nangong, but you can't have mother's surname either. Your mother's surname was given to her by the mama in the music industry, it's a little strange for you to follow me… I'll just call you Ran-er, okay?"

Mo Ran happily smashed his fingers together. He did not nod or shake his head.

“Xiao-Ran’er, let’s go back to Xiangtan when it’s spring.” Duan Yihan caressed his soft hair, “Mom can play the pipa and dance. There is a Miss Xun there. She is your mother’s good sister, she must like you very much. You should learn to call her auntie as soon as possible… Oh, forget it, she has a bad temper, you should learn to call her elder sister. After seeing her, you must say that Sister Xun is the best. Only then you will have candy to eat. Do you know that?”

She held his slender fingers and said gently.

“Ran’er, wait a little longer. Winter will soon pass. When the flowers bloom, we will return home.”

But this winter, in the end, was still too long.

That year was the year of disaster. The lower cultivation world was overrun by evil spirits. Linyi City was built to guard against evil spirits, and ordinary people were forbidden from entering or exiting. Thus, Duan Yihan had no way of leaving.

She went to work in a shop and wanted to earn some money to support her family. It was unknown who revealed her love story to Nangong Yan’s wife. In short, not long after, the steamed bun store that Duan Yihan was hired at chased her out of the store without any reason.

From then on, Duan Yihan became an outcast person. Since she couldn’t find a living in Linyi, she could only take her son and sell her skills and beg for money. There were several times when she would gently sing on the street. Once while traveling Nangong Yan found her like this but ignored and carefully walked past her.

He felt guilty and wanted to avoid her.

Actually, there was no need for him to do this. Although Duan Yihan was weak, she had her own pride. She only sang Xiangtan's melody and didn't even glance at this man.

He actually didn't understand how proud and reserved this Pipa girl was.

"Look at his tear-stained face. His clothes are shabby and his appearance is benevolent. She doesn't recognize me when we meet on a foreign path. Just what kind of gaze did he cast at me?"

Someone walked past her and casually tossed her a copper coin.

She was just like the beautiful and beautiful Lady Le Xian from back then. She lowered her eyes in blessing and gently said, "Thank you, Old master, for your kindness."

The days passed one by one like this, the Lower Cultivation world razed and burned while they watched from their high walls.

This lasted for five years.

Mo Ran was five years old.

One day, Nangong Yan and his wife had an argument. They were very annoyed, so they went around the West Market. It was a fine day, and he stood with his hands behind his back, looking at the jewelry stores, the pastry shops with little interest. Under the great banyan tree, there was still an old man playing chess.

Linyi had always been a paradise, so what did it matter how many people had died in the lower cultivation world? They had been singing and dancing here for a hundred years.

Nangong Yan walked over to watch the elders play chess.

He was used to traveling, so no one recognized him. Therefore, he just happily gave pointers to the people on the side, making those old men feel more annoyed in the end and chasing him away.

Nangong Yan was disappointed. His heart was not satisfied. He took a few steps forward and stood under a big tree. He looked at a golden embroidered bird cage hanging on a branch. Inside the cage, the embroidery birds were chirping crisply.

Perhaps it was because the sunlight was too great that it made people feel at ease. As Nangong Yan stood under the tree thinking, he suddenly thought back to five years ago, that gentle and gentle lady from Xiangtan Restaurant.

He tilted his head and teased the bird with embroidered eyes, saying, “Hey, can you sing Xiang Qu’er?”

The embroidery bird obviously couldn’t sing, but it could still chirp and cry.

Nangong Yan then sighed, his mouth humming the tune that he had heard many years ago when he had a cold shoulder.

Suddenly, he heard a clear and bright voice behind him. Someone was mumbling in a gentle voice, “Wild clouds, cold winds, a sky full of ice and snow.” The voice was like clink of pearls and jade.

He suddenly turned around as if he had been separated from his family for a lifetime.

It had been a long time since he had seen her because he had purposely avoided her. At this moment, through the bustle of the city and the crowd

that came and went, he suddenly saw that slender and gentle woman again — he did not even dare to look and speak with her even in dreams.

He met her again.

With a frail child in tow, the mother and son pair stood by the side of the street. She lowered her eyes as she sang a song, hoping to gain the mercy of those on the street and get a meal.

She softly sang, “This road leads to the front and back of the mountain. At the front and back of the mountain, there are tens of thousands of pedestrians…”

Countless people came and went, but no one stopped for her.

Although the song was pleasant to hear, it wasn’t that striking and she was singing alone, so no one was willing to pay for it.

“… It is easy for Bairong to meet a man, but not easy for him to meet him. He can only look out into the distance and see the river filled with smoke and cold water.” Suddenly, a pair of shoes with golden threads and jade inlaid appeared in front of her eyes. She heard a man humming a song she hadn’t finished.

Duan Yihan was stunned for a moment before slowly raising her eyes.

She saw him again.

He was still the same as he was five years ago. He was handsome, had a dignified appearance, and was extremely handsome. He was not old at all, and the years had not left a mark on his face.

Duan Yihan saw her own reflection in his eyes. From a delicate and pretty young girl from five years ago, she now had a face full of hardships. Her beauty was completely gone, and the sight of it made one sick of looking at her.

But when Nangong Yan looked at her, there was a deep affection in his eyes.

After many years of marriage, his wife had heard of his past love history. Although he did not dare to say it out loud, he was still extremely displeased. He would often throw a tantrum and put on airs, and his son was also extremely mischievous. Today, when he stood in front of Duan Yihan, seeing her in such a state, more or less, guilt and pity arose in his heart.

Duan Yi was stupefied. He lowered his eyelashes and stopped singing.

“Mother?” Mo Ran, who was beside her, was puzzled. He turned his head to look at her.

Duan Yihan said: “Mother is tired today, let’s go home.”

Mo Ran nodded obediently, smiled and said, “Then let’s go back and rest. I’ll think of a way to make dinner.”

The mother and son both desired to leave together.

Nangong Yan called out to her, “You…”

His gaze once again fell on Mo Ran.

The child was small and thin and dressed in rags, but he was sensible and had a pretty face.

Nangong Yan suddenly realized that this was his own child.

It was his blood and bone.

He reached out his hand and touched Mo Ran on the head.

Mo Ran did not know who he was. He squinted his eyes and allowed the man to ruffle his black hair. “Ugh…”

Nangong Yan thought of that year when Duan Yihan came to his residence to beg for his help while holding the baby like a kitten.

“He doesn’t have a name,” she said then.

“What’s your name?” Nangong Yan asked.

“Ran-er.”

“Surname?”

“I don’t have a last name.”

Nangong Yan looked at Duan Yihan in a rather sour manner. It was unknown what impulse he had as he said, “Why don’t you guys —”

Before he could finish his words, he suddenly saw a group of Daoist cultivators from the Rufeng Sect walking past on the corner of the street.

Nangong Yan’s state of mind was interrupted.

He quivered, as if he had returned to reality.

He once again looked at Duan Yi’s cold eyes.

The pair of eyes that had once looked at him with a smile that was as curvy as a crescent moon were now very dull. There were no longer any illusions of a young lady in the room. Even when he had wanted to reunite with them, it had been very cold.

She had already seen through this man.

Thus, Nangong Yan appeared to be in a sorry state and was slightly embarrassed. In order to cover up his emotions, he coughed lightly and generously stuffed all the gold and silver artifacts in his money pouch into Mo Ran's hands.

He patted Mo Ran's head again and said, "Your mother sang very well. These jewels, gold and silver, should be suitable for her."

A slender hand took the purse from Mo Ran.

Duan Yihan took out a copper coin from his pouch and placed it in the broken bowl held by Mo Ran Hand. After that, he handed the heavy jewelry silver coins back to Nangong Yan.

She said nothing more, only gave him a gentle, flat blessing, like any passerby who had given his money.

She politely said to him, "Thank you, my lord, for your kindness."

Then, he turned around and left.

She was the Xiangtan Le Xian, also known as the moon and stars, one song and one dance. When tens of thousands of people had come to her, he had never been proud or aloof. Now that his clothes were faded and her beauty was faded, she could only beg for mercy by selling his skills by the roadside. However, she would not feel inferior.

That day, from Duan Yihan's subtle attitude, Mo Weiyu became suspicious, but after some insinuating and questioning, he finally found out about his background.

"Mother told you these because she didn't want to lie to you. But you have to remember, Mo Ran, not to be angry." Duan Yihan replied, "I won't ask for his help either."

She said, poking at Mo Ran on his small head.

"When the disaster in the cultivation world is over, Linyi will allow ordinary citizens to go in and out. We'll head back to Xiangtan."

Mo Ran was quiet for a long time, then he nodded. "I won't beg him. I'll go back to Xiangtan with my aunt."

Duan Yihan smiled and said: "I don't know if sister Xun would recognize me, I'm not good-looking anymore."

Mo Ran was very anxious. "Mother, you look good."

"Hmm?"

"Mother is the most beautiful."

Duan Yihan's smile became even more dazzling, and between her brows, she really regained the charm of that year's beauty. She teased him: "Such a sweet mouth, you better coax whoever marries you in the future."

Mo Ran felt a little embarrassed and pursed his lips. After a while, his sharp teeth were still exposed.

“When I grow up, I want to find a wife that’s like a fairy and stay by my mother’s side.”

“Aiya, you think so much. Which Heavenly Immortal is going to marry you?”

The two of them laughed, causing the fire in the woodshed to crackle. It was very warm inside. It was as if every day in the future would continue to pass by in this tranquil manner. Fire and night gave the poor an illusory solace. Thus, at that time, neither of them had expected Duan Yihan to be so short on time.

“It was in the fall when I was five.” Mo Ran said, “It was just after mid-autumn. Because of the long term closed door, Linyi food supply has been insufficient. They adjusted the price of the goods. In the end, it was to let the poor people down below keep their mouths shut and not fight with the rich over food.”

Xue Zhengyong’s heart was filled with mixed feelings as he heard this. However, after Mo Ran said this, he still thought for a moment and then nodded his head.

“Yes, I remember that time when the prices were being adjusted. After that, the hungry people started to speak. Only then did the Rufeng Sect finally lower their prices again. It went on for about. A year?”

Jiang Xi said, “I remember it was half a year.”

Mo Ran closed his eyes and said, “Not that long. It was a month and a fifth. And it only lasted a short thirty-five days.”

Ch. 259 [Tianyin Pavilion] Robes Like Children

Someone asked, “How can you remember it so clearly? How long has it been?”

How could he not remember? In Jiang Xi’s memory of the Upper Cultivation World, it was a very ordinary half a year. In Xue Zhengyong’s memory of the lower cultivation world, it was a very emotional year.

In the memory of Mo Ran, however, it gradually gave up all hope, spending thirty-five days like a year. Every day was a life worse than death. Every day was spent in Purgatory.

That year, when the price adjustment order was issued, everyone was anxious. Duan Yihan and his child couldn’t get any food, so they could only rely on picking rotten vegetables and moldy rice noodles. And then there were more and more people who couldn’t eat, they couldn’t even pick up the leaves. In the midst of his predicament, Mo Ran could not help but ask Duan Yihan: “Mother, let’s go to Rufeng Sect to look for him and get something to eat.”

However, Duan Yihan muttered: “I beg no one, I can’t beg him.”

Begging along the streets to sell their skills, nodding and bowing, smiling and shouting, these were all forced businesses. But if he went to seek help from Nangong Yan, the meaning would be different.

Although Duan Yihan was destitute, she didn’t want to cross the last line.

Since she didn’t want to, Mo Ran didn’t mention it anymore.

On the ninth day after the price adjustment order was issued, he finally managed to steal a white radish from the ground.

Duan Yihan carefully hid the white radish. Every day, they boiled only about the size of a fist, so the two of them ate it separately. By the eighth meal, the radish was already rotten, but because she hadn't eaten anything for a long time, Duan Yihan sliced off the remaining rotten radish again, barely managing to deal with it for a few more days.

On the twenty-first day of the price fixing order, they ate the last of the radish and found nothing to feed their hunger.

Twenty-fifth day.

It rained heavily, and earthworms crawled out from the ground. Mo Ran trapped them together, received some rain water, and cooked them to eat.

The feeling of the earthworm slick in his mouth made him nauseous. Mo Ran muttered his apologies to these skinny animals. There really was nothing to fill his stomach for. If he could survive this period of time, the earthworm would be his benefactors. It was a pity that he didn't want to eat any more of his benefactors. Just when would this nightmare end…

Twenty-eighth day.

Mo Ran was suffering.

No matter how talented a child was and how high their spiritual essence was, they still could not withstand this kind of hunger and suffering.

Duan Yihan had long since lost all energy and her eyes were empty.

Today, while Mo Ran was asleep, she finally made up her mind. She left the wooden storage room and slowly walked towards the towering immortal city of the Rufeng Sect. She had her own bottom line, she would rather die than beg for food from Nangong Yan.

But the child was innocent. He was still so young, so how could he accompany her when she left the mortal world?

At this moment, the faces of everyone in the hall were filled with pity. Let alone the fact that Mo Weiyu was innocent, the past that had happened in the past was truly too tragic.

Someone slowed his tone and asked with a sigh, “Did you get it?”

“No. Her luck was bad. When she went there, Nangong Yan was arguing with his wife.”

He paused for a moment before continuing, “When the Mayor’s wife saw my mother, she flew into a rage. Not only did he not give any food to my mother, she even kicked her out of the Rufeng Sect.”

“What about Nangong Yan?”

“I don’t know. My mother didn’t mention him.”

He could have been stopped, or he could have just been standing there, unable to help.

Mo Ran did not know exactly what happened that day, he only knew that when his mother came back, her entire body was covered with scars. He curled up in the woodshed and held her, not saying a word. Then she began to cough up, spitting out blood and acid. The place smelled sour.

The thirty-fourth day.

Duan Yihan was on the verge of collapsing. She was almost unable to utter a word and could not shed tears.

That night, she woke up from her stupor and recovered some of her strength. Seeing Mo Ran curled up beside her, he tried to warm him with her small body. She gently said to him, “Little Ran-er, you have to find a way. Go back to Xiangtan.”

“Mother…”

“Go back to Xiangtan, find elder sister Xun, and repay the gratitude.” Duan Yihan caressed his hair and said, “You need to go to Xiangtan to repay my gratitude. I don’t want to stay at Linyi’s place to seek revenge…… Listen to your mother, and be a good… When your mother came to Linyi, she owed your sister Xun a lot of money, but it was still unclear… Go back, stay with her, do something for her, make her happy. In the future, if someone else gives you a favor, then remember it well.”

With tears in his eyes, Mo Ran raised his head to look at the woodshed. He looked at her emaciated face.

Duan Yihan’s eyes were black to the point that they were shiny, with even some purple tinge.

“Then I’ll return the favor.”

That was the plan Duan Yihan had made for Mo Ran before she died.

She was afraid that after she left, the child would go astray, so she reminded him repeatedly that he must, must leave this sad place.

If a person had a sense of purpose, he would not fall into a pit of despair and hatred.

She gave him a purpose — to repay the debt of gratitude and not hold any grudge.

Don't take revenge.

The thirty-fifth day.

This ridiculous order was finally annulled during the riots. It lasted for only a month and five days.

To the rich, this was like the end of a farce. Linyi was filled with the miasma of the city. As they woke up lazily in the warm sheets, they took the Eight Treasures Aroma Dew that the maid brought over and rinsed their mouths to clear their teeth. When they heard that the price fixing order was invalid, they just grumbled and yawned.

It didn't matter.

However, for Mo Ran, it was something he could not be more excited about.

He didn't have to worry about his rations anymore, so there were more kind-hearted people on the street. Mo Ran even brought a biscuit and a poor bowl of meat porridge.

He didn't want to drink a single mouthful, so he carefully held it in his hand. He wanted to hurry back and give it to his mother.

Meat porridge was such a good thing. If his mother were to drink it, she would definitely be able to recover, right?

He couldn’t wait to save his mother’s life with the bowl of porridge, but he didn’t dare run home. The bowl of porridge was cracked, and there was a big hole at the side. If he ran too fast, it would be a waste to spill it.

Just like this, he returned to the woodshed in high spirits and suffering.

“Mother!”

He held the broken bowl in both hands and used his dirty head to brush away the dust on the woodshed broken door like a little puppy. He had a smile on his face and was filled with longing for the future.

How nice, now that the meat porridge has been drunk, his mom will soon be better. Finally the flowers are blooming in the spring. They are going to go back to Linyi together. There was no hunger, and there was a sister with the surname Xun, so they no longer had to leave their homes and beg for a living.

How nice it was for them to go home together.

‘Squeak! ‘

The door opened.

“She was lying inside.” Within the Loyalty Hall, Mo Ran spoke quietly and indifferently.

The others were either surprised by his coldness, or their teeth were chilled by his coldness.

This person was actually very calm when it came to his mother’s death. There was no warmth, no ripples, not even tears.

However, no one had ever thought about how many years of despair and heartbreak before the scars could be healed and for his face to be so impassive.

“I called to her, but she didn’t wake up. She would never open her eyes or drink that porridge again.”

There was a long silence.

Madam Wang said with a trembling voice, “Then… And then you. You returned to Linyi alone?”

Mo Ran shook his head and said, “I went to the Rufeng Sect.”

Someone “Ah!” He said, “You… were you going to seek revenge?”

“My mother said, repay the debt of gratitude. Don’t seek revenge.” Mo Ran said indifferently, “I didn’t want to seek revenge. I just wanted to bury my mother. But I had no money, and I didn’t have time to raise it, so I went to his house and begged him to give me some money.”

“Did he?”

Mo Ran almost smiled and said, “No.”

“N-no? But according to what you said before, Nangong Yan still has your mother’s figure in his heart.”

“Because he found out not too long ago that his wife had passed away.”

“What?!”

Jiang Xi narrowed his eyes. “Nangong Yan’s wife did indeed die prematurely, and it was known that she killed herself…”

“That woman was pregnant at the time, but her husband was having an affair outside. After she gave birth to his child, she was always quarreling, and her life went extremely awry. That day, my mother went to find them at home. After she met them, she became even more furious. It was said that she stabbed Nangong Yan with a knife and made him anxious. She said that he wanted to divorce her.”

Mo Ran paused for a moment, then said, “She could not stand it. That night, she hanged herself. She passed away a few days before my mother actually did.”

Hearing this, the crowd was at a loss for words. It began with a beautiful romantic relationship between two people and ended with death of the woman. His family was also ruined, and the cycle of karma in the world was more or less like this.

“When I appeared, Nangong Yan was being reprimanded by the Sect Leader. His wife’s family also came, they are Linyi, a well-known businessman. Nangong Yan has already been scolded to the point that his head is being drenched in dog blood. He didn’t have a good temper at all when he suddenly saw me.”

Madam Wang’s heart was the softest. Although she knew that Mo Ran wasn’t a blood relative, she still lamented in her heart. With tears dripping down her face, she said, “Ran’er…”

Mo Ran really didn’t want to talk about these matters of the past.

The face of Nangong Yan at that time, the face of those who were present there.

There was also Madame Nangong's mourning hall — golden paper and silver flowers, paper wrapped around small children, a mountain of spiritual tools and tools, an embroidered soul gathering flag, a shiny black gold silkwood coffin, and too many things.

Hundreds of people were kneeling on both sides of his body, guarding him and crying in grief.

The lamp was filled with whale oil, and ninety-nine volumes of heart calligraphy were silently burning. The wind blew the smoke away, and the powder rustled.

It was too lively.

And his mother?

The Xiangtan Le Xian Duan Yihan only had one piece of torn clothes that she probably wouldn't be able to wear once she took it off, and that was a skinny child.

She didn't even have a mat to wrap her body in.

"It's hard for you to find a third of a meter."

— Those were the words that Nangong Yan said to Mo Ran in extreme anger and despair.

Then, under the gaze of the Sect Leader and under the watchful eyes of his in-laws, this man ruthlessly pushed his illegitimate son out of the door, refusing to acknowledge him as his son.

Madam Nangong's death was matched with a gold and red colored coffin, Agate Fragrance Beads, and a snow cold birthday suit to protect her

corpse. Her face was covered by silk and silk, while her eyes were covered by silk.

Duan Yihan was dead, a corpse, one person crying, Yin and Yang being separated, there was nothing else. According to Nangong Yan's idea, he shouldn't even ask for a thin wooden coffin.

So who dares say that men are equal in the face of death?

Destiny was unfair from the beginning.

In the end.

She was still flesh.

She was rotten to the bone.

"I dragged her to the cemetery and buried her." The few parts that were explained by Mo Ran were all too simple to describe.

He did not elaborate on how he had begged the gentlemen to give them a ride, and how he had spent fourteen days dragging the rotting, stinking body to the outskirts of the city.

He also did not say how he had used his hands to brush away the rubble and debris, burying his mother's petite body.

Mo Ran is not used to complaining in front of people.

He had always been a man who buried the past well, and would not speak lightly unless he had to.

He had long since suffered humiliation, malice, contempt and slander in the first dozen years of his life. His heart was as hard as iron, so he didn't

care what others thought of him. He disdained to be pitied.

“And then I went to Xiangtan.”

One day, he couldn’t stand the sight of Linyi any longer. He hid behind the Daoist’s cart outside the city and sneaked out of the city in his basket.

He began to follow his mother’s advice and walked to the Xiang City. He walked for half a year, from the peak of summer to the beginning of winter. If his shoes were broken, then he would walk barefoot. In the end, a thick callus would form under his feet.

Just like this, he continued walking and asking questions. When he reached the entrance of the Wubei Temple, he finally fell into a pile of grass because he was both hungry and cold.

“Mother…” The little child was lying prone on the ground. Under his messy black hair was a pair of unfocused eyes. He looked at the vast world.

It’s snowing. It’s snowing early this winter.

“I’m coming to see you. I’m sorry. I can’t hold on any longer…”

Snowflakes gently fell, gently descending like a sigh, covering his face and eyes.

In a trance, the sound of footsteps approached, followed by rustling sounds. A pair of hands dug through the grass, and he heard a young voice say, “master, come quickly! Look at him, what’s wrong with him?”

After a while, a pair of shoes approached and a man said, “Leave it alone. Go back first. I’ll see to him.”

The man's voice was deep and cold, without much emotion.

Mo Ran instinctively felt afraid. He instinctively felt that the young man was close, while the man was cold. He did not know where he got the strength, but the desire to live made him raise his hand and pull weakly at the corner of the young man's clothes.

Before he could say anything, tears had already started streaming down his face.

"Rice…"

I'm hungry, please, I want to eat.

The young man he was holding back was indeed Chu Wanning, who had gone down the mountain with Huaizui that day. Chu Wanning was stunned, "What?"

Mo Ran lifted his extremely dirty little face and shakily made a gesture as if he was going to eat something. He swallowed the bitter taste in his throat. Everything in front of him was blurry and dizzy, and his ears were buzzing.

Tears were streaming down his face as he pleaded with the man in front of him. He knew that if this young big brother was like the other old masters and Young Masters that he had met, abandoning him, then he would definitely die. He really couldn't take it anymore.

"Eat…"

Later, Chu Wanning fed him a pot of rice soup.

A pot of soup saved a man on the verge of starvation.

After drinking the rice soup, Mo Ran left the Wubei Temple. At that time, his mind was still muddled. He only remembered a pair of slightly raised phoenix eyes with long and thick eyelashes for the appearance of his benefactor.

However, he had worn the cloak that his benefactor and big brother had given him throughout the day and night from the Wubei Temple to the Xiangtan. He was small at the time, and his young clothes made him look awkward and comical, especially when he put on his hat, which almost covered his whole face.

Along the way, there would always be children who didn't have to worry about food or clothing. They would nestle by their parents' side, laughing and shouting, "Dad, mom, look at that little beggar. What is he wearing? It's so funny!"

Mo Ran was not angry.

What was the derision of others to him? He was only grateful that this unfitting cloak could protect him from wind and rain, could give him a gentle attitude.

He wore it, and when it snowed, the snow did not fall on him. Late at night, the darkness would not enter his heart.

And when night came, he would rise from the fire and sit at the edge of the fire, hugging his knees to keep warm. He covered his head with his cloak and shrank into it, watching the melting orange flames from under the soft edge of his fur.

The cloak was very warm, like the embrace of an aunt, and also like a benefactor's big brother's pair of gentle phoenix eyes… The little child

curled up and fell asleep just like that. In his dreams, he could even smell the faint fragrance of the cloak, as if he was leaning against a haitang tree that had bloomed to the size of a mantis.

Looking back now, it was no wonder that he felt that the smell on Chu Wanning's body was very good. As long as there was his scent in the bed, he would be able to sleep peacefully.

It was no wonder that the first time he saw Elder Yuheng at the foot of Heaven-Piercing Tower, he felt that his downcast phoenix eyes were extremely gentle. It was as if he had seen it somewhere before.

It turned out that everything had a cause and effect.

He and Chu Wanning… It turned out that he had said something earlier, that he had touched his body temperature, and he had even licked his palm before. It turned out that he had smelled the fragrance of the flowers on Chu Wanning's clothes so early on in the day. The benefactor he had been looking for was right beside him, and he had never left.

A trace of warmth was actually born in Mo Ran's lowered eyes within this clear and cold Loyalty Hall.

But this was a secret between them, Mo Ran thought, sour and sweet at the same time. He kept this secret in his heart, not telling anyone, not telling anyone.

He took a deep breath, paused, and then continued, "After arriving at Xiangtan, I followed the will of my mother and found Xun Fengruo."

At that time, Mo Ran was only five years old, and he was wrapped in a thick cloak that belonged to the young Chu Wanning.

The hem of the cloak was hanging on the ground and it was already dirty. A little kid poked out a dirty bird's nest head from inside the fur, raised his yellow skinny little face and softly asked: "Excuse me… Elder sister Xun Fengruo, are you here?"

"Xun Fengruo?" The actress who was being pulled by him laughed and looked him up and down curiously, "The music industry's top courtesan? Although we don't sell our bodies here, but for Miss Xun's fame, how many people don't like her looks more than they like her singing? Little brother, how old are you to actually know to look for her?"

Mo Ran's eyes were wide open and his expression was clear. He did not understand her words at all.

However, the mockery in the girl's eyes was obvious, making Mo Ran blush. He tightly gripped the collar of his cloak, and said with a flushed face, "Please, I want to see Sister Xun. My, my mother told me to come find her…"

"Eh? Who is your mother?"

"My mother's surname is Duan, and her name is Duan Yihan…"

The singing girl's expression changed. She took a step back and covered her mouth with her handkerchief. Even her originally lazy peach blossom eyes suddenly widened. "You, you're Duan Le Xian's child?"

Back then, when Duan Yihan's name was known throughout the world, she had never acted with authority, and she had even frequently distributed the excess money to her sisters who were no longer as earning as much as before. Thus, when this actress heard that he was Miss Duan's child, she immediately changed her attitude and hurriedly brought him to the

greenhouse of the Flower Pavilion. He saw Xun Fengruo lying on a high bed in the room.

Closing the door, Mo Ran bowed to Xun Fengruo and told her everything. Xun Fengruo's heart was weak as she mourned and her tears flowed down her face.

She immediately found Lady Mo and told her to keep Mo Ran by her side. She didn't want to do it, but she couldn't resist the incessant pleas. After examining Mo Ran for a while, she felt that he could at least do something for the building, so she reluctantly agreed. The beggar entered the building afraid of provoking misfortune, according to the rules, he had to burn all of his clothing, and then thoroughly wash it clean.

There was no problem with taking a bath, but when he mentioned burning clothes, Mo Ran cried.

"What are you crying for!?" It's not like I'm not going to buy you new ones in the future!" The mama knocked on Mo Ran's head impatiently with her water pipe. "Be more tactful. I'll eat and live with you. Others can't laugh even if they wanted to. Look at how poor you are!"

Mo Ran was afraid that he would implicate his elder sister Xun, who had already said all the good things for him.

So he bit his lip and held on. He rubbed his red eyes and stood in front of the fire, silently sobbing.

At that time, he had truly not understood why all of this happened. Why was it that he only wanted to keep an old garment with him, but because he was lowly, because he was weak, because he was a scoundrel, and in order not to cause trouble for others, he had to let others take it off him.

He could not struggle, could not say no, he did not even have the power to shed tears.

It had given him so much warmth and support. In order to protect him from the wind and rain, the original color of his clothes had already been dirty to the point that it could not be seen.

Now that he had a foothold, he might never need it again. He just wanted to wash it carefully and fold it neatly, even if it meant never wearing it again, under the small box. It was his friend, not just an old dress.

But now it was out of his control.

With a boom, the filthy cloak was thrown into the flames. To the person who threw it was just a litter, but in the end, it was still considered a waste. But to Mo Ran, it was a cremation, a funeral.

He watched on helplessly.

The flames rose up with a loud rumble, blurring the magnificent splendor of the mortal world.

—

“Drink slowly… If it’s not enough, there’s still…”

“Where are you from…”

He could still hear the gentle voice of the teenager. That was one of the few kindness he had gained in his humble life.

Everything turned to dust.

Just like that, Mo Ran had taken the mother of the House of Drunken Jade as his godmother, and he had also acquired a surname, Mo, with her. From then on, he became a servant in the building and finally, Duan An Sheng's life passed.

However, good times didn't last long. According to the rules of the building, the music industry might not be comparable to the brothels, but once one reached the age where they could not earn a full "self-pitying fee", then the young ladies' first night would be sold to those rich Young Masters and merchants.

Xun Fengruo was weak and not worried. She had long ago made a fortune for the House of Drunken Jade.

"We're still short of one hundred and fifty thousand gold." Xun Fengruo smiled and said to Mo Ran, "Ran-er, once I earn enough money from your sister, I can redeem myself. Big sister will take you to live a good life."

Mo Ran was sent to the kitchen and rarely saw her. This mama didn't want the people in the building to form gangs, so when Xun Fengruo and Mo Ran met, it was always in secret.

She reached out her hand and pinched his cheek, then handed him a handful of candy. "Shh, take it and eat. It's a pity I can't give you the money. Lady Mo's eyes are so poisonous, hehe."

Mo Ran then grinned, revealing a mouth with missing teeth, "En, thank you, big sister Xun."

However, Xun Fengruo was still short of one hundred and fifty thousand gold coins to redeem herself. How could the mama not be clear about this matter?

Although she looked calm on the surface, her heart was burning with anxiety.

After Xun Fengruo's became weak, she lost more than half of the House of Drunken Jade's source of income. Lady Mo planned to make a good profit before Xun Fengruo left.

At that time, there were many rich families that were drooling over Xun Fengruo's beauty. They all offered sky-high prices, enough for the mama to sit down and eat for the rest of her life. In the end, Lady Mo started conspiring. With Xun Fengruo being weak, she had made a contract with a wealthy merchant. The two took advantage of the Spring Festival, Xun Fengruo sat weak and played a song, was given a cup of tea that had been drugged, and then brought it to her room…

On the day of Mo Ran, he cooked the Soup Dumplings and carefully brought them to the Warm Pavilion for his sister to eat.

Before he could enter, he heard a heavy panting sound coming from inside the house. Mo Ran was startled. He pushed open the door, and a strong smell assaulted his nose, causing him to almost vomit.

In the dim halo of light, he saw a rich merchant that was greasy with a pork belly. He was drooling and his clothes were wide open. He was currently on top of a weakly struggling Xun Fengruo, who was trembling all over.

"Clang clang!"

He did not know where he got the strength from when he rushed into the room — his natural endowment had been shocking since he was a child — but after furiously beating up that rich businessman, he held onto that

fatty and shouted at Xun Fengruo, who was already crying until there were tears and was so shocked that he did not know what to do.

“Elder sister, let’s go!”

“But you…”

“Hurry up and go! I can’t go, I have to grab him! If you don’t leave now, we’ll all have to answer to you when the mama arrives. Run! If you go, I’ll run away immediately!”

Xun Fengruo was his benefactor.

Mo Ran had sent her flying far away from Yuezhou, never to return.

That day, he finally became a hero.

Xun Fengruo weakly bowed to him and ran out of the building. However, Mo Ran did not leave in time. When the mama heard the commotion, she quickly brought people up. The moment she came up, she saw Mo Ran beat up the esteemed guest and let her courtesan go. Her face contorted in anger, as if he was about to vomit blood.

The mama had a son about the same age as Mo Ran, who had a vicious mind and a belly full of evil tricks. Seeing how angry his mother was, he came up with an idea — sometimes, the viciousness of a child could be so naive and terrifying. The boy punished the peer who had angered his mother by punishing him like an animal.

He found a dog cage and had Mo Ran locked in. The cage was extremely narrow, and Mo Ran could only squat, not lie down, and not stand up. They fed him cold food like dogs, and so on for a full seven days.

Seven days later, Mo Ran was trapped in an old room with a weak breeze. The smell of incense mixed with the stench of a man's body and liquid.

He crouched, hunched.

Smelling the drowsy, sweet, greasy smell.

He wanted to vomit.

Seven days.

From then on, the smell of incense made him sick, and fear and horror filled his bones.

Ch. 260 [Tianyin Pavilion] Living as a Furnace

In the Loyalty Hall, the group of cultivators didn't know what to make of it. Many of them lowered their heads in silence.

Master Xuanjing said: "Sigh… Miserable people, they are all miscreants."

The master of the Tianyin Pavilion, Mu Yanli, said, "There is always someone to blame for what happened. There are many things in this world that are related to karma." At this point, she changed the subject, "But Mo Ran, you must know that suffering is not the reason for you to vent your hatred and disregard for human life."

"Yeah."

An elder of the Fire Phoenix Pavilion also sighed, and said, "Immortal Mo, you have suffered greatly, but it is still a pity. But that's also because you're from a bad family fate played tricks on him. Everyone has their own destiny. You can't just go back and bully someone you don't have anything to do with just because you've been bullied."

"You have done good and have been wronged, but as far as we know, you have also killed people later on… This is one matter and that is another, they should not affect each other."

Mo Ran did not speak.

Jiang Xi suddenly asked, "How?"

"This…"

“Who knows? Whose life is not a life? Who can be the fairest ruler?” Jiang Xi acted recklessly and did not make the Tianyin Pavilion into a God. “I don’t have any intention of favoring Mo Ran, but I do want to ask one thing. Today, we are standing here and saying that we will settle the score with Mo Ran one by one. Then — what about the humiliation of Mo Ran? What about the injustice he has suffered?”

“…” No one would have thought that Jiang Xi, who had suffered the most in the bloody battle a few days ago, would stand up for Mo Weiyu. Everyone was stunned for a moment.

Mu Yanli said, “Sect Leader Jiang, the Tianyin Pavilion has always been impartial. My clan will guard the divine weighing tool for generations. When the time comes, we will use the magical equipment to measure Young Master Mo’s merits and demerits and determine the punishment. You don’t have to worry.”

“Strange, what relationship does he have with him? Why should he be worried?”

Jiang Xi had been unhappy with the Tianyin Pavilion for a long time. He cultivated the Way of Medicine, so, to put it bluntly, as long as the medicine was refined well, the mortal body would be able to roam freely in the mortal world.

He narrowed his almond-shaped eyes and coldly said, “But I am very curious. May I ask, everyone from the Tianyin Pavilion, after the interrogation is over, will you also interrogate the others involved in these old matters? Should he dig three feet into the ground and see if Nangong Yan was still alive? Should he go to Xiangtan and look for the rich man who had assaulted Miss Xun? It is perfectly justified for Mo Ran to kill to repay

the debt, so if he is imprisoned, beaten up, beaten up, humiliated by his guests, and his mother starved to death, who should he talk to?"

Xuanjing stammered: "Sect Leader Jiang, why did you suddenly speak up for the sinner?"

"It's hard to say." Jiang Xi said with his thin lips, "I'm just thinking about how we treated Nangong Si and Ye Wangxi when we were at Mount Huang. I don't really want to see the old story repeat itself."

Someone said, "That's two yards of situation. It's completely different."

"What's different?" Jiang Xi said, "Now that Nangong is dead, and Ye Wangxi has been sick in Guyue'ye's bed ever since, things have changed. But back then, were we not the ones who forced them to say that the Rufeng Sect's debt of blood was theirs to pay with their lives?"

He spun around, his brown eyes like a hawk's.

"What about then? Where is the Tianyin Pavilion. Where is justice?"

The people of Bitan Manor had a deep grudge with the Rufeng Sect because of the sword art manual. "Sect Leader Jiang's words are biased," said Zhen Kuan, Li Wuxin's disciple. "Nangong Si was the descendant of the Rufeng Sect, and there was always a debt to be paid. Unless all the people from the Rufeng Sect died, they would still pursue the old debt. No one wants to be a fool."

Jiang Xi sneered, "Yeah, so you see, don't you understand this logic? No one wants to be the last person to be slapped without being able to retaliate."

Zhen Congming: "…"

“You’re thinking this way. Xu Shuanglin is thinking this way. Mo Ran can also be thinking this way.” Jiang Xi said, “When things happen to other people, these words will always come out easily. However, when injustice and brutality truly fall on me, I will only feel that there are so many wicked people in this world, but I am the one who has to suffer.”

Zhen Congming said, “Sect Leader Jiang, do you mean to say that we are being too cruel and unfair to Ye Wangxi, and that the matter regarding the Bitan Manor’s sword art manual has been resolved?”

Jiang Xi said, “Since Nangong Si is no longer around, who else do you want to pursue the matter with?”

Zhen Congming suddenly became angry, “Then my master died in vain?! Nangong is no longer here, but there is still Ye Wangxi, isn’t there? She is the commander of the Rufeng Sect’s hidden city. Regarding the sword manual, doesn’t she have a trace of whereabouts?!”

Silence.

Everyone knew that Jiang Xi had a cold and gloomy temperament. Zhen Congming and his name didn’t match at all, actually confronting Jiang Xi in front of everyone.

Jiang Xi stared at Zhen Quming for a moment, then said, “Back then on Mount Jiao, when Nangong Si fought with Nangong Changying, he was seriously injured. At that time, he used his lips to speak to me.”

“… What do you mean?”

Jiang Xi closed his eyes and spoke slowly to herself, as if the last words of the bloody battle between Nangong Si and himself were going to happen.

“I hope you can scatter all the treasures of the Rufeng Sect for a hundred years.”

“This…” The cultivators looked at each other in dismay, unable to keep their faces straight. The monks of the Wubei Temple even lowered their eyes, clasped their hands, and began chanting.

Zhen Congming’s face turned red, he finally gritted his teeth and said, “He doesn’t even have a corpse anymore, the treasures of the Rufeng Sect are all in the secret room, who can open it? Isn’t he just speaking empty words and putting on an act?”

Jiang Xi said, “Nangong Si did not expect that there would be nothing left of him in the end. Furthermore, I would rather believe that he was about to die and that his words are good.”

Zhen Congming’s lips trembled as if he wanted to refute something, but in the end, he didn’t say anything.

After a long while, he said, “Is this the reason why Sect Leader Jiang protected Mo Weiyu today? Do you want to ask for leniency so that you don’t end up like Nangong Si?”

Jiang Xi said, “I only feel that seeking justice is an extremely difficult and even impossible task. I hope that everyone will not praise yourself too highly when reprimanding others, and that you do not feel that you represent justice and the will of the heavens.”

He looked at the descendant of the God, the Tianyin Pavilion. “Even if it’s the Public Judgment Hall, they might not all be correct.”

As he said this, Xue Zhengyong also spoke.

Xue Zhengyong was obviously very tired, he didn't even know how to face Mo Ran. However, after pondering for a long time, he sighed and said hoarsely, "Sect Leader Jiang is right. For so many years, the cultivation world had been in turmoil, and there had been many storms. There had been a lot of trouble, and each sect had more or less done something muddleheaded. "Sigh, actually…"

He sighed and closed his eyes.

"Indeed such disregard for human life. Is it only when it kill people personally? Back in the days when the Rufeng Sect set the price adjustment, no blood could be seen on the blade, but it caused the deaths of so many innocent civilians. Xue's body has stood for more than forty years in the world, with little accomplishment, did not practice cultivation to become an immortal, and did not do for the name to go down in history. I just want to make the suffering in this chaotic world less."

He spoke with a straight face.

The Sect Leader at the Sisheng Peak, no matter how calm he was, was still at a loss after knowing that the child he had raised for so many years was not her own nephew.

"I just want the number of people who are suffering to be less," he murmured.

At this time, Mu Yanli coldly spoke, "Sect Leader Xue is a kind and benevolent person, but have you ever thought about how you would be lenient towards sinners? The Tianyin Pavilion was weak. It was true that they could not clear up the crimes committed by everyone one by one,

bringing everyone to justice. However, they made an example to everyone. The Sect Leader understands."

Xue Zhengyong: "…"

After Mu Yanli finished speaking, she turned her head to look at Mo Ran once more.

"Young Master Mo, now that you have explained all the suffering of your life, you have gained sympathy from almost everyone. Why don't we talk about something else?"

Mo Ran looked at her indifferently, "What does Pavilion master want to talk about?"

"Earlier, you said that you were not the one responsible for the matter of that girl from the tofu shop getting killed after assault. I believe you. But there is one other person whose death is always related to you."

Mo Ran closed his eyes, "Pavilion master has investigated thoroughly."

Mu Yanli coldly said, "Then come and have a good talk with me. Back then, how did you kill Mo Nian? That was Sect Leader Xue's true nephew."

Before he could finish, he was interrupted by an angry voice.

Xue Meng's eyes were filled with tears and hatred. He gritted his teeth and shouted in a low voice, "Shut up. Don't say anymore!"

Mu Yanli glanced at him and commented, "…… Running away from the truth is just a matter of escaping. It seems like the so-called darling of the heavens can only do this much."

The reply he got was the clamor of Longcheng, as though it was a warning. The scimitar passed by Mu Yanli's face and penetrated into the pillar. Wood chips flew everywhere.

Mu Yanli did not dodge. She did not even bat an eyelid as she stared at Xue Meng with her beautiful eyes that were cold as snow.

Xue Meng gritted his teeth as the muscles on his face trembled in hatred. "What nephew? Did you say enough?"

Abruptly, he pulled Longcheng back, his chest heaving.

He no longer looked at Mo Ran, nor at anyone. He was like a trapped beast, driven to madness in the same place.

"Are you done talking?! Was it enough?! Is it a good show to watch?"

Madam Wang said, "Meng'er…"

His eyes were scarlet red as he held Longcheng up in the air. Looking around him, he seemed to ridicule himself with contempt: "Watching a Grandmaster turn into a demon murderer, watching his brothers at Sisheng Peak fight each other, watching relatives turn into enemies — do you feel very happy?"

His voice was hoarse like a broken xun, and his last words were trembling like feathers.

"Did you guys really come here to seek justice? is it to seek the truth?" He paused, then gritted his teeth and said, "Aren't you here to seek revenge?!"

Jiang Xi narrowed his eyes, “Young Master Xue, you’ve lost your composure.”

Xue Meng suddenly turned his head. His eyes were like fiery lightning. “Are you in charge of me?”

“Meng’er!”

Xue Zhengyong stood up and grabbed Xue Meng’s shoulder, but when he touched Xue Meng, he was stunned. Although Xue Meng howled in anger, his entire body was trembling slightly.

It was almost shattered.

“I don’t want to hear it.” He stuttered, each word more bitter. “It’s all a lie. A lie. A bunch of liars!”

Xue Zhengyong wanted to persuade him, but Xue Meng had already pushed through the crowd and left the Loyalty Hall.

From start to finish, he did not look at Mo Ran.

In fact, Xue Meng already knew very well who was lying and what the truth was. However, many things in this world were easy to understand and difficult to accept.

Xue Meng had been following the flow smoothly for more than twenty years. Other than the death of Chu Wanning, he had never experienced any major calamities. It was because of this that he was still like a naive child to this day. This was not a good thing. Although they had a heart like a naive child, they also had their recklessness, ignorance, impulsiveness and sharpness.

Xue Zhengyong looked at the place where he left and stood there blankly for a long time before slowly sitting down.

He was no longer young. He was nearly half a hundred years old. He didn't know if he could bear it. He had to sit down.

This way, at least, he would be able to relax.

It was as if a thin layer of ice had formed on Mu Yanli's face, but there was not the slightest bit of warmth. She was only concerned with the matter, so she said, "Mo Ran, are you going to speak of this matter yourself, or should I call for a witness?"

Mo Ran was very calm.

He was as calm as a prisoner on death row.

"Don't bother others. If there were any other witnesses alive, I wouldn't want to see any of them either."

He looked up slowly.

The weak sunlight shone down on his somewhat pale face.

"I'll say it myself."

Mu Yanli raised her hand, and immediately a person from the Tianyin Pavilion moved into an empty chair. She sat down and rested her hand on her chin, as if she was going to listen to a long story. "Please."

Mo Ran closed his eyes for a moment, then finally opened his mouth.

"This was originally a businessman."

“What businessman?”

“… You should all know that there is a type of business in the cultivation world called ‘Bao Dating’.”

Palace Master Ma Yun was the most familiar with this. He raised his hand and said, “Right, right, our Villa is most familiar with these people.

Mo Ran replied, “Yes, that’s why Uncle was asking around for the remains of his deceased brother. He was also looking for Mr. Bao Wen.”

Xue Zhengyong: “…”

Of course, Xue Zhengyong remembered that it was Mr. Bao Wen who provided the clues. At that time, the House of Drunken Jade was engulfed in a sea of fire, and it was said that only one child survived. He could even clearly remember the excited face of Mr. Bao Wen, and he could not help sighing — God bless your brother’s son, who had survived a great ordeal.

“That year, Mr. Bao Wen accepted the assignment and investigated a few times. Finally, he got an idea and went to the House of Drunken Jade to look for someone. Find a woman with the surname Mo.”

Someone asked curiously, “Who is that?”

“She is the beloved companion of Sect Leader Xue’s elder brother. She was known as Lady Mo. She was once the concubine of a rich family.”

Someone reacted and said in surprise, “Lady Mo? That’s the head of the House of Drunken Jade’s, isn’t it?”

“But by what he said just now she seemed like an evil woman.”

Mo Ran said indifferently, “She wasn’t born to do evil. Listening to my mother, Lady Mo and her story are quite similar, and she is also a pitiful person. When she was young, she had a lover, a penniless rogue cultivator. That rogue cultivator said that he was going to the lower cultivation world to create a famous sect, so Lady Mo gave him all her money and accessories, determined to help him achieve his ambitions.”

Xue Zhengyong muttered, “My big brother…”

Mo Ran continued, “When that rogue cultivator left, he swore to Lady Mo that he would marry her off to his home in glory after he achieved great things. For this, he even gave Lady Mo a sentence— “On the River of Smoke and within the pleasure boat, the fairy’s lute sounds were slow, and my husband didn’t need to listen to anything.”

This kind of thing between a man and a woman caught everyone’s attention.

A female cultivator asked, “Could it be that the previous Sect Leader of the Sisheng Peak also did the same thing as Nangong Yan, abandoning his wife?”

Xue Zhengyong’s eyes were wide open as he scolded: “Nonsense! How could my brother be that kind of person! My brother… he has never forgotten Miss Mo…”

Speaking of his deceased brother, the man couldn’t help but feel sad. His eyes turned slightly red.

Elder Xuanji also said from the side, “Please be careful, this Immortal Lady. The previous generation’s Sect Leader died in a fierce battle not long after he became a member of the founding faction. He did not intentionally go

back on his words. Before he passed away, he often talked about that woman with the Sect Leader, always saying that once the sect was slightly more stable, he would immediately go and pick her up. He is not the same as Nangong Yan at all."

"Indeed. In the end, she was still much luckier than my mother. Her husband had died, but there was someone who still wanted to bring her back. Nangong Yan was still alive, but he had never dared to recognize me or my mother."

"Ha! Then I know! So that's the reason why you feel jealous. That's why you changed the crown prince for a cat, killed Lady Mo, burned down the House of Drunken Jade and impersonated him!"

Hearing this malicious guess, Mo Ran looked at this "extremely smart" cultivator and said, "I never thought of impersonating him."

The cultivator was not convinced and sneered: "What's going on? Could it be that there is someone forcing you to be the Young Master at the Sisheng Peak?"

What was going on?

In fact, there were many things in this world that weren't like this in the beginning. However, one day, the butterfly suddenly flapped its wings, causing the wind to blow and the sea to turn into a mulberry field.

It was as if he had thought of replacing Xue Zhengyong's nephew from the beginning, and Lady Mo wasn't that wicked music industry's mama.

She had been gentle and kind in her youth, and had stood by the Xuan window, hoping that her husband would return home soon. She had been

glad to write to her distant lover when she learned that she had a son in her womb. She had also received a letter from him, and the excitement of the man who had become a father overflowed over the paper.

She had experienced these wonderful times before.

So what if she was a concubine? Others mocked her lover as a nobody. So what if they mocked her for being pregnant before marriage? One day, he would fulfill his promise and gloriously receive her and her child through the door. She was so sure.

But then, day by day, the days passed. Gradually, the letters changed from three days to seven days. Then from seven days to one month. Finally, there was no news.

Lady Mo's heart was eventually dispirited. She had a wild personality, and this relationship was originally hidden from her parents. After the birth of the child, she hesitated several times before carrying the child home. As a result, her husband got angry and his legal wife began to insult her. Lady Mo left in anger. After a few rounds, the mistress of a rich family eventually became the manager of the House of Drunken Jade.

The ups and downs of life are like this, fate is like a furnace, you don't know what to do to go in, come out again, perhaps completely changed.

Mo Ran was like this, as was Lady Mo.

It had been fourteen years since her innocent days in the boudoir when Mr. Bao Wen found her.

The teacher who was carrying Xue Zhengyong's request sat down, opened his fan and smiled, "Where is your mama? Tell her to come here."

The mama arrived, dressed in a peach blossom coat, with goosebumps hanging from her arms. She twisted her waist, picked up a hookah, and lifted the ding-dong bead curtain as she smiled charmingly, “Yo, Young Master, you came to listen to a little song in the early morning? Do you like the zither or the pipa? I have a songstress here who is proficient in everything. I’ll open the door for you and make it cheaper for you.”

This was life. Fourteen years ago, when her lover had left, she had leaned against the beaded curtain with a sad expression.

Fourteen years later, her lover’s brother finally found her. The pearl curtains of time separated the vast lives, then rolled back again. She had brushed away the vermilion green and was now experiencing the vicissitudes of life. The shy as a deer woman died a long time ago. Now, sitting in the House of Drunken Jade is a middle age woman who smokes and winks brazenly..

Mr. Bao Wen did not sigh with emotion. In his eyes, there was only money. He waved his fan and smiled. “There’s no need to listen to a song. I came here to inquire about someone from the mama.”

The mama’s smile froze as his tone turned cold. “Find out who? Find out who?”

That Mister said in a slow and unhurried manner, “On the River of Smoke, in the pleasure boat, the sound of the fairy lute is slow, and my husband is not listening to you.”

When the mama heard this, her expression changed. When he finished speaking, she had already lost all color, her lips were trembling, and her

sharp, even mean, eyebrows were twitching. She held her handkerchief to her chest for a long time before finally trembling and asking:

“You, just who are you… Who is it?!”

Mr Bao Wen asked with a smile, “If I’m not mistaken, I’ve finally found someone on behalf of cultivator Xue. Lady Mo, how have you been all these years?”

Lady Mo swayed a little and lost her balance. She collapsed on the round wooden bench, panting heavily. Her face was pale and flushed red. She waved her hand to dismiss everyone, leaving Mr. Bao Wen alone in the hall. She stared at the face of the businessman, her eyes filled with ecstasy, sadness, and a myriad of other emotions.

Mr. Bao Wen’s expression was indifferent. He lifted the teapot to fill his cup with a teacup that was half cold and half warm. He passed it over and said, “Drink some tea first.”

Trembling, Lady Mo held the cup, took a sip, and then another. When the tea was finished, she still took a few sips before she finally raised her head.

“Xue… Xue Lang asked you to come find me?”

Mr Bao asked with a sigh, “To tell you the truth, the cultivator Xue that Lady Mo missed has long since passed away.”

“What?!”

“It’s his little brother. He asked me to search for his elder brother’s soulmate. In the past, the two brothers had established their own sects in the lower cultivation world. They were no longer the loners that they used to be. But that Xue Xiansheng was busy building his sect, and was unable

to leave for the time being. After that, an accident happened while he was beheading the demons, unfortunately…"

Before he could finish, Lady Mo covered her face and burst into tears.

Only after being coaxed by Mr. Bao Jiu for a long time did she finally stop her sobs. Then, the gentleman continued, "Before Immortal Xue Jun passed away, he had talked to his brother about the mama's whereabouts. His brother has been searching for her all these years, hoping to find you and bring you back."

Lady Mo muttered to herself, not daring to be confident. She abruptly pulled on Mr. Bao Jiu's hand and said, "Repeat that sentence again! I don't believe it, I don't believe the one dying is him…"

This was the most important part of this business. He recited it by heart and immediately repeated it again, "On the Misty River, in the pleasure boat, the sound of the Fairy's lute is slow. Husband, please don't listen."

Lady Mo exclaimed in a low voice as tears welled up in her eyes. "He… he hasn't come looking for me all these years. I thought… And I blamed him…"

Mr Bao asked with a sigh, "It has already been many years. Mother, please restrain your grief. Right, does this lady have another son?"

"Yes… Yes, yes, yes!" Lady Mo choked with sobs, weeping and wiping away her tears. She then called out to the Warm Pavilion upstairs, "A-Nian, A-Nian… Mo Nian! Quick, quickly come down!"

The door of the pavilion opened, but it wasn't Mo Nian who came out, but a frail child.

The child held a pile of laundry in his hands. His small face stuck out from behind the clothes, and there were some bruises on his cheeks. He looked timid.

Mr. Bao Wen hesitated: “This is… Your son?”

“Ah, no, no.” Lady Mo wiped away her tears and said, “This is a servant boy who’s staying in my building.”

Mister immediately heaved a sigh of relief and laughed in his heart, “Oh, so that’s how it is.”

Lady Mo turned to the child and asked, “Mo Ran, where did Young Master go?”

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Hearing this, Master Xuanjing sighed, “Amitabha, Young Master Mo is indeed not Sect Leader Xue’s nephew. What a bad fate.”

Another person reacted, “Ah… Is it him?”

The surrounding cultivators were puzzled, “What is him?”

“The one who mentioned earlier about the kid who came up with the idea of keeping Mo Ran in the dog cage.” The man said, “His age is similar to Mo Ran, and he is also the son of Lady Mo.” As he was thinking, he suddenly came to a realization. He patted his head and said, “I understand.”

“So it turns out that the reason why you killed them and their children, and took up such a place, was not because of greed, but because of hatred!”

When some people heard this analysis, they felt that it was very reasonable. They all cast gazes of disdain and pity at Mo Ran.

“In this way, it makes sense.”

“Sigh, there must be something pitiful about people who hate them.”

Amidst the discussions and sighs, Mu Yanli cleared her throat, and the surroundings immediately quieted down.

She said, “Young Master Mo, I’ve heard that you have been unable to eat your fill and have been subjected to abuse in the House of Drunken Jade all year round. Your mama has never been one to beat you up or scold you, right?”

Mo Ran said, “… Yes.”

“The son of that mama was the one who came up with the idea of locking you in the dog cage all those years ago. Was that wrong as well?”

“That’s right.”

Seeing that their guesses were correct, the crowd sighed and nodded their heads, “Ah, look. It is indeed a killing intent born out of hatred. He must hate that mother and son duo.”

What they said was right, how could he not hate them? Mo Nian was the same age as him, but he was much stronger. Because he was the mama’s son, no one in the building dared to offend him. This child had been fierce and naughty since he was young. If he had nothing to do, he would just use Mo Ran to vent his anger. If he caused trouble, he would often frame Mo Ran. Mo Ran would go and take the blame for anything that went wrong.

However, Mo Ran was a very honest man. Even though he had been wronged, he didn’t dare take revenge on Young Master Nian.

At that time, he only ate one cake a day. If he dared to say too much, then this last ration would probably be deducted, so when he was scolded or wronged, he would not utter a single word. If he really could not take it anymore, he would just curl up in the sleeping woodshed and quietly cry for a while.

He didn’t dare to make a sound. If he woke up someone else, he would get another beating.

“Do you hate them?”

Mo Ran raised his eyes and there was a hint of a sneer in them, “… Otherwise…”

“But your surname was still the same as hers. You hated them so much, yet you never thought of changing it?”

“The surname ‘Mo’ is the surname of the House of Drunken Jade. Many servants who sell themselves here take this surname as theirs. We call Lady Mo ‘mother’ or ‘mama’. Everyone is like this. I am used to it, so there is nothing for me to change.”

“She was so bad to each of you?”

“…No.” Mo Ran said, “It’s just that she never really liked me. Later on, when I let Xun Fengruo go, she became even more disgusted with me.”

“Then how harshly does Lady Mo treat you?”

Mo Ran had lived in the building for so many years that only on New Year’s Eve could he eat a piece of crescent meat, which was half of the fat that the guests had eaten. Other than that, he only had one biscuit to eat every day, while he had to do the heaviest work.

But he really didn’t want to say anything more. He simply said, “I don’t want to talk about this.”

“Alright. If it’s harmless, then let’s change it to another one. Because she treats you badly, that’s why when she asked you where Mo Nian went, you lied? Had you already begun to have your own plans?”

Mo Ran replied, “No.”

How could he have dared to lie? His life and clothes were in the mama’s hands. Thus, when he heard the mama’s question, Little Mo Ran cried like a beaten up dog. He first winced before whispering, “Young Master Nian has gone to the private school…”

Lady Mo knew her son well, and she thought to herself, How is this possible? That kid usually didn't like to read books the most, so he probably went somewhere to play crazily. However, Mr. Bao Wen was still sitting beside her. He lightly coughed and nodded his head. "Ai, that child of mine is very serious and sensible. Sir, look, aren't you going out to attend class again?"

Bao Wen laughed and said, "Ah, it's a good thing to be diligent and studious. Like this, he will first cultivate the beginning cultivation method to give the Sect Leaders at the Sisheng Peak. When that time comes, their uncle and nephew will recognize each other, so there's no need to rush for this moment."

Lady Mo stood up and bowed down in gratitude. "Thank you, sir. In the future, when you have the wealth and glory, I will never forget the kindness that you showed me."

After the inquirer left, Lady Mo sat in a daze for a long time, lost in thoughts and emotions. Sometimes she cried, and sometimes she laughed.

After being stunned for a long time, she realized that Mo Ran was fearfully standing in the corner and looking at her.

Perhaps it was because she had seen Duan Yihan's experience that was too similar to hers, or perhaps it was because she had dared to do something rash before Mo Ran, but she actually let him earn money. However, for whatever reason, as Mo Ran recalled, she didn't like the son of a bitch.

She stared at him. "What are you looking at?"

Little Mo Ran hurriedly lowered his long eyelashes. "I'm sorry."

“Do you think it’s ridiculous for me to laugh and cry when you say sorry?”

“…”

Seeing that he was silent and only had his head lowered obediently, Lady Mo scanned him back and forth and said with loathing, “Forget it, I won’t bother with you. What do you know? A thankless dog that eats off the inside.”

Mo Ran was already used to the mama calling him a dog, so he kept his head down and didn’t speak.

Lady Mo said, “Don’t just stand there. I’m in a good mood today, so I won’t hit you. Go and fetch Young Master Nian —don’t ask me, I know he’s not in the private school— and bring him back. I have something important to tell him.”

Upon hearing that he was asked to look for his Young Master, Mo Ran subconsciously trembled. But in the end, he still nodded submissively and whispered, “Yes, mother.”

“Don’t call me mother from now on.” Lady Mo wrinkled her nose. “I will soon… Forget it, I won’t tell you much.”

That evening, Mo Ran was anxiously searching for Young Master Nian’s figure in the vicinity of the House of Drunken Jade, following Lady Mo’s instructions.

He didn’t know if he wanted to find this person quickly, or if he wanted to find this person slower. If he found him, he would undoubtedly be scolded by Young Master Nian. He would be unhappy with him spoiling his own

good mood. If he couldn't find him, Lady Mo would blame him for everything when he returned. She thought he was useless.

The little figure helplessly walked under the setting sun.

At that time, Mo Ran did not know that his fate was going to be reversed with Young Master Nian.

One by one, he obediently searched.

To every place Young Master Nian usually visited — the riverbank, the casino, the brothel, the cockfight yard… Then they were all jeered at and chased out.

Finally, after some questioning, he found out that Young Master Nian had gone to the mill on the outskirts of the city in the afternoon with a bunch of his friends. He was also said to be carrying a large gunny sack.

Mo Ran did not think too much and hurried back to the mill.

The mill had long since been abandoned and was surrounded by cemeteries. Normally, there was no one around, so before Mo Ran even got close, he heard a commotion coming from the mill. A group of youngsters with disheveled clothing rushed out, led by Young Master Nian who was tying his belt.

Mo Ran hurriedly said, "Young Master, Mother is calling you back. She said it's —"

He did not finish his sentence.

It was because he noticed that the group of youngsters all had faces overflowing with fear of the impending disaster. A few of them were even

crying from fear as they shrank to the side while shivering.

After being bullied for so many years, he had developed a sense of vigilance. When he saw Young Master Nian staring at him with bloodshot eyes, he immediately turned around and ran, trembling with fear.

Young Master Nian's reaction was extremely fast as he shouted, "Capture him!"

Mo Ran was no match for these children. He was pressed down to the ground in a matter of seconds and was sent to Young Master Nian.

Someone said in a low voice, "What do we do, A-Nian. This is trouble."

"It's too late to run, I was seen by this kid."

"How about we also include him…"

Mo Ran did not know what they were talking about, but these young and tender faces were malevolent and fiendish. That was his first impression of the two words "evil spirit".

Young Master Nian's eyes narrowed. He was the calmest and gloomiest of these people.

He thought for a moment. "Don't kill him," he said.

Mo Ran looked up in shock.

Kill?

These people had beaten him and insulted him in the past, but he had never thought that the word "kill" could come from the mouth of a bunch of fourteen or fifteen year old.

For a moment, he was at a loss, unable to react.

Young Master Nian said, “Put him in the mill.”

“…” The surrounding people looked at each other, and then, a young man with monkey like cheeks and sharp mouth was the first to react. His eyes were shining, and his nose was still dripping with sweat. “That’s a good idea!”

More and more people came to a realization: “Ah! So that was what he meant! Ah Nian is still the best!”

These people were originally staring at Mo Ran as if they were staring at a mortal enemy with a blood feud. But now, their eyes were falling down one by one, like a pack of wolves that were about to starve to death staring at a fat lamb.

Mo Ran was pushed into the mill without any explanation.

First he hammered at the door, struggling, but it was soon blocked, and there were no windows in the mill, just the ragged sunlight seeping through the cracks of the broken planks.

Mo Ran shouted, “Let me out! Let me out!”

Outside, someone was shouting, “Go to the press! Hurry up and report this to the government!”

“Quick, quick! We’ll watch from here. Those who are walking fast, go and report to the officials!”

Mo Ran shouted for a while, and after hammering for a while, he realized that he could not open the door no matter how much he tried, so he gave

up. He turned around in a daze, and in the dim light, he saw another person lying in the room.

It was a girl.

Young Master Nian had been pestering her recently, especially when he remembered that she was the daughter of the tofu seller on the east side of the street.

This girl's clothes had already been torn to shreds. Her green and naked body was lying on the ground. Her hands and feet were spread out. Her body was covered with blue and purple spots, and her private parts were a mess…

She had been humiliated to death by these beasts, and her eyes were still wide open when she died. The tears had yet to dry from her cheeks, and her eyes were lifeless as she stared at the door in the direction of Mo Ran.

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment before letting out a miserable scream. His back slammed against the door and his pupils contracted— he finally understood what those people outside had done and wanted to do.

So it turned out that Young Master Nian had been unfriendly towards this girl many times, so he had evil thoughts. He knew that this girl was a soft persimmon with no family background, so it was easy to bully her. He and a few of his companions had made a profit in the mill and had defiled her in turn. The girl was weak, and the bastards were rough, and in the middle of it the girl died.

Mo Ran muttered, "No…No!" He turned around and began to beat wildly on the door. "Open the door! Open the door! Not me! Open the door!"

As if at his plea, the door of the mill swung open.

Mo Ran wanted to charge out, but his hands were violently held down by the group of youths.

The leader was Young Master Nian. He was vicious and said, “I almost forgot. Do it well.”

He then ordered his companions to strip Mo Ran of his clothes and smeared some blood and mucus on Mo Ran’s body.

Their eyes flashed with the light of a wild beast, and whether this child was begging or crying, they all turned a deaf ear to him. There was even one person who, after being bitten by Mo Ran, suddenly raised his hand and slapped him a few times, and said fiercely: “You fucking shut up, you are the murderer! A strong, violent criminal! With so many people supporting us, how can you be so clear about this?!”

“No… Not me! It’s not me…”

But so what if he resisted? They threw him into the mill, naked and chained to the dead girl, and then they called for the thief and reported him to the authorities.

It was difficult for Mo Ran to explain himself. In the magistrate court, he was heavily condemned. His skin was torn, his flesh was lacerated, and his flesh was mangled. He was then taken to prison, awaiting his final judgment.

The prisoners in his cell jeered at him, railed at him, and some of the prisoners with daughters heard of his actions and began beating him up —

some even tried to assault him — but the jailer didn't want it to get out of hand.

Lady Mo came that very night. She had already known the whole story and was angry at he son for failing.

But so what?

As a mother, she would always protect her child.

She was afraid that when the court was in session, the officials would investigate everything in detail. If they found out about her son Mo Nian, how could the two of them rise above and become the phoenixes? The letters had already been sent out, and someone was going to come pick them up from the Sisheng Peak. She had waited for so many years, and his hair had already turned white.

Whether it was glory or status, she and her child deserved it.

She would not allow anything to go wrong.

Therefore, she came in full time, giving the jailer and the officials enough money to beg them to turn a blind eye and put the blame on Mo Ran alone.

However, because her conscience worried her, Lady Mo came to the prison to visit him after bribing him. She even brought a bowl of Red Braised Meat to Mo Ran.

"There's no poison, I won't poison you."

Mo Ran shrank in the corner and looked at her, his eyes black and purple with helplessness, sadness, and pain. This was the look on the faces of the

cattle, sheep, pigs and dogs that were about to be massacred.

Fear, sadness.

However, it also had the taming of someone who had lost all hope.

Lady Mo suddenly felt her heart shudder and his neck tighten.

She was shocked and frightened by his emotion. She suddenly stood up, lowered her voice, and said resolutely, “In any case, you are a fatherless and motherless child. Although it was a pity, if you died, no one would be sad. I’ve raised you for so many years, it’s about time you repay me for my kindness.”

“…” Mo Ran did not say anything. He did not say yes, nor did he say no.

Lady Mo gritted her teeth and said, “I’ll treat this bowl of roasted meat as practice. If you eat it, don’t blame me after you enter the netherworld… I don’t have a choice either.”

With that, she turned around and left.

Mo Ran had never eaten Red Braised Meat in his life.

Now that he had a bowl in front of him, he stared at it for a while before deciding not to eat it. He turned the bowl upside down on the ground, the juice running in it. He stared at it for a moment, thinking of the blood flowing under the girl’s body, and suddenly he felt an indescribable nausea. He turned his back on the wall and threw up.

He couldn’t spit anything out.

He was a man who ate only one biscuit a day.

The bread had long since been digested, and all he could spit out was sour water.

That night, he could not sleep. The blood covering his entire body had congealed into a shell, and the shell gradually became brittle and hard. Upon contact, it fell to the ground like a powder made out of rust.

He was in his cell, not talking to the other prisoners, no one knew what he was thinking, no one knew whether he was dead or alive.

He was alone, curled up, and he slowly thought through many things.

In that dark, dirty cell, in that cell smelling of sour and red-braised meat, the honest Mo Ran was sentenced to death. The ones who had come back to life were the ones who had frightened the entire mortal world, the emperor Taxian-Jun — his initial appearance.

Later on, the hatred of the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower was born because of this.

Ch. 262 [Tianyin Pavilion] A Comedy Drama

The Xiangtan prison was old and crude. The second day, early in the morning, when Mo Ran was with the prison inmates, he ran out secretly. After regaining his freedom, the first thing he did was to return to the House of Drunken Jade.

As soon as he entered the backyard, he saw A-Nian standing triumphantly in the sun center in a black robe.

As ever before, the orphan named Mo Ran was carrying the misfortune for him, and he believed that he was safe.

—

“Anyway, you have no mother or father, and no one will be sad if you die.”

“It’s time for you to return the favor that I have kept you for so many years.”

That’s why they put an innocent man on the gallows.

He is full of dignity and neutrality.

Mo Ran stood in the shadows, standing in the dark, looking at the handsome and free, a relaxed boy.

Oh, somebody hurt, somebody loved, somebody cared for, is that the way it is?

When the sky fell, there were people standing in the way.

It is not a pity to die alone.

Mo Ran looked at him for a long time.

Mo Nian had bought a robe and dressed up as a monk. After his mother dropped the drunken jade building, he set out to work as a young master. At this time, he was in the courtyard pretending to dance with a sword, surrounded by a group of young people. They were his gang members who helped him imprison Mo Ran.

“A-Nian Good Swordsmanship!”

“It’s really imposing. You must be a great swordsman after you went to Xiashu!”

“Your uncle’s Sisheng Peak seems to be very strong. You were blessed. Don’t forget your brothers!”

“Yes, yes.” Someone echoed, “A-Nian don’t forget us. We grew up wearing a pair of trousers. We shouldered all the good and bad things for you, even the death of that little bitch in Tofu Square.”

A-Nian had taken his position very detached, and could no longer allow others to mention the stain that he had insulted the girl. When he heard that, he immediately pointed his sword at the tip of his throat and said angrily, “The death of the girl in the tofu shop was Mo Ran’s fault. We saw with our own eyes that day that he was possessed by animals, bereaved of all conscience and impolite to her. You will remember these words several times!”

The man was pointed at by the sword, trembling and hurrying, “Yes, you’re right… It’s my poor memory! I was wrong!”

Others rushed to calm A-Nian: “It’s all that Mo Ran’s fault, human face and animal heart, pigs and dogs are not as bad as that!”

“Yes, yes, to rape a woman, to kill after rape, we have all seen, this life can not forget his devil’s face.”

Several people have deepened their fabricated lies. Some people have told them thousands of times, even believing themselves to be true. The more they spoke, the more righteous they felt, the cleaner they pick themselves up. A-Nian laughed loudly and brushed and danced a sword flower. He chopped several swords at the straw man hanging in the sunshine field. He cut the straw man down and pointed the sword at the straw man.

“Look at me as a swordsman, to get rid of evil and punish evil… Punish that…”

He doesn’t like reading. He used to be absent from school, so when he talked about it, he got stuck.

Next to it, a teenager immediately answered, “Punish the evil and promote the good! Promote justice! Help the world at the same time! Clean up all directions!”

A-Nian hummed and scorned, “You’re the best talker.”

Unexpectedly, the man clapped the horse on the leg and was embarrassed: “…”

A-Nian brushed and danced several more swords and said, “It’s strength that sweeps away all sides, not your tongue. From now on, when I encounter the evil spirit of Mo Ran again, I can go to his head with a sword. What can you do with him, right? Ha ha ha ha-”

He had not finished his “ha”. Suddenly, a leisurely voice came from the wood door in the backyard. Someone clapped his palm twice, and then said:

“Nian-gongzi, you really deserve to be a young master on Sisheng Peak… Good authority.”

“A-Nian suddenly blocked his sword in front of him, instantly changed his face, and said sharply, “Mo Ran??!!”

A huge cloud slowly flowed through the sky, gradually obscuring the sun and casting huge shadows on the sun farm.

The shabby teenager somehow appeared like a hawk on the stack of firewood in the sunshine yard and raised his head slowly.

Although his face was thin, it was clear and handsome to look at it carefully. At this time, his eyes were burning, and there were still fierce whips in his eyebrows. He had just come out of prison, and the blood had not been erased. A-Nian looked at the face and thought it was both familiar and unfamiliar.

The one in front of him was indeed Mo Ran, but there seemed to be something wrong.

Mo Ran bent his eyes and touched a machete in his hand with a laugh. Two pools of dimples, stormy waves, blue water and cold pools, unspeakable intimacy gentle, unspeakable thriller.

“… Supporting justice and sweeping away the eight sides? Mo Nian-zi, the future Sword Fairy, a Sisheng Peak lord. When did you have this ambition? But I’m going to laugh to death, hahahaha”

The more he talked about it, the more brilliant his smile was and the more distorted his features were.

From childhood until now, the kid who burns the fire in the firewood room was always obedient and quiet, obedient and not very talkative. But when he did not see him overnight, he was like a cocoon-breaking moth, laughing wildly and publicizing with a fever of fire.

He used to have few smiles, and occasionally he laughed like a cowardly man with lips on his face.

But now he was driven to madness.

The group of teenagers retreated in horror. A-Nian's sword-holding hand trembled slightly, but his throat rolled up and down. He gulped with a hard scalp: "Mo Ran, you ate ambitious leopard gall? How dare you escape from prison? I'll kill the people and kill your dog for the government!!"

"OK." Mo Ran wore a heartless smile, the knife in his eye flashes, and rushed up. "I don't want to live like this anymore. If you have the ability to take my dog's life. Just take it, but if you don't have the ability, then—"

He didn't even finish his words, and people had already skimmed past. But when the light and shadow disappeared, the machete fell, and the sword in A-Nian's hand fell to the ground, rolling with his eyes and head.

Blood rush, sprayed a few feet far!!

The headless body staggered and fell to the ground.

For a moment, the birds were silent.

Mo Ran's face sprayed with blood, threads of rag clothes hanging on his body, in the foul wind hunting and brushing, like algae floating in the sea.

When he raised his head again, his face became more and more smiling and his eyes were bloodshot. He licked the blood splashing on his lips and said in a warm voice the half-truncated words: "Then let me take your head off your neck."

The teenagers were so frightened that they couldn't speak a word.

Mo Ran raised his eyes and they were cold. "Aren't you all very good? Aren't they good at upside down? Not very good at fighting!!! In addition to the guardian of evil, punish evil and promote good… Good! Come on together!"

They didn't dare move, all their legs were like sieve chaff, buttocks and urine flew. None of them could believe it. Is this is Mo Ran? Is it that submissive, suffered great grievances, are silent Mo Ran?

Mo Ran raised up his head, sighed, and then dragged his machete forward step by step. The tip of the knife drew a bloody line on the ground.

"How can you suddenly be so modest?" He smiled, raised his blade and opened his mouth. "Since you are unwilling to do it, I'll have to come first."

Suddenly there was a blood rain.

A slaughter.

It was closing time, most people in the drunken jade building were resting. Mo Ran killed the people in the backyard. He went to the compartment and killed the remaining people one by one. Some people had their throats

cut in their sleep. Others woke up only to see a flash of the knife, and their world turned upside down.

By the time everyone responded, it was too late. He set fire everywhere, igniting the drunken jade building into a sea of flames. The singing servants were crying and sobbing, but no one dared to rush into the sea of flames to save them.

After killing the last few people, Mo Ran was not satisfied with that, and he sat down in the middle of the hall. He smiled and looked at the people who had been cut off by their feet and unable to move. Mo Ran watched them writhing like maggots, twitching and trickling, and his face became blurred in the smoke and fire.

He took the handle of the machete across his knee, but did not kill them. Instead, he picked up a bunch of fresh grapes on the table with the tip of the knife, held them in his hands, slowly peeled and clipped them, and slowly put them into his mouth one by one, and chewed them bulging and sacking.

Suddenly, Mo Ran smiled and said, “Oh? It’s delicious. It’s so big. I’ve never eaten the grapes of Western Regions. It turns out that what you eat every day is such a good thing.”

He lowered his head and stayed for a while. Then he laughed and said, “I really envy you.”

A section of the roof was burnt and fell down, sparks splashed, burning and falling beside them. Everyone sobbed more bitterly, only Mo Ran, a boy holding his cheek, legs crossed, knife in his arms, ate his bunch of grapes conscientiously, as if nothing had nothing to do with him.

“The fire is so big that none of us can get out.” After eating the grapes, Mo Ran picked up another peach and laughed, “Why don’t you just sit here and talk?”

“Who wants to chat with you? Mo Ran, you beast! Not as good as dogs and pigs! Not as good as beasts!”

“No chat?” Mo Ran spit out grape seeds and laughed. Then got down to business. “Last night, Mo Nian also said that in the past ten years, I should be grateful to you all for your dedication and care. Now it’s time to be filial. So let me take you on your way.”

He stood up, walked around them, bowed like a model, and said, “But don’t go too far on Huangquan Road, wait for me.”

Everyone else was crying, and Lady Mo yelled, “Mo Ran!!! You dog! When Xun Fengruo saw you pitifully and kindly took you in, I shouldn’t have been kind and allowed her! You evil, you evil spirit! You’re this— you perverted beast!”

“You allowed Sister Xun?” Mo Ran laughed lightly, “I came all the way from Wubei Temple, in order to return her debt according to my mother’s wishes. She knew that I had no mother, so she gave you all the money she earned a year, hoping you could let me stay and have a shelter. She is my benefactor, and you? What do you reckon?”

“I shouldn’t have allowed her! I shouldn’t—what’s a year’s worth? You secretly let her go later! She is the head of the drunken jade building! How much money can she make for a song, do you know?! But you are — You…”

Mo Ran interrupted her: “She is my mother’s benefactor, but also my benefactor, she didn’t sell herself in the drunken jade building, but you took money from the rich businessman, you sold her, you forced her to receive customer. Why shouldn’t I let her go?!

“These years you hated me, you tortured me, but I did not say anything, I did not resist, because my mother told me you could give me a bite of food, I couldn’t be bad to you.” Mo Ran closed his eyes and said, “I have been enduring, I have been enduring…”

“Bah! You still have the face to say that?! You ungrateful thing, it’s me! I gave you a place to live, let you little crybaby have food and bed! You beast, you son of a bitch!”

“… Well, what a coincidence. Does the bitch give birth to a bastard?” Mo Ran laughed in the light of the fire. “If you scold me like this, would your son think you were calling him when he heard it?”

As Mo Ran said this, he went over and pinched Mammy’s face.

“But, godmother, you reminded me that you have given me food and bed these years. I really thank you. In that case, I’ll see you off first.”

“You —!”

“But for the sake of entertainment, why don’t we play a game first?” Mo Ran said enthusiastically, “What do you think of blind people guessing paintings?”

He said, picking up a small piece of broken wood on the ground and lighting a fire at the end. Then, slowly and slowly, he drew the shape of the sun in her eyes. The wooden tops passed by, the skin was burnt and the

flesh was rotten. She cried sadly, but Mo Ran laughed and said to her: “Godmother, guess what I painted here? If you can’t guess, even if you lose, I’ll draw the next thing.”

That day, the remaining few people were slowly tortured by him, bit by bit to death.

He returned the poison and hardship that had been accumulated for ten years, and hurled it back at the House of Drunken Jade, destroying everything, a scorched earth.

He finally lay down in the fire, with the twisted bodies, looking at the shaky Qionglou, smiling, mouthful by mouthful, delivering cakes and fruits to his mouth.

“Delicious.”

He paused, and suddenly laughed bitterly. As soon as his eyelashes were wrapped up, tears rolled down and streamed down his bright smiling face. He reached out and blocked his eyes, crying and laughing.

“Unfortunately, we can’t eat any more…”

The ebony red plaque of the drunken jade building fell and smashed in front of the hall, splitting in pieces. Smoke billowed and the buildings with carved beams and painted walls finally collapsed.

This building was used to see Pipa singing and dancing, and the dress stained with wine. Once the scenery was infinite, singing and dancing became even.

Today, yesterday’s glitz is gone, the past luxury was turned into smoke. The love between men and women and the entanglement between love and

hatred are all burning and degenerating in successions of beams. The fire was burning, and the fairy sounds of the two blossoms seemed to come out of the cracks in the wood and from the seams in the tiles.

Duan Yi chilly sings: “Like a beautiful family —”

Xun Fengruo’s weak chant: “All pay for the broken wall and ruins…”

The famous building in Xiangtan was buried in this faint and unreal music. The curtain fell and a long drum music ended. Those were sad, or brilliant, fold operas, in this fiery fire, brilliant and solemn curtain call.

Ch. 263 [Tianyin Pavilion] Old Dream Repeats Itself

Mo Ran's confession was over. For a moment, no one made a sound within the Loyalty Hall. Everyone was silent.

Right or wrong? What's right and what's wrong?

Although each has their own personal belief no one can say for sure.

"I thought I was going to die in the sea of fire all those years ago," he said. "But when I woke up, I found myself lying on the Sisheng Peak. Mr. Bao Wen, who was sitting on the edge of my bed, placed his hand on my shoulder when I woke up and told me that from now on, I was the son of a great master."

He paused for a moment before he chuckled, "It's uncle's nephew."

The ground of the Loyalty Hall was embroidered with the blooming of pollia. Mo Ran looked at the luxuriant purple flowers blooming all over with an indifferent expression.

"Mister Bao Wen was afraid he wouldn't get the reward. So when my uncle rescued me from the fire in the House of Drunken Jade and asked him anxiously if this was the child he was looking for, he nodded." Mo Ran said, "With this nod, he changed my fate."

Master Xuanjing sighed and said, "Amitabha, Benefactor Mo, can you be at ease? All these years, have you never thought of confessing to Sect Leader Xue?"

"Why didn't I think about it? In the days when I just woke up, I was very uneasy. I really wanted to confess."

The black flames in his eyes were hazy, as if he was looking at the passage of time.

“But to hear me awake, Uncle. Just come and saw me. My aunt cooked the noodles for me personally, and I remember there were three poached eggs, all sweet and covered with meat foam. She said. ‘I’m afraid you just woke up and don’t digest it. Only after you’ve chopped it up can you swallow it easily.’ Xue Meng also came over and gave me a whole box of pastries.”

He slowly closed his eyes.

“I ate that bowl of noodles, those flower cakes. And I could not speak the truth. They smiled at me like that and treated me well. If I said that I set the fire in the House of Drunken Jade ablaze, that I killed his nephew, his sister-in-law… What would happen then?” Mo Ran said softly, “I couldn’t say it. That phrase was swallowed in my throat, and then it got stuck in it… the more time passed the more I didn’t know what to say.”

Master Xuanjing sighed, “Sigh…”

“I knew what kind of person Mo Nian was. He was lazy and does things frivolously. At first, I didn’t know if uncle really knew much about him, so I did everything to help him. When I found out that my uncle didn’t know, I didn’t take him for granted.” Mo Ran paused for a moment, then slowly continued. “At the end of the day, I have a blood feud with Mo Nian’s family. But in the end, I took over their family and relatives.”

The people at the Sisheng Peak were all at a loss. There were many disciples and elders who had interacted with Mo Ran before who stood

there dumbstruck, all feeling at the same time. Xue Zhengyong and Madam Wang didn't say anything as they stared blankly at Mo Ran's figure.

They had watched this child grow up from a young age until he became a Grandmaster.

But now, he was telling them that all of this was wrong from the beginning.

Mo Ran was not their nephew. What's more, there was even a blood debt between them that separated them from each other.

What should he say?

What should he do?

Xue Zhengyong didn't know, and neither did Madam Wang.

They did not know who Mo Nian was, but they had touched Mo Ran's hair, held Mo Ran's hand, and been called "uncle" and "aunt" by Mo Ran.

Xue Zhengyong's mind was in a mess.

In the silence, Mu Yanli said, "Mo Ran, although you are pitiful, you have committed many crimes and cannot be forgiven. Count them, do you know how many great sins you have committed?"

Mo Ran didn't like the Tianyin Pavilion, so he closed his eyes and didn't answer.

Mu Yanli looked at him disdainfully, her voice as loud as a bell, "You killed many mortals, set fire to a building, swindled a Young Master, and took his identity.— On Mount Jiao, you clearly knew that you had the blood of the Nangong Family on you, but you just watched coldly from the sidelines. It is

hard to predict your intentions, but Guyue'ye, you started a massacre and spilled your blood on the hall. What exactly do you want?"

"I'll say it again, I didn't kill Guyue'ye's people. After the Gate of Life and Death opened, two lives intersected. That person was not me."

"The Gate of Life and Death is the first forbidden technique. It hasn't been opened for thousands of years. Don't you think that your excuse is too ridiculous? I'm afraid that as the descendant of the Nangong Family, you will remain unresigned, have your ambitions expanded, and plan to overturn the world of cultivation?"

"Pavilion master Mu is too excessive with her words." Jiang Xi couldn't help but frown when he heard this. "In my opinion, Mo Ran has no motive to overturn the cultivation world of the upper and lower levels. If he wanted to do these things and used any means at Mount Jiao, the top ten sects would probably suffer heavy losses. These places are full of doubts, but before you understand them clearly, you must be careful with your words."

Mu Yanli stared at him coldly. "Sect Leader Jiang, you don't need to speak up for him. Even if he does not wish to overturn the cultivation world, the sins he had previously committed would be enough for him to be brought to the Tianyin Pavilion for questioning."

After she finished speaking, she raised her hand and commanded the people behind her, "Capture Mo Ran and bring him away."

"Wait a minute!"

Mu Yanli raised her eyebrows and looked at Xue Zhengyong, "Sect Leader Xue, do you have something to say?"

Xue Zhengyong's face turned red and green. He didn't seem to understand why he stopped Mu Yanli. After all these years, he had seen Mo Ran as his own. It had become a habit of his.

He couldn't just sit there and let the Tianyin Pavilion take their people away.

But what should he say? To stay?

Xue Zhengyong closed his eyes, his teeth chattering. He felt cold and empty, as if something important had been gouged out.

He buried his face in his palms. He had always been in high spirits, but at this moment, he was surprisingly old and stooped.

"Does Sect Leader Xue want to bid farewell to his nephew?"

Mu Yanli was a rough person, intentionally or unintentionally used the word "nephew", which made Xue Zhengyong even more so, trembling.

"I…" Xue Zhengyong's throat became hoarse, "Ran'er… Mo Ran…"

He didn't even know what to call him.

Mo Ran stopped making things difficult for him. He closed his eyes, walked up a few steps, and knelt and kowtowed to Xue Zhengyong without saying a word.

Three kowtows and nine kowtows.

Someone was muttering, "Just dawdling, doing something."

"Putting on an act…"

Mo Ran turned a deaf ear to this. When the ceremony was over, he stood up and prepared to leave.

However, just at this moment, Xue Meng suddenly rushed into the Loyalty Hall. His sword was filled with black blood and it was extremely shocking. He shouted, “Outside —”

“What’s going on?”

“There is a large number of Zhenlong Chess pieces attacking from outside, and many of them are the death soldiers of the Rufeng Sect!”

Everyone was shocked! At the Sisheng Peak, three hundred meters away from the Cloud Sky, countless cultivators flew into the air, their robes fluttering in the wind. Half of these people wore standardized black robes that covered their faces, while the other half wore crane feathered clothing that covered their eyes. They were the corpses of the Rufeng Sect’s Hero Tomb.

“What, what is going on?!”

“Didn’t these bodies sink into the ground? Why did they all appear again! Who undid the restriction?”

As the words left his mouth, he already had the answer in his heart.

Who had broken the restriction on the Nangong family, and who else could break the seal on the Nangong family?

Quite a number of Li Li’s angry eyes had already shifted to Mo Ran.

Although Mo Ran knew who the mastermind behind this was, there was nothing he could say. What was even worse was that he had lost all his

spiritual energy and couldn't stop the pawns from invading them. He could only watch helplessly as hundreds and thousands of Death Soldiers descended.

The Sisheng Peak was the same as in his previous life.

In an instant, the place turned into a sea of blood.

It turned out that the 'surprise' mentioned by Shi Mei was not over yet.

"Fight first!"

"Get rid of this wave of chess pieces! Defeat them first!"

The crowd welcomed them out of the palace hall, but because they had no idea what was going on, and because these Zhenlong Chess pieces came in full fury and without warning, it was chaotic all of a sudden.

Mo Ran stood in front of the hall and watched the chess pieces land one by one. They exchanged blows with the disciples at the Sisheng Peak and fought against the cultivators' magic techniques.

The Silverblue Light Armor and the black cloaks clashed in a chaotic melee.

He stood on the jade steps, his eyebrows twitching in pain. Everything in front of him was like a replay of the memories of his previous life…

In his previous life, he was the one who controlled the pawn army that was formed from the living and the dead. He killed anyone who dared to say "no" to him.

From that moment on, he became accustomed to killing people. Accustomed to seeing human life as grass, liver brain smears heavy

mountain.

He still remembered standing in front of Loyalty Hall like that. The traitorous disciple Mo Weiyu looked down at the heroes of the wilderness with a smile, as if he was grieving for all living beings. Next to his boots lay the corpses of Xue Zhengyong and Madam Wang.

“From the Sisheng Peak, use your blood to pave the way for me.”

The sneer from his previous life still lingered in his ears, Mo Ran’s eyelids jumped up and down as he shouted towards Xue Meng, “Don’t fight, you can’t win! Hurry up and go, all of you!”

The crowd was noisy, and Xue Meng was too far away to hear.

Mo Ran looked around and saw the battle between the swords in the surroundings.

He saw Jiang Xi fighting against more than ten chess pieces, and at that moment, he was thinking about how Jiang Xi had fallen to his saber in his previous life —

“You won’t kneel to me?”

“Don’t kneel.”

“You don’t recognize me as an Emperor?”

“No.”

Fresh blood splattered everywhere.

He couldn’t beat them…

The voice pierced through the nine heavens, causing the mind of the pawns to become blurry and shaky. However, he thought of how this Palace master had ended up with his ten fingers destroyed and his tendons and bones torn apart —

“Why are you resisting so stubbornly?”

“Since I am the master of a palace, even though I am unable to ensure the safety of the Taxue Palace, I will definitely not run away.”

When the xun was shattered, it finally became an unstoppable sound.

He couldn’t beat her.

As the chaos raged, Mo Ran saw Madam Wang and Xue Zhengyong fighting hand to hand in the distance. What flashed before his eyes was the two of them from his previous life, whose eyes were filled with grief and anger.

Staring at him through two lifetimes, resenting him.

Cold.

It was cold.

The muscles and bones throughout Mo Ran body trembled, and the tip of his fingers turned ice-cold. For Shi Mei to do this… He could actually do this!

Previously, he felt that he should not underestimate the threats that Shi Mei had made before he took Chu Wanning away. That was why he had so decisively returned to the Sisheng Peak. At this moment, he could not help but feel his scalp tingle.

What would have happened if he had acted on impulse and refused to listen to the threats of Shi Mei, insisting on chasing after Chu Wanning?

Half of the elites of the cultivation world were here. What would happen if these people died at the Sisheng Peak?

The rings that Shi Mei had set up didn't give him any time to breathe. Mo Ran raised his eyes and looked at the treasured chess set that covered the mountains and plains… Those who were not afraid of death, those who were not afraid of pain… A mountain of corpses and a sea of blood…

This could not continue, this could not continue!

If Shi Mei had said that this was a "surprise" for him, then he wouldn't have laid it out for no reason. Since he came back, if he obeyed, there must be a way to solve it! He could not watch his old dream repeat itself. He could not watch the Sisheng Peak being destroyed. He could not watch his aunt and uncle die in front of him.

If the past were to reappear, how could he face himself… How could he face Chu Wanning?

Mo Ran suddenly recovered his wits and separated the crowd as he ran towards his aunt.

"Stop fighting! Retreat from here, leave this place first, don't fight anymore! It's impossible to win!"

His voice was hoarse and his eyes were bloodshot. He was like a man sinking into the ocean, struggling as hard as he could to get to the other side. He was like a dead man struggling for life, like a moth struggling for fire, a life struggling for another life.

“Stop fighting! Go, go, go! You can’t beat them!”

You couldn’t beat him.

I have seen your deaths with my own eyes.

Come on, please.

Suddenly, a sword slashed out horizontally, carrying a cold, sinister sword light.

It was Mu Yanli’s ice-cold face.

“Are you trying to escape in the chaos?”

Mo Ran angrily said, “Get out of the way!”

“You are already a felon in the cultivation world, I should —”

As she said this, Mu Yanli felt a chill behind her. She turned around and saw a chess piece with a face covered by a veil swinging down. She quickly turned around to face the blow, his eyes filled with killing intent. She shouted, “Mo Ran! It really is you!”

The woman’s face was clear and limpid, like an icy spring, easily recognizable.

This sound attracted a lot of attention from the surrounding cultivators. They saw that the chess piece and Mu Yanli were fighting intensely, but not a single piece of the piece was touched.

Only now did everyone realize that almost all the pawns that were approaching the Sisheng Peak seemed to view Mo Ran as their pawns. They all avoided him, not harming him at all.

Someone shouted in anger, “It is really the work of that traitor, Mo Ran!”

“He’s on the same side as these pieces!”

Flames of fury were twisting and twisting in his face. Whispers and growls were pouring into one ear after another, and pairs of bloodshot eyes were looking over at him.

In such an angry gaze, he was once again a murderous devil. It was as if he had once again become that Emperor who trampled over all immortals to rule the world. He immediately broke a thousand rules! He viewed this world as he had gone mad!

Someone shouted, “Seize him!”

“Watch him! Don’t let him escape!”

“Let’s see how long he can keep up the act!”

His ears buzzed with the exact same anger, the exact same accusations, the exact same crusades.

The two lives were so similar that he could even recall the life-and-death battle between him and Chu Wanning back then.

On that day, just like today, Mo Ran held Zhenlong Chess pieces in his hands and controlled the dead to fly. His army was like a black cloud, while his soldiers were like a sheet of ink that reflected the snow on a mountain.

He sat high up in the air looking down at the world with a disdainful smile. The sky and earth were overturned, and the day had become dim and yellow.

Finally, it was Chu Wanning who stopped him.

It was Chu Wanning. He tried his best to fight against his million pieces. His weapons were exchanged from Tianwen to Jiuge, and from Jiuge to Huaisha.

Huaisha.

He would never forget the sadness and pain in his eyes when he finally summoned it.

“Rumor has it that this is Shizun’s Blade of Killing. I’ve finally seen it today.”

Chu Wanning asked him, “Mo Ran, what do you need to do before you can put it down?”

He only laughed brightly, “I can’t let it go, Shizun. My hands are already covered in blood. I killed my uncle and aunt, my fellow sect disciples… Now, as long as I offer you my head, I will be the unparalleled overlord of this world. No one can stop me.”

Chu Wanning’s expression was full of pain.

He saw it, but he felt very uncomfortable. A wave of revenge surged through his heart. He gritted his teeth and squeezed out every single word.

“Kill you. There is no one else in this world that I cannot kill.”

Ch. 264 [Tianyin Pavilion] Emperor Is Like Him

In the past, the Shizun and the disciple became enemies.

It was a battle at the peak of its power.

In the end, because of his weak core, Chu Wanning was no match for Mo Ran. He was young and fierce.

“Stop struggling to the death.” The more the young demon fought, the more his fighting spirit flourished. He grinned wantonly.

Golden rays of light flashed and dimmed.

As for Chu Wanning, his eyes were filled with fire.

Mo Ran glanced at Chu Wanning’s pale face, then he rolled his eyes. He looked at the gradually dissipating flow of Huaisha, his eyes full of mockery.

“You no longer have any spiritual energy. If you keep fighting with me, your spiritual core will shatter. Shizun, you are so arrogant, and will not be willing to become a mortal even if you die, right?”

Chu Wanning clenched his teeth and did not answer. His lips were bloodless.

Finally, the glow of Huaisha dissipated, and Mo Ran knew that Chu Wanning’s spiritual energy had been depleted. He laughed heartily and his voice sounded like a vulture.

“What else can you use against me? Wanning, Yuheng… My esteemed Shizun?”

Chu Wanning was half-kneeling on the ground, his white robe was stained with blood.

He raised his eyes. At that time, the hatred from Mo Ran was too deep. He could only see the determination in his eyes, but he could not see the sorrow buried deep within.

Many years later, when Taxian-Jun Jun committed suicide by consuming a deadly poison, he couldn't help but recall the first battle in his entire life.

He could not help but think that at that time, Chu Wanning was indeed determined to die to stop him…

Being the leader of all living things was already the end.

He had called him a vile character, and only had a good mouth.

However, Chu Wanning was a man of his word.

"Let's pray for goodness."

His Shizun said.

"Don't be wicked."

A golden light flashed.

Mo Ran only had time to take a good look at the calmness in Chu Wanning's eyes before the light in his palm blazed brightly. This Immortal Elder Beidou, this man who had no friends or relatives in the cultivation world, had sacrificed his spiritual core to summon three godly weapons.

Jiuge and Huaisha.

How much did Chu Wanning get for the arrogance of a son?

The mighty troops made by Mo Ran was finally suppressed by the power of Chu Wanning's Spiritual Core. Under the brilliant light of the Divine Martial Realm, the white of the black stones were crushed into ashes.

Strangely, Mo Ran was standing right in front of Chu Wanning, just a few feet away. He looked at the person who had stubbornly resisted, the person who had poured in so much blood and sweat, and yet he actually did not do anything to stop him.

He was somewhat astonished and curious at the same time.

He wanted to know to what extent this person who had a soft spot could do to help.

He just watched.

He saw Chu Wanning exhaust the last inch of his spiritual energy.

The raging tide had subsided, and the sun-blotting birds had dispersed.

One by one, the living people under his control regained their consciousness, while the people under his closed their eyes and went to sleep forever.

Mo Ran just looked at it.

He saw the destruction of the Beidou Immortal's spiritual core, saw the fall of Chu Xiange, saw his Shizun kneeling in front of him, and finally fall into the dust.

At that time, Mo Ran did not have much of an expression on his face. He turned his face to the side and faintly heard his mother's warning before she died. The kind-hearted woman caressed his cheek and said to him, "Let's repay this debt of gratitude. Do not seek revenge."

After all these years, he had heard the familiar sentence again. Before offering his spirit core, Chu Wanning said to him, "Think about kindness, don't harbor evil."

But he didn't.

His heart seemed to be filled with endless hatred. Only his blood could cause him to gasp for breath…

He had exterminated the Sisheng Peak, massacred the Rufeng sect, killed his aunt and uncle, and killed several Sect Leaders. He had dyed the Heaven Lake red and turned the entire mountain into a pile of bones.

In the end, the rebel army surrounded the mountain, and he went to lay dead at the front of the tower.

He was the one who had personally experienced all of this, the one who had committed all those heinous crimes. In this appalling tragedy, he was the creditor, and if he didn't return, he would be stained with the blood of thousands of people.

It was him.

Mo Ran felt dizzy, and he was unable to catch his breath.

Suddenly, he heard a groan and pulled him out of the mud of his memories. When he regained his senses, he saw that Mu Yanli's shoulder had been stabbed by a chess piece. Hot blood splashed onto his face.

“Pavilion master!”

“Pavilion master, be careful!”

The people from the Tianyin Pavilion immediately flocked over to protect Mu Yanli.

Mu Yanli took a deep breath, then gritted her teeth and said, “No harm done.”

The treasured chess piece in front of her drew a sword flower in her hand. Under everyone’s gaze, that chess piece nimbly knelt down towards Mo Ran. He covered his head with the mask and said with a low voice, “It was not good for this subordinate to protect and save you, causing master to be disturbed. I deserve to die a thousand times for my crimes.”

Everyone was terrified.

“It’s a chess piece controlled by Mo Ran!”

“He calls him master!”

Mo Ran said, “No… That’s not it…”

But who would believe him?

Who would believe him!

Mo Ran shook his head in despair and retreated. He looked at the faces that were filled with hatred and doubt.

No.

He went to see Xue Meng, but Xue Meng was too far away to notice anything. Then, he saw Madam Wang and Xue Zhengyong.

When the two of them saw this change, their expressions became extremely ugly.

Mo Ran's lips trembled. He wanted to say something, but he did not know what else to say.

Suddenly, he caught sight of a group of chess pieces pouring out from behind Madam Wang. In a split-second, he shouted, "Auntie! Be careful!"

This shout turned everyone's head. Xue Zhengyong immediately became alert, but because of the pawns on his left and right, it was too late for him to return to the continent.

"Auntie!"

"Mother!"

"Bam!"

A metallic sound rang out. Jiang Xi had rushed out of the crowd. Xuehuang's sword energy had repelled a piece of chess piece that was close to Madam Wang in one move.

Madam Wang said in astonishment, "Junior brother…"

"…" Jiang Xi cast a cold glance back at her, and only said, "Grow eyes."

At this time, Grandmaster Xuanjing suddenly discovered that the horizon was covered by a dense layer of clouds, pressing down on the very Sisheng

Peak. He couldn't see it at first, but then he saw it and he couldn't believe it.

It was only when the surrounding people had noticed the rolling black clouds that he finally confirmed it. He blew on his beard and shouted: "How is that possible?! How many pieces are there exactly?!"

The black chess pieces surged forward as far as the eye could see.

Some were dead, some were alive. All of these people had their faces burnt by some kind of spell and were tongue-tied. Even if they recovered their spiritual sense, they still could not speak.

Behind them were even flying beasts and dragons and serpents that were being controlled by Zhenlong's pawns.

"Mo Weiyu!"

"Mo Ran…"

At this moment, when these people turned to glare at him, their fear had already surpassed their hatred. Those who were originally approaching him couldn't help but take a few steps back.

"Madman… Are you crazy…"

"How many chess pieces have you refined?!"

Mo Ran opened his mouth.

He wanted to say, No, not me.

But if it wasn't him, who else could it be?

The the Gate of Life and Death in Time and Space opened once more. Taxian-Jun led a million mighty soldiers to descend upon this world.

What was the difference between him and the emperor Taxian-Jun?

They both had the same memory and the same technique. Mo-zongshi was also adept at the Zhenlong chess game of Taxian-Jun. If the chess piece that Taxian-Jun made was not specifically ordered, it would also recognize Mo-zongshi as its master.

As such, he killed his family in the city and trained in forbidden arts.

An army of thousands of men and horses could be formed by scattering beans.

To subvert the world, all living things.

This was all his doing. No one had wronged him.

More and more chess pieces were pressing down on him, and he couldn't see the end of them. They were like black ink that was quickly spreading on the paper, and it was getting closer and closer.

Someone was already panicking, "What should we do?!"

Mu Yanli shouted angrily, "Mo Ran! What other excuses do you have! You designed all this! I only hate that the Tianyin Pavilion did not interfere in this matter earlier, and did not kill you!"

Dark clouds covered the sky and covered the earth.

The mountains were filled with the wind. These tens of thousands of dead bodies were like giant bells hanging in the sky. They could fall down at any

time and shatter the five seas. People were like ants.

Mo Ran's pupils constricted as he looked at the sky.

No one wanted to surrender. whether it was sword kinesis or close quarters combat, they were already engaged in a chaotic battle with those chess pieces. This time, the battle was much more intense than before, with blood and miserable cries everywhere.

The head rolled down.

The intestines flow out.

However, there was still a never-ending black tide rushing in from the horizon. It was so endless that it made one's hair stand on end.

Suddenly, he heard Xue Meng's shout from afar, "Father! Mother!"

When he turned around, he saw that Xue Zhengyong and Jiang Xi were both covered in blood. The blood was so red that it was hard to tell if it was their own wounds or the blood they had shed while killing the enemy.

Xue Meng did his best to squeeze in the direction of his parents. He fought the entire way, but he was outnumbered.

"Xue Meng —!"

Mo Ran wanted to help him, but Xue Meng seemed very conflicted the moment he saw him. Xue Meng was avoiding him.

Suddenly, a death warrior from the Rufeng Sect raised his sword and stabbed Xue Meng's shoulder. Immediately, blood flowed from his wound, and his armor was dyed in blood.

“Xue Meng… Xue Meng!”

Mo Ran pushed his way towards him with a burning heart, but there were so many people fighting in the battle, and they were so far away that he could not get through… He couldn’t make it.

After being injured, more chess pieces rushed towards Xue Meng. The young man’s body was soon swallowed up by a group of Zhenlong chess pieces.

“Meng’er!”

“Meng’er!”

Miserable screams rang out.

It was Madam Wang’s voice and Xue Zhengyong’s voice.

Mo Ran had never heard a scream like this that shattered his bones and shattered his bones.

His scalp was tingling.

Xue Meng…

No.

It shouldn’t be like this.

There had to be a way, there had to be a way!

Since Hua Binan asked him to come here and set up such a situation, it was definitely not to let him see the Sisheng Peak being destroyed. What did Hua Binan want him to do?

What was he supposed to do? What did Hua Binan want him to do? What was the purpose of this ‘surprise’? How to end all this, how to let him go…

Suddenly.

He thought of it, and he understood.

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment, and then his heart began to pound.

He finally understood.

What Hua Binan did was ruthless. Not only did he want Mo Ran to lose his reputation, he also wanted him to have no way back… He understood.

Nangong Si had done this at Mount Jiao.

In his previous life, Chu Wanning had fought in battles before.

He didn’t have any more spiritual energy now… But the core was still there.

He could feel the brilliance flowing through his chest, matching his heartbeat.

In his previous life, the savage and crazed sneer of an Taxian-Jun appeared in front of his eyes once more…

“You no longer have any spiritual energy. If you keep fighting with me, your spiritual core will shatter. Shizun, you are so arrogant, and will not be willing to become a mortal even if you die, right?”

He knew what to do.

His eyes were warm, and the flames of war swirled around him. However, the mind of Mo Ran had suddenly calmed down.

In his previous life, Chu Wanning had sacrificed himself and personally told him that the so-called “all living beings are the leaders and they are the last” was not a lie.

It was as if he could see the pale face of his past life before Chu Wanning overused his spiritual core.

At that time, his Shizun thought that he would definitely die. Before he died, he said to Mo Ran:

“Remembering kindness, don’t do evil.”

The earth rumbled.

“What’s wrong?”

“What’s going on?”

Everyone was stunned. While dodging, they were searching for the source of the disturbance.

Actually, he didn’t need to look for it.

From where Mo Ran stood, a fiery light suddenly exploded — it wasn’t real flames, but the spirit energy flowing through his fire attribute spirit core, enveloping the entire Mo Ran within.

It was drizzling.

In his past life, he had become a Grandmaster.

He… In front of a great disaster, he actually… To think that he was trying to stop it all…

He had broken his own spirit core!

Just like Nangong Si, the destruction of his spirit core allowed him to gain the greatest amount of spirit energy in an instant. His eyes were dyed red by the flames, and there was no pain on his handsome and upright face.

Who was he at this moment?

Could he stop being cursed at by tens of thousands of people as Taxian-Jun?

If possible, he also wanted to be like Chu Wanning.

The spirit core slowly cracked and melted in his chest.

The flames burned brighter and brighter, piercing through the clouds and mist, illuminating the endless sky.

At this moment, he suddenly felt that all those pure and clean dreams from his childhood had returned to the bottom of his heart. He stood in the middle of the flames and saw Duan Yihan and Chu Wanning.

Seeing her touch his cheek in the woodshed, she said — “To repay gratitude, not to bear grudges.”

Seeing the youth outside the Wubei Temple, he held the rice milk and carefully fed it to him to drink.

“Drink slowly, if not enough…”

In his two lifetimes, he had always wanted to be a good person.

He hadn’t been able to do it in his previous life.

In this life, when he thought back to the past and asked himself, he felt sad for nearly ten years.

He did not know how to make it up to them. Even if he had to suffer day and night, he would not be able to get a single result.

If he told others that he also had the dream of protecting all the cold warriors of the world, who would believe him?

There was only ridicule, abuse, and ridicule.

This was because he was Mo Weiyu, the Emperor of the Immortals.

He had missed out on and killed people before, so no matter what he did to make up for it, it was all useless.

It was all wrong.

No one could forgive him.

Perhaps, only when the spirit core was broken and he walked down the road to his former world as a martyr would he be able to obtain some comfort.

Only then could he cautiously say:

“If possible, I also want to be with Chu Wanning.”

Please, hear this wish, don’t laugh at me.

Don’t despise me.

I was stupid, and for a long time no one accompanied me.

I walked two lifetimes like this, twenty years in the wrong direction.

Stupid, I don’t know why I ended up in endless darkness, I don’t know why things ended up like this, looking back, it was all wrong.

I can’t find my mother.

He couldn’t find his Shizun either.

Please, hell is too cold.

Just let me go back, okay…

I want to go home.

Ch. 265 [Tianyin Pavilion] Shi Mei's Ignorance

The wax burned out, leaving only darkness.

The fire went out, only the embers remained.

However, the darkness had also once lit up, and Ashes had also once warmed up. He had also experienced the years of light and heat, and at this moment, not a single person knew about it, so he wouldn't be mentioned again.

Mo Ran had used up the last bit of his spiritual force.

He watched as the birds dispersed, the ghost soldiers sank, the living people were no longer under control, the chess pieces were cracked. He watched as the black tide that was about to engulf the Sisheng Peak retreat in a daze, watching as the calamity of hell finally came to an end.

Everyone said he was wicked beyond redemption, and he himself felt the same way. However, this demon had done exactly the same as the God of Heaven. Chu Wanning was his wax torch, and he followed after the light.

"Brother!"

"Ran'er!"

He heard someone calling to him. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Xue Meng stagger towards him. He saw Xue Zhengyong and Madam Wang break through the encirclement and rush towards him.

He was so relieved at their call that he grinned as if he wanted to laugh, but tears ran down his bloodied face.

He wanted to say, “I’m sorry, I didn’t do it well.”

But in the end he begged, “Don’t hate me.”

I’m really.

I really like you.

He liked his uncles and aunts, liked the Sisheng Peak, liked this period of stolen warmth, stolen family.

Uncle, Aunt, Xue Meng.

Don’t hate me.

The million soldiers retreated, and Mo Ran fell heavily onto the ground, his body covered in dust.

In his previous life, when Chu Wanning was in a coma due to severe injuries, his white robes were stained with blood, but he still looked clean and immaculate. Unlike Mo Ran, Mo Ran was always dirty.

When he lost consciousness, he felt Madam Wang’s arms around him, her soft, warm arms calling out to him in a voice that was not without heartache, “Ran’er.”

He heard Xue Zhengyong and Mu Yanli arguing and shouted angrily, “Sly plan? What other sinister scheme could he have? If it was a pawn that he summoned, how could he have done this for the sake of retreating?!”

He heard Xue Meng yell, “Don’t touch him! Don’t touch him! Don’t take him away!”

Chaos.

Mo Ran wanted to explain more, but he was too tired, too tired.

He closed his eyes.

Mount Jiao.

Inside the Hall of Sages, the lamp glowed faintly. The wax torch made from whale oil was as thick as the mouth of a bowl. The sun, moon, and morning light were nowhere to be seen.

Shi Mei wore a white fox fur robe and sat in a high position. He rested his forehead and closed his eyes.

This seat had originally been occupied by Xu Shuanglin. Back then, he had watched Xu Shuanglin refine and create a series of precious pieces of chess, creating an extremely happy and hellish hell, hoping with all his heart that his Shizun would return to the mortal world.

He felt that this person was very interesting, but unfortunately, he couldn't stay.

In front of him was a piece of cloth covered with illusions. Dragons, snakes, and other small dots of different colors were flying on the cloth.

The black dot was a black Zhenlong chess piece, the silver dot was a white chess piece, the red dot represents those who died in action, and the small square on the silk cloth represented the hostile forces — as long as he had this sand table, he could clearly see the battle even from a thousand miles away.

Shi Mei spread out the silk cloth before him, but didn't take a good look at it. He was well aware of the choice Mo Ran would make in the end. It was just a piece of cloth, but it was just for fun. Taxian-Jun had countless ways

to get out of this predicament, but Mo-zongshi only had one way out, so there was nothing to look forward to.

After an unknown amount of time, the door of the hall suddenly opened. Light footsteps came from within the hall. Shi Mei didn't raise his head and only asked: "You're here?"

On the shiny brick, a man stood still.

The man who walked in wore a snow-white cloak. The brim of his hat was very low, so it was impossible to see his face. He stopped in the middle of the hall, his figure like a lotus.

The man spoke with a clear and elegant voice, but his tone was low: "Just now, there was a commotion coming from outside. Mo Ran destroyed the chess pieces that Taxian-Jun King made."

Shi Mei didn't even bat an eyelash as he indifferently replied, "Yeah, he has no other choice."

The man continued, "… Taxian-Jun's body was no longer in a good condition. Therefore, the chess pieces that he has controlled have already begun to devour you. Now that Mo Ran has released all of them using the power of its spirit core, it can be considered a good thing that you have been released."

Shi Mei laughed: "Oh? Are you concerned about me?"

The man did not answer. After a while, he said, "What are you going to do next?"

"Just follow the old plan." Shi Mei finally moved. He stretched his waist and opened his peach blossom eyes. With a smile, he said, "Didn't I already tell

you that?”

“… I know what you think. But you have to think clearly, Mo Ran paid such a heavy price to stop Zhenlong Chess from wreaking havoc. The cultivators of these sects are not idiots, they would not have no doubts about the whole matter.”

Shi Mei smiled, “I know what you mean. In order to protect the cultivation world from a calamity, he did not hesitate to shatter his own spirit core.”

“Do you think the cultivation world will interrogate their hero?”

Shi Mei didn’t answer directly. He was still smiling, his fingers folded under his chin as he gently asked, “Does the Chu Wanning of my past life look alike to the matter I did with Mo Ran?”

The man was silent for a while. Like. “It’s almost a repeat.”

“Alright, let me ask you this again. In my previous life, Chu Wanning was forcefully taken over by Taxian-Jun, so how many people in the cultivation world truly cared about him? Do you remember him?”

“…”

Seeing that he did not answer, the smile on Shi Mei’s face became even more enigmatic: “Almost none, right? I told you. In those years, Xue Meng ran all over the place. At the beginning, there were even some people who shed two drops of tears of sympathy, promising that he would lend a helping hand and go to the Sisheng Peak to save others. But then what? Under the pressure of the emperor Taxian-Jun, those promises were only on his lips. Furthermore, as time passed, the initial feeling of being moved dissipated, people began to feel more and more annoyed with Xue Meng.

When he went to ask for help, everyone told him that Chu Wanning had been in the palace for a long time. Perhaps he was already dead. How can you lose your life for someone whose life is unknown?"

The mysterious man shook his head, "Chu Wanning was really missing at that time, and now Mo Ran is still well and sound beside them. No matter how ruthless they are, they probably won't hurt a person who has just shed blood for the cultivation world."

Hearing his rebuttal, Shi Mei could not help but sigh, "You, compared to me, are only lacking a few years to live, so you're still too naive."

As he spoke, he put away the silk cloth on the table. The pieces on it had all turned red, meaning that they were all useless. He didn't care about it at all and returned the silk to his Qiankun bag.

"When people do not involve their own interests, they can be very noble. But once it hurts, it will gradually reveal its animal nature."

His slender fingers made a knot on the Heaven and Earth Pouch, and Shi Mei raised his head: "In their eyes, half of Mo Ran could be a good person who has been wronged, and half of him could be a cunning and evil person. It is a pity to mistakenly injure a good person, but to wrongly release an evil person could lead to a bloody storm in the cultivation world."

"…"

Seeing that the other party was listening silently, Shi Mei continued, "So, even though he shattered his spirit core to help protect the cultivation world from a disaster. However, there were too many suspicious points on his body. If his human nature was suspicious and something harmed them,

they would choose to get rid of it. This small variable will not change the end result."

The mysterious man asked, "So, do you think the Tianyin Pavilion can successfully capture Mo Ran?"

Shi Mei laughed, "The Tianyin Pavilion is on our side. Everything is planned. That is inevitable. Next, as long as I can find a way to obtain the spirit core shards from Mo Ran, I'll be able to make Taxian-Jun submit to me once more. With his power, what else can't be done?"

The man didn't answer immediately. After a while, he said, "But in another world, you have controlled him for nearly ten years. What have you accomplished?"

Shi Mei was startled. He seemed to be stung by the man's questioning. His face slowly darkened. After a while, he narrowed his eyes and asked: "What do you mean? Are you questioning me?"

"… No, I didn't question you." The man sighed, "You and I had the same intention. I'm afraid no one in this world understands you better than me."

Shi Mei's cold expression calmed down a little, but his beautiful eyes were still staring at the man's face. He seemed to be examining the man's words to see if they were true or not. He pursed his lips and said: "It's good that you understand. Every step I take is to get back what we deserve, so some sacrifices are inevitable."

"Yes."

"You're very right, the person who understands me the most is none other than you." Shi Mei said softly, "Between these two lifetimes, I have lived in

constant fear and fear. I have almost no one to trust but you."

"…"

"Don't let me down."

As soon as Shi Mei finished his sentence, the mysterious man spoke up after a period of complicated silence, "I've been wanting to ask you a question for a while now."

"What?"

Outside of Mount Jiao, dark clouds densely covered the sky. The wind had picked up, and the vegetation was bleak as it swayed back and forth. It was as if countless people had been displaced and were wailing in grief — the whistling of the wind.

The man said, "I really want to know, in my previous life, just how big of a sacrifice we made for our sake. Tell me the truth."

He didn't expect him to suddenly ask this question. Shi Mei frowned, and his eyes lit up: "Didn't I already tell you? It's normal for some innocent people to die, and if you think about the trampling we've had before, you'll __"

"What are some?"

The man's gentle but firm voice interrupted Shi Mei, who looked like a mute.

His face began to darken visibly. This was very unusual, because Shi Mei was a person who never spoke lightly about his emotions. However, in

front of this mysterious man, he didn't seem to care about his teeth or claws, as if he couldn't even see the killing intent on his face.

"Some are just some. Do I really have to register innocent people who have died in harm's way and show them to you?"

The man smiled faintly and said softly, "Alright, you know it as well. I won't be able to see it anymore."

"…"

"I've always been cooperating with you. Ever since you came to find me and told me the truth about my past life, I've been helping you for so many years. While you were lying in ambush for Guyue'ye, I was doing everything you told me to do on the Sisheng Peak. Despite the occasional confusion, your thought is my thought and your quest is mine — I have long ago put death at the back of my mind for what we have in common, and I have always thought you would be the same, so I don't mind sacrificing myself, as long as we succeed."

Shi Mei suddenly stood up and started pacing back and forth.

"What do you mean? Do you mean to say that as you have put your life and death on the line you don't want live anymore?"

He flicked his sleeves as he turned around and stared at the white-robed man with a cold expression.

"If you knew what sort of person I am, you shouldn't have said those words."

"I know." The mysterious man said, "But I was thinking, in your previous life after you faked your death, using Hua Binan's identity to hide behind the

scenes and control the Soul Devouring Insect in his heart… for ten years."

"Eight years." Shi Mei interrupted, "Later on, Chu Wanning split his earth soul into two and injected it into his body, more or less bringing back some of his personality. He committed suicide in eight years, not ten years."

"Alright, eight years. These eight years, you've expanded the hatred in his heart, made him commit such heinous crimes, but now you're moving further and further away from our original purpose. If you see him like this, why didn't you stop him in time?"

Shi Mei laughed out of extreme anger: "Do you know how hard it is to refine a single flower?"

"… I know."

"Do you know that for those who were afflicted with the Flower curse, once it is removed, it will no longer be effective for a second time?"

"I know."

Shi Mei no longer smiled. His eyes flashed with anger, "Then what else do you want to ask? If it were you, what would you do?"

The man was silent. After a long time, he sighed, "Didn't you already make the choice for me?"

Shi Mei was suddenly at a loss for words.

The man said, "I have never personally done this before. Even if I knew that I would have made the same decision if I had encountered the same situation, I…"

Shi Mei narrowed his eyes. Step by step, he walked down the stairs and stopped in front of the man: “But you?”

“… But I still have a guilty conscience.”

Dead silence.

Suddenly, Shi Mei grabbed onto the man’s robe. Such a beautiful hand, wearing a snake-print ring, such an elegant hand, clutching the person in front of him tightly, the meridians on the back of his hand protruded.

He gritted his teeth and said, “What a guilty conscience, what’s the difference between you and me? Past events came one after another. Which one of them wasn’t planned by the two of us? Didn’t you understand it well, didn’t you? Aren’t you vicious and merciless? Are you ashamed now? — Why?”

“…”

“Because you feel that Xu Shuanglin views you as a friend, but you’ve always deceived him, told him about the fake method of rebirth, and asked him to open the Gate of Life and Death for us. Are you ashamed?”

The man said softly, “He didn’t betray me to death.”

Shi Mei was stunned, his eyes flashing with despair and grief: “Fine, fine - I was wondering why you were so unwilling - what else? You saw thousands of pieces, and you feel heartache for those people, and you blame yourself?”

However, the man was very calm. “Don’t you feel the slightest bit of remorse?”

“You…” He stared at the person in front of him for a long time, as if he was looking at a huge joke, or as if he was looking at a traitor who had made his teeth go cold.

Suddenly, he seemed to have thought of an extremely vicious phrase. He sneered, exposed his poisonous pincers, and fiercely stabbed into that man’s blood.

“Good, very good. You have said so many beautiful words. Self-reproach, shame. But in the end, you’re still lamenting, right?”

Seeing the blank look on his opponent’s face, the light in Shi Mei’s eyes became even brighter. He was like a vulture pouncing on food, circling around and waiting for the moment his prey died.

“You’ve suddenly come to me to denounce me. You probably think you’re regretting it because you saw a million dollars worth of chess. It was most likely because he had seen Xu Shuanglin’s death that he had been moved. But I know you. I know what you are — self-reproach and shame don’t exist for you, you’re as cold-blooded and untrustworthy as I am.”

The vulture’s wings cast the shadow of death, descending lower and lower, colder and colder.

“You are not confessing at all. Don’t lie to yourself.”

He smiled proudly and decently.

Shi Mingjing, who always kept people at a distance, was always graceful and calm.

He paused.

“In my opinion, you’re just praising your eyes.”

As soon as he finished speaking, he took out the dagger at his waist and slowly used the handle of the dagger to pry open the man’s white cape. Then, bit by bit, he suddenly ripped it off.

As the cloak fell, a devastatingly beautiful face was revealed behind the white velvet hood.

He had a peerless appearance and an elegant appearance.

The two of them actually had the same face!

The only difference was that this cloaked Shi Mei had his eyes closed and was covered by a snow-white bandage. A few strands of his hair fell in front of his silk belt.

Shi Mei looked at the man whose cloak had been lifted and sneered: “Shi Mingjing, look at yourself. All you lament is that you have sacrificed more than I have. That day, the situation on Mount Jiao became extremely dire. In order to disturb Chu Wanning’s mood, we had to make the final move that we had discussed before. With so many people around us watching, we naturally could not act out the show. So in the end, you lost your eyes, but I’m still okay, you’re jealous.”

“… If I had been jealous, I would not have agreed to your plan from the very beginning. As far as I was concerned, it was fine for either of us to live long enough to finish the unfinished business. Why would I…”

Before he could finish, he was interrupted.

“Who?!”

The dagger was thrown out, accurately hitting the pillar.

Shi Mei looked back and coldly said: “Come out.”

Huang Xiaoyue, with his disheveled hair and dirty face, came out from behind the stone pillar in an extremely weak manner.

That day, he had betrayed the crowd and searched for the treasure of Mount Jiao. However, because of the triggering mechanism, he was trapped in a secret room and was unable to escape. In the secret chamber of the Rufeng Sect, gold and silver treasures, secret manuals and swordplay manuals, there was nothing missing except for the lack of food.

The group of people from the Jiangdong Hall were trapped in there. Their hands and feet were maimed, and they bullied the weak. People ate people, and in the end, only Huang Xiaoyue remained.

He finished the last disciple and struggled his way out of the secret room. However, he didn’t expect to run into such a bizarre situation.

— What did he see? Two Shi Meis?

Huang Xiaoyue couldn’t figure it out.

With his brain, he could at most guess that they were twin brothers. He would never have thought that they were two Shi Meis who had appeared in the same world under the influence of the Life and Death art.

However, the more he heard, the weirder the conversation became. Huang Xiaoyue was a cunning old fox, and he vaguely felt that something was wrong. He wanted to leave first, but who knew that Shi Mei’s eyes and ears were sharp?

Shi Mei narrowed his eyes, “I was wondering who it was. So it was an old Shuo.”

His gaze shifted down and landed on Huang Xiaoyue’s robe. “Blood? There are no animals on Mount Jiao.”

He was silent for a moment, as if he had understood something.

His lips and teeth parted, showing his disdain.

“Human blood?”

Huang Xiaoyue felt the killing intent, and ran away.

“Where can you escape to?”

His body was as light as a kite, and he stood firmly in front of Huang Xiaoyue, raising a pair of misty eyes.

Unfortunately, his gaze was too cold. The rain in his eyes had turned to ice.

“Old man. I’m afraid you don’t know that the most disgusting thing in my life was eating people.”

— This was the last sentence Huang Xiaoyue heard.

The hall was filled with the thick smell of blood. Seeing Huang Xiaoyue on the ground, blood flowed out from the hole in his chest, and Shi Mei frowned in disgust.

As he wiped the blood off his hands, he said, “Disgusting.”

He turned around and stared at the other him for a moment.

Then he slowed down.

“It’s been two lifetimes, and there are many beasts like Huang Xiaoyue in the world. Did you see that? Therefore, the cards in the cultivation world should have been reshuffled a long time ago. Besides, don’t think too much about it. I told you, I won’t let your sacrifice be for nothing. When this is over, I will think of a way to heal your eyes.”

“…”

Seeing that the white-cloaked mage still did not make a sound, he rolled his eyes, and said indifferently: “Stop being stubborn…… Forget it, I promise you that unless it’s absolutely necessary, I won’t drag in any more innocent people. You can finally relax now, right? Are you satisfied?”

His lips moved, as if he wanted to say something to the other person. However, after this incident, the Shi Mei from his previous life became extremely unhappy, and did not intend to listen to him anymore. He had already strode out of the main hall of the Pantheon Monastery.

Ch. 266 [Tianyin Pavilion] Warm for You

At the foot of the mountain, there was a hidden path that was covered by layers upon layers of vines. From this path, one could see the clear pool palace used for resting during the Nangong family's ancestral worship. The palace is not big, but as you turn a corner the scenery changes.

There's a garden in which a type of Dragon Blood Flower grows that emits fluorescence in the night. At this moment, the blooming season was over, and only a few clumps of it were still open. From afar, it looked like stars were falling and adorning the night sky.

Shi Mei walked into the depths of the flower bush where there was a hot spring. He took off his clothes and stepped on the shore with his jade-white toes, then looked down at himself in the pool.

The hot spring water was very hot, but his eyes were very cold.

He stretched out his hand and slowly touched his heart.

The area had been festering from the backlash of the forbidden technique, but now he didn't need to worry. Everything was going according to plan. Everything would be fine.

He stepped into the spring. The hot spring at Mount Jiao was mixed with the aura of the demonic dragon. It was extremely comfortable to soak in. Shi Mei leaned against the edge of the pool and closed his eyes.

Suddenly, there was a rustling sound not too far away. Shi Mei didn't open his eyes. He only asked: "Who is it?"

Nangong Liu came out from the bushes. There was a Dragon Blood Flower in his hair.

When he saw Shi Mei, he smiled happily: “My dear friend, brother, is taking a bath? Is there anything I can do to help?”

Shi Mei replied: “No.”

Nangong Liu scratched his head, “Then, then I won’t be standing here. I’ll be leaving first. Otherwise, if you were naked and I wore clothes, you would be in trouble.”

In the mist, Shi Mei smiled. His face became more and more transparent as it was moistened by the spring water. It was like the thin ice in the early winter in Jiangnan, sparkling and easy to break, yet cold to the bone.

He opened his peach blossom eyes and looked at Nangong Liu with a smile that was not a smile. “What do you mean?”

Nangong Liu was very honest, “Because you look good.”

“Oh… You’re just a little kid, do you know what’s beautiful and what’s ugly?”

Nangong Liu said with some anger, “I’m already five years old, I’m not a child.”

Shi Mei seemed to be interested and his smile deepened: “Okay, then it’s big brother’s fault. Come, my brother asks you. Taxian-Jun and I, which do you prefer?”

“Of course it’s my good friend brother.” Nangong Liu said without any hesitation, “Who is Taxian-Jun? I don’t know him.”

“Then let’s put it another way. Mo Ran and I… You remember? He said hello to you.”

Nangong Liu held his finger and seriously thought for a moment before nodding his head.

“Who do you like more between him and me? Don’t choose because you’re familiar with me, I just want to ask about the beauty in your eyes.”

This time, Nangong Liu did not immediately reply. He tilted his head and thought for a while before saying, “I still prefer my close friend brother.”

Shi Mei seemed to be pleased: “Oh? Tell me, what’s wrong with him?”

“… I can’t say.”

“Then why do you like me more?”

Nangong Liu seemed to be wronged, “I don’t know either…If you think that it’s beautiful, it’s beautiful.”

Shi Mei pondered for a while, then suddenly walked out from the depths of the hot spring to a shallow part of the water mist. He crossed his hands and laid on the side of the pool, revealing a gentle and beautiful back as he smiled and said, “Come here.” As he spoke, he beckoned to Nangong Liu with his wet hands. When Nangong Liu came closer, Shi Mei stood up straight from the depths of the hot spring.

“Aiyaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah!”

Shi Mei laughed: “What’s with you? We are both male, what’s there to be shy about?”

Nangong Liu used his hand to wipe his eyes as he muttered, “I’m not shy at all. You brought water into my eyes.”

However, Shi Mei didn’t care about whether he had water in his eyes or not. He pulled on Nangong Liu’s wrist and forced him to look at him. Thus, the ferocious scar on his chest completely appeared before Nangong Liu’s eyes.

“Look here. Are you afraid?”

The wound was festering badly and was still leaking pus. Nangong Liu only took a glance before turning his head away in disgust. After all, he was a childish person who spoke without restraint. He said, “Disgusting.”

Shi Mei’s smile did not change, but his eyes turned cold: “Do you still think I’m good-looking?”

“…” Nangong Liu tried his best to struggle free from his grasp, but Shi Mei’s strength was too great. No matter how much he tried, he was unable to do anything. In the end, his eyes became watery. “I don’t like it.”

“Look carefully.”

“I don’t want — Ouch!”

Due to the excessive force, Shi Mei managed to squeeze Nangong Liu’s hand until it was dislocated. His eyes flashed with an unspeakable anger or unwillingness, almost paranoid: “Didn’t you say I was good-looking just now? What, with just a small wound on me, I turned from beautiful to ugly?”

“That’s not it…”

“Do you think that if a beauty has even the slightest flaw, he will be detested by others?” Shi Mei approached him, “Old lingering feelings will become disgust when reexposed. Old desires will become a fishbone stuck in one’s throat.”

Nangong Liu finally could not hold it in and cried loudly, “I don’t understand, I don’t understand! Let me go, I don’t want to stay here.”

His racket caused the originally anxious mood of Shi Mei to darken even further. A dark cloud seemed to be churning in his eyes. He suddenly raised his hand and slapped Nangong Liu’s face.

In the end, he released Nangong Liu and coldly said, “Trash, scram.”

After Nangong Liu left, Shi Mei once again returned to the depths of the hot spring. The scenery around him was still pleasing to the eyes. Dragon Blood Flower’s brilliance was revealed and the air was filled with a faint fragrance. However, his initial happiness had completely vanished. There was only anger in his heart.

He suddenly hammered the surface of the water, causing water to splash everywhere as he regained his calm.

The ripples dispersed, once again reflecting the image of his still gentle, but festering chest.

Shi Mei’s anger gave birth to a wave of helplessness and weakness. He leaned back against the edge of the pool, lifted the curtain of eyelashes, and gazed at the sky.

“People change.” he murmured.

Just like how a seed would germinate, a tender bud would turn dark green, a flower would bloom in the green leaves, a flower would wilt or fall, and a falling flower would shatter into the mud.

Time could not be seen or touched, but everyone was being quietly worn away by it. Some people had been sharpened by claws and teeth, while others had been sharpened by edges.

“It’s all going to change…”

He cupped his hands wearily and wiped his face.

Comparing it with his previous life and this life, he would know. However, from which step did he start to go astray and never return?

After taking a bath and changing clothes, Shi Mei loosened up the black hair bun and returned to the secret chamber in Mount Jiao from the fragrant path. He stood in the doorway for a moment, then reached out and pushed the door open.

At this time, it was already deep into the night. Almost all the candles in the room had been extinguished, leaving only a single flame burning behind the curtains of the room.

Without making any sound, Shi Mei quietly entered the room, bringing in the unique scent of soap after taking a bath. However, it was this fragrance that alarmed the man deep within the bed curtain.

Taxian-Jun slowly and hoarsely asked, “Who is it?”

Shi Mei said gloomily: “… Me.”

There was a momentary silence in the pavilion, followed by the sound of rustling. Taxian-Jun's voice sneered through the curtains: "… Master is truly elegant. In the middle of the night, you come to my room and eavesdrop from the corner. Aren't you ashamed?"

Shi Mei's expression became even colder: "You should stop there. If we kill him, we won't be able to play with anyone."

Taxian-Jun's voice was lazy and low, with a hint of laziness in it, "Master, please be at ease. This Venerable One doesn't have any perverted hobbies while in bed. Always love to be practical, pointless blather, stinging people with snakes, playing guessing games with blindfolded eyes, none of that interest me. Rest assured nobody is getting killed."

"…"

Pointless blather, stinging people with snakes, and playing guessing games with blindfolded eyes — no matter how big one's heart was, they will know who he was talking about.

Anger boiled in Shi Mei's heart as he stepped forward and parted the curtains. It was as if swords and blades clashed, and sparks were flying everywhere as Shi Mei's gentle face faced Taxian-Jun's handsome face.

"You-!" Before he could finish, he suddenly stopped.

He had thought that after Taxian-Jun reunited with Chu Wanning again after a long time, he would be as starved, eager and impatient, having sex in every way.

But behind the drawn curtain, the scene in front of him was truly surprising.

He saw that Chu Wanning was sleeping soundly, his cheeks were slightly red from the heat, and he was having a fever. As for Taxian-Jun, his clothes were slightly open, revealing his smooth and well-proportioned chest. He held him in his arms with a dark expression, while stroking the hair of the person in his arms with his large hands. He looked like he despised him but would never let him go.

Shi Mei: "… What are you doing?"

"What do you think I am capable of doing?"

"…"

Well, why bother with a dead man.

He closed his eyes and suppressed his anger, but the small flame in his chest continued to burn and he was unable to extinguish it. In the end, he could not help but retort coldly, "Who would have thought that at your age, you would need Shizun to accompany you in your sleep. I think if it's not because you're afraid of the dark, then it's because you want to be coy with Shizun."

It had to be said that Shi Mei's words were very effective. Taxian-Jun immediately narrowed his eyes. He subconsciously wanted to push the unconscious Chu Wanning away or kick him under the bed. This way, he would look very imposing.

However, the last thing he did was to hug the man in his embrace even tighter as he watched Shi Mei approach. He waved his wide sleeves, covering Chu Wanning's face.

After doing all of this, Taxian-Jun raised his eyes gloomily, “What does my matter have to do with you?”

Shi Mei gritted his teeth: “You should know how to talk back. Why don’t you think about who created you?”

“The Cold Scaled Sacred Hand only has one sentence to threaten me.” Taxian-Jun said coldly, “He really does have a great future ahead of him.”

“You-!”

Even though he had been rebutting Shi Mei, he still found it hard to endure. He raised his hand and poked Taxian-Jun in the forehead, transferring some of his spiritual energy over.

“Soul Gathering.”

He chanted the incantation from his full lips, but Taxian-Jun’s eyes persisted on for a long time, long enough to make Shi Mei’s heart tremble. He even felt that this man was about to break away from him.

Sweat trickled down his forehead as he stuck himself to Taxian-Jun. In the end, he used up almost all of his spiritual power and shouted, “Soul Gathering!”

This time, Taxian-Jun’s body trembled, and then his gaze finally disappeared.

Shi Mei withdrew his spirit energy and took a deep breath. He held his chest in pain and felt dizzy.

Because of his physique, his spiritual core and spiritual energy were of low quality. No matter how hard he trained, he couldn’t compare to others.

Normally, drugs were naturally powerful, but once it involved someone who needed spiritual energy, his body wouldn't be able to withstand it.

He closed his eyes and rested for a moment. Then, he looked at Taxian-Jun again, "Let me ask you again, what were you doing just now?"

Since he was already out of control, Taxian-Jun said without emotion, "He has a fever and is afraid of catching a cold."

"… So?"

This zombie, who was only left with a sliver of his soul from his previous life, lightly said, "With me holding him, he will be warmer."

"…"

For a long while, Shi Mei stared at Taxian-Jun.

"Warmer?" His pale lips moved, and he suddenly laughed out loud. Although there was no smile in his peach blossom eyes, "Mo Ran, have you gone mad? Feel the temperature of your own body — what are you? Your entire body is as cold as ice. You have already died, and have no heart or lungs, and no body temperature. You are even as cold as a corpse, yet you still want to warm him?"

A hint of pain seemed to flash through Taxian-Jun's black eyes, but that pain only lasted for a moment. In the end, he was still a corpse.

Shi Mei said: "Get up."

The emperor Taxian-Jun didn't immediately get up when he heard the order. His black brows were knitted tightly, as if he was struggling between his will and the control of Shi Mei.

“Get up!”

The order was even stronger, and under such a vicious tone, Taxian-Jun finally obeyed.

He slowly got up from the bed, his robe was still open, and Chu Wanning’s body temperature was still in his chest.

Shi Mei said in a gloomy voice: “Get out.”

Just like that, Taxian-Jun walked a few steps slowly before he suddenly stopped and said in a low voice, “Yes.”

“… “What?”

“Yes, I do.”

Shi Mei didn’t know what to say, so he asked: “What is it?”

“Have temperature.” The man slowly raised his hand and touched his chest, feeling the warmth left by Chu Wanning, “It’s hot here.”

Shi Mei felt as if he had been stabbed by a needle. He was furious. Nothing vexed him more than the disobedient puppet in his palm. He shouted in a low voice: “Get the hell out of here.”

Taxian-Jun took two more steps, but this time, it was only two steps before his expression suddenly turned bitter.

“No…” He held his head, the meridians in his palms bulged, his entire body was trembling, and a low gasp came from his throat, “This Venerable one… Unreconciled… How, how could this be… If that’s the case…”

His eyes were closed, his will was strong but weakened, his memory was far and near. He was struggling and struggling. After suffering for so long, he had been tormented for two lifetimes.

"… By you. Impudent…!"

The mutterings stopped as the trembling came to an abrupt halt.

"Hmph!" Shi Mei groaned. He covered his heart — the backlash from Taxian-Jun gave him a powerful burst of energy. He almost staggered back a step. Then, he saw Taxian-Jun's eyes suddenly open wide, and a bloodthirsty and fiendish look appeared in his eyes.

"…"

That pair of hawk-like black eyes no longer contained any traces of confusion. Instead, a clear and cold face was reflected within them.

Shi Mei's face was pale as he slowly said, "You're recovering faster and faster."

Taxian-Jun did not say anything, his eyes flashed with a bright light, he slightly gasped for breath, and raised his hand to summon Bu'gui.

Shi Mei raised his chin and looked at the blade's hilt. His sharp gaze fell on Mo Ran's face: "What, angry? You want to kill me?"

The pitch-black blade was lifted up, and in the blink of an eye, it was already hanging around Shi Mei's snow-white neck.

Shi Mei did not retreat and said with a sneer, "Your Majesty, the reason why you can move now is all because of my spirit energy. If you kill me, you will also die. You can understand that."

“…”

Shi Mei continued, “In terms of strength, I really can’t beat you. But you should think about it clearly. Do you want to die or do you want to continue living in this world.”

Taxian-Jun’s hands were steady and he didn’t shake.

However, after a while, he suddenly retracted his hand and turned his head away.

Seeing him retract his saber, Shi Mei raised his hand and slowly touched the bloody wound on his neck. He then said, “Fortunately, you weren’t too stupid.”

“…”

“From now on, don’t just stand there and scream angrily. Actually, you know very well about our relationship. You are like a rusty knife. I want to restore you to your former state of being useful. Continue to be my blade. As for you, I’m afraid that you plan on completely getting rid of my control and taking my head after you recover.”

Taxian-Jun’s black eyes turned as he turned to face him, staring at him coldly.

“All these years, you have continued to work for me in another world. The crack in the Gate of Life and Death is very narrow and difficult to pass. Usually, I send you a message with a carrier pigeon. But occasionally, we would also use Soul Devouring Insects to communicate with each other and connect our hearts. So of course I know what you think. You don’t have to be surprised.”

Taxian-Jun finally spoke, and said coldly: “You’re not too far away from being blind, which eye of yours saw my surprise?”

“…” Shi Mei pursed his lips, his face turning even darker, “Okay. Since you know the pros and cons of this matter, you should endure it even more. We will work together and see whether you can kill me or whether I will have an invincible weapon when the day comes.”

Taxian-Jun said, “I’ll be waiting to see.”

Just as Shi Mei wanted to say something, Chu Wanning, who was on the bed, let out a soft groan. However, with this light sound, the two men immediately turned their heads.

“Wanning?”

“Shizun!”

“…” The former martial brothers looked at each other, Taxian-Jun was sinister and didn’t say a word. After a while, his eyes shifted from Shi Mei to the unconscious Chu Wanning.

A moment later, he said in a seemingly indifferent tone, “This person has been having fever for many days. No matter what, it’s not good. If this goes on, will he…”

After he finished saying those words, he stopped. His long eyelashes moved and he closed his eyes.

On the other hand, Shi Mei was indifferent: “What do you want to ask? You want to ask if he will die?”

He didn't know if it was an illusion, but the pale face of Taxian-Jun became even paler. He pursed his lips as if he loathed the word "death" and said concisely, "Will he?"

"Of course not. You are underestimating the Beidou Immortal. But you still have the nerve to ask me about this?" Shi Mei raised his eyebrow, "Who's the reason for his fever? Isn't it because you're as fierce as a wolf?"

On the other hand, Taxian-Jun's expression turned even worse. His stench had reached its peak as he gloomily said, "He is not me, then don't confuse me with that trash."

Hearing him say that, Shi Mei looked at him up and down, and finally said: "What a coincidence, I also think he's trash. You also know very well that I have spent a lot of effort to tear open a huge rift in space and time in order to invite you over so that that trash could disappear and allow you to ascend to the top again."

"Your Majesty." He suddenly had a look of playfulness on his face as he addressed Taxian-Jun in this way, "I still have a little more to go before my goal can be achieved. Actually, you also want complete power. You want a surging spiritual core, right?"

"…"

Shi Mei was like a snake hunting for its prey. He had a scarlet tip of his tongue as he seduced and enticed the other party.

He could see the desire in the eyes of Taxian-Jun.

Thus, he smiled, determined to win.

“If you want to recover your full strength, then be obedient.” His white teeth were filled with poison, and his eyes were sparkling. “You better listen to me, then we’ll do things properly.”

Taxian-Jun was silent for a moment, then said, “Don’t talk about this for now.”

Then he pointed at Chu Wanning, “Talk about this.”

“Him, he’s only suffered too much stimulation due to his soul merging.” Shi Mei lightly replied, “There’s nothing to talk about. But if you really want to make him more comfortable, you might as well go out first.”

Taxian-Jun’s eyes flashed with vigilance, “What are you trying to do?”

Shi Mei gave a faint smile, “Treat his wounds.”

“I want to be here too.”

“That won’t do.” Shi Mei said, “When the Cold Scale Sacred Hand uses magic to save someone, it doesn’t allow others to see it.”

“…”

Seeing that Taxian-Jun had no intention of leaving, Shi Mei said: “It’s fine if you don’t want to leave. Then I’ll go out and you stay. Anyways, Emperor, since you have the ability to transcend the heavens, you will definitely be able to take good care of him.”

When he heard Shi Mei’s words, Taxian-Jun’s expression became even uglier.

His spirit energy was tyrannical and ferocious, the most unsuitable thing for him to learn was healing techniques. In his previous life, there were many people in the palace, and there was no lack of doctors, so he had never studied it in detail.

Shi Mei regained his composure and looked at him with a smile.

Taxian-Jun was obviously disgusted by his smile. He suddenly turned his head and gritted his teeth, unwilling to look at Shi Mei again.

After a long while, he said, "… All right. This Venerable One will go out and you can treat his injuries." Pausing, he continued fiercely, "But I will be at the door, if you dare…"

Before he could finish his words, the coldness on his face was almost enough to force someone to death.

"If you dare to do anything to him, I will immediately take your life."

This kind of threat didn't have much of an effect on Shi Mei. He smiled again and gestured Taxian-Jun to leave.

Taxian-Jun left. Before leaving, he remained at the entrance with a dark face for a long time. Shi Mei stood in the quiet chamber, looking at the stone door that had finally closed. After a while, he turned around and walked to the man in white on the bed.

"…" The mocking smile on Shi Mei's face disappeared, replaced with an extremely peaceful and crazed expression. "Shizun."

He walked over step by step.

Now that Chu Wanning was in his grasp, what did it matter if Taxian-Jun was standing outside? He had ways to prevent Chu Wanning from making a sound.

When the emperor of the Mortal Realm entered, no matter how fierce and furious he was, he would be powerless. He could only blame himself for being too naive and useless. He had no choice but to leave his lover in the snake den with him.

His slender white fingers lifted the curtain, and he stared at the burning man on the bed with almost gentleness and greed: “This time, no one will bother us again.”

He slowly sat down and placed his hand on Chu Wanning’s face.

“… Come, consort Chu, let me teach you in a place that is just a wall away from your husband. “Hmm?”

Ch. 267 [Tianyin Pavilion] Golden Dragon Coiled Pillar

First, Shi Mei fed Chu Wanning a healing medicine. Then, he bent over and used his soft and thin fingers to hide between his hair like ten bewitching white snakes. He held the back of Chu Wanning's head up against his own forehead.

"Zhuang Zhoumeng, butterfly incarnation, always with you…"

He chanted the incantation softly, but as he continued to chant, he suddenly stopped mumbling.

He initially wanted to cast a spell to remove some of Chu Wanning's memories. This was one of his best spells, and he had used it on Mo Ran before.

However, because Chu Wanning's soul was in a mess and his memory was still in the process of recovery, he found that this trick did not work on Chu Wanning.

"This is a real nuisance." He closed his eyes, and then opened them —

A bewitching light lingered in his peach blossom eyes. He used his eyes to stare at Chu Wanning, then started to recite, "Zhuang Zhoumeng, the butterfly incarnation, you will always be together with me. Yesterday, you were like flowing water, intoxicated in this mountain…"

There was some effect this time, but it was not perfect.

His incantation was like a huge rock thrown into a pond. Although it had caused tens of thousands of ripples, it would soon return to its original state.

But it doesn't matter. It's good to forget it for a while.

He did not want to leave for the sea of desires with Chu Wanning, as his mind was still full of killing intent.

That would be too unappetizing.

"Shizun, you've slept for such a long time. It should be time for you to wake up."

This soft call was like a curse. After a while, Chu Wanning's eyelashes moved slightly and his eyes opened up.

Because of the Incantation of Conviction, his consciousness temporarily became blurry. It stopped after his previous life and his death.

In the past, Chu Wanning had been hurt so deeply by Mo Ran, his beloved. Subconsciously, he had always thought that it would be great if it could be changed. Thus, his divine sense was able to trace back to those years.

However, a human's three souls and six souls were already exquisite. Chu Wanning had two lifetimes' worth of souls in his body, so even if he was cursed by Shi Mei, his mind was still in chaos. He looked like he was in a dream.

He had lost some of his memory and was still dreaming.

"… Shi Mingjing?"

"Yes." Shi Mei's voice was very gentle, suppressing a kind of twisted tenderness, "It's me."

Chu Wanning seemed to be very tired, the high fever made him feel very uncomfortable. He only replied faintly before closing his eyes again.

Shi Mei knew that he was just getting used to it, so he didn't rush him and waited patiently by the side.

After a while, he heard Chu Wanning sigh with his eyes closed, "I'm afraid I'm dreaming. It's good that you're still alive."

He knew that his memories had stopped after the Heavenly Rift from his previous life, but he didn't think that he would have such an emotional reaction. Shi Mei was startled, surprised to find that it had been a long time since he had last seen him.

"You can't bear for me to die?"

"… You're so young. So many people like you…" Chu Wanning said softly, "It shouldn't be you. I'm sorry…"

"…"

"If only it were me. At least no one would be too sad."

The bitterness in his heart grew more distinct, pulsing in his dead heart. This feeling existed the first time Chu Wanning and him went home together under the same umbrella. After conspiring for so many years, the people around him, they either died or scattered.

He lied waiting in the dark, thinking of himself as a heartless rock.

Then he really thought he was a rock, and it was only today that he truly felt the existence of his heart.

They were both sour, sweet, bitter and itchy.

He clearly knew that he shouldn't be in this mood. The sour rain would corrode the boulders, and the soft moss would cause him to fall apart.

However, he couldn't help but hold onto Chu Wanning's hand, his heart thumping wildly.

He opened his mouth, but his throat was dry. He swallowed a mouthful of saliva and then asked again, "What about you? Are you sad that I died?"

"…"

"Have you ever been sad?"

Chu Wanning's phoenix-like eyes were half open. Under his long and thick eyelashes was a pair of eyes that carried too much of his worries. Shi Mei tried his best to look inside, trying to find a trace of an edge to his emotions.

But no.

Just like how water alone is water, or wheat grain alone is wheat grain, a kind of feeling that is simply placed there can only always be that kind of feeling.

Unfortunately, people's emotions could never be singled out. The death of Shi Mei had caused him to be sad, to suffer, to blame himself, and then to regret. So many emotions mixed together, just like the wheat grains mixed with water to store, fermented and changed, no longer the same as before.

"Shizun, if I were to give you another chance, would you sacrifice your life to save me as if you were willing to?"

Chu Wanning's eyes were blurry.

"Would you?"

"Shi Mingjing…" He only had time to say these three words before his lips were roughly stuffed shut.

After waiting so long for an answer, it was really about to be revealed, but he didn't dare to listen. He didn't want to hear it.

Shi Mei thought that he probably knew the answer.

The resentment in his chest was rampaging. He was kissing the man on the bed in retaliation, greedily sucking on him. At first, Chu Wanning did not react at all. It was only when Shi Mei's tongue was trying to pry open his teeth and get in that he suddenly opened his eyes wide as if he had just awoken from a dream.

"Urghhh!"

"Shh, don't make a sound." Shi Mei took a deep breath and pointed at Chu Wanning's throat. He then said, "This incantation was taught to us by you. You said it could keep us from making a sound in dangerous situations. Did you ever think that one day, I would be able to use it?"

As he spoke, he ignored the confusion and hatred in Chu Wanning's eyes. His jealousy and thirst made him lose his composure, "Shizun, do you know? Two lifetimes. I have worked hard and hard, and I have not lived a single day in peace."

He tied Chu Wanning's hands and feet, tied them to the headboard, and did all this while gritting his teeth, "I am not a normal person, and I am not allowed to do what I want to do, but so what? For a puppet like Emperor

Taxian-Jun to be able to do as he pleases, why should I care about everything?”

As Shi Mei said this, he saw Chu Wanning struggling furiously under his feet.

He felt both pain and pleasure.

“Now I understand. Whether one was proud or not, one had to be happy… Shizun.” He straightened his body and began to remove Chu Wanning’s clothes in a hurry, “it was so hard to reach this step, you should let me have a taste of you. Reward to your disciple, huh?”

A seriously ill person didn’t have much strength to resist, so Shi Mei easily took off his robe. The air was slightly cool, and the lights were dim. The muscular man’s body was covered in bruises and purple ink.

Shi Mei’s eyes dimmed as he muttered to himself: “He’s really that fierce.”

With that, he raised his hand and pinched Chu Wanning’s chin, examining his eyes.

At that moment, his eyes looked like they were covered by a layer of fog. Chu Wanning must have been in a dream, and he couldn’t tell the difference between reality and fantasy. He must have felt that everything before his was absurd and unreal.

Adding on the memories of his past and present lives that were in disarray, it was actually not that easy for him to immediately react to it.

“I’m not like him.” Shi Mei stared at Chu Wanning for a while, and his gaze gradually turned gentle again. However, there was still a trace of

strangeness in that gentleness, “He doesn’t know how to make you addicted. You will try me and you will know he’s nothing.”

With that, he began to undress himself.

He had just taken a bath and was wearing only a bathrobe. He easily slipped to the ground and revealed his exquisite body that was like the jade of Kunshan.

“Shizun…”

He whispered and pressed forward.

No matter if it was a dream or real, Chu Wanning could not bear it any longer. His whole body was trembling and his face was ashen.

“You’re so hot.”

“…”

He knew that if he let go of the forbidden spell on Chu Wanning, this man would probably curse and threaten him with death. But Shi Mei couldn’t help but caress it as he mumbled: “Is it hotter inside?”

“Shi… Mingjing!”

When Shi Mei heard this, he was shocked.

“… You managed to break away from the Silencing Curse?” He raised his eyes and looked at Chu Wanning’s face, “You, really…”

Chu Wanning’s lips trembled, coughing up blood, he said hoarsely, “You are too presumptuous! Get lost!”

Shi Mei was silent as he lowered his head to look at the man below him.

Is this person too vicious?

Too stubborn?

Or was he too unresigned to accept his fate and refused to admit defeat?

There were too many things he wanted to say, so he didn't know what to say.

In the end, Shi Mei just smiled. Then, when Chu Wanning was about to angrily shout out the next words, he suddenly covered his mouth, quickly took off his hairband and tied it between his lips.

"Since you are able to escape from my spell, I will have to tie you up. Sorry, Shizun."

Shi Mei felt his blood boil as he looked into those confused, angry, and humiliated eyes. He bent down and whispered into Chu Wanning's ear, "No matter how good you feel from me, you have to remember to call me in a low voice. Your Emperor is right outside. If he were to hear that you are also so strong beneath me, do you think he would be happy?"

Shi Mei's finger slowly slid down, lingering on each of the bruised kisses. As he descended further, he felt as if he was being pierced by shame.

His memories were in disarray. But they stopped at his previous life, when he had yet to discover the secret of Mo Ran's curse, so he thought he hated him.

However, he hated his own shamelessness even more.

Even though he was humiliated, hated, and disappointed in Mo Weiyu. But when he was carried by Mo Ran, when he heard Mo Ran catch his breath, when that person's sweat gathered on his body and dripped onto his abdomen, he would involuntarily feel excitement and pleasure.

In fact, during the most frenzied of lovemaking, he could even feel himself secretly yearning for Mo Ran not to stop, tearing himself apart just like that and penetrating his spirit soul.

The storm-like entanglement gave him an illusion of tranquility.

Lying in Mo Ran's arms, he would occasionally feel like nothing had happened. This person who kept pestering him might also love him.

But Shi Mei was different.

Although he did not know why he would fall into such a bizarre nightmare, when Shi Mei touched him, all he felt was anger and bitterness. He simply could not stand this kind of relationship…

He didn't like it at all.

Shi Mei's body was different from what he remembered. It was very tall, but it was still smooth and fair. The lines were soft and elegant, as if they were made from goat fat. The scent of his body was fresh and fragrant.

It was not the hard power that he was used to.

He was only used to Mo Ran. Although the man's skin was pale, the blood that flowed beneath his skin was like that of a ferocious beast, wild and untamed. The purest smell of a man burned his heart like a scorching sun.

Even though there were times when the smell of blood and iron still lingered in the air.

Hard, cold.

However, his sturdy chest was extremely hot.

Chu Wanning suddenly opened his eyes. His bound hands were struggling, and there were traces of blood on his wrists. Two lines of red appeared on the tail of his eyes due to humiliation.

However, his struggles were ineffective. The bed was covered with a thick layer of animal skin, and so there were no loud sounds.

Shi Mei looked at him with interest, and laughed in the end, “Shizun, why waste your efforts? Do you not believe that I will make you feel good?”

As he spoke, he lifted up Chu Wanning’s slender and firm legs. His waist was wedged in, and his eyes were gloomy. He was about to enter as he had imagined countless times before.

Chu Wanning suddenly closed his eyes. He had bit his lips, and his nails had sunk into his palms — the muscles throughout his body had tensed up, not because of the fear of the pain that would come later.

It was because of shame.

It was too humiliating, whether it was true or not.

If it was a fake, then he would be ashamed of himself for dreaming about such things. If it was true, then he would be ashamed of himself for being so foolish as to accept two disciples.

He had always been a person who was used to reflecting on himself first.

Mo Ran’s lust for him, if anything, could be said to be just Mo Ran’s problem. But what about Shi Mei and Mo Ran together?

He couldn’t help but wonder if there was something he had done wrong, something he wasn't doing right, not acting like a teacher, so this disciples one by one succumbed to this kind of wolfish ambitions in bed.

What was wrong with him that caused him to suffer like this?

“…”

They were in a deadlock, tense.

After a long while, nothing happened.

Chu Wanning slowly opened his eyes. His dark brown eyes rolled around, only to see that for some reason, Shi Mei had frozen in place. The spring color on his face had completely vanished, and was instead as black as the bottom of a pot.

He still didn’t fully understand why Shi Mei would have such an expression. He looked down a few inches and saw something that left him speechless.

……

What… Things…

The heavy atmosphere from before was swept away, and Chu Wanning felt as if he had been struck by lightning.

Cough cough cough, the thing under Shi Mei’s feet was actually gold?

This situation was really too absurd. Chu Wanning stiffly turned his head away, not wanting to hurt his eyes.

But after a while, he felt that something was wrong — which normal person would have something of this color?

He turned his face around again and glanced at it again.

This time, he clearly saw that it wasn't Shi Mei who was golden, but rather a small golden demonic dragon that had appeared out of nowhere and occupied the same spot as Shi Mei. The dragon held its head high and glared angrily at Shi Mingjing. It seemed as if it would ruthlessly crush the thing that was wrapped around it into dust if it dared to act recklessly.

Chu Wanning: "…"

Shi Mei: "…"

The little devil dragon bared his teeth and roared at the unlucky guy he had trapped: "Wa, Baa —!"

If it wasn't for the fact that his hands were tied, Chu Wanning would have raised them to support his forehead at this moment. He really didn't see it.

"…" Shi Mei was silent for a while, before gritting his teeth, "What's going on?!"

As soon as he finished speaking, he heard the rumbling sound of a stone door opening. Taxian-Jun's sinister face appeared behind the door, and his voice contained the killing intent of a black cloud.

Taxian-Jun stepped through the door and crossed his arms. His gaze swept across the scene of the "Golden Dragon Coiling Jade Pillar". His killing

intent was tinged with a hint of scorn. Then, with his thin lips parted, he said coldly, “Miss, please get off the bed.”

Shi Mei was furious from embarrassment, and did not understand what he meant for a moment. He sulked: “What Miss? Who?”

“I’m sorry.” Taxian-Jun carefully examined the item that the dragon was trapping around, “So it’s a Young Master. Young Master is too young, I didn’t notice it at all.”

The little gold dragon climbed on top of the pillar and raised its beard. It bared its fangs as it echoed and summoned its master. “Baa, waa!”

To humiliate a man to this extent was the limit. No matter how calm and composed Shi Mei was, he couldn’t help but feel his veins bulge and his face turn red. Unfortunately, his clothes were in a mess and he was tied up by a Demon Dragon that had seen a ghost somewhere. When he got angry, he seemed to have no vigor, so he just didn’t say anything.

The emperor Taxian-Jun walked towards him. He stood by the bedpost with his arms crossed and leaned against it.

“Hua Binan, do you think I don’t know what you’re doing without making a sound?” He narrowed his eyes, and his handsome face was filled with contempt. “You really think This Venerable one is three years old. Hmm?”

Ch. 268 [Tianyin Pavilion] Return to Wushan

After saying that, the emperor Taxian-Jun moved his finger and the little devil dragon immediately wrapped itself tighter around his body. Shi Mei's expression changed. It was obvious that he was in pain, but he had always treasured his reputation. Even at a time like this, he still tried his best to remain calm.

"Mo Ran, how dare you spy on me?"

Taxian-Jun laughed, "Interesting. Tell me, is there anything in this world that I don't dare to do?"

"…"

"Let me introduce you. This is a split of the Mount Jiao Demon Dragon, they only listen to the Nangong Family's orders." Taxian-Jun gave him a sidelong glance, "You still don't know how to restrain yourself in my territory. I think you're asking for death."

Shi Mei's forehead and veins were bulging; he was obviously very angry. However, he did not expect the Mount Jiao Blood Pact to be used like this. After being pinched for a while, he did not dare to act too arrogantly. He could only say, "Withdraw this disgusting thing for me."

Taxian-Jun didn't say anything. He stared at the demonic dragon's entanglement for a while longer before sneering, "Then you have to promise me that you'll never take out this disgusting thing like you again."

Being disturbed like this already made him angry. He then asked with a gloomy face: "Who are you calling disgusting?"

“Whoever is tied up will be the one I’m talking about.”

Chu Wanning: “…”

When he saw the tied up Chu Wanning, Taxian-Jun frowned, then changed his tone and said, “Whoever is naked will be the one.”

Chu Wanning: “…”

There were too many misunderstandings, so Taxian-Jun shook his hand. “This Venerable one did not refer to you.”

Shi Mei said: “Mo Ran, you are really funny.”

However, even though he said that, he still wore the bathrobe with a calm expression. He then looked at Mo Ran and said, “Alright, can you release it now?”

“There’s no hurry. You go out first and walk further. When you reach the back of the mountain, it will open up by itself.” Taxian-Jun said lazily, “However, I shall remind you that if you wish to do anything to my person next time… It is already familiar with your smell. Even if you were outside of Mount Jiao, it would chase you there to strangle you.”

Taxian-Jun was invincible.

Shi Mei left.

The only two people left in the room were the Emperor and the Immortal Elder Beidou.

Taxian-Jun walked over and extended his hand —

Then he saw Chu Wanning's eyes, which were clearly filled with hostility and sharpness, moist at the same time. He reached out his hand. Perhaps all those years of imprisonment reminded Chu Wanning of his tyrannical actions, which made him tense up in the blink of an eye.

"…" Taxian-Jun sighed in his heart, but he didn't know why he was so soft-hearted.

He touched Chu Wanning's forehead.

"It's not that hot anymore." Taxian-Jun didn't have much of an expression on his face. "He's a bit crippled, but the medicine's really good."

Pausing, he continued coldly, "I won't let that evil creature bully you anymore. No one is allowed to touch my people. You can rest assured."

He did not know that Chu Wanning's memory had been erased by Shi Mei, and it had temporarily returned to his previous life. Thus, he did not know how much of a shock he had given to him.

To think that Mo Ran would call Shi Mei a vile beast…

Taxian-Jun Lord didn't pay attention to Chu Wanning's expression. In fact, he had always avoided looking directly at him. He knew that if he looked at the scene in front of him a few more times, he would lose control. However, in his current state, it would be even harder for him to endure.

If it was before, he probably wouldn't have pitied him.

But he had been alone in another world for so long, unable to make decisions even if he died. He could only live like a zombie.

When he saw Chu Wanning again, his ice-cold heart felt a faint warmth. It was this warmth that made him less irritable than he used to be.

He untied the rope for Chu Wanning, and when he saw the red marks on his wrist, he even subconsciously rubbed it to comfort him. But then he realized what he was doing and stopped.

He really didn't know what was going on with himself.

After a while, the Shi Mei's Memory Disturbance Incantation weakened, so Chu Wanning's eyes started to look a little confused, but under this strange dizziness, his face was still pale. He endured the pain in his head and said, "Mo Ran…"

"…"

"He's back."

It is no longer important to be awake or dreaming, but a long-cherished wish has been redeemed in his heart.

Chu Wanning said almost hoarsely, "So… Stop hating me."

Taxian-Jun looked at him.

Feeling that the dream was about to happen, Chu Wanning closed his eyes and touched Taxian-Jun's face with his red hand, saying, "Let's turn back."

He felt as if something inside of him was collapsing. He stared at him without blinking, and the blank look on his face was like a thin layer of smoke.

Chu Wanning frowned, he was actually choked with sobs.

“There is no road ahead. Go back… Don’t go any further.” He held his face. The Beidou Immortal, who had sunk into his two lives, looked at the dead Taxian-Jun Emperor. After two lifetimes, both of them were in tatters. Chu Wanning’s voice was hoarse. “Mo Ran, why is your face so cold…”

It was as cold as ice.

If I could, I would like to be a wax torch, waiting for you to turn back at the crossroads of the long winter night. I’m willing to burn my life away and follow your path home.

But why are you so cold.

I don’t know how long I can burn, but what if when I’m exhausted and burnt out, and if when I’m extinguished, you still walk in the dark and refuse to look back?

Chu Wanning’s fingers trembled as he closed his eyes.

He had been alone all his life. He had no family or friends, so he wasn’t afraid of leaving.

Just thinking that he might have burned all the heat of his life and still be unable to warm his already cold heart, he felt very guilty. He thought that if he died, if that young man ever wanted to turn back and couldn’t find his way back, then he felt that he should live.

It was good to wait another day.

Maybe tomorrow, the ice will melt.

The man would turn around and walk out of the endless night towards the lights.

For the next few days, under the influence of the remnant spells of Shi Mei and the fluctuations of his memories from two lifetimes, he woke up less and slept more. Furthermore, every time he woke up, his mind was a mess and everything he knew was incomplete.

After Taxian-Jun understood the whole story, he also felt that it was a bit of a relief. Chu Wanning was just disoriented and his thoughts were muddled, he was easy to push and coerce him other, but when he opened his eyes the next day, he might not be able to remember everything that had happened. Since his memory was shattered, Chu Wanning thought he was dreaming, hence he was less vigilant than usual.

Although a sharp finger-and-claw cat is certainly good, a large white cat soft as a milk dumpling was also rare.

It had to be said, he felt that Hua Binan had done something good.

“How many things did you remember today?” This became the question that he would ask Chu Wanning when he woke up in the morning.

On the other hand, Chu Wanning usually frowned and asked, “What?”

It was a rare occasion for him to reply patiently and tirelessly, “Do your memories still only stop when we were married in our previous life, or did it become a different day?”

At this point, he would most likely wait for Chu Wanning to finish with an embarrassed look on his face. He then said in a low voice, “Mo Weiyu, why are you being so crazy again?”

This wasn’t a good thing. If it was before, he would definitely have slapped him.

Taxian-Jun got slapped too now, but there was no force behind it. Then, his other hand caught up to slap him again. It looked like he wasn't slapping him, but rather that he was holding his face in his hands.

He sneered, but there was a trace of satisfaction in his eyes. "Very good. If you continue to be like this, then it will be even better."

He really did not wish for Chu Wanning to think about the events of his life, nor did he wish to think about the Mo Weiyu who had become a Grandmaster. It seemed that as long as Chu Wanning remained confused, they would be able to return to that year at the Wushan Palace. No matter how much Chu Wanning hated him, the two of them would be together day and night.

His Shizun, his Wanning, all belonged to him alone.

Hua Binan mocked him, "If you can't even drink your own vinegar, you are not as generous as a woman."

Jealous?

Taxian-Jun thought, "It doesn't exist." However, even if an animal stayed with him for a long time, he would still develop a feeling similar to 'habit'.

That's all.

Today was a beautiful day at the Heaven Mount Jiao. Taxian-Jun forced Chu Wanning to rest with him in the orange flower tree. He looked at the small white flower that was filled with its fragrance and sighed lazily, "It lacks flavor. It would be great if it was a haitang."

Chu Wanning's spiritual sense was still blurry, he still thought that this was a dream of his.

So he said, “Why are you so picky even in my dreams?”

Taxian-Jun rolled over on the lawn, leaned over, and rested his head on his knees. Their gazes met, and Taxian-Jun said, “It has always been this way. Oh yeah, I’m hungry. When we go back later, you can cook a bowl of porridge for me.”

“…”

“I want some thin meat porridge from the eggplant. Don’t get too cooked and the porridge can’t be too thick. Just put a little bit of the meat in and it’ll be fine. You’ll do it, won’t you? I’ve taught you many times.”

Chu Wanning didn’t want to go, but he was dragged along by him until there was nothing he could do. Afterwards, they had no choice but to follow him to the sacrificial hall.

The firewood was ready, the rice was cleaned, and the water began to boil. Taxian-Jun sat by the small table, supporting his cheeks with his hands as he looked at Chu Wanning’s agitated and helpless expression.

Fortunately, Chu Wanning thought it was just a dream, so he didn’t want to spend too much energy to resist.

As for Taxian-Jun, he knew that this dream would eventually shatter, so he cherished it more than ever before.

The water was boiling, and the aroma of rice and meat wafted out from under the wooden lid.

Taxian-Jun changed his posture and folded his hands under his chin. He felt that he had a lot to say to Chu Wanning, but he felt that it was meaningless and in vain.

In the end, he moved his lips and spoke in a low and lazy manner, but he could only say, “Hello.”

“Hmm?”

What do you want to say?

Actually, he didn’t know either. Thus, after some thought, he solemnly said, “Remember to add salt.”

“… I did.”

“Then remember to taste the salt.”

“…”

A hint of amusement and relief flashed through Taxian-Jun’s black eyes. “Don’t count on salting me to death.” As he spoke, he got up and walked behind Chu Wanning. He looked into the pot, then suddenly raised his hand and embraced the warm man in front of him.

He rubbed the hair on Chu Wanning’s ears and lowered his eyes, “I still want to torture you for a lifetime.”

“Mo Weiyu!”

Sensing the man’s stiffness, he hugged him even more tightly than before. Unable to hold himself back, he turned his face to the side of his neck and gave a gentle kiss, his long eyelashes fluttering. “I have taught you the art of cooking porridge for so long, but you are still unwilling to cook a bowl for me?”

Chu Wanning was rendered speechless by the bandit's logic. It was not easy for him to think of some rebuttable words, but before he could even open his mouth to speak, he was completely blocked by Taxian-Jun's lips.

He carried the fire he had lost and returned to the world of blooming flowers.

In the smell of firewood, he who was already a dead man kissed Chu Wanning passionately. His cold lips were wrapped in warmth.

His Shizun, his Wanning, his consort Chu.

No one could take it away, no one would give it to anyone else.

When the kiss reached an intense point, Taxian-Jun felt dizzy. He pressed the person down on the table, and from time to time, he would go over to kiss his red and swollen lips, while at the same time, he would reach out to take off his clothes.

He used to do this kind of darn thing all the time. When he was in a good mood, even if someone wanted to see him, he wouldn't care.

In the most crazy of times, he had a sudden desire to have sex in the meeting hall of the Wushan Hall with Chu Wanning, who had just been bestowed the title of Imperial Consort. In the end, he was annoyed, so he ordered someone to put down the curtain and let the monks in.

He continued to invade his Shizun through that thin layer of gauze, the crisp beaded curtain, and the summer bed carved with small purple sandalwood.

"Don't make a sound… I told these men that I was calling upon Imperial Consort Chu's favor, and gave you some face." At that time, he was

thrusting on top of Chu Wanning, gasping for breath, “If you scream, then those bald donkeys will know it’s you.”

“Mo Weiyu…” The person beneath him was humiliated to the extreme. His eyes were red, “You bastard!”

Taxian-Jun’s response to this was only a more ferocious and sticky thrust inside. He said, full of erotic mockery: “Baby, you are so hot and wet below, how can your mouth above be so cold? Don’t pant out for too much at the moment.”

Those monks came in without knowing why. They saw the blurred and tall silk yarn, and long and tight legs spread out, which trembled with the rude penetration of Taxian-Jun. The fingertips were delicate and cold white, like orchids trembling with the rain dew.

The request was confusing and vague, and Mo Ran didn’t hear much at all.

He only remembered that Chu Wanning would rather endure to the extreme, silent appearance, physiological tears flowing from the red like Rouge eye tail, under his body was shot at the moment, is suddenly spasm, stretched up, extremely painful and hidden comfort, bite broken lips never moan….

It was so exciting.

After the monk left, he could no longer hold back, lifting Chu Wanning’s feeble long leg, settling it on his shoulder, and thrusting into him more ferociously and forcefully from the side.

“Wanning, don’t hold back. There’s nobody left.”

However, Chu Wanning's divinity had been scattered. He could only remember that he must not make a sound at all. Taxian-Jun went over to kiss his bloody lips and swallow the rusty smell.

"No one…"

He turned Chu Wanning over again and let him lie in front of him and be pushed forward. The hot and hard cock plunged into the already wet and sticky hole, and one hand reached ahead to touch and rub the man's solid and tearful chest. His throat was swollen and he gasped in the heat of sex.

"Feeling good? Is the sting stimulating?"

"…" Chu Wanning's forehead was hidden in front of his unfocused eyes. Half of his handsome face was hidden behind the chaotic soft cushion. Mo Ran's cock was too big. Every time, he had the illusion of being penetrated through the belly. He slightly opened his thin lips and tightened his fingers with silk and satin.

The faster the person behind him got to the top, the almost fanatical rhythm, and the deeper the ejaculation went at the end, as if even the sacks were going to be crushed in together.

The semen sprayed into the depths of his already wet and sticky entrance, and Chu Wanning trembled all over. Mo Ran was always like this. He knew that his sensitive point was there. Every time he vented, he would come against that place. The thick semen made his scalp numb. He couldn't help closing his eyes and groaning: "Ah…"

But this was not the end.

Mo Ran kept going vigorously, just pressing on him for a little while, and the dick buried in his body swelled up again. Mo Ran opened his dark eyes and stared at Chu Wanning through his slightly sweaty forehead.

The eyes burned away inch by inch.

From wet and blurred eyes to bitten lips.

All the way down, suddenly he buried his head again, holding his chest. Chu Wanning, who had already been made incoherent, burst into a muffled gasp and then his legs were raised again. He gasped for breath and endured the penetration of his fiery sex organ again in his body.

“Ah… Ah…”

He shook his head and heard his groans and groans. He could not help raising his hand to his lips and biting.

But the light in his eyes was more and more broken.

His body was already wet, and Mo Ran’s semen became his lubricant, making a sticky wet sound by the two men’s intense lovemaking.

“Don’t bite yourself. Release your hands.”

Where would Chu Wanning listen to him, still gnawing his wrist, trying to block the voice. Mo Ran cursed, holding the couch with one hand, and holding Chu Wanning’s arm with the other hand, pulling him down.

“Hold me.”

“What to do… Ah…”

Without giving him time to react, Mo Ran carried him from his low couch, and all the weight of the man who lost his dependence was on Mo Ran.

Mo Ran smiled slowly and kissed him. “You’re not that heavy either.”

So he held him in his arms and wanted to go to the inner hall.

But his angry penis was still embedded in his Shizun’s body. This position made him push deeper in the inner walls with every step he took.

Whether it was coincidence or deliberate, the burning head was in the most difficult position in Chu Wanning. Every time it reached the depths, he was stimulated to tighten his toes, but he still refused to cry out, staring fiercely at the disciple in front of him with only a pair of black eyes.

“Why do you always look at me doing it?”

Mo Ran laughed softly, and suddenly stopped walking, but still tied Chu Wanning’s legs, and made a small, graceful top.

“Want that?”

“…”

It was too humiliating, but his body had long been sensitive to him, Chu Wanning was gasping for breath, mouth open, face involuntarily flushed.

He could clearly feel the viscous body fluid flowing down. As Mo Ran thrust in and out, their lower parts became more and more obscene.

Mo Ran held him for a short time, and it seemed that he could not bear it. He glanced dimly into the rear hall, seemingly tired of traveling too far. He simply pressed the man on the cold floor of the meeting hall - he did not

want to wait any longer, he felt that he was wrapped around something warm, slick and wet, so he pressed Chu Wanning on the ground, and started thrusting inside, moving almost frantically now.

“Ah… Ah…”

At the most enthusiastic time, the souls as if to be sucked out, Chu Wanning couldn’t endure it, he couldn’t help losing his mind in this stormy sex.

His legs opened powerlessly, hanging on the tight and vigorous waist of Mo Ran, and his body trembled and shook with the passion of the man. For a moment, he even felt that Mo Ran wanted to kill him like this…

Wushan Palace was in a riot of clouds and rain. There are no other people above the majestic temple. There are only two men naked and entangled in each other.

Mo Ran was hot and the sweat was gathering in his waist and abdomen. He embraced and hugged his shizun who had been distracted by himself. Under him, he pressed hard, and heard Chu Wanning’s depressing murmur and occasional unsupported moan in his ear.

“Wanning…”

The fiery kiss held Chu Wanning’s slightly open lips. The sex was so fanatical that the meridians and the veins on his neck bulged, the heat in his eyes was the same.

He grind him and entangled with him. After a long time, in this lingering kiss and fierce confrontation, Mo Ran fiercely threw Chu Wanning’s dead

weight on the ground, covering Chu Wanning's breathing mouth and nose with one hand, leaving only those eyes that lost focus.

He eventually gave two small thrusts, then jacked them in, deep enough to whiten his toes against the ground.

"To cum… Wanning… should it be here?"

Chu Wanning had been mad by his monstrous violence and energy. His hands were powerless on the cold stone. His body was completely opened by Mo Ran. He shivered slightly because of stimulation and pain.

Mo Ran lowly gasped, voice sexy, deep pupil color, he broke off Chu Wanning's side face: "Here?"

The huge and full head of his cock was against the muscles deep in Chu Wanning's body. One of the thrusts made Chu Wanning suddenly open his closed eyes, and the tail of his eyes had a pink color that was unwilling to be humiliated.

He shivered under Mo Ran, but was held tightly by a pair of big hands. Mo Ran breathed deep in his ear and gasped warmly, "Don't move baby, it's coming! Ah…"

He gave a muffled groan and ejaculated warm fluid, pouring all of it into the deepest part of Chu Wanning's body, which caused Chu Wanning to close his eyes and convulse. His whole body was shaking like a leaf, numbness spreading to his extremities. He felt like his soul was coming out of the body.

"Wanning, did it feel good? Did I make you happy?"

Chu Wanning, at that time, could not answer anything, whether it was scolding or reprimanding, there was nothing.

He was already out of his mind, a pair of long legs stretched out, legs full of the semen of his apprentice…

After that, they often did it again on the throne of the hall, or on the steps, or even against the wall. The fierceness and wildness of Taxian-Jun were almost destructive.

This kind of sex, if you like it, can be called ecstasy, so even with the meaning of revenge and humiliation, it was still extremely pleasurable.

At this moment, deep within Mount Jiao, Taxian-Jun Lord gazed at Chu Wanning's thin face.

He silently recalled the events of that year, but his heart was slightly knotted with curiosity – he did not know whether Chu Wanning had any curiosity back then, why his energy was so strong, yet with Song Qiutong he had nothing to show.

In fact, although he had once favored that woman, there was always some affliction. He did not wish to have children with Song Qiutong, even if it meant having fun, he would avoid her from getting pregnant. Perhaps it was because of his background, but he always felt that two people who could stay together their whole life and didn't have a deep friendship shouldn't have children.

But it was strange. He hated Chu Wanning so much, but he always thought that if his consort Chu was favored by him day and night like this, it would be great if he was pregnant with his blood and bones.

Conquest?

Revenge?

Possession? It was still a more humiliating punishment than being taken.

He didn’t know.

In this kind of paralysis, he dragged Chu Wanning along with him to the abyss of sin and destruction time and time again.

Ch. 269 [Tianyin Pavilion] Separation Between Kings and Men

As he was lost in his emotions, Taxian-Jun pulled down the waist of the person below him. His robes were in disarray, revealing the deep green and purple marks underneath. His movements paused for a moment as if he had thought of something. His gaze was gloomy and fiery, as if there were two clumps of flames within the ashes.

After a while, he closed his eyes and sighed. “Forget it…” He also knew that if he were to continue, Chu Wanning would probably be torn apart by him.

“Today… Today I’ll spare you…”

Amidst the tranquility of this place, he finally let go of the person in his embrace, and did not do anything excessive. Still, he lowered his head, his Adam’s apple moved, and kissed the face of his lover. Finally, it landed on his neck…

He took a bite with his sharp white teeth. Then he straightened up and picked up the man who had been pressed down on the table.

The porridge simmered and bubbled.

Taxian-Jun clumsily arranged Chu Wanning’s clothes. He coughed lightly, but his voice was still deep and warm, “The porridge is done. Go, fill a bowl.”

Although Chu Wanning was confused by his actions, he was usually temperamental. Moreover, he felt that it was just a dream, so he did not probe too deeply into it. Besides, it was much more comfortable to eat

properly than to have fun and foolishness, so he didn't say anything more and went to uncover the beech pot.

"Serve me."

"… I'm going to kill you?"

Taxian-Jun smiled faintly, "Try if you want."

As he spoke, he sat down at the table.

Although he really wanted to go over and see how the pot of porridge looked like, he still had the dignity of an Emperor. Thus, he sat upright at the table and put on an indifferent expression.

However, when the porridge was truly served, Taxian-Jun couldn't afford to be careless anymore…

The porridge was overcooked with too much water and taste was a little salty. Even though he hadn't yet touched the spoon, he knew that it was a familiar taste that he had not tasted for a long time.

"Eat."

"…"

Taxian-Jun was lost in thought for a long time as he looked at the small bowl in front of him. He stirred the bowl with his spoon, but he didn't put any of the porridge into his mouth.

Chu Wanning glanced at him, "If you don't eat any more, it'll get cold."

"… Oh."

When the porridge was scooped up, he put it to his lips and hesitated before letting it drop.

Chu Wanning finally felt his strangeness and asked, “What’s wrong?”

“Nothing.” Taxian-Jun smiled, but he still maintained his cruel and disdainful look, “The cooking is so terrible, I don’t want to drink anymore.”

“…”

“It’s too stuffy here. I’m going out to get some fresh air.”

After he finished speaking, he pushed away the untouched bowl of porridge and walked towards the door. Just as he was about to leave, Chu Wanning’s voice sounded from behind him.

“If you don’t drink.” Chu Wanning’s voice was very calm, it was a calmness that came from the many times he humiliated him, “Then I will have to pour the whole pot.”

In any case, the things he made for him would most likely be discarded.

It had been like this since the day he had been knocked to the ground.

Taxian-Jun immediately turned his head, “Leave it alone!… I mean…” He coughed, hiding his lack of composure. “Just leave it.”

“Why?”

“… It’s none of your business.”

He pushed the curtain aside and went out under the eaves, closing his eyes and sighing heavily.

He was actually a corpse. No matter how much he looked like a living person, he was still a walking corpse — he could no longer eat.

Back then, he had committed suicide in the Wushan Palace and had been used by the Cold Scale Sacred Hand as a living corpse. The Cold Scale Sacred Hand had come to this world through a crack in time and space, and he had been left in that tattered and dilapidated world to do things according to orders, just like that, for nearly ten years.

In the ten years he had been a walking corpse, he had eaten nothing. However, he was not a greedy person, so he never felt any regret.

Until today, when he was sitting in front of the bowl of eggplant thin meat porridge, he suddenly felt dejected —

Why was he no longer alive?

He had waited for so many years, and finally, a few days had passed. He finally obtained a Chu Wanning that belonged entirely to him.

However, he couldn't even drink the bowl of porridge personally made by that person.

What was the taste of the congee Chu Wanning cooked?

After a long time, he suddenly raised his arm to cover his eyes. No one could clearly see the expression on his face, what he revealed was only his puckered pale lips and the line of his chin.

Then he lowered his arm and opened his eyes, which were slightly red.

He had a bad memory and was not very smart. If the tip of his tongue could sense a little bit of sour, sweet, and salty, he might be able to recall

his memories. However, his bones and blood were ice-cold, and his lips and teeth were tasteless. So even if the bowl of porridge was right in front of him, he could not remember what it tasted like.

He would never know.

Deep in the night, he went to find Shi Mei.

Beside the cold pond in front of the Sacrifice Heavenly Palace, the handsome man stood barefooted, poking at the cold spring water with his foot, bringing up a star-like stream of water light.

Seeing him arrive, Shi Mei's eyebrows shot up. Seemingly knowing the purpose of his visit, he said with a cold, mocking expression, "Such a beautiful sight. I didn't expect that the Emperor wasn't accompanying Chu-zongshi in his secret chamber. So he came to find me."

Taxian-Jun didn't want to beat around the bush, so he directly asked, "Do you have any way to temporarily make me look the same as when I was alive?"

"…" Shi Mei glanced at him, "Even though you are a dead person, the matters on the bed should not be affected."

"I didn't mean that."

"Oh? Which one do you mean?"

"… To eat." Taxian-Jun Jun said coldly, "I want to eat something."

The expression in Shi Mei's eyes was gloomy as he thoughtfully asked, "Could it be that the Emperor wants to eat that bowl of wontons?"

“Other than my shixiong, no one else in the world can do it well.”

Shi Mei laughed: “How rare. You actually thought of him today.”

Taxian-Jun’s memories of Shi Mei were in a mess. Sometimes, he could recall them, and sometimes, he couldn’t remember them. However, most of the time, he couldn’t remember them, so when he mentioned the word “Shixiong”, Shi Mei felt a sense of freshness.

He asked, “Hey, why don’t you think about your Mingjing-shixiong when you were hanging out with Chu Wanning all day long?”

“…”

That was more or less what it meant to not know each other.

Taxian-Jun said after a while: “You said it before, this body of mine has too much Yin Qi. Before I obtain a new Spiritual Core, I shouldn’t have come to see my shixiong. He is of the Water Attribute, so I will hurt him.”

Shi Mei didn’t seem to be lying at all. “Indeed.”

“So why are you asking about the wontons.” Taxian-Jun looked at him coldly. “Don’t you know not to bring it up?”

“I’m just curious, in this world, what other food would the emperor Taxian-Jun, who has tasted all sorts of delicacies, remember?”

“…”

“What? Are you unwilling to say?”

“…”

“Let me guess, Chu-zongshi must have cooked for you?”

Seeing that Emperor Taxian-Jun’s expression changed, his lips pursed slightly. Shi Mei then smiled and said: “I’ve heard that Chu-zongshi from Sisheng Peak is the worst at cooking. You sure are interesting. You can swallow this down.”

Taxian-Jun’s face darkened, “Just say if there’s anything you can do. There’s no need to be so long-winded about the rest.”

“There’s definitely a way, and I’ve already told you about it.”

Taxian-Jun frowned, “What is it?”

“That’s the old way.” Shi Mei said gently, “Get Mo-zongshi’s spirit core as soon as possible. If I give you his spirit core, you’ll be just like how you were before you died.”

An orange flower floated in the water, and with a flick of Shi Mei’s foot, the fragrant white flower appeared between his toes. Although the flower skin was white, it was not as delicate as Shi Mei’s skin.

Shi Mei smilingly looked at this flower that was trapped at his toes and could no longer float, and said: “The two of us will work hard together, if we can get the Spiritual Core sooner, then I will obtain your complete strength. As for you, you can also eat what you want to eat sooner.”

Pausing for a moment, he lifted up his soft and fluffy eyelashes. “To see someone you’ve yearned for day and night.”

“…”

“That’s why you should cooperate with me more, your Majesty.”

“Before, you wanted me to kill Guyue’ye, and later on you asked me to summon a great army of Zhenlong to attack the Sisheng Peak, and I did all of that. How do you want me to cooperate with you?

Shi Mei clapped his hands and laughed, “Good, that was great. Actually, there’s not much else I need you to do next. There’s only one last thing.”

“Go ahead.”

“Come with me to the Tianyin Pavilion. We’ve finished our game. Put away the net.”

As he said this, Taxian-Jun noticed a pigeon with golden feathers resting behind Shi Mei. It was the Spiritual Bird of the Tianyin Pavilion.

“Did the Tianyin Pavilion send you a message?”

“Yeah.” Shi Mei stretched out two long fingers and held onto a piece of paper, “This is good news, everything will go according to our plan. It’s not easy being a good person, Mo-zongshi used all his spirit core to protect the peace of the cultivation world, but no one want to give merit to him for it.”

He smiled, and with a twist of his finger, he chanted an incantation and instantly folded the letter into a paper butterfly, and threw it to Taxian-Jun.

“Take a look for yourself.”

“No need to look.” Taxian-Jun In took the paper butterfly, but he didn’t unfold it. He looked at Shi Mei with his black eyes, “Just say it, when will you make your move?”

“Interrogation three days later. Another three days before the execution.”

“Six days?”

Shi Mei stroked the wings of the golden tailed carrier pigeon with a gentle expression. Suddenly, a multicolored triangular snake sprang out of his sleeve and bit the pigeon’s neck with lightning speed. In an instant, it swallowed the gentle bird into its stomach.

All of this happened in a split-second. There was no change in Shi Mei’s expression, as if he had already gotten used to it.

He smiled and brushed away one of Wandering’s remaining feathers. He raised his head and said, “That’s right, so we will stay at Mount Jiao for another three days. Afterwards, we will go to Tianyin Pavilion and wait there.”

The feather fell into the pool, the ripples spreading gently and shattering the reflections of the two men on the shore.

“His spirit core will give you unstoppable power. In that case, you’ll have everything you want very soon.”

After this conversation was over, Taxian-Jun returned to the secret room at Mount Jiao with a heavy heart.

Chu Wanning was not in high spirits. He seemed to be reading a book at first, but now he fell asleep on the table. His snow-white sleeves fluttered like the first snow.

He stood by his side and watched for a while. He’s just that sort of person, like a lonely light or a simple book. He’s experienced the bustling of humanity and known bright vibrant luxuries. What beauty had he not seen?

Chu Wanning was nothing.

What's there to look at? He thought irritably, but his Adam's apple moved, and he bent over the man uncontrollably, burying his cheek in the man's neck and nuzzling it.

"…" Chu Wanning woke up from his daze and opened his eyes. His phoenix eyes were first filled with confusion and gentleness. Then, he remembered the brutality of this Emperor Taxian-Jun, so his gaze suddenly turned cold.

All of these changes were seen by Taxian-Jun. The annoyance and unwillingness in his heart grew like wild grass, and in the end, he couldn't bear it anymore and quickly picked Chu Wanning up.

"What's the matter with you again — oh!"

With a muffled grunt, he was pushed against the wall.

Taxian-Jun kissed him passionately and despairingly, from neck to lips, from lips to chin, and as he gasped and gasped, he asked, "Do you like me?"

"…"

"Chu Wanning, do you like me?"

"What are you doing? Why did you suddenly…"

However, it seemed like Taxian-Jun didn't want to know his answer. He just wanted to ask this question. As for what the answer was, it had nothing to do with him.

Or perhaps it was because no matter what the answer was, the path of return was too vast, and he could not turn back. Thus, there was no point

in doing so.

“If I had not become a grandmaster like you, would you have been willing to be together with me? Would you be willing to treat me better?”

He bit onto the side of Chu Wanning’s neck and took over his body like he was sucking blood.

It was only in this way that he could prove that the person in his embrace belonged to him and not to the completely different Mo Weiyu.

However, the moment he lowered his eyes, his voice became hoarse.

“Do you like him like that after all, more than me…”

“Mo Weiyu, what are you talking about?”

That’s right, Chu Wanning’s memories were in disarray. He only had memories from his previous life, not this life’s memories. Naturally, he would not understand his nonsense.

It was probably only at this moment, that he was completely under the control of Emperor Taxian-Jun.

He suddenly felt very sad.

For some reason, there was even a hint of pride and misery in his voice.

Taxian-Jun was entwined with his lover, and in the end, he softly asked, “If I take away his spirit core… Will you hate me more?”

There was nothing more incomprehensible than being denied.

Taxian-Jun Jun held the person in his arms.

“But you are this Venerable one…”

“Don’t betray me.”

When he mumbled his selfish desires, he even felt desolate.

After being alone for a long time, even a sharp blade would be sharpened to a dull state.

“Eight years. After he was reborn, how long did he have you? I was alone, waiting for how long in the mortal world.”

Lonely Wushan Palace, drifting without purpose.

“Don’t leave me a second time. The first time, I could die. But if you go away a second time. I can’t even choose to die.” Taxian-Jun frowned. His face was gloomy and crazy, while sadness and paranoia coexisted. “I will not be able to take it…”

Ch. 270 [Tianyin Pavilion] Punishment Will Be Imposed

Three days passed in the blink of an eye. At the break of dawn on the third day, Shi Mei arrived in front of the secret room.

Taxian-Jun was already dressed, still in his black armor, with a slim waist and a shiny silver hidden weapon case. His legs were long and slender, his shoulders were broad and straight, and he wore a dragon scale leather set on his hands.

He raised his eyes, which were cold. “You’re here.”

“Get ready, we’re going to the Tianyin Pavilion.”

“There’s no need to prepare. Let’s go.”

Shi Mei sized him up: “Then what about Chu Wanning?”

“I fed him medicine and put him to sleep.”

Shi Mei nodded his head, but just in case, he and the emperor Taxian-Jun had to enter the secret room again. After checking his pulse, Shi Mei said: “He should be able to recover his energy in a few days. We have to be careful.”

Taxian-Jun Lord was not afraid of Chu Wanning’s battle prowess, but he asked, “What about his memories?”

Shi Mei glanced at him: “It’s the same.”

“…”

Ignoring the gloomy and unhappy expression on Taxian-Jun's face, Shi Mei got up and set up a bewitching formation in the secret chamber to ensure that Chu Wanning would not suddenly wake up and spoil his plans. Finally, on the way out, he left a high level forbidden spell on the door.

Taxian-Jun frowned, "What are you doing with this curse? There is no one else on this mountain. Nangong Liu only has the mind of a little brat. No one can enter to save him."

Shi Mei's expression did not change as he said flatly: "Thieves are hard to guard against."

"Who?"

"You don't know him." Shi Mei sighed, "He's the person closest to me. Let's not talk anymore. Let's go."

The two of them left.

In the cold stone room, only Chu Wanning was left. He was still unconscious, the memories of his two lives swirling around him as they recovered.

However, not only did he not feel it, but even his memory and spirit had not recovered yet due to the fact that he was not in a good condition. There was another very important reason…

What he wanted to recall was not only his own memories!

Roughly half of the Earth Soul had been in Mo Ran's body for a long time, and it had been entangled with Mo Ran's soul day after day. When the Earth Soul returned, it actually brought him some memories from the depths of his soul.

At this very moment, these memories became the last images that flowed into his brain. He was dreaming. All he dreamed were broken memories.

The first thing he dreamed of was the mass grave, with a child with unkempt hair and a dirty face crying on top of a rotting female corpse, his faces covered with tears, eyes blurry.

“Mother… Mother… Is anyone there? Is there anyone… Bury me, too. Bury me and my mother together…”

Then, he dreamt of Xiangtan’s House of Drunken Jade. Mo Ran’s body had turned purple from the beating, and he was curled up in a dog cage.

A child around his age sneered at him. “You want to be a hero without even looking at yourself? I think you’re a joke! Pui! Your whole life will be a joke!”

He spat.

Little Mo Ran closed his eyes.

Chu Wanning’s eyelashes trembled.

Mo Ran…

Then, he dreamt that the raging flames were like a ghost that was hanging and twisting around the building, dancing in a dense manner.

There were wails everywhere, burning beams falling down, someone was screaming, thick smoke billowing.

His expression was extremely cold and his eyes were calm. He lowered his head and placed a bloody knife on his knee. He held a bunch of grapes in

his hand as he slowly peeled off the purple skin.

“It’s all over, Mother.”

Mo Ran looked very peaceful.

“But I can’t see you anymore. I’ve killed, and my hands are covered with blood. Mother, I’m going to hell after I die, and I’ll never see you again.”

Mo Ran… Mo Ran…

Suddenly, his eyes lit up.

It was the gentle face of a woman, with the tail of his eyes slightly raised.

Who is it?

Chu Wanning felt that the woman’s brows were quite similar to his own. When she lowered her head to do her work, her actions were particularly clear.

She was carefully sewing the coarse clothes in her hands.

“Mother…” A child’s voice was calling out softly.

The lady raised her head and smiled at him, “Why are you awake?”

“I had a nightmare… I’m so hungry…”

The woman let go of her clothes and opened her arms. She smiled gently and said, “Did you have a nightmare again? Alright, don’t be scared, Ran-er, come into Mother’s embrace.”

Ran-er… Mo Ran…

Chu Wanning closed his eyes, his heart was filled with an indescribable bitterness.

Too bitter.

Just by looking at it, one would feel that this day was shriveled and dry, and every day and night was extremely difficult to endure.

Mother…

This was the first time he had seen the appearance of Mo Ran's mother, and he suddenly understood why outside of the Wubei Temple, Mo Ran would instinctively grab onto his robe and believe that he was praying for him. He also suddenly understood why that youth would walk over to him in front of the Heaven-Piercing Tower and stubbornly beg him to accept him as a disciple.

The youth smiled brightly and said, "Because you look the most beautiful and gentle."

At that time, everyone was laughing behind his back saying that he was being excessive and that his eyes were blinded.

Not really.

No…

He was not blind, nor was he fawning on him, but he could not tell him the truth, he could not cry, he could not hold his hand and said, "Immortal, when you lower your head, you look like the person who treated me the best in this world. She is no longer here. Can you please look at me, can you take her place and look at me one more time?"

I miss her so much.

Mo Ran couldn't say anything. He could only bear with the bitterness in his heart and the tears that were welling up in his eyes. He endured Chu Wanning's indifference. Chasing after him, he pretended to be leisurely laughing, tricking everyone.

No one had to know his past, no one could share his pain.

He could only smile at the scene below Heaven-Piercing Tower. That smile was too fervent, too eager, and full of longing.

Mo Ran opened his eyes.

He was no longer at the top of the grave; he was in an extremely narrow cell. The only source of light came from a small space underneath the black iron gate.

The top of the cell was embossed with a weight coat of arms, and he knew he was in a prison.

This was the world's most impartial judgment temple, independent of the top ten sects in the cultivation world.

The Tianyin Pavilion.

He lay inside, his throat burning, his lips chapped.

It was very quiet around him, so quiet that the empty wind could be heard in his ears and his spirit could be heard mumbling. It took him a long time to collect his scattered consciousness.

Actually, he felt that such a day should have happened in his previous life, but fate was still kind to him in the end, allowing him to live another life before clearing away his sins.

“Mo Ran, time to eat.”

He didn’t know how long he had been lying there. Time seemed to blur around him.

He heard someone come up and push the food out of the cave to him, a slice of pastry, a bowl of soup.

He did not stand up to receive it. The attendant of the Tianyin Pavilion also did not speak to him again. His footsteps clicked, and he quickly left.

How is Chu Wanning?

How was the Sisheng Peak?

Where did the destroyed pieces end up?

Faintly, wearily, he thought about these three questions for a long time before he resigned himself to the fact that no one would tell him the answer.

He was a prisoner now.

He sat up.

His chest was in pain and he had no strength left in his entire body. The spirit energy that had been surging violently was gone. He leaned against the wall and was stunned for a moment.

It turned out that this was the feeling after his spirit core had been broken.

He couldn’t summon his godly weapon or use any spells. It was like a roc that had lost its tail, or a roc that had lost its wings while riding the clouds.

He was curled up in a corner, his dark eyes staring blankly ahead.

Mo Ran suddenly felt sad, but it was not because of him. He thought of Chu Wanning from his previous life, the reincarnation of the heavens, and finally, he felt his helplessness and pain at that time.

He really wanted to apologize to him.

But it was too late.

Nothing can be turned back.

He was trapped in the house, the cake and the bowl of soup cold. Later on, he began to eat. After eating this small amount of food, no one else came to this cell.

He was once more Mo Ran of his childhood in a dog’s cage, but the room was so much better treated than a dog’s cage that he could lie down comfortably.

He lay in this darkness, dozing off and waking up, but waking up and sleeping wasn’t that important. In this room, it was as if he had died.

Perhaps he was already dead, he thought dully.

Perhaps, this life was a good dream that he had as he lay in a coffin under Heaven-Piercing Tower. He passed the thirty-two years of his life as if they were a circus, colorful, joyful, angry, sad, and finally turned into the bones of a tomb.

He curled his lips into a smile.

He actually felt that if the truth was as it was, it would be the best.

He was very tired. He had walked for too long and struggled for too long. Whether it was hell or the human world, he no longer cared. He only wanted to rest.

His heart was very old. In fact, ever since Chu Wanning had died, his body had already completely collapsed and aged. He had been doing good deeds all these years, making up for it. He was looking for a medicine that could cure this old age.

But he couldn't find it.

He had fought for so long, had brazenly and brazenly begged for so long, and now he was tired, tired. In this life, he had lost his mother, his master, his close friends, his loved ones, his stolen family, and his false heroic name.

Now, he had lost his spiritual core as well. However, he was still taken to the Tianyin Pavilion, and was still unable to escape the harshest rebuke of the cultivation world.

He finally gave up. He knew he would never be forgiven again.

This Mo Weiyu was an ugly and deformed broken mountain, and the boundless winter snow covered his wounds.

But the snow had melted.

There was no place for his darkness or his horror to hide.

He was unable to become Mo-zongshi. From the moment he was stained with the blood of the first innocent person, he was destined to be an Immortal Emperor — he, boil a crane, grind his teeth and drink his blood. His face was ferocious, worse than an animal's — he deserved death.

He's dead, the world is cheering.

He didn't know how many days it had been since he was trapped in the forbidden room, but the door opened.

A disciple of the Tianyin Pavilion walked in and wordlessly tied him up with a immortal rope. Then, one on each side of him, he dragged him outside.

They led him through a long, dark corridor.

"What happened to them?" Mo Ran asked in his first sentence of the past few days, his voice hoarse and dull.

No one paid any attention to him.

He was led to the end. The sky lit up, and Mo Ran seemed to burn like a dragon that had been huddled up in the darkness for too long. Its blind and rotten claws seemed tired and uneasy under the dazzling light. He couldn't get used to the sudden light. He wanted to cover his eyes, but his hands were tied behind his back, so he could only lower his head and shed a few tears under his thick black eyelashes.

He was deaf and did not know where he was. Only his sense of smell was distinct.

He smelled the wind, the sea of people, the flowers and trees, and he was pushed forward, hesitating.

Slowly, the ears adjusted to the noise.

He could hear a lot of people talking, whispering together like the tide of a river. The tide can wash away the filth, but it can also drown people.

Mo Ran felt breathless.

He was very weak.

He was weak to the extreme.

“Kneel.”

His captors were pushing him, and he knelt, the sun shining brightly on his haggard face.

Who would have thought that it would be such a sunny day outside?

“It’s that Mo-zongshi…”

“I never thought that one day I would see him being interrogated by the Tianyin Pavilion. Ai, I really don’t know what is going on.”

Mo Ran’s ears buzzed, and his eyes gradually became clearer, but it was still very unclear. He could only use the shadow of his eyelashes to slightly close his eyes and look at everything in front of him.

It was the public trial platform of the Tianyin Pavilion in his memory.

When he was young, he had seen the trial together with Xue Zhengyong and Xue Meng.

However, he had gone from a spectator to a person on trial under the eyes of many.

The crowd gathered below the stage like a crowd of crucian carp, packed and rushing. These were the common folk who came to watch the interrogation at the Tianyin Pavilion, the rogue cultivators of the four seas. He could not see the faces of anyone, nor could he see the expressions on their faces. He only felt that the heads that were whispering together were like the rising and falling of a wheat wave.

Then he looked up again.

On the four walls of the high tower, all sorts of visitors from different sects were seated.

The jade colored one was the Bitan Manor, the red one was the Fire Phoenix Pavilion, and the yellow one was the Wubei Temple… Then, his heart suddenly clenched. It was strange that he would still feel pain.

He saw that familiar silver-blue area. The quietest and most crowded sect in the entire stands.

The Sisheng Peak.

He blinked, ignoring the pain in his eyes, trying his best to look in that direction — but he could not see, he could not see where Xue Zhengyong was, could not see clearly who was Elder Tanlang and who was Xunji, he could not find Madam Wang.

At the end of the trial, he still couldn't see the people he cared about the most.

"Mo Ran from the Sisheng Peak, the ninth city lord of the Rufeng Sect, Nangong Yan's illegitimate son…" On the high platform, Mu Yanli was clearly using a sound amplifying technique to express what was going on,

“…… Therefore, we should strictly interrogate him, put him in order, and make sure that he doesn’t make any mistakes…”

Mo Ran did not heed his words.

Such a bright voice was simply too ear-piercing for someone who had been in seclusion for a long time.

In the time it took for a cup of tea to be brewed, the words that left Mu Yanli’s mouth were all incomplete phrases such as “killing to pay with one’s life”, “doing evil things”, and “cultivating a forbidden art”.

In the end, he heard her say, “It’s the responsibility of the Tianyin Pavilion to exonerate a felon, and also to give justice.”

After Mu Yanli finished speaking, a disciple of the Tianyin Pavilion walked over. The disciple arrived in front of Mo Ran. Against the dazzling sunlight, he cast a shadow as black as ink.

“Open your mouth.”

“…”

Seeing no reaction from Mo Ran, the man clicked his tongue, pinched his chin roughly, and poured a pot of bitter and salty medicinal juice into his mouth.

“Cough, cough, cough ~ ~ ~”

Mo Ran could not stop coughing. He had not eaten for many days. His stomach suddenly came into contact with such a strong liquid. He felt like he was going to vomit.

The man held him by the throat and forced him to swallow the whole pot. The ice-cold liquid was like a snake that slithered into his stomach, overturning the river and overturning the seas. It was as if it wanted to tear his internal organs apart and pierce through them.

Mo Ran's face turned ashen. He wanted to vomit, he really wanted to vomit.

But he would not yield, he would not beg, he did not even want tears to fall from the corners of his eyes. He had spent half his life thinking that he had lived too many days, but that did not mean that he had no dignity.

The man let go of him as he gasped for breath.

His wings were dejected, and he looked exhausted.

However, it still had the fierceness of a lone eagle on the verge of death.

The people from the Tianyin Pavilion explained to the spectators from all over the place as per usual —

"This is against you."

Mo Ran's lips turned pale and his eyes drooped down as he smiled.

Swearing Water… Heh, Sin Shui, how could he not know?

This medicine was not to be drank by the innocent. Only when one became a prisoner of justice in the Tianyin Pavilion would they be given this medicine. Only after that would they become unconscious and recount the great crimes committed in their lives.

After the Tianyin Pavilion disciple finished his explanation, he walked over and lightly tapped the side of Mo Ran's lips. With a sound amplifying technique, everyone could hear his words.

Mo Ran closed his eyes and frowned, as if there was a knife twisting in his stomach.

He was enduring it. Because he had endured too much, his entire body was trembling, and his shackles were clanging. His face was pale, the whites of his eyes were slowly rolling up, and he was writhing on the platform. They were all twitching…

He was still conscious, but that consciousness was sometimes clear and sometimes blurry. He had exhausted all of his willpower to fight against the medicine, but he still couldn't get rid of it.

"I… I've killed people." In the end, he still closed his eyes in pain and spoke in a hoarse voice.

His ragged voice staggered around every corner.

Everyone quieted down as they stared at the people on the stage.

Mu Yanli cast a disdainful glance at him from the high platform.

"How many people have you killed?"

"… Too many. I can't remember…"

The faces of the people below had already changed.

"How old were you the first time you killed someone?"

"Fifteen."

“Were you killing a cultivator or a mortal?”

“Mortal.”

“Killing for revenge, or for self-preservation?”

“Both.”

The two of them asked and answered. Many of the guests had come to watch the show, so they weren’t aware of what had happened. When they heard that Mo Ran killed more and more people at the age of fifteen for revenge, they couldn’t even remember the exact number. All of them were shocked and furious.

“I can’t believe that the famous Mo-zongshi is a devil that kills people without blinking an eye!”

“So terrifying… This person is too sinister.”

“When I was fifteen, I didn’t even dare to kill a chicken, but he already started killing people! What a monster…”

Mu Yanli acted as if she did not hear him, and said coldly, “Continue with your crime.”

“I…” He endured until his muscles and bones bulged, but he could no longer endure, so he said hoarsely, “I… Impersonated him. I’m impersonating the nephew of the Sisheng Sect Leader…”

“How long?”

“Eight years…”

“Continue with the crime.”

Mo Ran slowly said, “I… cultivated… Three forbidden arts… Jinlong… Jinlong… Chess game…”

Many people in the stands were struck speechless at this moment.

Someone looked at the Sisheng Peak with a weird expression, and said coldly: “Didn’t Xue Zhengyong want to excuse this beast? I said that I fed him a cup of suing water, and he must be telling the truth — Xue Zhengyong actually didn’t let the Tianyin Pavilion follow the rules and burn Mo Ran. I think that this old thing was blinded by greed and didn’t even want to take revenge for killing his nephew. [There are actually disciples at the top of the mountain who train in forbidden martial arts. Can the sect disperse now?] What was there to keep it for? Continue to nurture demons?”

“I also said that he did it! At the Sisheng Peak, for him to cripple his own spirit core to save us, it was nothing but a stratagem. Fortunately, we did not let him off that time!”

“That’s right, there is no need to worry about whether there will be more wood to burn. He must have thought of something. With his ability, so what if his spirit core has been destroyed? He might even think of some evil scheme to restore himself. “It looks like it’s really dangerous. If not for the Tianyin Pavilion’s insistence, we might have let this vicious thing go by mistake!”

On the platform, there was a large scale, flowing with a golden brilliance — it was an extremely special godly weapon, weighing over a hundred tons. Since the opening of the Tianyin Pavilion, it had been standing here for thousands of years, generation after generation.

It was said that this Libra was left behind by a god, and could judge all crimes and punishments in the mortal world, giving the most just judgement.

Mo Ran didn't even open his mouth to admit his guilt, and Mu Yanli ordered her disciples to throw the weights condensed from golden spirit energy into the weighing scale. Those exquisite weights fell into the weighing scale, rapidly growing in size and pressing down heavily, punishing the people on the other side of the weighing scale accordingly.

When he recounted his first sin, the Libra had pointed to "the raw excavation of the spirit core."

After he finished talking about the most Zhenlong Chess game, the Libra pointed to the most extreme punishment —

"Destroy the soul."

In the stands, Xue Meng's face instantly lost all color.

He muttered, "Destroy his soul…?"

From then on, there would be no more Mo Weiyu in the world, no more Mo Ran.

It didn't matter if this elder brother of his was real or fake.

Even the reincarnation of the reincarnation was never to be seen again.

His mind was blank, his hands stiff.

Xue Zhengyong stood up and sternly said to Mu Yanli, "The punishment of shattering the soul has never been inflicted upon anyone since the

establishment of the Tianyin Pavilion. Pavilion Master Mu, I’m afraid your judgement is unfair.”

Ch. 271 [Tianyin Pavilion] Final Trail

Hearing Xue Zhengyong's words, the people from the other sects got angry and stood up: "Can you shut your mouth for the best?! Your disciples have violated a great taboo in the cultivation world by cultivating a Zhenlong Chess game. Logically speaking, your shitty sect should have immediately dispersed and left! Right now, I do not have the time to bother with you guys, but can you guys be a little self-aware?"

"Xue Zhengyong! You still speak for him? You shouldn't be on the same side as him, right?"

Surrounding him was the buzzing human language.

Whether it was a sect or a clan, they were often like this. Once a person attains enlightenment even his pets seems to be ascended to heavens. However, once one person did something unforgivable, the entire sect or family would be viewed as a cave of devils.

"This is a punishment, not a sentence Sect Leader Xue, there's no need to be anxious. After the sins are measured the merits are also calculated. The difference between the two is the final conclusion."

After he finished speaking, he turned his head back and looked at Mo Ran. With a clear and cold voice, he said, "Continue with your confession."

"I… Once. Bullying my shizun… Destroy… Ancestor…"

"Deceiving Master to exterminate our Ancestor?"

This statement was quite puzzling.

Mo Ran felt like its heart was on fire.

Bullying his teacher to exterminate his ancestors was a sin from his previous world — This accusation actually forced the heavy crime he committed in his previous life out of his throat!

But he didn't want to say… He didn't want to say! Did he have to reveal how he had humiliated Chu Wanning in his previous life under the watchful eyes of countless people?

Made him a prisoner, married him as a concubine.

He humiliated the other party's prideful bones, and in the end, even caused his death.

He didn't want to say.

He felt that he would not be able to live, but Chu Wanning's life was still very long.

Chu Wanning was a spirit of the Divine Wood, possessing the purest Spiritual Qi and a natural talent. He hoped that Chu Wanning would continue walking down the path. In the end, he would be able to ascend to the Immortal Class and not have to suffer the pain of reincarnation or love anymore.

His Master was so good, so clean.

He wanted to protect him.

They must not let others think that they had anything to do with it.

Everyone must not think that Chu Wanning was dirty. His body was tainted with the guilt and sweetness of Taxian-Jun.

He wanted to protect him.

Protect him…

The abdominal cavity is still burning a handful of fire, pain to the point of breaking the intestines. He could faintly hear Mu Yanli's cold voice asking him, "What do you mean by bullying your shizun, and exterminate the ancestors?"

He didn't say, he didn't say.

His fingertips grazed and bled on the rough gravel, and his forehead was a deep red. He lay there hunched, panting like a fish on the edge of a river.

He wouldn't say.

This resistance was the same as Resistance Against Tianwen. As long as you gritted your teeth, you could endure it in the end.

He was currently being interrogated by the Tianyin Pavilion. Everyone's eyes were focused on him as they struggled and cried like trapped beasts. The torment was too deep for ordinary people to endure, and it was a hundred times, a thousand times, more painful than the interrogation.

He felt as if a pair of invisible hands was tightening, tearing, and twisting his stomach. The mottled wounds on his body were flooded with salt water and burned with a burning pain.

The sound of Mu Yanli's voice seemed so far away, as if it came from across the ocean.

“What exactly do you mean by bullying your shizun and exterminating your ancestors?!”

He did not say anything. He bit his tongue and bit his lips. His mouth was full of blood, but there were no tears.

Just like his seven days in a dog cage.

He did not cry.

His tears would only be the laughing stock of the audience.

No one would feel pity, and he did not care about the pity of these people.

Even if the pain was excruciating to the point of death, he had to endure it no matter what.

“What did you do to Chu Wanning?” Mu Yanli asked in a condescending tone.

It was too painful, and in the end, he could see illusions.

He could vaguely see Chu Wanning ascend into the Immortal Realm after a hundred years. His clothes were still as white as snow, and his appearance was handsome. When he wasn’t smiling, his eyes were sharp, and when he was smiling, it was just like a lake or a sea.

“I’ve never…”

Mu Yanli was stunned for a moment before she asked, “What?”

Mo Ran’s throat had been crushed to bits and he said hoarsely, “I was wrong, I didn’t… I didn’t bully my shizun…”

He raised his head and saw bloodshot eyes, but they were shining brightly.

“Destroy the ancestors!”

His words were broken.

“…” There was a trace of shock on Mu Yanli’s face, but at the same time, there was also a trace of confusion. However, she was too cold, and the shock and confusion quickly froze into ice.

Mo Ran coughed up blood. His lungs felt as if they were being churned to bits. Even when he breathed, there was a foul smell coming from them.

He lay on the ground, soaked from the excruciating pain, his face as pale as paper, his cheek pressed to the ground, his hair matted against his cheek, gasping for breath.

Mu Yanli couldn’t help but take half a step forward.

She stared at him. “Continue to say your crimes.”

“No more…” Mo Ran closed his eyes and said hoarsely, “… to declare.”

Mu Yanli ordered a disciple to go ahead and get a drop of Mo Ran’s fresh blood, and then smeared it on the exquisite weight. The weight was carved with the three “Merit Good Virtue” charms, and it was used to measure the person’s merits.

She tossed the weight into the scale.

The Libra was slowly floating, and apart from Mo Ran, everyone was staring at the golden needle.

“Destroy the soul! It was still shattering the soul”…

The needle was moving.

It shattered the soul.

Yet it could not break out of the soul shattering circle.

Xue Meng held the Longcheng scimitar on his knees, his face was extremely anguished. He stared at the scale. He tried his best to straighten his back, because he knew that if he collapsed, it would be difficult for him to straighten up.

At this moment, his palm was actually colder than Longcheng's dark-steel.

Mu Yanli's beautiful eyes stared unblinkingly at the golden scale. The needle was moving slower and slower, moving within the soul shattering domain. It was almost forbidden.

She brushed away her sleeve and lightly said, "Alright, looks like the situation has turned…"

"Still moving."

"Young Master Xue…"

Xue Meng stared at her. He was talking, even though his voice was also shaking, even though he didn't know if he was doing the right thing or not.

"The needle is still moving."

Mu Yanli said, "It's about to stop."

"Then wait for it to stop."

Mu Yanli met his gaze.

After a while, a cold and mocking smile appeared on her face. “Okay, then we’ll wait for it to stop.”

The sun was scorching hot and a layer of gray smoke was rising from the grilled gravel.

They waited, all of them looking at the needle, waiting for it to stop. However, the strange thing was that the needle did not calm down even after a long time had passed.

It also seemed uncertain as to how Mo Weiyu should decide. It swayed, hesitating as it tilted slowly, bit by bit, towards the place where the punishment was reduced.

Mu Yanli seemed to have never encountered such a situation before. He did not say anything else as his yellow robe fluttered to and fro as he quietly waited for Shen Wu Tianliang’s judgement.

Xue Meng’s knuckles turned white. He stared fixedly at that needle, as if the next adjudication was not only about Mo Weiyu’s life, but also about the years he and Mo Ran had known each other.

From disdain to disgust, from disgust to acceptance, from acceptance to approval.

Was the initial coldness wrong, or was the later “brother” ridiculously wrong?

He didn’t know.

He stared at the needle. In his heart, there was only hope as he stared at the needle.

Don’t stop.

Please.

Go on, you see, just a little more.

No matter how wrong that fellow was, he had broken his spirit core and retreated back by tens of thousands of men.

How could he be punished by capital punishment?

How could he shatter his spirit soul?

A little. A little more.

In the end.

—

“Digging the Spiritual Core.”

Mu Yanli expressionlessly announced. She seemed extremely impartial and cold-blooded, completely different from the golden, warm light of the gown she wore. His entire person was much colder than the snow and frost.

The needle stopped.

The tip of his finger pointed at the words “digging for the spirit core”.

That was Mo-zongshi’s final judgement.

Mu Yanli faced the audience, as well as the top ten sects on the stage.

Indeed, it was one of the ten great sects. The Tianyin Pavilion still had the old seat of the Rufeng Sect. On that seat sat a lone person. It was the black-clothed Ye Wangxi.

She was carrying Nangong Si's quiver and on her knees was Naobaijin who had lost his owner forever. Her face was haggard, but her eyes were clear. She too was watching everything happening on the platform.

Mu Yanli replied, "The blue sky has its own eyes, and is very clear. The Tianyin Pavilion has each other's achievements, and has never acted maliciously for personal gain, never showing favoritism, never making things difficult for others, and has never deliberately made things difficult for others. Announce to the world three days, and if there is no objection, three days later —"

Xue Meng had been patiently waiting with his eyes closed all this time, but at this moment he finally could not hold it in. He suddenly stood up. His silvery-blue light armor was flashing with radiance. "I have an objection."

"…"

"There's no need to wait for three days. I have an objection now."

The commotion became even more intense, "Fucking Sisheng Peak, quickly shut the fuck up! What the heck is that thing!?"

"Why don't we interrogate Xue Zhengyong and Xue Meng together? There's a high chance that they are in the same group. How can they even speak up for the devil at this point?"

"At that time, how come he didn't kill that many people? Are you really not from the Devil's Cave?"

Xue Meng was so angry that his face turned ashen, but he had no choice but to suppress his anger with all his might.

Naturally, Mu Yanli could hear the angry roars of the cultivators, but she turned a deaf ear and only lightly said: “Young Master Xue, I am all ears.”

Xue Meng opened his mouth, but did not know what to say. Madam Wang was extremely worried, and he quietly pulled at his hand. “Meng’er, there are still three days left. We will think over our plan carefully and think of a way to put it…”

However, Xue Meng didn’t seem to hear his mother’s words. He stared blankly at Mu Yanli for a while, then turned to look at the scale. Finally, his gaze fell on a black dot in the distance.

That was Mo Ran on the execution platform.

Xue Meng’s eyes abruptly trembled. It was as if a curtain had been blown by the wind, causing his eyes to wrinkle.

Dark or light.

He answered absentmindedly, “He no longer has a Spiritual Core.”

“What do you mean?”

Xue Meng suddenly became excited. He looked back at her. “What do you mean? Don’t you know? The person who saved you on the Sisheng Peak, the person who retreated from the chess pieces, isn’t that the same person? Pavilion Master Mu, I would like to know how will you execute it? His spirit core had shattered! What else do you want to do? Dig out his heart?”

There was moisture in his eyes, and his nails dug deep into his palms.

“Digging out spirit cores and digging out spirit cores alive… Without any more spirit cores, do you want to take his life?!”

Mu Yanli narrowed his eyes. “The Tianyin Pavilion has its own methods.”

“According to the rules, after the verdict, the execution is carried out in three days.” Suddenly, a slightly hoarse voice rang out. Everyone looked over and saw it was Ye Wangxi who was speaking, “Pavilion Master, what solution do you have? Please explain it clearly.”

Immediately, a person from the Bitan Manor scolded: “What qualifications do you have to speak? Who do you think you are?”

Another person whispered, “Relying on Jiang Xi’s backing and Nangong Si’s death to restore the purity of the Rufeng Sect, he has really taken herself seriously. How could a nameless woman be worthy of questioning the Tianyin Pavilion Master in such a grand occasion?”

Ye Wangxi ignored them all.

Until someone who had a grudge with the Nangong family shouted at her, “Ye Wangxi, the Rufeng Sect is already dead. You sitting there alone, don’t think that you are the Sect Leader of the Rufeng Sect?”

Ye Wangxi hugged Naobaijin which had yet to recover his spiritual energy, and let out a loud cry. She stood alone in her original spot, neither angry nor noisy. Waiting for the angry or mocking voices to gradually calm down, she said, “The leader of the Rufeng Sect’s dark city is still alive. It’s not up to you to say whether he’s dead or not.”

“You…”

Ye Wangxi didn't want to talk much with the others, so she looked at Mu Yanli with her eyes, "Pavilion Master, please enlighten me."

Mu Yanli said, "There is a way to reconstruct a Spiritual Core in this world. The Spiritual Core is broken, but the fragment is still inside the heart cavity. Naturally, there is no need to ask for the Spiritual Core to be intact."

Xue Meng's face was as pale as paper. "So what do you want to do?"

"Just cast a spell and dig out the spirit core. The Tianyin Pavilion will not take his life…"

Xue Zhengyong also stood up before the "Order" came out. His face was full of dark clouds as he asked, "Dig through all the spirit core fragments?"

"That's right."

"Then how many times do you have to dig?" Xue Zhengyong stared angrily, his hair already mixed with white. "Five times? Ten times? Digging out a spirit core to injure the heart is always extremely painful — a few years ago, the Sound Pavilion dug out a prisoner's spirit core, but he was unable to make it through. On the same day, he returned to the prison and died."

"That is because he was too weak and it cannot be blamed on the Tianyin Pavilion."

"Then you might as well take his life!" Xue Zhengyong shouted angrily, "Mu Yanli, broken spirit core! If his spirit core is broken into two pieces, then he will dig it up twice. But if his spirit core is broken into three pieces, then he will dig it up three times… But what if it was shattered into a hundred pieces? Are you going to torture him?! You are delaying him!"

"If it really shattered like that, it would be his own fate."

Xue Zhengyong was speechless.

Fate?

Everything was fate.

He suddenly felt that it was very absurd.

What was fate?

Because of his fate, he mistook this child for his nephew.

He gave this child's family, master, a place to stay, a home. But what was the original fate of this child?

He had been born an abandoned illegitimate son, so he hadn't had enough to eat since he was young. He had followed his mother and begged for a living by selling off his skills.

His mother had died. He was just a skinny child, dragging her rotting body along as he buried the only warmth of his childhood in the unmarked cemetery.

He had been beaten and scolded countless times. He had been locked up in a dog cage. He had been framed and imprisoned.

Everyone hoped that this world would be fair, but from the moment he was born, fate had always been unfair…

Why did the young master of the Venerable family here exchange his wealth for a beautiful smile?

The poor people there were displaced, so they had to eat the insects and the heaven and earth.

Why some people can indulge in a carefree act of coquettishness towards their mother.

However, some people would bring their mother's corpse to the tycoons of Wealthy Class and ask them for a "three feet hit, you can't ask for ten feet".

Why did someone dig himself and bury himself in the ground?

Some people were born rich.

It's not fair.

When fate had poured injustice on those at the bottom, a mere price adjustment order could take the lives of the loved ones around them.

Where is justice?

They were all living people. How could they not hate him? How could they feel relieved?

Even if this child had missed it, even if he was not his blood kin, even if his fate played with him… Thinking of this, his heart still ached.

Xue Zhengyong closed his eyes.

He muttered to himself, "It's too cruel, I don't think the Celestial Scale ever took into account the fact that his spirit core was destroyed…" Hundreds of times.

He raised his eyes, his voice trembling.

"Take the awl and gouge his heart, hundreds of times."

"…"

The heaven and earth was clear and bright. The Tianyin Pavilion was strict, impartial, and meticulous.

Xue raised his face and watched the clouds drift by.

“Okay, now that his sin has been repaid, he should at least repay the debt he owes this world.”

The wind was blowing.

Xue Zhengyong suddenly choked with sobs.

“But this world owes him… Did someone give it back to him… Has anyone returned it to him…”

Ch. 272 [Tianyin Pavilion] People May Talk

The public trial finally ended.

Even though there were voices and arguments, the result could not be changed.

The trial of the Tianyin Pavilion's scales of prowess had been passed down for a thousand years in the cultivation world. No one was able to escape, and naturally Mo Weiyu was not spared as well.

After clearing the area, Mo Ran was escorted to the Sky Sound Pavilion's penitential counter.

The magical equipment was tied up, the barrier was in place, and the guards stood still. He would kneel here for three days and three nights, accepting the mockery and curses of passersby until the day he dug up the spirit core.

It was a public announcement.

"Father, mother, I want to go see him."

Inside the guest room of the Tianyin Pavilion, Xue Meng could not sit still. He suddenly stood up, but was stopped by Madam Wang.

Madam Wang said, "Don't go."

It was rare for him to be so determined, but at this moment, he could not deny it.

"Don't go to the penitentiary. Don't look at him."

“Why?! I just. “I just…”

Madam Wang shook her head.

“The Sisheng Peak can’t even protect itself, how many people are ordering us to disperse today? You, father and son, must be calm. If there was anything wrong with the Sisheng Peak, both Yuheng and Gui`er, Even the last path of retreat has been cut off.”

Xue Meng was at a loss. “But will there really be people who fight against him and surround and scold him? I don’t know what’s going on with that Zhenlong Chess game, or why he can solve it. But…”

He buried his face in his hands and his voice was moist.

“But, he really saved us that day… Why haven’t some people experienced that day’s calamity and seen what happened on that day? Just by hearing those words, they would treat him like this.”

Why?

Xue Meng did not understand. He was too pure and clean.

But Madam Wang knew, and so did Xue Zhengyong.

The Tianyin Pavilion was the most impartial palace in the cultivation world — once something was fixed in nature, especially after experiencing countless years of cultivation, it would stand tall for thousands of years. Very few people would think about why it was just, whether it was wrong or not. In this kind of power, even if there were any retorts, they would be easily overshadowed.

Mo Weiyu was a sinner.

Because he was a sinner, anyone could talk to him and scold him.

Because they were scolding sinners and beating up sinners, even if they were drooling and punching, it was not violence, not venting, not following the wind, not a venting of jealousy, nor was it the boundless satisfaction one would get from a fallen tiger.

It was punishing evil for good.

Everyone should applaud and cheer. Whoever dared to speak out and plead for mercy, was his accomplice. He should be brought up on stage with his face painted and his hair cut off.

Xue Meng could not go to the confessional.

It would be crazy.

In the evening, it began to drizzle.

The penitential platform was open. Mo Ran was kneeling in the misty rain, the thin drizzle covering his face. His eyes were closed, the crowd surging, even the rain could not extinguish the excitement.

At this time, the cultivators had already dispersed. Those who remained were mostly ordinary people who didn't understand anything. These residents of the Upper Cultivation World did not cultivate for real, nor did they know about the various events that had occurred. However, they were extremely curious, holding up oil-paper umbrellas as they sized up this man that was tied up.

In the daytime, their stands were far away, making it impossible to see Mo Ran's appearance.

But when the penitentiary came to trial, these people were allowed to approach.

A girl said in surprise, “From what I heard from him in the morning, I thought he was some ugly monster with a green face and fierce teeth. I didn’t expect him to look so good.”

The strong guy next to his tidied up his cloak considerately and said, “You’re just too naive. In this world, there are countless good-looking people who have malicious intents. You must not be fooled by the appearance of such people.”

There were also parents who came with their children.

The father was a scholarly teacher of the Upper Cultivation World, a gentle and gentle man. He picked up his own child so that Mo Ran could see him kneel down on the ground.

“Did you see that? In the future, you must behave properly and never behave like those beasts.”

The child, who was five or six years old and was not very sensible, asked, “Father, what did he do wrong? Why is he kneeling here?”

“The number of mistakes he has committed is truly untold.” The teacher said sourly, “According to the Tianyin Pavilion’s public trial conclusion, he killed people, set fire to them, cultivated forbidden techniques, and deceived them. This man, he has no sense of shame, no humanity, he is cold-blooded, worse than dogs or pigs — when you grow up, do not be like him, do you remember?”

“Got it.”

Just as the father let out a breath of relief, he heard the child ask himself, “But father, do you know him?”

The father was stunned for a moment. “Me? Of course I don’t know him. Your father, I, am the most righteous teacher in the Upper Cultivation World, the Clearwind Institution. In my entire life, I have always been fair and square, and the people I have friends with are all knowledgeable and upright.”

He paused, as if he felt that he had to add fuel to the fire, and began to instruct the child: “Our family is a scholar’s family, and has been nurtured by excellent morals since childhood. To talk to a person like him, even if you speak an extra word, you should feel extremely ashamed and dirty. Do you remember?”

This time the child did not say he remembered, nor did he say he did not remember.

He puzzledly asked, “But father, since you don’t recognize him, how would you know that he… He… Hmm…” He tried to emulate his father’s words and recalled with difficulty, “What about him? We’re meeting him for the first time today. Didn’t it take a very long time to understand a person? For example, the Little Flower next door and I…”

The teacher: “You don’t understand. This is different. He’s been convicted.”

The child looked at Mo Ran with his large, clear black and white eyes. He said half-heartedly, “But this brother looks so pitiful… He doesn’t seem to be a bad person. That ‘Sound Chamber’, could it be that the interrogation was wrong?”

“You’re too young, that’s why you think that way. When you grow up, you will understand that the Tianyin Pavilion has always been the fairest and fairest place in the world. The temple left behind by the God of Heaven cannot be wrong.”

The child held his finger and stared at Mo Ran. He did not seem to understand, but as expected, he no longer spoke up for Mo Ran.

Deep into the night, the crowd gradually thinned and dispersed.

It was already late in the morning, and the drizzle had turned into heavy rain. There was no one left.

The night passed, and at daybreak, a peddler slowly pushed a cart past the city.

The rain was heavy and the wind was strong. The peddler was hunched over as he pushed his old wooden cart. At this moment, Mo Ran was half asleep and half awake. He could hear the sound of the wheels rolling on the limestone road and the heavy breathing of the peddler.

His consciousness began to wander as he absentmindedly thought that he was still wandering around in the outside world for the past few years.

He slightly opened his eyes as they lost focus.

But almost reflexively, just like every other night since he lost Chu Wanning, he instinctively wanted to help the exhausted peddler push the cart under the tree. He wanted to do whatever he could.

But he found he couldn’t stand up.

It was a long time before he remembered that those days of atonement were gone.

He was now a sinner appointed by the Tianyin Pavilion.

Suddenly, a strong wind blew, the wind was too fierce, the tarpaulin on the peddler's cart was rolled up, he tried to flatten it, but it was useless.

The tarpaulin was lifted and the pile of goods on the cart was thoroughly drenched by the rain. The poor man who was tired of running for a living was anxiously chasing the tarpaulin in the rain.

Mo Ran looked at him.

He felt terrible because he remembered his mother dancing for a copper coin.

In this world, there were always so many people who would have to bear the hardships of life and wander around for a meal when others were sleeping peacefully.

He wanted to help him.

On this quiet rainy night, he felt so at ease that he could recall many things from the past. He thought back to the time when he had giggled and said those words to his mother.

"When I have a future, I will build many houses, and everyone will have a place to live. No one will be hungry or cold anymore."

In fact, Mo Ran didn't understand why none of the Tianyin Pavilion disciples attending to the hawker had stepped forward to help him.

It was obviously a simple task.

However, these people stood tall and straight like pines. This was the most solemn and dignified act of the Tianyin Pavilion, but they did not move at all. Their bodies were like boulders, and their hearts were roughly the same as the boulders.

The peddler ran after the tarpaulin, panting for breath. The tarpaulin was blown and rolled all the way to the penitentiary, to Mo Ran.

A hand as thin as an old tree bark had finally caught it.

Mo Ran breathed a sigh of relief and felt relieved for him.

But the peddler knew that his car's contents had been drenched, and his mood was extremely poor, yet he didn't know how to vent it. He held the tarpaulin in his hands, and when his heart ached, he suddenly realized that Mo Ran was looking at him.

He turned and stared at him.

Suddenly, he gritted his teeth and spat fiercely at Mo Ran's face. "What are you looking at! What's there to look at! You want to laugh at me? Damn thing! Let's see how you die!"

He did not want to vent his anger, but he did not dare to get too close. He picked up a few rocks beside him and threw them at Mo Ran.

The young disciples of the Tianyin Pavilion were used to this.

They would laugh in private and say, "As long as you can distinguish good from evil, you will always hate those felons. It doesn't matter if you hit them twice."

They are very understanding of the mood of the people.

Thus, they didn't stop them often.

A few pieces of stone hit his face, but it didn't hurt.

But Mo Ran was trembling slightly.

Seeing him tremble, and seeing him in pain, the peddler seemed to feel that his misfortune and misery today was nothing. His resentment was somewhat lifted as he dragged his weak body towards the cart and covered it with a tarpaulin before walking away.

The rain had washed away all the sputum the peddler spat out, and had also washed away all the stains.

The rain was getting heavier and heavier, and the world was clean.

Daybreak had arrived.

One by one, the cultivators of the Tianyin Pavilion walked out of the city gate, passing by Mo Ran. They either turned a blind eye to him or looked down on him.

A pair of black boots suddenly stopped in front of Mo Ran.

An umbrella leaned down, blocking out the patter.

Mo Ran was silent as he slept, unaware.

Until he heard someone arguing.

A gentle and deep voice sounded, but it was very insistent, "Give him a barrier to protect him from the rain."

“Without the Pavilion Master’s order, the Penitent Platform is not to be touched at all.”

“It’s just a barrier.”

“There’s nothing I can do.”

Mo Ran opened his eyes and saw a tall and straight man in a daze — no, not a man. It was Ye Wangxi. She was adamant, “The day of execution has not arrived. You should not do this to him.”

“What did we do to him?” Someone frowned, “Miss Ye, you have to be responsible for your words. The Tianyin Pavilion does things according to the rules, but the heavens do not see him through. This rain is not our punishment.”

Anger flashed across Ye Wangxi’s eyes, “Isn’t this punishment? All night! You let him get wet like this all last night? If I hadn’t seen it today…”

Below, a group of people from Bitan Manor were passing by. They were Zhen Congming and his juniors.

Hearing the commotion, Zhen Congming raised his eyebrows and sneered: “Oh wow, the leader of the hidden city of Rufeng Sect is meddling in other people’s business again?”

“Hold up the umbrella for the sinner, hur hur.”

People crowded around them and whispered to each other. A few female cultivators rolled their eyes and started whispering to each other.

Unfortunately, their voices weren’t low.

“I heard that back in Rufeng Sect, the man in black who stood up for Ye Wangxi was none other than Mo Ran.”

“What? Why didn’t I know. She actually helped this evil bastard?”

“Mo Ran even killed his godmother! How could he treat Ye Wangxi so well?”

After a moment of silence, someone opened his eyes wide, covered his mouth with a handkerchief, and changed his color. “Oh my god, could it be that the two of them are…”

What is it?

Very smart. No one had made it clear at the moment. However, their faces were filled with disgust and excitement. Irresponsible speculation was too comfortable, like a prolonged and fierce climax that spread through the crowd and the rain.

They stared at the two people on the stage.

A man and a woman.

Why would a woman be willing to help a dejected man? Had she slept with him? She must have slept with him. She must have loved him to death.

So dirty.

Mo Ran raised his eyes and glanced at Ye Wangxi. He tried to speak, but for the first time he couldn’t.

He could only swallow his saliva and say hoarsely, “Miss Ye…”

“You’re awake?”

Ye Wangxi lowered her head, she was still the same gentle and upright look.

“… You can go. Don’t stand here. It’s not good for you.”

Ye Wangxi didn’t leave. She brought a pot of warm water with her. She bent over, holding the umbrella while opening the pot. The umbrella tilted and a large portion of the rain fell on her body.

“Drink something…”

Someone from the Tianyin Pavilion immediately came forward to stop her. “Miss Ye, no one is allowed to give food to a prisoner.”

“Can the prisoner be beaten up by bystanders?”

Although Ye Wangxi did not see what happened last night, there were stones of all sizes scattered around Mo Ran. There were also bruises on his forehead and cheeks.

She stared at them with a certain ferocity in her eyes.

The shadow of an old friend gradually appeared on her body.

“Isn’t the Tianyin Pavilion supposed to act impartially? Is this your fairness?”

Those people knew they were in the wrong, so they didn’t say anything more. The leader looked embarrassed, and coughed lightly: “Forget about the water, he can’t eat anything else.”

Ye Wangxi fed him some warm water.

Mo Ran said in a low voice, “Why…”

“You helped A-Si.” Ye Wangxi did not raise her head. “You helped me too.”

“… On Mount Jiao, if I was the one to die, Nangong Si would…”

Ye Wangxi’s hand paused slightly. She was trembling, but she still said in the end, “Everyone wants to live. I won’t blame you just because you want to live.”

“…”

“Drink it.” She said, “Xue Meng won’t be able to come, he’s been stopped by his parents. I’m holding an umbrella here, and you’ve been helping me and A-Si by risking our lives. Now, even if no one is willing to help you, I will still help you.”

Her expression was still dull, but it was firm.

“I’m here.”

As she said ‘here’, she was indeed standing by the side of Mo Ran. The Tianyin Pavilion did not allow the enchantment to be opened, so she held an umbrella in her hand. She tilted it slightly to shield Mo Ran from the rain.

With her standing up, there were no more people throwing stones, but the words of discussion became more and more unpleasant to hear.

An androgynous demon. A well-dressed beast.

A good and bad woman. A heartless murderer.

Why is there no excuse for the crime you wish to commit? Furthermore, everyone knew that the man kneeling on the ground would never be able

to turn the situation around. The woman standing beside him had long since lost her sect and had no one to rely on.

No matter how ugly their curses were, who would care about them?

It was at this moment that Mo Ran realized how many warriors there were in the world. They came out one after the other, impassioned and impassioned, like bamboo shoots after a spring rain.

So righteous, indignant, and resentful of evil.

In the past, these people had gone somewhere.

The Tianyin Pavilion's interrogation was the hardest thing to come by. It would take at least ten years for anyone to obtain such an honor.

The onlookers came and left in waves, echoing back and forth like the tides. Someone said, "Mo Ran had done a lot of good things before, but now it seems like he has some ulterior motives. He even stayed in our village for a while. Just thinking about such a murderous demon is enough to make one tremble."

"I heard his mother is that Duan Yihan, did you all know?"

"Duan Yihan? The music immortal that's hard to find?" Wenren was surprised, "Isn't that girl very nice? I've heard that she's talented, gentle, noble, and kind-hearted…"

Immediately, someone said in a weird tone, "You men are really interesting, aren't you? These days, you can even be praised as noble and noble. I think that this world has truly changed. In my heart, you don't even have a shred of morals."

The man who was being retorted with displeasure, “Duan Yihan is a songstress, not a prostitute. She has been in the music industry for so many years, yet she had never received a single flower guest…”

“Do you think that’s because you’re poor that she didn’t accept it? This kind of woman, as long as we have enough money, what’s there to be ashamed of?”

At this time, someone exclaimed, “What’s the difference between a music artist and a prostitute? They were all people who didn’t know self-respect and were shameless. These days, there are actually people arguing on behalf of prostitutes. Who would have thought that the morals would have reached such a low level in the cultivation world.”

The one who spoke was none other than the teacher who came yesterday with a child in his arms.

Today, he was not carrying his own child, but was holding a pile of books. Behind him was a group of bookkeepers from the academy. The teacher slightly raised his chin, appearing extremely tall.

Someone recognized him and politely said, “Mister Ma, it’s quite early to end class today.”

“Paper has to have a shallow end.” The teacher said, “The reason for coming out of school early today is to bring students to be taught personally and to see the world.”

After he finished speaking, he shot a glance at the Young Master who spoke up for Duan Yihan and snorted disdainfully, “But I didn’t expect that I would actually hear such shocking words. It has really broadened my

horizons and caused me to be deeply worried for my culture in the world of cultivation."

"Yes, what Mister Ma said is right. Teacher is truly a model of morality."

"Mister has put a lot of effort into becoming a teacher."

The man who was brave enough to defend Duan Yihan earlier was both embarrassed and angry, but the surrounding people were all laughing at him. His face was flushed red like a pig's liver, and he couldn't say anything else.

At first, Mo Ran was furious, but afterwards, he was powerless.

There was nothing he could do but listen as his mother, long dead, became stinking between the lips of the crowd.

He could only let the woman who had warned him before he died, "Remember your kindness, don't take revenge!", be chewed into a prostitute or a woman who gave birth to a lowly scum.

He couldn't block the opening.

Ye Wangxi waited patiently for a long time, but finally, she couldn't take it anymore. He took a step forward, wanting to argue with the crowd.

But Mo Ran called to her in a low voice, "Stop it."

"…"

"It's useless."

Ye Wangxi returned to his side. The rain had gradually stopped, but her umbrella had yet to close. It was as if this thin oil-paper umbrella could

block anything.

Mo Ran looked at her and said hoarsely after a while, “Don’t stand here with me. Miss Ye, if you trust me… return to the Tianyin Pavilion, find Xue Meng, and find the people at the Sisheng Peak… Tell them…”

He paused for a moment.

At this moment, he didn’t even have the strength to speak.

“Tell them, listen to me, try. Find Hua Binan as soon as possible… Find my Shizun…”

When he mentioned Chu Wanning, his heart ached again.

Where was Chu Wanning?

Listening to Shi Mei’s tone didn’t hurt him, but where would he be taken by Shi Mei, and what would he be forced to do?

He couldn’t think too deeply about it.

“The first forbidden technique has truly been released. You have to prepare for it as soon as possible.” Mo Ran’s eyelashes rustled, “…” I can’t block the second attack. But there would definitely be a second time… Please believe me. I have no other intentions. I just want this to stop.”

We can’t go on like this.

I don’t want to repeat the same mistake again and see Chu Wanning call out Huaisha.

I don’t want to see him by himself again.

Ch. 273 [Tianyin Pavilion] Different Path

Within the main hall of Mount Jiao, a single lamp was lit.

Nangong Liu was sleeping soundly beside the throne. Beside him were two oranges that he had not finished eating.

Suddenly, a slender figure appeared at the corner. A shadow landed on Nangong Liu's body and slowly approached him. The man's steps were slow, and he pointed at his staff. A snow-white silk cloth covered the soft bridge of his nose, completely covering his eyes.

"Ugh…" Perhaps it was due to the sound of the cane hitting the ground disturbing Nangong Liu. He woke up from a shallow dream and rubbed his eyes, somewhat at a loss. What happened to your eyes?"

The person who appeared within the hall was precisely the blind Shi Mei who had appeared mysteriously before, trying his best not to appear in front of the crowd.

Nangong Liu stared blankly, "Didn't you go to the Tianyin Pavilion?"

Shi Mei shook his head: "It's a long story, so I won't go into details with you." After a slight pause, he continued, "Liu, I should have left a copy of the Zhenlong Troop Index on the table. Can you help me find it?"

"What's wrong with that?" Nangong Liu immediately searched the table and quickly found the list of weapons made of silk. "Here."

"Thank you very much."

Shi Mei's slender fingers moved over the silk slowly. His eyes were already blind, so he couldn't see the words on it. However, this type of weapon wasn't just using characters to record things, just in case.

He could read it with his spiritual energy. He stood in the empty hall, reading its contents bit by bit. It was written on the cover that Hua Binan had used to force Mo Ran to burn down his own spirit core.

In his previous life, the people of Linling Island numbered 46,000.

Wubei Temple had 13,000 people.

……

All this.

All of the top disciples of his previous life.

Shi Mei held the soft and delicate silk cloth, feeling numb at first. In his mind, he thought, "So the sacrifice that I mentioned in my previous life is this kind of a mountain of corpses and a sea of blood?"

All of the disciples at the Sisheng Peak.

All of them had been turned into Zhenlong Chess pieces, and for the sake of Taxian-Jun on, no one had been spared other than Xue Meng?

However, he clearly remembered that Hua Binan had gently said to him, "You know, I am also used to life and death. The human world is filled with hardships, and I only wish for evil to not be done. I hope that very few people have died on this path, otherwise my conscience will not be at peace."

That was what Hua Binan had just said to him after passing through the space crack.

There is much suffering in the human world, but do not do evil, and you have no choice but to suffer.

This was not too different from his own thoughts. He was ruthless, but it was not what he wanted. He was also forced to do it.

“Conscience is hard to settle…” At that time, he had begged him to say those words to him. However, he had killed everyone in the world in the other world.

However, it was only now that he realized it.

“My dear brother, you… what happened to you?” There was blood rushing to his head, Nangong Liu’s anxious voice could be heard, “Your face is so ugly, why are you trembling? You. Are you sick? Are you cold?”

Suddenly, a wave of warmth wrapped around him. It was Nangong Liu who had taken off his robe and put it on him in a flurry.

“Come, I’m not cold. I’ll give you my clothes.”

That sinner who once hid needles and calculated everything had become so simple after losing his spiritual sense.

Maybe everyone had this kind of anxiety, worry, and sincerity when they were young? However, after being refined by the passage of time, his heart and face had developed the same wrinkles.

He no longer looked like himself.

Shi Mei was wrapped in Nangong Liu's clothes. He was cold, cold to the bone.

His vision became blurry as blood flowed out from under the white cloth… He slumped back in his seat and curled himself into a ball.

"He's not me… He's not me…" Shi Mei mumbled to himself.

Nangong Liu was at a loss listening on the side. "What?"

Shi Mei curled his face into the crook of his arm. The tiny tremor spread throughout his entire body. He didn't even want to touch the silk again.

"I want to save people, and I know that sacrifices are inevitable. I know that there will be many schemes, and I will not live up to my sincerity, so I was already prepared to die for sure. When he discussed with me that I should donate my eyes, I did not hesitate either. But I…"

"Good friend, big brother…"

Nangong Liu covered his hair with his hand, like comforting a child. He clumsily comforted him.

Shi Mei suddenly choked with sobs: "But I really didn't think that he would kill so many people……"

The silk cloth floated to the ground. On it were recorded the experiences of almost all cultivators and commoners in the world of mortals.

They were all bones.

After a long while, when Nangong Liu was about to squat down to the side, not knowing what to do, Shi Mei slowly supported himself on the cold

table and slowly stood up.

Nangong Liu quickly asked, “Where are you going?”

Shi Mei stood still for a while. He seemed to be really confused about where he should go. After Nangong Liu asked for the third time, he came to a sudden realization. He bit his lips and said, “Secret room.”

He could not continue to be wrong. He had to go save his Shizun.

Arriving at the door of the secret room, he touched it and realized that Hua Binan had actually placed an extremely profound forbidden spell on the stone door.

“…” Shi Mei was startled, but then he smiled bitterly.

From the Silk Cloth Troop to the Forbidden Spell on the Stone Door. He suddenly felt that he was so ridiculous.

He was wary of him, so he used a forbidden spell. It was a spell that logically speaking, he had never learnt before. In the end, Hua Binan didn’t trust him at all.

“Sorry to disappoint you.” A blue light appeared in his hand as he moved towards the heart of the formation.

“Perhaps the old you haven’t learned this spell at my age. But I have, and you just don’t know it.”

The stone door to the secret room suddenly opened.

Who will live again, and the path of life will be the same?

Even if it were the same person, perhaps because they had avoided the rain on a spring day and slept soundly in the shade of a summer tree, their lives would have changed because of this.

Shi Mei hesitated for a while in front of the door to the secret room, but eventually, he slowly walked in.

Inside the secret room, there was a candle lamp burning with nine dragons, emitting a pure and bright light. However, this light was of no use to the two people inside the room.

One of them was unconscious, the other blind.

Shi Mei, who was wearing a bandage on his head, sat by the side of Chu Wanning's bed. He stretched out his hand and stroked his face with his slender white fingers.

He softly murmured, "Shizun…"

Chu Wanning did not wake up, nor did he respond. His face was still burning.

The soul split apart had merged into one.

He endured the fragmented memories that belonged to Mo Ran, suffering in his dreams.

Shi Mei's fingertip lit up with a bright light and pointed at the side of his neck. A gentle spiritual power, like water, flowed through his entire body.

"Are you better?"

Still no one answered him.

Shi Mei lowered his eyelashes. He knew that Chu Wanning was still sleeping, otherwise he would not have been able to muster up the courage to go into the stone room and sit beside him.

He was dazed for a moment, as if he had thought of many things, but also as if he had not thought of anything.

In fact, before he entered the sect, when he was still very young, he had a wish in his heart. For this wish, it was worth it to sacrifice anything.

He knew very well what his destiny was, so he had never felt that he had made a mistake.

However, one day, spacetime was reversed, and he suddenly appeared in front of another person. He was covered in dust from the mortal world.

He had seen himself more than ten years later.

Putting aside the surprise and fear, when he first saw him in his youth, his greatest feeling was disharmony — he didn't know what had caused him to become like this. Cold, cunning, impatient, desperate.

However, in order to achieve their common goal, he finally agreed to Hua Binan's request. It was only because they had done this that they had come to this step.

In these past few years, the master of the two mortal world had each assumed their respective duties. The one who stayed by Mo Ran's side had always been him, while the one controlling the other, Shi Mingjing, was the one who returned from his transmigration.

Just like how Taxian-Jun and Mo-zongshi were like two different people, he and that Shi Mingjing were actually not that similar. Due to their different

experiences, Shi Mingjing was more like a scheming Cold Scale Sacred Hand. In the current of time, he actually became a spy on the chess board of the Sacred Hand.

Now that he thought about it, before Hua Binan broke through the gate of life and death, he could be considered a ruthless young warrior. But after working with Hua Binan, he had been telling him to restrain his edge and learn how to disguise himself.

When he was a teenager, he had a huge argument with Hua Binan, “I’ve had enough. How long do you want me to pretend? He was gentle and kind everywhere, and he could only swallow his anger. Who can remember that so many lies and lies are in cahoots with you?”

At that time, when he had returned from the Jincheng Lake with Mo Ran and the others, Hua Binan was not satisfied with his performance in front of Zhaixin Liu so he scolded him a few times. He did not expect that the reaction of Shi Mei would be so huge, he could not help but be startled: “I was just reminding you to be careful and not be caught.”

“You speak quite lightly.” He bit his lip. “When have I ever failed to confirm Mo Ran’s intentions when you asked me to do it again and again? Do you know how disgusting it is to flirt with someone you don’t like?”

Hua Binan seemed to not know how to respond. After a while, he said, “I’ve experienced everything that you’ve experienced. What right do you have to say that I don’t know?”

“But I have never experienced what you experienced!”

“…”

“Ever since you came to this world, you’ve told me that what I do is wrong and what you do is right. Yes, you are. For that purpose, I am willing to listen to you and give my all for it. But Hua Binan.” The more Shi Mei said, the more excited he became. He panted and his eyes were red, “You better know that you don’t have the right to criticize me.”

This was the first time he had such a huge conflict with his young self since he had transmigrated into this world.

“You failed in your world, so you came here through the Gate of Life and Death rift to start over. But you have to be clear, I’m not your chess piece.”

“…”

“I’m conspiring with you for our common purpose.”

Hua Binan closed his eyes, “You think too much. No one will treat you as a chess piece.”

Shi Mei was still very excited: “Forget it, ever since you sensed Mo Ran’s rebirth, which one of these things didn’t happen according to your instructions? It’s me who has been watching the hibernating Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower in his body all this time for you! It’s me!”

“…”

“Ever since the first time he appeared in Wuchang Town, you were in a hurry for me to ‘bump into’ him. From now on, you have me carry small dishes to spy on him, not to mention the things you did to get me to deliberately distance myself from him and Chu Wanning.” Shi Mei stared at Hua Binan’s increasingly embarrassed face with his peach blossom eyes, “I’m going to puke from my acting!”

“Even without me, you would have done these things.” Hua Binan gritted his teeth and said, “Don’t think that I am the one forcing you. I have done all of these in my previous life. Mo Ran is the host of the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower, only by repeatedly verifying his emotions can you know the situation with the Flower curse in his body. Do you think that I have not suffered all these grievances?”

Seeing that Shi Mei did not immediately refute, Hua Binan continued: “In my previous life, I did the same thing as you. I also kept on pretending until the Ghost World split, and I used my own death to fuel the hatred in his heart. After that, I started my life as Hua Binan.”

“…”

“I’ve endured for so long. Why can’t you bear it in just a short one and a half years?”

Shi Mei suddenly raised his head: “Do you even need to ask? You’re fighting for yourself. What about me?”

Hua Binan: “…. What’s the difference between you and me?”

“There’s a difference. If I can, I don’t want to be manipulated.” Shi Mei stared at him, and then said the last part of his sentence, “Even if it’s me from another world.”

However, it was difficult to fulfill one’s wish. No matter how indignant he was, after the argument that broke out that day, Shi Mei had no choice but to bow his head to fate.

He was, after all, too young to have experienced many unforeseen events, and he knew exactly what he wanted at the end, so he would eventually

compromise on his previous life.

All these years, he had been constantly being manipulated by the other world's him, living more like a puppet than a Zhenlong chess piece. It would be false to say that there was no boredom. However, whenever he was extremely agitated, he would constantly remind himself that all this suffering was nothing for the sake of the great things he had planned.

"When can we end this show?" This became his most common question to Hua Binan, "When is the sky splitting?"

The answer that Hua Binan gave him was usually like fishing for a radish in front of a flower donkey: "Soon, it will be faster than in my previous life."

He waited day after day, patiently waiting.

After that, the door to the ghost realm finally opened, and he believed that he could die to free himself, just like how he had in his previous life. However, he hadn't expected that Chu Wanning would die in this battle.

That night, the conflict between him and Hua Binan had reached an unprecedented level. In the tightly shut disciple's room, Shi Mei had smashed all of the blue and white porcelain bowls in front of him, and his chest was heaving violently —

"How can I pretend to continue? Shizun is dead, do you think you can calculate so far?"

Hua Binan's face was extremely ugly: "How can you blame me for this? If you want to blame someone, you should blame Mo Ran too. He acted rashly." His fingers were clenched into a fist on the table, almost sinking

into the palm of his hand. His voice suddenly turned sharp, “He was the one who killed Chu Wanning.”

“… Yes, it’s him.” Shi Mei’s eyes turned red, but he tried his best not to cry. Ever since he was young, his mother had warned him not to cry no matter what he encountered.

Hua Binan was the same.

“If he’s the one who killed shizun, then don’t stop me. I’ll go kill him now!”

“Are you crazy?” Hua Binan raised his head all of a sudden.

“Oh?” Shi Mei gasped and nodded his head, his eyes full of provocation, “You know the word ‘crazy’?”

Hua Binan gritted his teeth and said: “…… Protecting Mo Ran, refining him, and controlling him are the keys to our work. As for everything else, it’s not what you should be thinking.”

“Look, that’s it. You are the Cold Scale Sacred Hand, so you can follow the other cultivators and worship Chu-zongshi from afar, or even scold Mo Ran whenever you want — but what about me? What kind of shitty bullshit are you telling me?”

“…”

Shi Mei sat down on his chair. He had a disdainful look on his face as he said, “The first thing you told me today was to make sure that the Cursed Flower Mo Ran had had completely lost its effectiveness and that it could still be saved.”

He murmured as he slowly raised his eyes a few inches high and looked at the pale white face of Hua Qingan.

Mockingly, he said, “You want me to confess to Mo Ran right now? Telling me that Chu Wanning must not be allowed to take my place in his heart?”

His words were as sharp as needles, piercing towards Hua Binan and himself.

He sneered, “Who the hell is the crazy one between us?”

Hua Binan suddenly closed his eyes, and his pupils rolled under his thin eyelids. Then he said, “I can’t do anything about it. Due to the sacrifices made by Chu Wanning in his previous life, Mo Ran’s Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower was already in a precarious situation. If it were to be completely destroyed, it would be even more difficult to control Mo Ran.”

“so you put off all the things you couldn't accomplish on me, right?!” Shi Mei could no longer hold it in and suddenly slammed the table and stood up, “Shizun just left… Have you considered my feelings?”

“…”

“Don’t you like him?”

After Shi Mei said this, his voice couldn’t help but tremble.

The room was deathly silent.

At last he sat down and put his hand to his forehead, and his long eyelashes trembled under the palm of his hand. For a moment, no one made a sound. Rain poured outside the window, and the world seemed as if it had been cracked by the thunder and lightning.

After a long time, he heard Hua Binan sigh softly, “…A’Nan, I can’t do anything to you.”

Shi Mei’s reaction was stiff and cold: “Don’t call me A’Nan.”

“…”

“I’m not like you. Call me Shi Mei, or Shi Mingjing.”

Ch. 274 [Tianyin Pavilion] One Thousand

Most people would change. Even if they were the same person, they would initially look the same. However, due to all kinds of fortuitous encounters, the variables would change. After ten or twenty years, their personalities and circumstances would no longer be the same.

In fact, when he had planted the Curse on Mo Ran, he had been a cold-hearted and resolute person.

In his eyes, other than his own revenge and his own pursuit, there was nothing else he could do.

However, at that time, when he was looking at his actions in the mortal world, he suddenly wanted to know if Hua Binan had ever felt that uncomfortable and cold in his heart.

In the end, he did as he instructed. At this point of his sacrifice, he could not dismount from the tiger.

He knew very well that personal relationships would make a big mistake come to naught. Nothing was more important than stabilizing Mo Ran and protecting himself.

In any case, he had been acting for so long, and after wearing so many years of mask, he was sick to his bones, so he became numb. What show, what show, even if it wasn't Chu Wanning's death, it would not change anything.

He just stood by the Bridge of Helplessness holding the Soul Lamp given by master Huaizui and didn't go anywhere. He couldn't help but feel envious

even when he wasn't willing to go through fire and water for someone he loved.

It would be great if he could be like Xue Meng and Mo Ran to make decisions for his own life, or perhaps think he could make decisions for others.

But fate had never been his. He was like a little boy from a pear garden, unresigned but silent as he played the play in his hands that only he could achieve perfection.

In the beginning, he had seduced Mo Ran.

Mo Ran smiled at him and said, "Shi Mei, I really like you."

Afterwards, he had used Xu Shuanglin.

Xu Shuanglin lazily tossed the tangerine in the air, squinting his eyes. "I've drifted for my entire life, but I never thought I'd meet such a friend like you. Many thanks to you for being willing to teach me the forbidden technique of rebirth. When that trash, Luo Fenghua, revives, I will definitely make him cook a bowl of Soup Dumplings for you — you don't know, the Soup Dumplings he cooked are the most delicious. I'm only willing to let you taste it because I think highly of you."

At the end of the day, the picture was the same.

Like the worst case scenario he and Hua Binan had discussed earlier, he had to sacrifice himself in order to stir up his Shizun and friends. He had to make the Space and Time Gate open at that critical moment.

He was a man with a chess piece.

But ten years later, he came and became his pawn.

The feeling of being controlled was actually not that pleasant. It was not that he did not hate them, but his heart was too persistent and his desire was too deep. He did not want to give up so easily.

However…

He truly did not know that the “tiny sacrifice” of his worldly self meant the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives.

It was only after he had opened the gate of life and death that he had seen the cruel truth.

In the end, this Shi Mingjing was not like that. He had not experienced that decade, nor had he experienced the day after day of his downfall.

At this moment, he truly could not understand his own self ten years later.

But there was no way out.

At this moment, he was no more than an abandoned child, just like the black-and-white armors on the chessboard. He had lost his edge, and was no longer of any use.

“Shizun.” The light was hazy, reflecting his beautiful face, he was still calm and gentle, “Actually, I have thought about this matter for a long time… I was thinking that Mo Ran could start all over again and become different. I was wondering, if I could turn back, would I also make a different choice because of my thinking?”

The room was very quiet, and only his voice could be heard.

“However, it’s already too late. I know that Shizun already hates me to the bones, and Mo Ran also hates me to the bones. Even Young Master wouldn’t treat me as a friend anymore… Regardless of whether or not I hesitated along the way, I still have his appearance in the end.”

He placed his hand on Chu Wanning’s hot cheek and quietly distributed the healed spiritual energy to him.

“I’m sorry, I’ve disappointed Shizun. The only good thing is that I’m blind and don’t have to see you hate me.”

After pausing for a moment, Shi Mei smiled. As he smiled, the entire room turned into spring.

“The last thing I saw was that you were sad for me. That’s enough.”

He untied the immortal binding rope from Chu Wanning’s hands, removed the forbidden spell on the bed, and removed the curse on the stone door.

After doing all of this, Shi Mei turned around and slowly left the secret chamber while rubbing his hands.

He walked away, swallowed by darkness.

At the same time, on the ground of the Tianyin Pavilion.

Mr. Ma, the corrupt teacher, had just returned from the private school. He entered the house, tapping his sore shoulder. As usual, he went to the kitchen to make himself a cup of eight treasure tea.

He pushed the door open and entered. It was pitch black.

Mr. Ma could not help but frown. He rubbed the lampstand and shouted: “Madam? Why didn’t you light a candle at night? This is…”

With a “chi” sound, the fire knife and the fire stone shined brightly.

Mr. Ma lost his voice and stood silently in the middle of the room. He could clearly see that all the servants in his house had been strangled to death, just like a string of wind chimes hanging on a beam. His wife, her stomach ripped open, her bloody intestines all over the floor, her eyes and mouth open, her head turned in the direction of the door.

“Ahh…” Mr. Ma wanted to scream, but the words that came out of his mouth were extremely vague, trembling, and powerless. After a while, his scalp went numb as he screamed miserably, losing bowel control, “Ah!”

“Tsk. What are you whining about?” A man came out of the back room with a scroll in his hand. He scratched his neck with the scroll and yawned, “Haven’t you seen a dead man before?”

“You… You, you, you! Mo — Mo……!”

The man snapped his fingers and lazily explained, “Silent Curse.”

“Wha… What spell?”

“Obliterating Curse, you don’t even know that?” The man rolled his eyes, “This reputed one is currently studying the classics in Teacher’s room and knows that it is bad for the neighbors to rest so late at night. Come. If anyone can hear you, please do not hesitate to blame me.”

Mr. Ma’s face was as pale as a ghost. When he stood on two sides, he was usually alone, but when had he ever seen such a bloody scene? He was so frightened that he started sweating all over, and after a while he said with

a shaky voice, “Mo… You demon. Devil… You. Shouldn’t you be at the Tianyin Pavilion…? You. You…”

“Tianyin Pavilion?”

The man lifted his purplish black eyes and smiled.

“Not bad, I went there to take a look. How else could you have heard what you said the other day?”

As he spoke, he threw the book aside, straightened his body, and slowly walked towards the teacher.

The lantern light shone upon his handsome face. Who else could it be other than Taxian-Jun?

Taxian-Jun smiled, his dimples were deep, and he actually clasped his hands in front of him, “In my life, I have always admired the ability of a scholar. It would be very rude of me to come and kill your whole family. Greetings, mister.”

This tone was eccentric. In addition, it was the tone of someone who had died in vain.

Even if there were only seventeen or eighteen people with the surname Ma, he still wouldn’t have the guts. He fell to the ground with a thud, gasping for breath, “What are you trying to do… What are you trying to do!”

Taxian-Jun only smiled as he raised his hand and a blade appeared in his palm.

He turned his face to look at the teacher. “Guess?”

“Don’t kill me!” Mr. Ma screamed miserably as he continuously retreated, “Don’t kill me!”

As he was retreating, he bumped into something. As he turned his head, he saw his wife’s dead face and he cried out, “No no no! No, no — no, please. Don’t. AHHHHHHH! Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah Ah!”

What answered was a knife stabbing down, straight into his thigh, straight through the ground!

“AHHHH!”

Taxian-Jun narrowed his eyes, his smile was kind and sweet: “May I ask, Sir… What’s the difference between a musician and a prostitute?”

“W-what?” Mr. Ma stared blankly, the pain was so painful that he didn’t have the brains to think. He could only cry, “What…”

“You said it yourself.” Taxian-Jun slowly said, “Sir said so in front of the Tianyin Pavilion. The musicians, the prostitutes, the prostitutes… they were all people who did not know self-respect and dignity, and were also shameless. These days, there are actually people arguing on behalf of the prostitutes. Who would have thought that my morals would have reached such a low level in the cultivation world.”

He imitated the tone of the teacher and remained calm and collected.

After saying that, he paused for a moment, sneered, and turned his handsome face to the side.

“Is it familiar, sir?”

At last, Mr. Ma realized something after being frightened. He remembered that these were the words he had said to attack Mo Weiyu's mother, so he hurriedly said with tears flowing from his nose, "No no no, I'm confused! I'm confused! This…" He swallowed his saliva and said with a face covered in sweat, "A prostitute is a prostitute, a musician is a musician… No, it's not the same, it's not the same…"

"How is it different? This Venerable one felt that what Mister said was very reasonable." Taxian-Jun's face didn't seem to be smiling as he walked over and raised his blade, "Speaking of which, my brain isn't working well. I'm in need of someone to guide me. If you have such a clever tongue, why don't you give it to me, eh?"

"No… No, no, no! Grandmaster, spare me! Please have mercy, lord cultivator!" Mr. Ma's incoherent words made him break out in a cold sweat. "Please, I beg of you, for your great kindness and righteousness…"

Taxian-Jun smiled merrily. "What Grandmaster? Do you have long ears? — Your Majesty."

"Your highness… Your Majesty?" Mr. Ma was startled, but who cares. As long as he was alive, he could call him father. And then, one after another, "Your Majesty! Your majesty, spare me! Your Majesty, please be merciful!"

Taxian-Jun crouched down, pinched his chin, and said with a smile, "Ai. Moral role model, I ask you, am I shameless, or is mister shameless?"

"I, I, I! It's me, it's me! It's me. It's…"

"But what's the point of sparing your life?"

Taxian-Jun exerted force into his palm. Amidst his wails and pleads, he broke his throat with a bright smile.

After doing all of this, the man in black looked around the room and confirmed with satisfaction that no one was still alive. He then stood up, wiped the blood off his hands, and walked out of the courtyard.

Hua Binan was waiting for him outside.

“Finished venting?”

“More or less.”

“Can you come with me back to the Tianyin Pavilion to prepare?”

Taxian-Jun glanced at him. “Fine.”

Hua Binan shook his head: “I really can’t do anything about you. Even with such a small grudge, you still have to care about it. Isn’t it just a few words from your mother? As for you…”

“How about I say a few words to your mother?”

“…”

Hua Binan’s expression changed slightly. He turned his face to the side and no longer answered.

“Let’s go. Didn’t you say that you would return Mo-zongshi’s heart to my body tomorrow? Then what are you waiting for, I can’t wait.”

As Taxian-Jun spoke, his robe fluttered as he strode in the direction of the Tianyin Pavilion.

Golden light radiated everywhere, and the clouds had just begun to glow. The sky quickly brightened up.

Accompanied by an extremely terrified and miserable scream, the corpses of Mr. Ma and his family were discovered by the neighbors who had woken up earlier. This kind of murder should be able to cause a huge commotion, but unfortunately, it did not happen.

Because at this very moment, an even more eye-catching judgement was in progress.

On the execution platform of the Tianyin Pavilion, the torches were burning fiercely. When the wax melted, it gave off the fragrance of pine and cypress. The two maids from the Tianyin Pavilion were dressed in robes of gold, their jade-like arms graceful as they lit up the lampstands on both sides of the platform.

Strangely, the guards of the Tianyin Pavilion were all extraordinarily good-looking. It was unknown if the male and female beauty was due to the mental cultivation method cultivated by the Tianyin Pavilion, or if it was due to the fact that Mu Yanli had taken a liking to their looks when accepting disciples.

“Heaven and earth naturally have their own brilliance, good and evil will eventually be rewarded.”

One after another, bronze candles lit up, and the flames were like bright red silk that fluttered in the air.

There were people everywhere.

Onstage, off the stage, southeast of the northwest direction.

The execution platform was so tightly blocked that not even a drop of water could leak out. Xue Meng sat on the Sisheng Peak's place, trembling slightly.

For the past three days, Xue Zhengyong had been begging everywhere, but it had been useless. Those cultivators were superstitious about the fairness of Tianliang, and also feared Mo Weiyu, who was in control of the Zhenlong Chess game.

"He saved us."

The people at the Sisheng Peak patiently tried to explain to everyone they could convince, "It was him who released his spirit core to save us that day. If he had a conspiracy, why would he do this?"

However, there were too many questions about Mo Ran's life, so no sect was willing to stand on their side. Even Guyue'ye and Taxue Palace remained neutral, keeping their silence.

—

The first forbidden technique that had been lost for thousands of years suddenly reappeared. Compared to the first public trial that was thousands of years old, it was much more powerful.

Only a fool would choose to believe the former.

So Xue Zhengyong's running seemed so stupid, and the defense of the Sisheng Peak was so weak.

Xue Meng vaguely thought, how about we take the jailbreak.

But he also knew that it was impossible.

There were guards of the Tianyin Pavilion everywhere, as well as the Sect Leaders and disciples of other sects. Below the stands were the commoners.

Countless pairs of eyes stared, unable to escape.

Therefore, digging for the spirit core was ultimately the end of it.

“The Tianyin Pavilion has issued a public notice for three days. The punishment for this crime has been decided.” Mu Yanli solemnly and elegantly looked down at the endless sea of people below. She rang the bell in her hand. “Bring the prisoner Mo Ran.”

From the prison to the execution platform, Mo Ran was being escorted away. A person with a broken spirit core was being watched by dozens of disciples of the Tianyin Pavilion.

They were vultures. However, he was going to die soon. Not many people would be able to survive after digging for their spirit cores. The vultures’ eyes flashed with the smell of blood.

“The body of the felon Mo Ran. Today at noon, you will be sentenced to death by the digging of his spirit core.” Mu Yanli’s voice was clear and cold. “There are ten counts. I hereby announce them to the world.”

The rain had stopped, but the ground was still wet. Mo Ran stood in the pool, the light of the sky and the shadow of the clouds hovering beneath his feet. He looked up and found Ye Wangxi in the crowd.

His dark eyes were fixed on her, inquiring. He asked if she had already followed his instructions and brought up the people at the Sisheng Peak. Asking her if she knew what was behind her.

Ye Wangxi nodded to him, and Mo Ran's lips curled into a bright, gentle smile, his eyes shining.

The weather was good.

The rain stopped.

"Crime number one, slaughter the people and disregard human life."

Mu Yanli's voice echoed within the Tianyin Pavilion, solemn and respectful.

"Crime number two, burn down a building to avenge your wrongdoings."

The Buddha in front of the burning incense, the divine Buddha in the clouds, either angry or benevolent, fell to sit in the ring, looking down at the vast masses. All these years, Mo Ran had been looking up into the sky with displeasure. If there really was a God in the sky, then his eyes would hide sin and hide evil. He was afraid that he would be discovered.

But at this moment, he finally relaxed. He looked up at the sky, and the sunlight was like a bath. It soaked his purplish black eyes into a light brown glaze, making them seem pure.

He looked at the sky. The sky was sparse and clear, even the clouds were light.

Mu Yanli's voice was so far away that he closed his eyes.

He did not look at the Sisheng Peak, nor did he look at the faces of any of his old friends.

"Crime number six, Sneak in Forbidden Techniques, Violate the Big Commandment."

Suddenly thinking of something, a hint of regret and affection appeared between his brows.

Originally, he wanted to be good to Chu Wanning, but he was unable to do so. Even his first true relationship with Chu Wanning was a mess.

It ended in failure.

He really wasn't a good man. He was a disaster, a plague, and a bad joke.

In these two lifetimes.

He wanted to protect his mother, but failed.

He wanted to repay someone for their kindness, but he failed.

When he was a child, he wanted to be a hero, but later on, he wanted to secretly become Sect Leader Xue's nephew for the rest of his life. Now, he was at the end of his road and gave his all to become the world's coldest and most merciless Immortal Emperor.

However, they were all in vain.

"Taxian-Jun, Mo Xianyu, Mo-zongshi…" His eyelashes trembled and his Adam's apple rolled. In the end, he let out a laugh and a deep sigh that only he could hear.

"You really are the most ridiculous person in the world."

He sighed and raised his head to look up at the sky. The wind was blowing his hair into the air. He narrowed his eyes and thought, where is Chu Wanning now?

It was probably because he had received too much and had already expended all of his destiny, that he wouldn't be able to see the man again for the rest of his life.

Good. He narrowed his eyes and snickered on the execution platform.

At least, he didn't need to let Wanning see his sorry state.

"Time is almost up! Prepare for punishment —!"

A majestic melody was heard as the horn sounded.

As if a nightmare cast its shadow, as if this "prepare for punishment" could be heard from thousands of miles away. Inside a secret room of Mount Jiao, Chu Wanning suddenly opened his eyes and woke up from his stupor and sat in shock.

"Mo Ran!"

Candles flickered, and he gasped for breath, sweating profusely.

He trembled slightly, and almost subconsciously, the moment he opened his mouth, the name that he had been entangled with for two lifetimes came out. Then, his Adam's apple rolled up and down, and his eyes became a little dazed.

He felt as if he had seen the shadow of a blade. He felt a strong chill run down his spine, and his heart pounded like a drum. He didn't know why, but he was terrified.

"…"

He sat on the couch and rubbed his face with his palms. As his sweat gradually became colder, he finally regained his senses.

Memories kept flashing before his eyes, but they didn't belong to him — half of his soul had been in Mo Ran for too long, so long that when it returned to him, it had brought back many memories that belonged to Mo Ran. Those who had been devoured by the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower, those who had been abandoned.

It was an important memory that even Mo Ran himself could not remember.

Chu Wanning saw it all…

Ch. 275 [Tianyin Pavilion] Broken Heart

When he was a child, Mo Ran was smiling brightly at his mother. He saw Duan Yihan touching Mo Ran's head and said, "You must repay the debt of gratitude, do not hold a grudge."

He saw Mo Ran carefully nibbling on a box of pastries given to him by Xue Meng, not willing to waste any of it.

He saw Mo Ran standing in front of the wine shop in Wuchang Town.

Wearing a new disciple's uniform, he gave the silver pieces in his pocket to the boss with both hands, then laughed bashfully and expectantly: "If you want a pot of good Pear Blossom White, can you bring a better looking wine pot? I want to give my shizun a taste."

All the memories came one after another.

The warmest, clearest memories of the past that had once been burning in Mo Ran's heart — just like that, they flashed all over the place.

In the image, Mo Ran was always laughing, from his cold and hungry childhood, to those tender years before the eruption of the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower. But these memories are not many,

The amount of pure time that Mo Ran had in his life was too little. There were only a handful of days when he could laugh heartily.

Chu Wanning looked at the passing pieces of memories.

Then everything settled down.

Because their souls had been entangled for too long, he could clearly feel how Mo Ran liked him, respected him, clung to him, loved him, even though he didn't like to laugh or was even a bit strict when teaching.

But he liked it, and it felt familiar and warm.

He felt that this Icy Cold shizun was actually a very, very good person.

Mo Ran actually liked him… He had loved him passionately and innocently at that early hour.

The memories in front of his eyes continued to flow through his mind. Chu Wanning's body then sunk into a clear, moonless night as his memories of Mo Ran. That night, the disciple at the Sisheng Peak sat by the side of the table with a solitary lamp lit in his room. Facing the open book, he carefully sewed on the white handkerchief in his hand.

After a few stitches, the tip of his finger was clumsily punctured, and blood dripped onto the cloth.

Mo Ran opened his eyes wide, and immediately after, he seemed very depressed. He sighed, "So hard."

The white handkerchief was rolled up and tossed aside.

He took out a new piece and sewed it again.

The candle light didn't extinguish for the whole night. After throwing away countless pieces of handkerchief, his hands and feet finally became more agile. Slowly, the light red petals began to blossom. One petal, two petal… Five.

Each petal was embroidered in detail, each petal was embroidered in sincerity.

The youth clumsily sewed a pure white handkerchief, stitching it one by one until it bloomed into an undefeated haitang flower.

There was light in his eyes as he looked at the handkerchief.

He had already finished embroidering, but it was also very ugly. The place where the legs were not in the same place was obviously the work of a new hand, but Mo Ran was overjoyed. He looked around excitedly, then threw the handkerchief away, and a gentle handkerchief fluttered in the air and landed on his face.

It covered his face.

He laughed under the handkerchief and blew, and the haitangs lifted their horns to reveal his gentle eyes. Full of light.

“Giving this to Master, he will definitely like it.”

His heart was heavy with warmth, a warmth that could not be tolerated by the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower he was infected with later, a warmth that had to be devoured.

“He will think of me every time he uses this handkerchief.”

Mo Ran put the handkerchief away in his arms. He had thought countless times in his heart that Chu Wanning would praise him and look happy. He could only feel an uncontrollable joy growing out of the grass. That night, he ran excitedly to Chu Wanning’s room to find the man standing by the pond watching the fish.

“Shizun!”

He ran over excitedly, his face glowing.

Chu Wanning turned around in surprise, “Why are you here?”

“I, Achoo!”

He came out in a hurry. He didn’t wear a cloak, and he sneezed before he could finish his words.

Chu Wanning said, “… What’s so urgent that you couldn’t even remember your clothes?”

Mo Ran rubbed his nose and grinned. “I can’t wait. I have something. If I don’t give it to shizun now, I won’t be able to sleep.”

“What is it?”

“Shizun’s acceptance gift as a teacher.” As he said that, he carefully fished out the folded handkerchief from his bosom. When it came to his present, he suddenly became timid and his face had actually turned red. It wasn’t really worth much money. “No, it’s not very good.”

After some thought, he hid the handkerchief behind his back and began to trample on the ground with his toes.

Chu Wanning: “…”

“What did you buy?”

The youth’s ears were completely red as he blushed and replied, “I didn’t buy it, I don’t have any money…”

Chu Wanning was stunned, “You made it yourself?”

Mo Ran lowered his head and his eyelashes caged his eyes like clouds. He said softly, “Yes.”

Without waiting for Chu Wanning to reply, he hurriedly added, “If we don’t count them, they are really, really ugly!” After a few sounds, he still felt that it was not enough. He mustered up his courage and looked at Chu Wanning again, then forcefully added, “Especially ugly.”

Chu Wanning still remembered his feelings at that time. In fact, it was a surprise.

He had never received a handmade gift.

However, he was too embarrassed to show it, and he was too embarrassed to smile. He could only tighten his face, afraid that this new disciple would see the sweetness that seeped into his heart.

He coughed lightly, and said while weighing his options, “Then, it’s done. No matter how ugly, can you let me have a look?”

In the end, Mo Ran still took out the handkerchief. He wanted to present it with both hands, but he felt that the handkerchief had already wrinkled after the last struggle, so he frantically tried to smooth it over.

It was when his face was burning red that a slender hand reached out and took the handkerchief that had caused him so much trouble.

All the chaos died down, and thus, the flag stopped beating.

“Ah!” Mo Ran was dumbfounded and couldn’t help but exclaim, “Shizun, it’s really ugly…”

At that time, Chu Wanning was not in love with Mo Ran, so he only remembered the pair of shiny black eyes. They were wet, like a sweet rain on flowers, very beautiful.

Sometimes love is as swift as thunder and lightning, and sometimes it as slow as dripping water drops.

Chu Wanning was one of the latter. He had been touched bit by bit by the tenderness of the young man. At that time, he did not realize how fierce his smile was, and little did he know the after-effect of it.

When he came to a sudden realization, this tenderness had become a quagmire, and he was deeply immersed in it, unable to extricate himself from then on.

“A handkerchief?”

“Um… Yes, yes.”

White square scarf, sky silk, the side embroidered with haitang flowers, the needle carefully firm, raw to a somewhat cute.

Chu Wanning’s heart was suddenly moved. There was a spring in the valley, and flowers were falling from it. He stared at the handkerchief, not knowing what to say for a long time.

This was the first time he had received such a gift.

Seeing that he did not say anything, the giver thought that he did not like it and stuttered as he explained, “I, I was embroidering according to the drawings in the painting, but actually… Well, in fact, this kind of handkerchief is sold in town, and it’s not expensive. The embroidery… it’s also much better looking than mine.”

Finally, he got a little anxious and wanted to get the handkerchief back. However, Chu Wanning was one step faster than him, and he had already put it away.

“Nonsense. How can I possibly return an apprenticeship gift after it’s given?”

The crumpled handkerchief and the temperature at which Mo Ran was burning were indeed very ugly. To Wuchang Town, the same style of ten copper could be bought for eight pieces.

However, he just felt it was too precious and didn’t want to return it.

Thus, it became the first gift that Mo Ran gave to Chu Wanning. After being afflicted with the Gu curse, regardless of whether it was this memory or this handkerchief, it was all forgotten by Mo Weiyu.

Chu Wanning was thin-skinned and didn’t speak very well, but he didn’t mention anything else. He saw that Mo Ran was getting more and more interested in Shi Mei and that he had given him more than 80 things, so he became more and more silent. He didn’t want Mo Ran to see this handkerchief again.

It was something that Mo Ran had freely given him, and he was very attached to it.

He remembered…

The merging of the souls brought back the past. Things like this, one by one, Chu Wanning slowly recalled them all.

He stood up, more furious than ever, anxious, sad, and in pain —

His hands were shaking. He finally knew the truth. He knew the whole story.

In fact, it was not just his innocent childhood.

It was more than just being bewitched by Shi Mei.

It was much more than that.

However, the most important memories were all suppressed by Shi Mei's incantation. In these 20 years and 2 lifetimes, no one knew what the original appearance of this event was.

Until today.

Truth, truth…

This was the final truth!

There was no one on Mount Jiao to stop him, so Chu Wanning did not care about anything else. He ran towards the foot of the mountain like a madman. When he arrived at the nearest village, he asked where Mo Ran was.

"That Mo-zongshi?" The villagers did not know Chu Wanning's identity, so they said roughly, "What a grandmaster, he's just a beast with different appearances."

The surface was different, the beasts…

Sinner…

Tyrant.

He felt dizzy for two lifetimes. In his previous life, Taxian-Jun in front of him was grinning malevolently. In this life, Mo Weiyu was smiling at him with his eyes downcast.

No.

This was not the truth.

Chu Wanning asked with a pale face, “Where is he?”

“Tianyin Pavilion.” The villagers said, “In the world of cultivation, who doesn’t know of the crime committed by this person? Today, his spirit core will be dug out and he will receive the punishment he deserves!”

It was like a mountain had been split open, causing the brain to buzz.

“When is the execution?!” Chu Wanning’s question was too urgent. His eyes shone with an intense light, startling the villagers.

“I can’t really remember. It seems to be… Noon?”

Noon… Noon… He looked at the sundial beside the sun and his expression suddenly changed!

The Ascending Dragon Talisman flew through the air, creating a violent storm. Chu Wanning ordered the paper dragon to take him to the wind, heading towards Qi Jing. At first, the paper dragon wanted to bicker with its master, but it was surprised to find that there was moisture in Chu Wanning’s eyes.

The little paper dragon was stunned, “… What’s the matter with you?”

“Help me.”

He didn’t know what to do, so he just said, “I’ve never refused to help you. Oh, please don’t cry.”

Chu Wanning gritted his teeth viciously, but he was an empty frame.

The truth was like a worm that had bitten off his spine.

“I’m not crying. Take me to the Tianyin Pavilion. If I don’t hurry, it’ll be too late!”

“What are you going there for?”

“Save him!” He could not stop shaking. He did not want to cry. He never wanted to cry, but tears still rolled down his face. Chu Wanning ruthlessly wiped away his red eyes.

“Save a wrongly convicted man.”

“…”

“If there is anyone in this world who should have their spirit core dug out alive and be scolded by tens of thousands of people, it shouldn’t be him. I want to save him.”

The paper dragon did not ask any further questions. It carried him on its back and transformed into a giant dragon that pierced the heavens. It howled, soared into the sky, and stirred up the group.

Chu Wanning sat beside its dragon horn.

A strong current of air brushed across his face. The sky was frighteningly cold, and the blood on his fingertips seemed to be on the verge of freezing.

He looked ahead and saw layers upon layers of clouds, mountains, rivers flowing endlessly. All sorts of things like yesterday flashed by below.

In fact, from the moment he woke up, he had been crazy, numb, and broken.

Now that he had recovered, he was completely immersed in the grief brought by the past. He curled up on top of the dragon, slowly curled up, and slowly buried his face in his palms.

The wind was strong, whistling past his ears.

They wanted to pass judgment on Mo Ran, they wanted to cut open his heart, they wanted to shatter his spirit core —

A heinous crime deserves death.

No.

The sound of the wind was so loud, it was enough to cover up the sorrow and joy of mortals.

The sky was high and the clouds were vast. Chu Wanning finally broke down crying in this sorrowful wind. These two times of floating… Regardless of whether it was Taxian-Jun or Mo-zongshi…

It was never supposed to be this way.

Mo Ran was right.

From the start, the bow from Heaven-Piercing Tower was wrong.

As the sun rose higher and higher, the copper pot outside the Tianyin Pavilion dripped to a certain point. The female official's strike was

exhausted. He shouted, “It’s noon —”

Birds were startled.

“Execute the punishment!”

He was boarded onto the rack and tied with the Immortal-Rope. His outer robe was removed and the collar of his robe opened.

With a cold expression on his face, Mu Yanli wielded her godly weapon and stepped forward to stand in front of Mo Ran.

“Today is the day of your punishment. I hope you will repent.”

Her lips opened and closed as she chanted the ancient chant of the Tianyin Pavilion.

“The Tianyin is vast and mighty, it cannot be hidden.

The son of the Tianyin Sect must not be sentimental.

The heavenly music was weak and could not be disrespectful to the gods.

Tianyin has pity on all, respect all living things.”

She lowered her eyes to pay her respects to Mo Ran. It was a farewell.

Following that, she drew her blade. Flames flew everywhere, and the divine artifact hummed as golden feathers scattered in all directions. The dagger shone in his eyes, and there was no emotion.

Some people covered their eyes, some stretched their necks, some closed their eyes and sighed, while others clapped and cheered.

All beings are nothing.

“Penalty by excavation of the spirit core.”

Blood splattered everywhere.

Dead silence.

Following that, someone on stage lost control of his voice and shouted, “Brother —!”

Red, bright red blood oozed out from his wound, flowing into his chest. Mo Ran’s eyes were wide open. At first, he was unconscious, but then he stiffly lowered his head to look at the blood and flesh of his heart.

His lips moved, and the pain began to explode like fireworks. Light and shadow were boiling before his eyes.

“Cough, cough!”

Blood gushed from his mouth, dripping, iron.

The world was vast, and just like that, it turned into a desolate red sea.

But wrong, wrong.

Chu Wanning flew closer and closer to the ground.

He had once thought that Mo Ran was indifferent to him, playing games in the mortal world, because of resentment, because of the hatred in his heart.

He had thought that Mo Ran had gradually forgotten about the gentleness of the two as he reprimanded him over and over again.

Actually, that's not it. Those memories had always been trapped within his soul.

He saw it.

Chu Wanning saw the deepest part of his heart, under the suppression of the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower, filled with friendship.

That year, Mo Ran was still so young and pure. He also had a warm and healthy heart that beat under his chest. That year, he saw his new shizun standing by the window of the Lacquer Wood Pavilion. He turned towards him with a pale look in his eyes. "Mo Ran, come over here."

As he approached, he kept ink and paper before him.

"From what Sect Leader said, you still don't know how to write your own name. Take the pen, I'll teach you."

He taught him, his voice was light, like the apricot flower outside the window, blooming in the sky.

"The surface character that the Sect Leader gave you is called drizzling rain, which is the opposite of your name. I will write it down, so you'll have to look at it carefully."

Horizontal, vertical and curved strokes,, his master's calligraphy was intricate, and his little disciple was standing on the side, learning without a care in the world.

"One more point."

"There's one less point missing this time."

The two words were taught to him five times before he finally managed to write it right with difficulty. However, it was as shabby as a rune and extremely ugly. Chu Wanning had never seen such a stupid disciple and could not help but feel a little annoyed. “Is it hard?”

Not hard.

However, Mo Ran did not dare to tell him that it was actually because the way he lowered his eyes and wrote was too good-looking. He was insatiable in his greed, so he asked for more, so he deliberately wrote more and less.

Just so he can teach him again.

“How difficult.”

Chu Wanning glared at him, “Watch carefully, don’t laugh.”

Mo Ran pursed his lips into a smile, sincerely feeling vexed. “Then, shizun, write it again and teach me again.”

He really liked that moment when he lowered his head and his phoenix-like eyes curved upwards.

As long as Chu Wanning held his hand and taught him, he would be able to hear the sound of haitang blossoms blooming outside the window.

The execution platform’s had a high barrier. No one could stop Tianyin’s judgment.

The dagger godly weapon was sharp enough to break gold, it understood the master’s intentions. Mu Yanli’s expression was pale, as if she could not hear the rough breathing of the guy who had just coughed blood, his face

was pale like a corpse, his forehead was burning, and his veins were popping out, and blood was trickling from the corner of his mouth.

She only carried out the judgment of the scales.

She dug out the spirit core.

The dagger stabbed into his heart and rapidly weaved through his flesh. The moment she reached the spirit core fragment, she gathered her strength and pulled it out — the tip was sharp and would inevitably cut his flesh.

She did not seem to care at all, throwing the flesh and blood along with the glowing pieces into the silver plate carried by the servant at the side.

The healer female cultivator immediately stepped forward, stopping the surging blood, sticking it to his convulsing heart, so that he would not die just like that.

His punishment was the excavation of his spirit core, so the Tianyin Pavilion would protect him to his heart's content. At the very least, he would not die on the stage, nor in the process of execution.

They kept him awake in case he was in a coma or dying from the pain, so Mo Ran watched his heart being cut open again and again, searching for fragments, then temporarily repressed and healed.

Again and again.

Xue Meng had already collapsed. He was crying, his face buried in his palms as tears fell like rain.

"Brother……"

He was in so much pain that his soul consciousness became blurry and his tendons started to bulge.

But he felt that he had finally been liberated.

Each time his blade descended, it would pierce through his heart and dig out a fragment. He felt that the sins he had committed in his past life, and the bloodshed on his hands, faded a little.

Will he be forgiven when the pain is over?

Could it be that if I dug out the remnants, I would be able to return to the past?

But where was before?

On the day he returned to the Heaven-Piercing Tower to be a disciple, he would still be a fake young master at the Sisheng Peak. His mother had also already starved to death.

If he returned to the woodshed when he was young, he would only be able to live with Duan Yihan for the rest of his life. However, he was also afraid of the possibility of not encountering Chu Wanning. This kind of happiness would be extremely regretful.

Looking back, he couldn't find a safe place to start from scratch in his two lifetimes. He couldn't find a truly carefree and simple day, even if it was just a day.

He had lived for more than forty years, and yet, there was not a single peaceful night in his life.

Mu Yanli was still stabbing deep in the flesh and blood, acting on behalf of the heavens.

He knew that the crime of his soul being filthy was unforgivable.

However, at this moment, he suddenly felt a bit sad.

He loved his mother, his shizun, his younger brother, his aunt, and his family.

However, he was probably too greedy and wanted so much.

So in the end, he had nothing.

The happiness he knew, the warmth he had gained, were all false in the end. He couldn't compete with the water in the basket and the sand in his palm.

He had used everything he had to make up for it, but nothing came of it.

He was by the river of life, holding his small, wet basket. He crouched down, the basket empty, and stared out at the rushing tide.

In fact, from the beginning, he had only had one broken basket, and he held it.

A dream that was destined to break.

Ch. 276 [Tianyin Pavilion] I Came to Die With You

The execution ground was solemn. Mo Ran spirit core shards were continuously being dug and taken out.

Piece by piece. One after another.

He endured it fiercely with all his might. It was one thing to pay him back for his crimes, and another to be weak. He did not want to cry out in pain in front of Mu Yanli, he was like a rock.

The pain was too deep, causing his Sea of Bitterness to sink.

All of a sudden, a shocking voice exploded inside his brain like a thunderclap.

“Mo Ran!”

Impossible, how is this possible?

How could it be him…

He must be in too much pain, having hallucinations and losing his consciousness.

“Mo Ran!”

The sounds gradually became noisy, as if someone was shouting and screaming. The wind started to blow and Mu Yanli’s hands stopped moving.

Mo Ran trembled and used all his strength to raise his head.

He saw his God riding the dragon, swooping down from the sky.

He saw the white clothes of his God, looking like an exiled immortal.

As he got closer, the face next to the soaring dragon horn became clear. Mo Ran's heart suddenly hurt, and it was even more painful than being stabbed by a knife.

He saw his God crying, Chu Wanning… he was crying.

"Shi… zun…"

The wound on his chest was bleeding profusely. Mo Ran struggled as the buckle made "ding ding" sounds.

Chu Wanning jumped off the huge dragon, and the instant he landed in front of the execution platform's barrier, the paper Candle Dragon turned into a dazzling golden light and returned to the incantation.

"Yuheng!"

"Shizun!"

"Elder Yuheng!"

Everyone in the viewing gallery stood up, the people from the other sects also stood up in shock. Even the commoner dressed in plain clothes asked in astonishment, "Is this the legendary Immortal Elder Beidou?"

"It's Mo Ran's shizun!"

"Didn't they say they severed ties?"

Chu Wanning's eyes were originally red. When he saw the blood and spirit core fragments on the silver tray, he collapsed even more.

His throat was hoarse and he wanted to speak, but before he could, he was choked with sobs.

“You all… You can’t treat him like this…”

The crowd went into an uproar.

“What is he talking about?”

“Is he crazy? Mo Ran is a crazy murderer!”

Every word was like a sharp knife slicing through Chu Wanning’s heart, and every accusation was like a hammer piercing into his chest.

It was extremely painful.

Chu Wanning looked into the Tianyin Pavilion’s enchantment, at the man with the moist black eyes who had silently gazed upon him, the man whose heart had been cut open and whose spirit core had been damaged.

The man who did not know that he had been wrongly accused even after he had gone thousands of years ago.

So stupid.

Chu Wanning’s lips twitched and his whole body trembled.

He placed his hand on the Tianyin Pavilion’s transparent barrier and choked with sobs, “Wrong judgement… Wrong…”

Don’t stab him with a dagger.

Stab me…

Both lifetimes, the ruthless Taxian-Jun and Mo Weiyu resigned to his fate.

In the previous life, everyone had criticized him and couldn't wait for him to die. In this life, it was difficult to escape from the internal condemnation day and night.

But who knew the truth?

Mu Yanli seemed to be anxious. After the initial shock, she immediately raised the sharp knife. Blood dripped from the tip of the knife as it sparkled.

Mo Ran muttered, "Don't look."

With a "pfft", the dagger once again pierced his heart, causing blood to gush out.

Chu Wanning's pupils suddenly contracted. After a long while, his voice sounded hoarse, "Don't!"

Golden light flashed as astral winds surged.

The Tianwen was summoned and the whip fell. The several tens of high-ranked disciples of the Tianyin Pavilion that were maintaining the enchantment were unable to withstand the attack. They vomited blood and knelt on the ground, and the enchantment instantly shattered. Amidst the dazzling brilliance, Chu Wanning held his sparking godly weapon and charged straight towards the center of the execution platform.

"Someone wants to rob the prisoners!"

"Chu Wanning wants to rob the prisoners!"

Immediately, Mu Yanli placed the remaining pieces of his spiritual core into his Qiankun bag, then ordered in a stern voice, "Stop him!"

“Yes, Pavilion Master!”

The golden waves from the Tianyin Pavilion surged forward and fiercely collided with Chu Wanning’s spirit energy. The cultivators in the stands were all shocked; they had never seen Chu Wanning like this before.

Mad and sorrowful.

He no longer had any sense.

Seeing that Chu Wanning was getting closer and closer, Mu Yanli cursed in a low voice. A cold light flashed in his eyes, and she finally took out a piece of broken spirit core and put it into his Qiankun bag. Then, her robes fluttered as she turned around to exchange blows with Chu Wanning.

“Chu-zongshi, you really want to save him? You have to think this through clearly. If you take this step, you will be infamous for thousands of years, and both you and him will have to bear the consequences!”

The sword light illuminated her almond-shaped eyes staring at him.

Tianwen strangled the blade that was held by Mu Yanli and it instantly shot out streaks of light in all directions.

Chu Wanning bit down on every word, “Then, let me accompany him!”

The true history is well organized, and the record is that of heroes.

But I just want to be with you, be it lying in the Tyrant’s Legend or rotting on the Fearful Ranking, it’s all good.

I do not want future generations to refer to you as a ghost when they speak of us. I don’t want future generations of books to carry this passage,

saying that you and I are enemies and master and disciple became enemies.

If I can't be wronged for you.

Mo Ran and Taxian-Jun.

I am willing to be scorned with you for all eternity.

Hell is too cold.

Mo Ran, I will die with you.

As the clouds converged, the dazzling light was already shining.

The audience was even more confused. In the chaos, there was only the sound of "Zheng!" "Clang!" Tianwen abruptly broke the chain that was tied to Mo Ran.

Mo Ran knelt down on the ground and fell into the warm embrace of Chu Wanning.

His blood dyed his white clothes red.

From the very beginning, there had been no tears. Even as his heart was dug out he didn't choke but Mo Ran finally collapsed. His hand trembled as it lifted up and drooped down.

He wanted to hug Chu Wanning, but he also wanted to push him away. He wanted nothing more than to be separated from him. He also wanted nothing less than for everything to be good, forever clean, unrelated to his filth.

Thus, he did not know whether to hug him or to separate him.

His hands trembled for a long time before he carefully held him back.

Mo Ran cried.

He said, “Shizun… Why don’t you blame me… Why did you save me…”

Chu Wanning’s heart ached. He held the man tightly in his arms, no longer caring about the gazes around him. Everyone was watching him and speaking a thousand words, but he did not know what to say first.

“I’m so dirty… I’ll dirty you too…” The more he cried, the more he grieved. This man, who would never show weakness in front of others, had no armor in Chu Wanning’s arms anymore, “But I’m also afraid that you won’t want me anymore… If even you don’t want me, then I really don’t know where to go…”

What was broken was obviously the spirit core that was Mo Ran’s, and what was pierced was the heart that was Mo Ran’s.

However, at this moment, Chu Wanning felt as if his heart was convulsing as well. Like his body was badly mangled and torn to shreds.

The original tendons and bones were now tightly intertwined.

A large group of surrounding cultivators from the Tianyin Pavilion surrounded them, bearing them down step by step.

Chu Wanning’s white robes were stained with blood. He held Tianwen in one hand and Mo Ran in the other.

Many of the black and white in the human world were not easy to explain clearly.

Too much self-righteousness.

There were many schemes with ill intentions.

They could still be repaid their innocence, but what about the rest of the youngsters? Not every injustice could be exposed, and there was still the one who would never be able to turn the tables on others.

Chu Wanning held Mo Ran in his arms and said softly, “Don’t be afraid, I won’t leave you behind.”

“Shizun…”

“I will always be with you. Live or die, I will bring you home.”

Having lost the healing spell, Mo Ran’s consciousness turned increasingly dim and his heart began to hurt more and more. However, when he heard those words, his entire body trembled, his lips moved, and tears rolled down his face. He smiled.

“You treat me so well, my basket is full. I’m very happy…” He paused for a moment before his voice slowly faded.

“Shizun, I’m so tired… I’m cold…”

Chu Wanning’s body trembled almost imperceptibly. He held the hand that belonged to Mo Ran and used even more strength to continuously send in his spiritual power, but to no avail.

It was just like how, at the peak of Mount Kunlun in his previous life, Taxian-Jun carried his dying body and tried to save his life.

It was useless.

Chu Wanning was anxious. His eyes were wet and red, and tears were rolling down his cheeks soundlessly. He turned his head and kissed his damp forehead, saying hoarsely, “Don’t sleep, tell me, what basket?”

Those who were nearby had faces full of vigilance, contempt, chilliness, vigilance, loathing and disgust.

But so what?

Nothing mattered anymore.

Reputation, dignity, life.

For two lifetimes, he had seen Mo Ran fall into the abyss, but he was helpless. He felt only pain and defeat.

It was he who came late.

Mo Ran was breathing softly, his consciousness was fading, more blood was flowing, and his body was getting colder. He said softly, “I only have one small basket. There are holes in the little basket. It’s empty. I’ve fished for a long time…”

He subconsciously wanted to curl up.

His white lips moved slightly as he sobbed.

“Shizun… My heart hurts…”

“Hug me, please.”

Chu Wanning’s heart ached, “I’ll hold you, it won’t hurt, it won’t hurt.”

However, Mo Ran could no longer be heard. His consciousness was in chaos.

It's all messy.

He looked like the helpless, underfed child from years ago. He looked like the child kneeling and wailing beside the rotting corpse of a mother on the cemetery.

He looked like Taxian-Jun who would never return to the past.

It was like the lonely figure at the foot of Heaven-Piercing Tower.

He looked like Mo-zongshi, who was waiting for his return to the world by relying on his sword.

It was like the man curled up on the couch in the middle of a rainy night, wetting his pillow.

"I'm in so much pain… it really hurts…"

"Shizun, have I paid my debt? Am I already clean?"

It was getting more and more blurry.

"Shizun."

In the end, the little disciple, the teenager, the demon, and the tyrant choked with sobs.

"It's getting dark, I'm so scared… I want to go home…"

Chu Wanning had been listening to him all along, and at this very moment, he was sobbing silently.

Mo Ran, Mo Ran, why are you so stupid?

What was clear, what was clean…

I owe you.

No one knows the truth, not even your own memories.

However, I finally know…

I finally know that you've only been my disciple for a few months, but you've spent two lifetimes protecting me.

To cover up all the infamy, crimes, misunderstandings, slander.

Being forced to become crazy, crazy, bloodthirsty, dirty.

If it weren't for you, the person kneeling on the altar today should be me, the one whose heart has been dug out… It would be me.

It was Emperor Taxian-Jun that used his own soul to protect Elder Yuheng.

Ever since then, he had fallen into darkness.

And he stayed bright.

It was all wrong.

At this moment, the Tianyin Pavilion's elites were like cheetahs that had wandered around for a long time. Finally, they broke through the air, claws tearing through the air as over a hundred people rushed towards them!

Tianwen golden light was intense to the point of being pale, and dazzling to the eye.

“Kill them!”

“Stop them!”

Chu Wanning closed his eyes.

The sounds of killing filled the sky —

The surrounding people attacked in groups. Within the bloody glow of the sword shadows, Chu Wanning suddenly opened his eyes! Then, he lowered his hand and extended his five fingers. In an instant, astral winds swirled around him as he shouted, “Huaisha, summon me over!”

Ch. 277 [Tianyin Pavilion] This Venerable One Is Lonely and Cold

With this shout, that fierce killing intent of that golden light was summoned. Its infernal energy defied the heavens!

The crowd paled, and the high-ranking disciples of the Tianyin Pavilion took a step back in fear. However, they braced themselves and shouted, “You are not allowed to retreat, you are not allowed to let go!”

“How can we let such a disaster go on! We must eliminate the roots!”

Both sides had no choice but to take action. The atmosphere was extremely tense.

“Attack!”

The sound was like a drop of water falling into a wok, instantly creating a clamor! He saw the magic curse and the sharp blade slashing down from the middle of the execution ground from all directions, while Chu Wanning’s hand was holding Huaisha, the golden light blocked with a ‘clang clang clang clang’. With his strength alone, he faced the cultivators rushing over like a tidal wave. The sword qi in his phoenix eyes intertwined with the blood flowers, making him look like an Asura.

He held Mo Ran, protected the sword, protected the flesh, protected his life, and protected his future innocence.

No one listened to his explanation. No one was willing to let two beasts in dire straits to return home. No hope, no redemption, no trust, no light.

All they had left was each other.

“Mo Ran, bear with it a bit longer and I’ll take you away.”

All of a sudden, a powerful curse struck Chu Wanning’s arm, causing blood to gush out like a fountain. The wound was so deep that even the bones could be seen. However, Chu Wanning only bit his lower lip and swung his sword.

“Get out of the way!” The cultivators on the Tianyin pavilion cried out in alarm, “Get out of the way!”

With an astonishing power, the sword slashed down with a loud bang. Sand and stone filled the sky, sword beams crisscrossing each other, creating an immeasurably deep chasm on the ground.

Mu Yanli’s voice was shrill, “Chu Wanning! Do you still follow the cultivation path?”

“…”

Seeing that he had ignored her, Mu Yanli became even angrier, and shouted sternly: “Could it be that you want to openly oppose the god heirs, defying the will of the heavens?!”

Someone from the spectator’s seats also shouted, “Immortal Elder Beidou, please stop. Are you going to be a felon in the cultivation world?”

Under the explosive killing intent of Huaisha, no one in the surroundings could immediately take half a step forward.

Chu Wanning finally turned his face to the side, looked at the cultivators from the Tianyin Pavilion and said, “… I already am.”

Finished speaking, he clenched his teeth as he carried the dying Mo Ran onto his shoulder and said hoarsely, “Don’t be afraid, it’s all over. Let’s go, let’s go home. I’ll take you home.”

However, when he looked ahead, he saw that there was already a path of blood and bones crisscrossing in front of him. As he killed the cultivators of the Tianyin Pavilion, more and more bloodshot death warriors emerged from behind the broken limbs and bodies.

Where was home?

They had nowhere to go, only hell.

In the end, he didn’t know how many people he had killed before he was finally able to escape. When he brought Mo Ran out of the nine heavens, his entire body was trembling. He had never taken so many innocent lives before. Right now, his body was stained with the blood of Mo Ran, his own blood, and most of all, the blood of the dead soldiers of the Tianyin Pavilion.

Dirty.

It was so dirty that it could not be washed away.

The clouds dispersed before his eyes, leaving him at a loss.

Where should I go?

It was impossible for Mount Jiao, and Mount Longxue was no longer safe… The Sisheng Peak… How could he have the face to drag down the Sisheng Peak?

“Shizun…”

Hearing the hoarse moan in his ear, Chu Wanning suddenly turned around. His face was looking at Mo Ran, which was like golden paper, “You… Take me back.”

“What nonsense is this!”

Mo Ran only shook his head. “You’ve already come to find me. You didn’t leave me behind.” He forced himself to smile, even though his eyes were glazed over. “That’s enough… I have a family. That’s enough…”

“Take me back, take me back… You still have a way out…” His voice became softer and softer, and his eyelashes gradually drooped, but he still held onto Chu Wanning’s sleeve and kept muttering, “You still have a way out…”

“No.” Chu Wanning felt as if his heart was being stabbed by a knife. He held onto Mo Ran’s hand and hugged him tightly, “I have no way out, I won’t go anywhere.”

“…”

“I’ll stay with you.”

If it was in the past, Mo Ran would definitely be ecstatic and elated to hear Chu Wanning say such words to him. But now that he heard it, he was at a loss. He raised his hand, but even with all his strength, he could only lift his hand.

The puddle of blood had already dyed his clothes red. Mo Ran finally lost consciousness and fell into Chu Wanning’s arms.

He wasn’t sure how long it would take for those people to arrive. He brought Mo Ran with him and landed on a hillside nearby. His hand was shaking so badly that he pushed away Mo Ran’s shirt a few times.

— A bloody hole in his heart.

There was an explosion in his head. He did not even dare to look at Mo Ran's face.

He suddenly recalled that in his previous life, Mo Ran had guarded his corpse for two years.

What would he feel during those two years?

"Don't leave, Mo Ran…" He folded his hands in front of his wounds and transferred a stream of spirit energy to him. Chu Wanning, who was covered in blood, stood by Mo Ran, who was also covered in blood, like a wild beast that had been skinned alive by a hunter.

In the afterglow of the apocalypse, blood melts into blood and flesh wraps around the flesh.

"It's not your fault that you can't leave… It's never been your fault…"

Mo Ran, Mo Ran… Mo is darkness, Ran is light. He had sought light all his life, but he could not escape the darkness. Chu Wanning finally mustered up the courage to look at Mo Ran's face. It was only a glance and he was already on the verge of breaking down.

There was not even a shadow of a living person on that face. It was terrifyingly white and covered in blood. There was even a mottled old scar on his forehead — the mark of a stone being smashed.

He could not hold it in any longer. He cried bitterly in front of Mo Ran, his heart aching.

Was this the youth that once surrounded him under the Heaven-Piercing Tower in a brilliant and vigorous manner, telling him to “Xianjun! Please pay attention to me”?

Why… Blood. Why… There was no longer any trace of anger on him, and not even a hint of a smile could be seen on his face.

He couldn’t even recognize him anymore… He couldn’t recognize it.

So what had Mo Weiyu done wrong? In his entire life, he had been subjected to such torture and suffering.

Perhaps it was because he had no relatives, no one, that even fate had humiliated him. The smile he had tried so hard to form in the crevices of his life was eventually seen as a loathsome face.

Who knew the decomposed dust and mud in front of the steps were in April vibrant blooms.

“… Chu Wanning.”

Suddenly, a familiar voice coldly sounded from close by.

“In order to save him, you didn’t even hesitate to damage your good reputation?”

Chu Wanning froze, then suddenly raised his head and saw a tall figure slowly striding towards him against the sunlight.

Taxian-Jun stood among the trees, his eyes squinted as he stared at them.

“I thought the most important thing to you in this world was your innocence.” he said slowly. “I didn’t think you’d end up dirtying yourself for

him.”

As he walked closer, the dark dragon pattern embroidered with black and gold lights sparkled in the sunlight, the red dragon pattern stabbing through the black and gold waves and stopping right in front of them.

Instinctively, Chu Wanning rose to his feet. A golden light shone from his palm, and Tianwen appeared along with it — he stood between Mo Ran’s previous life and his current one.

Taxian-Jun’s eyes turned. His gaze first landed on the rattan vines, which were emitting a golden light. Then, it quietly landed back on Chu Wanning.

At this moment, this man seemed to have been fished out of a pool of blood. Not a single piece of clothes on his body was clean. His eyes were moist, and he was looking at him with a complicated gaze.

“Is he that important to you?”

“…”

Seeing that Chu Wanning did not answer, Taxian-Jun Lord said coldly, “Move aside.”

Chu Wanning did not move. His mind was in a mess, but he still knew that Mo Ran in front of him was just a sharp weapon, a flesh and blood shell.

The sneer on the corner of the body became even more cruel, “What, do you think that I can’t do anything to you just because you are standing on my head like that?”

“… I want to take him away.”

“Where to?”

Just one sentence was like a sharp knife cutting into a clam shell.

Taxian-Jun’s eyes flashed with mockery, “Chu Wanning, ask yourself. In this vast world, other than me, who would be willing to take you in, where would you find a place to stay? Take him away? Don’t be ridiculous.”

He stepped forward like a bolt of lightning, and suddenly grabbed Chu Wanning by the chin, closing in on him.

“The last bit of incomplete spirit core on him belongs to me. You’re mine, too. You’d better get your bearings.”

As the voice rang out, a golden light suddenly shone out. Taxian-Jun was able to withdraw his attacks in time, but he still felt a fiery pain on his face. He carelessly rubbed his ears, and Tianwen had already pulled a vicious wound on his ear. Black blood flowed down his face.

“…” Taxian-Jun remained silent for a long while. He raised his eyelids maliciously, his expression revealing neither rage nor joy. His nose was wrinkled, and his expression and mood were distorted. “Good, very good.”

He laughed sinisterly, waving his sleeve and flapping his black robe like the clouds.

“I didn’t expect that after so long, I would still be able to fight against Tianwen.” He raised his slender fingers and touched his cheek to wipe away the blood. Taxian-Jun’s eyes were dark as he stared at Chu Wanning’s face, “This Venerable one really misses your presence.”

Behind him, his life was hanging by a thread. If he were to delay it even a little longer, he might not be able to make it back to the present. Even

though Chu Wanning's mind was in a mess, he knew that he could not talk too much with Taxian-Jun.

"Tianwen – ten thousand coffins!"

Taxian-Jun cursed under his breath. As soon as his feet touched the ground, a thousand cracks immediately appeared on the ground. Countless thick vines sprouted out from the ground and started sprinting towards him. As for the other vines, they carried Mo-zongshi, who was still unconscious, into their stomachs, protecting him tightly in the depths of the willow branches.

Taxian-Jun Lord looked at Chu Wanning, who was standing in the middle of the formation, and almost laughed in anger, "Are you treating me this differently?"

"Tianwen, Wind."

"…"

His questioning had only been exchanged for an even fiercer attack. The knife-like gale engulfed everything, and it would be a lie to say that there was no resentment.

Taxian-Jun stared at the disheveled man on the ground and suddenly felt a wave of bitterness in his heart that he hadn't felt in a long time. In that split-second, the wind blade struck his abdomen. He felt pain, and looked down to see black blood gushing out from the wound.

He hurt him again.

Whether it was his previous life or his current life, Chu Wanning had never placed him in his eyes.

He felt a sense of uneasiness rising in his throat, and Taxian-Jun's smile suddenly tightened. He raised his hand and shouted: "Bu'gui!"

The green field and red bridge from that year… Another year goes but still you do not return. But so what if the emperor had returned? He came back, the only reason why he didn't fight with his sword was not for such a stupid reason but to take his blood, and to take his life!

He suddenly felt extreme hatred.

The two martial spirits let out a dragon and tiger roar when they clashed with Tianwen.

Two lifetimes.

Two lifetimes had passed since the last life-and-death battle between these two weapons. The engravings on the hilt of Bu'gui had long been worn out. It was as if the past of Taxian-Jun and Immortal Beidou were already dilapidated.

Golden splendor and eerie blue rays of light were biting each other, as if they hated each other to the bone and blood, but also seemed to be lingering around each other. In the midst of all this light, Taxian-Jun stared fixedly at the face in front of him.

The blood was mottled and the expression on his face was complicated.

Alive.

His heart was burning with excruciating pain.

He gritted his teeth and suddenly asked with extreme unwillingness, "Why is it clearly me… Yet you want to fight another battle with me for his sake."

“…”

Chu Wanning did not know what to say. Nothing that he could say could change his mood.

However, he didn’t know if the light was just too dazzling, but it gave him an illusion. For a moment, he felt as if Taxian-Jun’s eyes were filled with pain and loneliness.

It seemed to be moist.

“You will suffer if he is injured like this. What about this one?” Taxian-Jun’s voice was hoarse and he tried his best to be sinister, but his unwillingness was too lush. He wished that the fire could burn his unwillingness to die, but when it did, the flames would make his eyes red.

“Chu Wanning. You know that after I revived, I saw that there weren’t even any bones left in the Red Lotus Pavilion… “How do you feel?”

Chu Wanning was stunned. Finally, Taxian-Jun, who couldn’t hold back anymore, closed his eyes as the muscles on his face tightened. Anger and humiliation, pain and insanity made him nearly go mad. He suddenly poured all his spirit energy into Forsaken —

There was a loud bang!

The mountain range cracked and the earth shook. The surrounding vegetation was instantly pulverized by the violent flow of spirit energy, and even the willow vine could not endure the violent nature, and was disintegrated into ashes one after another.

“Nearly ten years!”

Amidst the scattering tribulation, Taxian-Jun's berserk eyes could be seen clearly. His eyes were completely bloodshot.

"Ten years, Chu Wanning. He was reincarnated in the past, and this Venerable One was awakened in Sisheng Peak, in the Wushan Palace. For ten years I have read in letters of your joys, of his exploits — What about me? And me!"

The blade suddenly slashed down, causing sand and rocks to fly everywhere, and the ground to split into an unfathomable chasm.

"From the beginning till the end, I have only one person! When he turned around, I didn't even have a handful of ashes!"

With a slash of the blade, Chu Wanning returned Tianwen and welcomed it with Huaisha in his hand.

However, it was this deadly blade that made Taxian-Jun the Heavens even more ruthless. At this moment, he was like an evil spirit that had just returned from the underworld, filled with deep hatred.

The look in his eyes even caused Chu Wanning to be taken aback.

…… Why was he so emotional when he was just a corpse?

"What right do you have to treat me like this?"

Raging flames burned through the trees, and the falling leaves were still smeared with fire. The corners were scorched black, and the stars were bright and dark. Taxian-Jun was dressed in black. He suddenly retracted his power and moved backwards, standing amidst the desolation and bleakness of the leaves and the blooming of the grass.

Chu Wanning didn't know why he suddenly pulled back, but he saw that he had closed his eyes, and that pair of thick, thick eyelashes covered his overly pale face. Taxian-Jun murmured:

"Why are you treating me like this?"

As his voice fell, the ground faintly rumbled.

Suddenly, Chu Wanning's face changed. He turned around at once.

"Mo Ran!"

Just as he was about to turn around and stand in front of the unconscious Mo Ran, he heard the bone-chilling, bone-piercing words.

Taxian-Jun said, "Damn it. The ten thousand man coffin."

It was earth-shattering!

Chu Wanning's whole body was covered in cold blood. Willow vines… Willow vines… Taxian-Jun and Mo Weiyu were the same person. Mo Weiyu could summon Bu'gui, and Taxian-Jun could summon Jiangui as well!

The thick vines shot out from the ground and wrapped around Chu Wanning's limbs. As for the other, it cut open the already damaged Mo Ran and pulled him out from the deep parts of the willow leaves that was protected by Tianwen.

Chu Wanning was burning with anxiety, "Stop!"

No one paid any attention to him. Taxian-Jun gracefully walked in front of Mo Ran and coldly looked into the depths of the vine, at the face that was identical to his.

His gaze shifted downwards and landed on the chest that was already badly mutilated.

Chu Wanning snapped, “Tianwen!”

He didn’t even raise his head and just pointed at the air. The re-emerging golden willow vine and the fiery red ghost were entangled together. For a moment, no victory or defeat would be decided.

Chu Wanning’s lips turned white and the meridians in his hands bulged. He tried to break free of the damned binding with his own flesh and blood.

“…” Finally, Taxian-Jun turned his eyes away, and gave him a complicated look. His thin lips moved, and he sighed softly, “Chu Wanning. You truly care about him.”

As soon as he finished speaking, he suddenly raised his hand and stabbed straight towards Mo Ran’s chest!

As long as he had the last bit of the spiritual core, he would be able to recover. He was the real Taxian-Jun Emperor. He was the real Mo Weiyu. He was the person who had endured ten years of loneliness. He was the one who was supposed to get what he wanted.

He should be alive.

“Sha —!”

However, in the time it took for a spark to fly off of a piece of flint, a golden light flashed and pierced through Taxian-Jun’s palm.

Black blood dripped down.

Taxian-Jun stared at his hand that had been pierced through by the Tianwen Vine, and remained expressionless for a moment.

Pain?

Disappointment?

Resentment?

He had tasted it so many times in his life that he had probably gotten used to it.

The last thing he did was to slowly turn his head back and look at the man who was tightly bound by ghosts. He was still gasping for breath, and had a determined look in his eyes.

Taxian-Jun looked at his palm, which was dripping with blood. After a while, he smiled.

“Chu Wanning.”

“…”

“Why didn’t you just take my heart out?”

Chu Wanning was trembling. It was as if thousands of tiny thorns had grown out of his body, stabbing into every inch of his flesh. He frowned, his eyes filled with pain under his eyelashes.

Taxian-Jun Lord looked at him and poured his spiritual power into his palm, cutting off the willow branch.

At this moment, he was not in a hurry to dig up Mo Ran-burned heart. Step by step, he walked towards Chu Wanning.

He walked closer and touched Chu Wanning's pale face with his bloody hand.

"I'm asking you." He seemed to be playing it down, yet it also seemed as if his hatred was as deep as his bones as he said, "If you are so ruthless, why didn't you just dig out this reputed one's heart?"

"…"

"In your eyes, just what do you think I am…"

Taxian-Jun sighed softly, then closed his eyes.

Naturally, Chu Wanning would not answer him. Taxian-Jun wanted to say something, but at that moment, he noticed the willow vine emitting a dazzling fiery red radiance. He seemed to remember something as he murmured: "An interrogation?"

Since it was the same as Tianwen, then Tianwen's interrogation ability was the same even if it was the same as Jiangui.

Taxian-Jun's dark purple eyes suddenly lit up. He really wanted to use the devil to interrogate Chu Wanning for the truth. His lips moved, but he probably didn't know what to say, so he pursed them again. After a long while, he tried his luck, "Cough… If…"

"This Venerable one is referring to if."

The question he wanted to ask seemed too disgraceful, but if he did not ask such a godsend opportunity, he would regret it for the rest of his life.

He hesitated for a while longer before finishing his sentence, "If, in his previous life… I left early, before you."

The light of Jiangui was getting brighter and brighter, forcing the people who were being held down to speak the truth at any time.

Taxian-Jun raised his eyes.

“You… would you remember me too?”

This man’s desire to know the answer was too strong, so Chu Wanning felt as if millions of needles had stabbed into his body, tearing his guts out. Every needle was trying to force out the truth in his heart, and he was trembling, his bones trembling, his face ashen.

Taxian-Jun stared at him unblinkingly, his thin lips parted slightly, his thoughts deep within his heart.

“Would you?”

“I…” The pain seeped into his bone marrow as if his internal organs were about to be torn apart. Chu Wanning, who had been forced into a corner, raised his eyes and looked at Taxian-Jun in a daze.

The handsome face in the moist mist was so familiar, so full of desire, so much so that it seemed to be filled with love.

It was actually just like that Yue Ye a long time ago. On the tides of Flying Flower Island, Mo Ran rode on a flying sword with him. He held his hand and said, “I love you, what about you?”

His eyes suddenly became wet.

Chu Wanning mumbled hoarsely, “……It’s the same…”

Perhaps it was because his answer was too soft, or perhaps it was due to some other reason. Taxian-Jun moved even closer, almost sticking close to Chu Wanning as he sweated, revealing a face devoid of any human color.

“Like what?”

“It’s the same…” His eyelashes drooped down, and when they overlapped, they were warm and blurry, “I won’t… I won’t let you go before me…”

“…”

“I’m sorry.” His voice was hoarse, like a broken xun, “I did not protect you well.”

Taxian-Jun was suddenly stunned.

His originally bloodless face instantly became even more desolate.

His eardrums rumbled like a clap of thunder, and he couldn’t help but think of the Tianshan Heavenly Lake. When that person fell into his embrace, he used his blood-stained hand to lightly poke his forehead.

The man said, “It’s this master’s fault. I won’t blame you in life or death.”

His heart suddenly hurt, as if something had split open inside.

“… Wanning…” He stood stiffly where he was, like a wooden sculpture.

He once again stretched out his hand, but this time he did not frown. He did not even know why, but he reached out his hand just like that, wanting to touch that face that was so similar to his previous life.

Icy, bloody face.

Suddenly, a sharp whistle pierced his eardrums.

Taxian-Jun's fingers that were about to touch his cheek froze.

As far as the corpse was concerned, that pair of eyes that carried too much emotion suddenly became empty and vacant. Taxian-Jun lowered his arm, and after this whistle passed, it was as if he had lost his self-awareness. He slowly backed away, then waved his hand and removed all his weapons.

Be it in the previous life, or this life, or whatever it was like, it had all disappeared.

Chu Wanning fell into the dust. When he looked up, he saw a man in white clothes standing in the distance. He wore a mask, holding a jade flute in one hand and a cane in the other.

The man was standing at the end of the forest, amidst the bamboo leaves that were scattered everywhere. His figure was like a lotus, quietly standing there and leading Taxian-Jun towards his direction.

"You are…"

"Take Mo-zongshi and leave." The man sighed. His voice had clearly been distorted by the spell, "I can't hold on for too long. He will soon regain his consciousness."

"…"

"Let's go." The man said, "The Tianyin Pavilion and Hua Binan will catch up soon. If I get captured by them, I won't be able to change anything."

Chu Wanning clenched his teeth and stood up, then he set Mo Ran up, activated the Ascending Dragon Talisman and summoned the Azure Dragon

to carry them away.

Before the dragon leapt up, he turned his head to glance at the man standing in the depths of the bamboo forest, only to discover that the man needed a staff of light to touch the ground in order to move forward.

There were some vague memories intertwined in his mind, but he could not think of anything at the moment.

“… Thank you very much.”

The man only shook his head and urged again, “Let’s go.”

The paper dragon knew Chu Wanning’s feelings, so it opened its mouth, “Little brother is very kind, my master would like to ask for your name, if fate allows in the future, he can come and thank you.”

“…” The man was silent for a moment before he whispered, “Me?”

The trees rustled, and in the midst of all the sounds, his voice seemed hollow.

“I’m just a man who’s finally free.”

The paper dragon wanted to ask more, but Chu Wanning knew that this man would never reveal his identity. He greeted the man, patted the dragon’s body and said, “Let’s go.”

Since he had spoken, the paper dragon knew what was important and didn’t say anything more. It suddenly soared into the sky and disappeared into the sky without a trace.

The earth was shaken by the wind, and the man in white, who wore a mask over his face, stood quietly where he was for a while. He raised his head, and only when the wind had gradually weakened and the surroundings had become silent did he look at the sky that he could no longer see, and his back that he could no longer see.

“Disciple Shi Mei greets shizun.”

Sunlight shone down onto his clean clothes.

“Shizun, please take care of yourself on the long journey to the martial world.”

Ch. 278 [Sisheng Peak] Never Before

In these past few days, regardless of whether it was the upper or lower cultivation world, everyone was abuzz with the rumor that the Tianyin Pavilion, which had been standing for several thousand years, had been robbed for the first time. And the thief was the world's number one Grandmaster, Chu Wanning.

He had killed eleven elites of the Tianyin Pavilion and wounded a hundred. He had taken the felon, Mo Weiyu, with him and left.

Some people said that Chu Wanning had gone mad, and some people said that he was just like Mo Weiyu, a beast in disguise. There were also some who had seen the details clearly because they were too close. They were furious — there was something not right between Chu Wanning and Mo Ran, there was something fishy going on between them.

Very dirty.

However, no matter how many people were discussing outside, Chu Wanning and Mo Weiyu did not appear in the martial arts world again. No one knew where they were.

The most righteous Grandmaster in the world had taken away the most dangerous evil ghost in the world.

Then, they disappeared completely.

The wooden window was ajar, the snow was soft, and the curtain was covered with fresh moss.

Four days had passed since the commotion within the Tianyin Pavilion. A pot of porridge had already been cooked outside, and there were all sorts of evaluations going on. Only the empty mountain was quiet.

Suddenly, someone came out from the depths of the empty forest and walked into the window frame of the colored ink scroll. He held a large oil-paper umbrella in his hand.

Hugging a bundle of firewood, he pushed open the door and entered. It was very cold in the room, so he stacked the logs by the hearth, added a few chopping sticks to the hearth, and turned the flames on until they were weak.

It had been a long time since anyone had used this place. Although it had been roughly cleaned, there was still a musty smell in the air. To this end, he specially broke off from the outside a branch containing dew white plum, brought back and placed on the headboard.

Chu Wanning sat down and looked at the man lying on the narrow bed.

On the fourth day, he still hadn't woken up.

Ever since he escaped from Taxian-Jun, he had used the spells he had learnt in his previous life along with the spiritual energy that he had never lost in his previous life to keep Mo Ran afloat. However, even after so much time had passed, Mo Ran was still dazed and lifeless. His spirit core could no longer be restored.

"This house was built by my Shizun when he was travelling. It's been a long time since anyone has lived here, so it still has a bit of a smell to it." Chu Wanning looked at his face with rapt attention, "I know you don't like

incense, but you don’t hate flowers. I brought a pear of balsam and it should go on for a long time.”

Mo Ran lay, his eyelashes dropped.

The way he slept was very quiet and peaceful. It was a rare moment in his life.

For the past few days, Mo Ran had been sleeping peacefully like this. After finishing all the work that he needed to do, Chu Wanning stayed by his side and talked to him.

In the past, when they were together, Mo Ran had always talked while he was the one listening.

Who would have thought that one day, the person who said that would turn the tables on the person who heard it.

“The enchantment outside has been strengthened and the Forbidden Spell set up. No one will find this place. I’ve brought back the firewood and food. There won’t be any other matters for some time now.”

After a pause, he sighed and said, “Why are you still unwilling to wake up?”

As he spoke, he reached out his hand and stroked Mo Ran’s hair.

The pool of fire swayed. He sat on the edge of the bed and waited for a long time. The shadow cast on the ground moved with the sunlight, but he still did not open his eyes.

Chu Wanning closed the curtain and sighed softly.

“Since you still want to sleep, then go to sleep… I’ll go on with the story I told you yesterday and tell it to you.”

“Sorry, you said you like listening to bedtime stories, but I don’t know how to tell anything… So, we can only talk about what happened to us before.” He was silent for a moment, then said gently, “Um… What did you talk about yesterday? Let me think. Oh yeah, about how I found out that you were hit by a cursed spell in my previous life, I’ve always wanted to help you undo it.”

“But the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower was so deeply rooted that nothing I can do was of any use,” said Chu. “This life it was resolved, but I never thought it would turn out like this.”

He touched the back of his hand.

It was always that cold.

Just like that, he held Mo Ran’s hand, softly saying such words to him.

In the past, because of their schemes and also because of their personality, many things had never been spoken on the surface. As a result, they had been wrong, and thus, there was no way for them to find each other.

Chu Wanning regretted.

What if he was more honest? Would everything change just like that? Would he have realized earlier that Mo Ran had been poisoned by the flower poison?

He could look back.

“You have been wanting to atone for your sins since you were alive.” Chu Wanning closed his eyes and sighed. In the end, he said in a low voice, “But do you still remember how you suffered so much? Think about it. Mo Ran, think about it…”

You’ve never owed me anything.

From the beginning, I owed you.

Please, wake up.

If you can wake up, if you can remember those lost memories, then you will know… The truth of all this began seven years ago, on that rainy night when I was in seclusion.

—

That was the point where his fate had changed with Mo Ran. It was a day in his life that he had not paid much attention to. That day, the rain and wind was blowing in the Red Lotus Pavilion. Rain was pouring down from the roof tiles, and thunder and lightning were flashing, but he could not hear them.

Chu Wanning’s core was weak, and that year was the year that it would be repaired.

In order to let the disciples who were accompanying him feel at ease, before he went into closed-door cultivation, he had already cast the Sound Destroying Curse on himself, and after that, he quietly sat in the pavilion with his spiritual sense entering the Great Void.

Thus, he could not see the tension in front of him.

That day, in front of him, in the midst of the thunderstorm and the Red Lotus Pavilion, Mo Ran and Shi Mei were staring at each other. Mo Ran's face was pale, and Shi Mei's expression was sinister.

A truth that Chu Wanning did not know before slowly unfolded in the rain.

During his closed door cultivation, Mo Ran, who had just entered the sect, felt wronged because of the matter of "picking flowers". He said that he couldn't serve his Shizun well and didn't want to come and accompany him.

But how could he take the words of a young man seriously?

After tossing and turning for two nights, Mo Ran still remembered his grudges. He suppressed the depression in his heart and went to the Red Lotus Pavilion by himself, wanting to take the place of Shi Mei.

However, he did not expect that he would run into a plot that would change his entire life just because of this…

Shi Mei was using the curse flower on Chu Wanning.

Confusion, shock, fear, anger, and disappointment. Instantly, his internal organs were burnt through.

He rushed forward, and seized the blade in Shi Mei's hand. He bellowed like a beast, "What are you doing?!"

Shi Mingjing only had a moment of surprise before his beautiful peach blossom eyes narrowed.

He smiled, "I was wondering who it was. As of now, there are many layers of barriers around the Red Lotus Pavilion. It can only enter the three of us

disciples as well as the Sect Leader of the Sisheng Peak. Young Lord, Sect Leader, whoever comes here will be in trouble.

Mo Ran had anxiously ran over. He panted and stood in front of Chu Wanning. The night wind was blowing his clothes and his hair.

He stared intently at Shi Mei's face.

"Why are you taking advantage of Shizun's closed door cultivation? You. You…" At that time, Mo Ran simply could not believe that the gentle and quiet Senior Brother Mingjing would have a second fiendish devil's face. "Who the hell are you?!"

Shi Mei laughed: "A-Ran, you are so cute. I am naturally your Senior Brother Mingjing. Who else could I be?"

He looked at the way Mo Ran was protecting Chu Wanning.

A new disciple, so small, overestimating himself.

Like a bad joke.

"Didn't you say that you hated Shizun and didn't want to see him again?"

Because he was confident, Shi Mei teased and mocked him at a leisurely pace.

"When I passed you the script, you told me that you hated a merciless person like Shizun to death. Why did you change your mind and come look for him within two days?"

"If I did not find him, who knows what you would have done today!" Mo Ran was both angry and sad, "Shi Mingjing, it was all in vain for me to think

about you back then. It was in vain for me to believe in you now!”

“Aiya, you yourself are so easy to coax. Who are you blaming?” Shi Mei laughed, “A bowl of wontons and a few warm words has already tricked you to the point that you are dead set on it. Actually, you are just a dog that no one wants. Whoever gives you a bone, you can leave with them.”

“…”

“Why are you staring at me like that? How about it? Is it delicious?”

Mo Ran’s teeth had turned cold and his black eyes looked wet and cold in the night. After a while, his Adam’s apple bobbed up and down. “Your heart is actually black.”

“The black one is the heart that has been infected by the parasite, the sick one. My heart is neither sick nor in pain, so naturally, it will be the same as the current you and my Shizun, red.”

He paused, and with a twist of his white and exquisite finger, an extremely gorgeous flower appeared. The flower was in bud and had not yet bloomed. It had a black petal, the edges of which were flashing with silver light.

Shi Mei grabbed that flower and sniffed it.

Flowers and beauties, all kinds of beauties, but all kinds of dangers lurking in every direction.

It was chilling.

Mo Ran muttered, “Just what are you planning to do…”

He looked to be in a good mood, “Actually, it’s useless to explain it to you. I only need to cast a spell and you will soon forget about tonight’s events. You won’t remember anything.”

Black flowers pressed down on his watery fingers.

“However, seeing as we’re from the same sect, I can tell you. This is the bud my mother gave birth to, it is the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower that I painstakingly cultivated. If no one appreciates it, it will disappear from this world. I feel that it lacks some flavor.”

“Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower?”

“Shidi, there are eight hardships in life, and there are also endless grievances in death. In this world, there is a type of flower that was left behind by the demons. It is extremely difficult for mortals to grow. This kind of flower drinks human blood when it’s young. After blooming, it needs to be rooted in the heart, absorbing the kindness and warmth in the heart, nurturing the viciousness and hatred.” He said, stroking the black petals affectionately.

“No matter how good one is in this mortal world, as long as there is a trace of dissatisfaction in one’s heart, they would all be spurred by bitterness and hatred, and gradually… Become a devil that kills people without blinking an eye.”

His eyes shone like snake scales.

His peach blossom eyes turned as he stared at Chu Wanning, who was sitting in meditation.

“Do you want to plant the Long Hate Flower into Shizun’s heart?!”

“Why are you so surprised? He’s the greatest Grandmaster in the world. Tell me, if he becomes a devil, how much power would he have?”

“Are you crazy?! How can you. How could you bear to…”

“He was cold-blooded — didn’t you say? I turned him into the person you hate the most. Junior brother, from now on, you can rightly hate him. Wouldn’t that be perfect?”

Mo Ran’s scalp felt like it was about to explode, and his spine felt numb from the attack.

“You… Ridiculous… That was just a moment of anger. I-I didn’t hate him, so quickly! Put it down! Don’t hurt him like that…”

Shi Mei asked with interest, “Why?”

Why?

He was so good. The tables in the Red Lotus Pavilion were filled with blueprints drawn by him. Whether it was mecha construction or weapons made for him, he was always worried about the safety of others.

He was pure and clean, like the first new snow that fell in the early winter.

Even though he was very strict and sometimes did not treat others with kindness, he would hold his hand again and again to teach himself how to read and write.

He would accompany him in training, from day to night.

He was willing to accept him. From then on, Mo Weiyu was no longer alone, only having fake relatives and happiness.

From then on, he had a true identity.

Chu Wanning's disciple.

"You can't hurt him…" He wanted to wake his Shizun up, but he didn't know what to do. He could only stubbornly stand in front of Chu Wanning, "He can't become an evil spirit. He's so good, if you let him kill… He will be sad."

He didn't know how to express the intense grief and anger in his chest. He could only try to persuade him with the simplest, simplest, and even the most incoherent sentences.

It was as if he hadn't learned any spell in time and could only use his thin and weak body to resist it.

Letting a good man kill someone is an extremely painful thing.

He could already feel it bone-deep in the flames of the House of Drunken Jade.

Shi Mei looked at him and found him to be quite funny.

"Sad? When he becomes that kind of person, then he won't feel sad. A-Ran, you don't need to worry about this."

"But why would you do it?! Why do you insist on hurting him?!"

Shi Mei didn't reply immediately. He lowered his eyelashes, paused for a moment, and then said: "Because I also have something I need to do."

"…"

“I need the strongest power for me to use.” Shi Mei pursed his lips, “You won’t understand.”

The youth, Mo Ran, seemed to be using his pitiful little strength to convince the enigmatic senior brother in front of him with all his might.

“You should know what kind of person Shizun is, even if… Even if you treated him like this, polishing off all the kindness in his heart and turning him into a murderous demon, he wouldn’t listen to you and be of use to you — You… You can’t do it.”

“How do you know I can’t do it?” Shi Mei chuckled, “Oh, I forgot to tell you. I fused with half of my residual soul in this Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower. As long as I blossom in his heart, he will slowly fall in love with me.”

Mo Ran was terrified, “You are insane!”

Shi Mei closed in on him. The curtain of night was illuminated by the lightning, and a loud explosion resounded, illuminating the beautiful face of Shi Mei.

“Like you said, he is so good, he is mine to use. How can he not become my man? So what if he became a demon? When the time comes, he will only listen to my every word and be infatuated with me. Wouldn’t that be amazing?”

He knew that Chu Wanning would not wake up at this moment, nor would he hear the conversation between the two. Therefore, he was not afraid at all and said calmly, “Shidi, please move to the side. Do you really think that you, who have just cultivated the elementary spirit core, can beat me?”

Mo Ran gritted his teeth and said, “I won’t allow it.”

Shi Mei just smiled. Then in a blink of an eye, he had already moved behind Mo Ran like a ghost. His hand was already suspended above Chu Wanning's head, holding the black flower that was about to bloom.

"A-Ran, do you know how much effort I put in to cultivate this one? I have painstakingly trained only for the day that Shizun would go into seclusion."

He lowered his body, his cheek almost touching the side of Chu Wanning's face.

"He will become my blade, my puppet, he will become my partner. What can you stop?"

Flowers falling.

His life was about to change.

Suddenly, he heard the youth's stern voice and blocked his path with all his might.

"Don't touch him!"

"You're really funny." Shi Mei slowly lost his patience, "Did you know…"

"Let me do it."

The rest of the words were cut off between his lips. A clap of thunder tore through the sky from the horizon, and a flame bolt tore through the night sky.

Shi Mei narrowed his eyes and asked: "What?"

Mo Ran trembled.

He had only been in the sect for such a short time, and he had only learned a few techniques. He was fated to be unable to stop Shi Mei, and he did not know how to wake Chu Wanning up.

He was unarmed and undisciplined.

Only flesh and blood remained.

Therefore, he could only say, “Let me do it.”

Shi Mei was quiet for a while before laughing, “Do you know what you’re talking about?”

“I know.”

“The Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower was cultivated from the blood and sweat of my mother and my soul to nurture it.” Shi Mei straightened his body and stared at Mo Ran’s face, “Who do you think you are? You think you are qualified?”

“I…” After clenching his fingers into a fist, he suddenly raised his head and said, “I may not be qualified, but I am much more suitable than Shizun.”

There were spots of light that flickered in Shi Mei’s eyes: “…What do you mean?”

“You said that this flower could give birth to hatred in one’s heart. But what if that person doesn’t have any grievances against others?”

Shi Mei was silent for a moment, then laughed: “Impossible. Everyone has a grudge in their hearts, even the Immortal Elder Beidou is no exception.”

However, as his hand caressed the petals of the hate flower, a wave of restlessness gradually arose.

In fact, all these years he had been wondering if Chu Wanning could be used as a breeding ground for the hate flowers. What if this person never had a shred of hatred in his heart?

Cultivating another flower required time and effort, not to mention the soul splitting was too painful. He didn't want to experience it a second time.

Seeing him hesitate, Mo Ran stepped forward. "In all these years, have you ever seen Shizun hate anyone?"

"…"

"You said that the Flower of Endless Hate will devour the kindness and warmth in your heart… To ordinary people, these things may not be everything, but you should understand it better than I do, Shi Mei."

The rain was getting heavier and heavier, and the trees were bleak.

"Shi Mingjing, aren't you afraid that he will gradually lose all his memories and forget everything good? Aren't you afraid that someone will find out?"

Shi Mei suddenly narrowed his eyes.

His pupils were dark and gloomy, as if there was a snake flicking its tongue.

Mo Ran was coming towards him step by step, his heart beating like a drum, noisy, more urgent than the rain.

“I don’t know what you’re going to do, but if you insist on offering it to me, then so be it.”

“You…”

“I have hatred in my heart, and it can be nurtured. I don’t have too many pure, good memories. Even if I gradually forget them, it’s not easy for people to find them.”

Mo Ran was trying to persuade the executioner to turn the blade around and place it on his own neck.

“I still can’t do anything, but Shizun and Uncle both said that my gifts are high and my spirit energy is sufficient… I can do it.”

He trembled slightly as his fingernail entered his palm, but he still persisted in speaking.

“I can take his place and become the knife and weapon you want.”

“I can replace him and become the demon you want for killing.”

“Shi Mei.” In the end, he stood firmly in front of Shi Mingjing. Lightning flashed, and a gust of wind blew, blowing the curtain of rain diagonally into the pavilion.

There was a wave of coldness.

“Let me do it.”

It was probably because he had hit the nail on the head with this, or maybe it was because Shi Mei was not sure if Chu Wanning could make the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower take effect, or because the Spiritual Energy

that Mo Ran displayed back then was unparalleled, so the time he took to form his Spiritual Core was even faster than the favored son of heaven, Xue Meng, and it was so fast that it made one's eyes go red.

In short, after weighing the pros and cons several times, it was still the black bud that was about to bloom that pierced the bottom of Mo Ran's heart.

After doing all of this, Shi Mei sat by the stone table and started chewing on the food with his hands. His eyes seemed to be in a trance.

He did not understand why.

Why did Mo Ran help Chu Wanning by blocking this fatal blow? With life, soul, future, and dignity.

They clearly only had a year or so of destiny between Shizun and disciple.

He didn't understand.

Shi Mei watched as the black flower bud melted into his chest. Although it was just a soft leaf, it felt like a needle could pierce through flesh and blood and pierce into the deepest parts of his body.

During this whole process, Mo Ran kept holding it in, not saying a word. Only when his stamen was like some kind of Soul Devouring Insect with strange tentacles and a fierce seed drilled into his heart, did Mo Ran finally let out a whimper and kneel on the ground.

The young man trembled in front of him, while Shi Mei just sat there quietly. His jade arms were shining as he watched Mo Ran spasm in front of him and vomit blood in front of him.

“Does it hurt?”

“Cough cough…”

Shi Mei was interested, but his gaze was still gentle: “How much pain does it cause? I’ve never cast this kind of spell on anyone before, and I’m really curious. My good junior brother, what does it feel like to be pierced through the heart by a hate flower?”

His gaze was like spring water, flowing past Mo Ran’s body on the ground, and finally landing on Mo Ran’s pale knuckles.

Mo Ran’s fingers subconsciously dug into the ground. Even the tips of his fingers had been torn, forming lines of bloody marks.

“Does it hurt more than digging your heart?”

Mo Ran did not answer him.

The pain was real. However, it was much better than the pain he had suffered that year on the unmarked cemetery outside Linyi City.

It was much better than watching one’s mother die in front of him.

It was much better than digging through the mud and burying the flesh.

“Back then…” He didn’t manage to protect his mother properly, and now, he could finally… “I can protect Shizun.”

His eyes were unfocused as he mumbled to himself.

Those best memories were fading away bit by bit, his pure and clean past was fading away bit by bit, those few pitiful and beautiful memories flashed before his eyes…

A bowl of hot soup was given to him and his mother one year.

An old farmer had once offered to ask them to come in on a snowy night to warm themselves and set them near a fire.

Some other begging child had shared half a loaf of meat loaf with him.

Duan Yihan pulled his hand and brought him over the autumn river bank where dragonflies danced…

There was no hatred, no sadness, no unwillingness, no apprehension, no hostility.

Everything was peaceful.

It was the purest of good.

He saw himself carefully embroidering a haitang handkerchief under the lantern light, saw himself supporting his cheek as he sat at the stone table, smiling and watching his Shizun eat the mooncake. He saw them drinking under the moon, and the first time he brought a pear blossom wine for his Shizun.

These memories would have to be forgotten forever.

He would never remember again…

Henceforth, hatred would be born, and the gentle memories of the past would be transformed.

From then on, the burning passion in his heart would be extinguished, and there would be no more flames. The spring water in his eyes would freeze and turn into ice.

From then on, he would go against his mother's last words.

Duan Yihan said: "Repay your gratitude. Don't hold a grudge."

I can't do it anymore.

He did not know where he got the strength from, but he clenched his teeth and endured the tearing pain in his internal organs, trying to stand up. He staggered, but he could not stand up, so he knelt and crawled until his soul trembled.

"Shizun…"

He struggled and wriggled, trembling pitifully.

Shi Mei thought that he was going to do something, but in the end, he realized that this youth was just doing his best, using his final bit of passion and gratitude to knock him down.

Tears welled up.

"Shizun, soon I… I'm going to disappoint you…"

Rain falling heavily in the night.

"Very soon, I won't be able to remember you anymore. I won't be able to… I won't be able to learn from you anymore… You will hate me, hate me…"

He was crying, telling him his final farewell before his good sense was gone.

However, Chu Wanning could not hear him.

He was right in front of him, but he couldn't hear anything.

“I’m sorry, the reason why I broke that flower was because I wanted to give it to you. Shizun, the reason I’m here today, was originally… I intended to apologize to you when you wake up and put all that I have in my mind into words… I would tell you everything.”

His voice was hoarse, as if it had been gouged out of his throat along with his flesh.

“Shizun, thank you for not looking down on me, and for taking me in…”

“I really, really…”

His heart suddenly jerked as his eyes were filled with blood. This was the sign that the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower was about to take root. It was also an indication that the love art had begun to take effect.

His forehead fell and heavily crashed into the ground.

He sobbed silently.

“I’m serious, I really love you.”

Shi Mei sighed softly. His expression seemed to be filled with both interest and pity.

However, whether it was his pity or his interest, everything was bland and nothing could enter his heart.

He walked over and lifted Mo Ran’s face. He stared at Mo Ran’s eyes that were gradually becoming blurry and softly asked, “Come, junior brother. Tell me, what do you want now?”

“What do you want…”

What is it?

In front of Heaven-Piercing Tower.

Duan Yihan was laughing, Chu Wanning lowered his gaze.

Xun Fengruo's elder sister from the music industry revealed her two sharp canines, her eyes flashing with a fervent and excited luster. She said to him, "Ah Fengruo, I'll soon earn enough money to ransom myself. I'll take you along with me. We'll leave this place. Elder sister will take you to live a good life."

Although Mo Ran was still unconscious, he was still doing his best to capture these memories that were scattered like grass.

He muttered, "What I ask for in return is… Not… To hold a grudge."

Shi Mei shook his head and waited for a while.

He then asked, "What do you want?"

Mo Ran said hoarsely and persistently, "What I ask for… One day, to die under Shizun's hands."

Shi Mei froze for a moment, then he laughed: "Die under Shizun's hands?"

"I don't want to be a devil… I don't want to go to hell…" He mumbled over and over again, "I don't want to remember only hate, Shizun…"

He had actually freed himself from Shi Mei's grasp, kneeling down in front of Chu Wanning, almost howling in pain. His eyes were bloodshot as his consciousness became more and more chaotic.

"Kill me."

In the end, the only thing that remained was this wish.

“On the first day of my wickedness… Please, please. Kill me.”

The torrential rain poured down, engulfing the inky night. The young man’s hoarse cry that sounded like a trapped beast was heard. The sound of thunder rumbled, the bamboo forest was desolate, and all the lotus flowers in the Red Lotus Pavilion fell into the pond in the middle of the night.

There were eight hardships in life, and there was a deep hatred in death.

Before he lost his consciousness, Mo Ran stretched out his trembling hand and held onto the corner of Chu Wanning’s clothes. He looked up and muttered to himself, “Shizun… You… Don’t you worry about me…”

You keep me in mind.

How much suffering and hatred in this world had been blotted out by the torrential rain?

After two lifetimes, after finally learning the truth, Chu Wanning finally recalled the past. He vaguely remembered the next day, when he finished one cycle of cultivation, he woke up from his meditative state.

Golden light scattered into the bamboo pavilion, and the flower blossoms within the pavilion were almost all gone. Fangfei, who used to have a branch, was soon to be grind into dust.

The rain had stopped. Chu Wanning blinked and turned around to see the Shi Mei standing by the stone table, cooking tea. The mist rose in spirals, and Shi Mei’s face was so gentle and beautiful. He smiled when he saw that he had woken up.

“Shizun.”

“Why aren’t you going to rest? You have been guarding it for the past three days.

The teacup was filled with boiling amber water.

Shi Mei served him tea and said with a smile, “Today I will be the one guarding Shizun. A-Ran is a child and has been punished by Shizun. I still feel bad about that.”

Chu Wanning was taken aback, “He’s not coming anymore?”

With the soft black eyelashes fluttering in the wind, like two tender stamens on a branch in early spring, he replied, “He’s not coming. He went to the library to help the Sect Leader organize the books.”

Chu Wanning was lost for a moment.

He had originally planned to take advantage of the two of them being alone to have a good chat with Mo Ran about the matter of the flower breaking. In the end, he had been too strict with himself…

He had never encountered a violation of the law by his disciple, and thinking about it afterwards, he also felt that the punishment was too severe.

However, Mo Ran didn’t even want to see him, nor was he willing to go into closed door cultivation with him.

Chu Wanning closed his eyes.

“Shizun, let’s drink some tea.”

After a long while, he agreed. He took the cup of fragrant tea from Shi Mei's white and long hands, blew away some of the mist, and took a sip.

The tea was too full, and when he received it, a few drops sprinkled onto his robes.

Shi Mei was extremely meticulous. When he saw it, he smiled and said, "I have a handkerchief."

"No need to borrow yours." Chu Wanning took out a white handkerchief embroidered with haitang and wiped away the remaining tea stains.

"What a beautiful handkerchief. It looks like the best one in town. Shizun, did you buy it yourself?"

For a moment, Chu Wanning wanted to say, "No, it was given by Mo Ran."

He embroidered it.

A gift for my apprenticeship.

However, he was in a bad mood and did not want to say it. Furthermore, he felt that his words were inexplicably a bit shameful.

Thus, after a moment of silence, Chu Wanning only replied with a dull "Okay" before folding the handkerchief and putting it away.

After putting the handkerchief away, he let out a soft sigh.

On that day, the sun shone brightly, the desolate wind and rain of last night had only left behind a red light to brush the appendix dry, the lotus leaves had been exposed to the new dew.

"Was it raining hard last night?"

As Shi Mei fiddled with the tea set, his fingers froze as he heard the question. His eyes turned dark: “Huh?”

Chu Wanning cast his gaze on Fangfei, lightly saying, “All the flowers have fallen.”

Shi Mei laughed again and carefully arranged the tea cups. Then, he calmly said, “Last night, there was a thunderstorm. The ruckus lasted for a while before it stopped. It’s going to be a good day. When the ground dries up a bit, I’ll go and sweep away all the falling flowers in the yard.”

Chu Wanning did not say anything else.

In the distance, the sky looked like it was being washed clean. When the sun rose in the east, golden feathers fluttered everywhere.

Indeed.

It was a rare sunny day.

Ch. 279 [Sisheng Peak] Snow Night for the Remaining Life

Nanping valley.

It was late at night, and fresh snow was falling outside the hut.

In the past few days, the injuries on Mo Ran's body became worse and worse. Even if Chu Wanning had used the flower soul sacrifice technique to heal him, the results would still have been minimal.

In the afternoon, he vaguely woke up once, but he was still unconscious. Squinting his eyes, he saw Chu Wanning, so he just cried. He apologized and said not to go, and his words tumbled over and over until he burst into tears.

He had been dreaming, shuttling back and forth through his turbulent years.

For a moment, he thought that he had just been picked up by Xue Zhengyong, and for a while, he thought that he was in the five years that he had lost Chu Wanning.

The only thing he couldn't dream of was his memories that had already been taken away by the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower. He could not dream of all the sacrifices, all the protection, all the innocence.

"Mo Ran…" After serving a bowl of freshly brewed congee, Chu Wanning came to his bedside.

It was a technique from his previous life that could barely be eaten.

He sat down on the edge of the couch, raised his hand, and touched his forehead.

It was very hot.

He called out to him, but he couldn't wake up. Chu Wanning waited until the porridge cooled down and became cold. He felt that he could no longer do this and kept the porridge warm again.

He did not know when Mo Ran would wake up, but if he did, he could always eat something immediately.

"It was cooked with chicken soup, your favorite." Chu Wanning told him softly that the spiritual spells used to maintain Mo Ran's heartbeat had not been broken. However, Mo Ran could not wake up.

If he couldn't wake up, it meant that once his spiritual energy was cut off, he would no longer be able to open his eyes.

There was no way he could save him.

But he couldn't accept it. How could he accept it?

Mo Ran was still alive, even though his aura was still extremely weak. These days, sun, moon, and the morning were all in a daze. Chu Wanning stood by his side, watching his chest move up and down. He felt that there was still hope. Everything could be turned around.

There was still time.

Chu Wanning remembered one night when Mo Ran woke up in a daze. There were no lights on in the room, so Mo Ran just stared at the candlestick, his dry lips were moving slightly.

At that time, he was very excited. He hurriedly held Mo Ran's hand and asked, "What do you want to say?"

"… Lamp…"

"What?"

"… The light. You want a lamp…" Mo Ran looked at the candlestick that he was destined to be unable to light, and tears began to flow down his cheeks, "I want the lamp to be lit…"

In that instant, time overlapped.

It was as though he had returned to that year when he had just taken on a shizun. Mo Ran was sick. The skinny young man was curled up on the bed, feeling extremely drowsy.

When Chu Wanning went to visit him, he was sobbing for his mother.

Not knowing how to coax him, Chu Wanning sat beside the young man's bed. He raised his hand hesitantly and touched the young man's forehead.

And the little boy cried and said, "Black… They were all black… Mother… I want to go home…"

Finally, it was Chu Wanning who lit up the candlestick, lighting up the walls and illuminating his face. As if feeling the warmth of the light, the child with the high fever opened a pair of shiny, watery eyes.

"Shizun…"

Chu Wanning agreed. He adjusted the blanket for him and spoke softly, sounding very gentle, "Mo Ran, the light is on… Don't be afraid."

After so many years, the lone bean lamp once again flickered on. A warm yellow halo submerged into the thatched cottage, dispersing the endless darkness and cold.

Chu Wanning stroked his hair and called him hoarsely, “Mo Ran, the lights are on.”

He wanted to continue. You don’t have to be afraid.

However, his throat was choked with sobs and he could no longer speak. Chu Wanning tried his best not to cry but his forehead was still pressed up against Mo Ran, breaking into tears. “The lights are on. Wake up, okay?”

“Pay attention to me, please…”

The lantern was in a pool of tears, always burning bright and clear, until the end of the oil.

Later, when the sun had risen, the sky outside the window had turned white, and Mo Ran had not yet opened his eyes. The time that could awaken the sleeping youth with a single lamp had passed.

Will never come back.

Another three nights passed.

These days, Chu Wanning stayed by his bedside every day, taking care of him, accompanying him, losing his spiritual power, and telling him about things he had forgotten.

It was already dusk. The snowing had stopped. The red sun shone outside the window, illuminating the land. A squirrel leapt over the snow-covered branches, causing the pears to rustle and sparkle.

The man lying on the couch was bathed in the gentle twilight, which added to his pale, haggard complexion. Under his thin eyelids, his pupils slightly shifted — and then, just as dusk was about to fall, he slowly opened his eyes.

After days of heavy illness and dizziness, Mo Ran finally woke up.

He opened his eyes, his gaze still blank and empty, until he saw Chu Wanning napping tiredly beside his bed.

Mo Ran said hoarsely in a low voice, “Shizun…”

He lay in the depths of the blanket, his consciousness slowly returning. Gradually, he recalled the words that Chu Wanning said to him over and over again while he was still half asleep.

A glass of wine, a haitang handkerchief… There was also that year at the Red Lotus Pavilion, the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower that he had sacrificed his life for him.

Was it a dream?

Was it because he longed for salvation that he dreamt of Chu Wanning telling him these stories? Was it because he wished to go back and dream that Chu Wanning was willing to forgive him?

He turned his face to the side and reached out his hand to touch the sleeping man beside the couch, but his fingertips did not touch him.

He was afraid that if he touched him, the dream would break.

He was still in the Tianyin Pavilion, kneeling in front of the Confession Platform. Beneath him were the guests who had been summoned by the

mountains and sea. He was on his knees before thousands of people, all of whom had eventually become blurred faces in his eyes, souls who had once died in his hands, screaming and laughing at him for their lives.

No one wanted him, no one wanted to save him.

It was his audacity, his wild heart, his madness, his illusion that Chu Waning would come — he was in the pain of digging his heart out, this illusion is the last fire in the world.

Fake.

No one had ever cut the chains, no one had ever embraced him, no one had ever come with the wind, no one had ever brought him home.

His eyelashes trembled as he held onto his tears. He stared at Chu Wanning's sleeping face, not daring to blink until his eyes became hazy and tears began to fall.

Chu Wanning's reflection shattered into thousands of specks of light and he once again went to look at his dream.

The dream was still there.

Mo Ran lay on the bed exhausted. His eyelashes were wet, his throat was choked with sobs, and tears continued to flow from the corners of his eyes… His heart was in pain, and blood kept seeping out. He was afraid that he would wake up Chu Wanning, who had finally gotten some sleep, so he bit his lips and wept silently.

He was awake, but he knew his body. He knew that this was only temporary, it was time borrowed, just a glimpse.

It was also the heavens last pity for him.

He had been worried for most of his life, had gone mad for the rest of his life. His hands were covered in blood and there was no escape from his notoriety. It was only at the end that he was convicted. As a result, he felt very at a loss, and even somewhat apprehensive.

He didn't know if it was luck or misfortune.

Unfortunately, two lives are absurd.

Fortunately, the rest of his life would be peaceful.

But how much of his life was left? One day? Two days?

That was a good day for him.

— It was a peaceful time that he had never had before.

Later, when he heard the sounds of Chu Wanning waking up, he hurriedly wiped away his tears. He did not want his shizun to see that he had been crying.

Mo Ran turned his head and looked at the person sitting beside the bed. His eyelashes trembled.

Outside the window, the golden crows were sinking and the Big Dipper was turning.

He heard Chu Wanning whisper, "Mo… Ran?"

The voice was slow and gentle, like spring sprouts breaking through the earth, like the first melting of an ice river, or like the wine on a small red clay stove warming to the third stream, as wisps of steam emanated and

filled the air, causing one's heart to feel warm. It was a heavenly sound that he would never forget for the rest of his life. Mo Ran was silent for a moment, then he smiled.

"Shizun, I'm awake."

The clear night had no snow, and the rest of his life was long.

On this night, in the deep valleys of the Nanping Mountains, the most relaxed and most gentle time of his two lifetimes finally arrived. He woke up, he could see the joy and sorrow in the corners of Chu Wanning's eyes. He woke up, leaned against the couch, and allowed Chu Wanning to tell him what he wanted to do, what he wanted him to say to him.

None of this mattered to him.

He just wanted to hold on a little longer, a little longer.

"Let me see the wound again."

"No." Mo Ran smiled and held Chu Wanning's hand. He pulled him over and kissed him lightly, "I'm fine now."

After a few rejections, Chu Wanning looked at him, as if he suddenly understood something, and the color of his face slowly faded.

Mo Ran calmly replied, "It's really alright."

Chu Wanning did not answer. After a while, he stood up and walked over to the furnace. The firewood within was gradually extinguished. He left Mo Ran with his back as he slowly fiddled with the wood in front of the fire.

The fire started and lit up again. The whole house became warm afterwards, but Chu Wanning didn't look back. He still held the poker and poked at the wood that didn't need to be fiddled with.

"Porridge…"

Finally, he spoke in a hoarse voice.

"The congee is still warm. Drink it when you wake up."

Mo Ran was silent for a moment before he lowered his eyes and laughed. It's been a long time since I've had a drink of the porridge that was cooked by Wanning. "In my previous life, you left, but I haven't had a drink of it since."

"It's not ready." Chu Wanning said, "I still don't know, about… I can barely enter…" His last words were a bit shaky, as if he couldn't continue any further.

Chu Wanning paused for a long time, then said slowly, "Let me get you a bowl."

Mo Ran said: "Alright."

It was warm in the house, and the snow outside began to fall fitfully as the night turned darker.

Mo Ran held the bowl of porridge and drank a few mouthfuls. Then, he looked at Chu Wanning, lowered his head and drank a few mouthfuls, then looked at Chu Wanning again.

Chu Wanning asked, "What's wrong? Is there something wrong with it?"

“No.. I just want to look at you again.”

“…” Chu Wanning did not say anything. He picked up the silver dagger and picked up the roasted fish from the fire. It was a melting river fish, but there were still thorns. He picked out the thorns and carefully divided the snow-white fish.

Mo Ran had always taken care of him when he ate.

Now it’s the same if you turn it upside down.

He handed the sliced fish to Mo Ran and said, “Eat it while it’s hot.”

Mo Ran obediently ate it.

The man didn’t look that tall as he leaned back against the couch and wrapped himself in a quilt. The orange glow of the fire illuminated his face, making him look very young.

It was at this moment that Chu Wanning suddenly realized that whether it was Taxian-Jun or Mo-zongshi, they were both ten years younger than him.

But they had experienced so much suffering.

Mo Ran finished the porridge, then poked the most plump piece of fish up, wanting to give it to Chu Wanning to eat, but he was surprised when he asked, “Shizun, what’s wrong?”

Chu Wanning lowered his head, his eyes red. He calmed himself down and said lightly, “It’s nothing. I just caught a chill.”

Afraid that he would be unable to control himself if he continued to sit there, he stood up and said, “I’ll go and check around. Rest early after you

finish eating. Once your injuries have healed, I will bring you back to the Sisheng Peak."

Both of them knew that getting better was not going to happen in the end, and that all the warmth was already running out of time.

They were talking about tomorrow, talking about the future. It was as if he wanted to stuff the decades to come into this night, to transfer all the stars in the future, and to spend them on this snowy night.

After Chu Wanning left, Mo Ran sat in front of the fire for a while. Then, he untied his clothes and looked down at the scar on his chest.

Then he was stunned for a moment, feeling empty.

Outside in Nanping valley, it was snowing.

The floating clouds outside were getting bigger and bigger. Mo Ran didn't know when he would rapidly deteriorate, nor did he know when his life would come to an end. He lay on the bed and looked out at the drifting snow. The wind whistled past his ears, and he suddenly felt that his life was like the current, swift wind, and all the things he had experienced in the past had gone away.

In fact, whether it was his previous life or his current life, there would always be such a smart person scheming and playing games.

Whether it was Shi Mei or Shizun, one wanted to protect him, and the other wanted to harm him. But they all had their own plans.

Mo Ran was different from them. He was the type of stupid dog that did not have any complicated thoughts. He did not know how to move about and make the chess pieces look beautiful. He would only obediently guard

the person he loved. Even if his skin and flesh were ripped open and his bones were lacerated, he would still stubbornly stand in front of that person and not leave.

This kind of person was brave to say it nicely.

To put it bluntly, it was stupid.

This very stupid person was lying by the window, his eyelashes trembling. Suddenly, he saw a familiar figure standing under the Plum Blossom Tree.

Chu Wanning did not go on a patrol. It was just an excuse.

He stood under the flower tree, too far away. The wind and snow were too fast, so Mo Ran could not see any of the expression on his face, only his blurry silhouette. Standing alone in the obscuring snow, he did not move.

What was he thinking?

Is he cold?

He…

“Shizun.”

Chu Wanning, who was lost in thought in the snow, turned around and saw that the black-clothed youth had actually appeared behind him in the dark, carrying a blanket in the snow.

Chu Wanning was shocked, and immediately asked, “How did you get out like that? What are you doing out here? Hurry up and go back!”

“Go!” Before he could say anything, a wave of warmth enveloped him.

Mo Ran lifted the quilt with the blanket. It was pitch black and warm, so he also wrapped Chu Wanning in the quilt.

The two of them stood under the old plum tree. They had not used it for a long time. No matter how much they basked in the musty smell, they would always find it in their thick quilts. No matter how heavy the snow outside or how fast the wind blew, it had nothing to do with the two of them.

Mo Ran embraced him in this warm and pitch-black place. “Don’t even think about it. Although I don’t remember what shizun said, but…”

He paused for a moment, first kissing Chu Wanning’s forehead, then whispering, “But if I were to go back and experience it again, I would still do it.”

“…”

“Also.” He held onto the quilt, stroking Chu Wanning’s cold hands, “Shizun doesn’t need to feel sad. In fact, I think what Shi Mei said was true. The Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower was only able to make those thoughts in my mind come true, those thoughts that cannot be seen in the light of day.”

The ten fingers interlocked.

Mo Ran pressed his forehead, “I already had a lot of hatred in my heart, but I just couldn’t vent it when I was young. Slaughterer of the Rufeng Sect… I thought about it. I have thought about dominating the world. When I was five or six years old, hiding in a broken house, I had fantasized that one day I would be able to summon the wind and rain to scatter the

beans into the army. These are my own thoughts, and no one has forced them on me."

He caressed Chu Wanning's face, "So, if the one who got infected with the curse was you, shizun, you might not have become an unforgivable tyrant like me. You wouldn't be used, and you wouldn't be harmed by the Tianyin Pavilion." He smiled with a heavy nose and rubbed his forehead to comfort him. "You are not replaced by me. Don't think too much. Go back to the house and sleep."

The bed was very narrow, and Mo Ran held him.

The moment that should come would always get closer and closer. It was impossible to escape.

The pain in his heart was even worse than ever before. The afterglow would not last long, and it was the same with his mother when she died. He knew that he did not have much time left.

His thick eyelashes were down, and the fire in the furnace had dimmed a little by now. The dim yellow light shone softly on his young, handsome face.

This stupid man could see the pain in Chu Wanning's eyes, so he forced a smile and said, "does it look good?"

Chu Wanning was stunned, "What?"

"The scar. A man should have a few more scars."

Chu Wanning was silent for a moment, then he raised his hand and slapped his face, not hard, but gently.

After a moment, he seemed to be unable to hold it in any longer. He buried himself in the warmth of Mo Ran chest. He did not say anything, but his shoulders were trembling slightly.

He knew very well.

Chu Wanning knew all about it.

Mo Ran froze for a moment, then hugged him and kissed him on the forehead and hair.

“So ugly.” Having survived the calamity, he was much warmer than he was in the past. He sighed lightly, “Have I made Wanning cry?”

It would be fine if he called him Shizun.

A “Wanning”, two alternate lifetimes.

Chu Wanning was hugging the man’s warm and lively body in the depth of bedding. He had always hated and was ashamed to express any of his intense emotions, but at that moment, he felt that his nervousness and shame were laughable and ridiculous.

And so they embraced each other on the narrow mattress, in the empty huts on all sides, and in the long night of wind and snow.

Chu Wanning said softly, “How can it be ugly? It doesn’t matter if you have a scar or not. They all look good.”

Mo Ran was stunned.

He had never heard Chu Wanning express himself so bluntly.

Not even on the day of the confession.

There was only the last of the light from the fire in the room. It was quiet and gentle.

The tranquility and tenderness of the night.

“In my previous life, in this life, I have always loved you and was always willing to be with you. In the future, I’m also willing.”

He could not see his face clearly, but he could imagine what he looked like right now.

Her eyes were probably red, and even the tips of his ears were red.

“Once I found out that you were cursed, I couldn’t show it. I could only hate you… Now I can finally make it up to you.” Chu Wanning’s cheeks burned and his eyes were damp. “I love you, I’m willing to tie the knot with you, I’m willing to die for you, and I’m willing to submit to you.”

Hearing that he was willing to submit to him, Mo Ran’s heart felt as if it was being burned by a raging fire, and his entire body trembled.

He was both moved and sad, both painful and loving.

He was almost trembling. “Shizun…”

Chu Wanning raised his hand to stop him, “Just let me finish.”

But after waiting for a while, Chu Wanning was still a person who could not speak words of love. He had thought of many things, but they were not suitable. No matter what he thought, it was not enough.

For a moment, Chu Wanning really wanted to say, “I’m sorry for causing you to suffer so much, you had to bear too much of a burden.”

He wanted to say: “In my previous life, until I left, I still could not tell you the truth. I was wrong.”

He wanted to say, “That year at the Red Lotus Pavilion, thank you for being willing to protect me.”

He didn’t even want any dignity anymore. He wanted to cry to Mo Ran, wanted to hug his warm body and say, “I beg you, don’t leave. I beg you, don’t leave.”

But his throat was choked with sobs and his heart was filled with bitterness.

In the end, Chu Wanning lowered his head and kissed the scar on Mo Ran’s chest. His eyelashes rustled as he spoke in a low and hoarse voice.

“Mo Ran, no matter how it used to be, or how it will be in the future, I will always be with you.”

Shame burned through his blood.

But his words were solemn.

“As a person who had belonged to Taxian-Jun in his past life, and also someone who belongs to Mo-zongshi.”

It was too hot.

Mo Ran only felt the flames of the world in his embrace light up once more. The fireworks before his eyes were bright as all the pain and sorrow disappeared at this moment.

“Two lifetimes, they belong to you.”

“No regrets.”

Mo Ran closed his eyes, which were moist.

He kissed him on the lips and sighed, “… Shizun… Thank you.”

Outside, the snow was falling harder and harder, and the night was getting darker.

They slept in each other’s arms, both of them thinking. So, this is the rest of my life.

Mo Ran knew that his clothes were wet with tears, but he did not speak. Ever since he was young, he had been wishing for so much joy for the rest of his life. At this moment, he should be happy.

He hugged Chu Wanning and said, “Go to sleep, Wanning. Sleep, I’ll hold you. You’re afraid of the cold, so I’ll be warm for you.”

“Wait for me, we will return to the Sisheng Peak together. I want to ask for forgiveness from my aunt and uncle, and I want to argue with Xue Meng again… We still have a lot to do…”

Mo Ran caressed Chu Wanning’s hair and spoke softly.

His throat was filled with the sweet taste of blood, and his breathing became more and more sluggish.

However, he continued to smile. At this moment, his expression was very tranquil. “Master, I will give you an umbrella for your entire life.”

In his arms, Chu Wanning choked with sobs.

“Xia-shidi…” He was teasing him again, even though he was already at a loss for words, he still teased him, “Shige… will tell you a story. I’ll tell you a story every night. Don’t despise your shige for being so talkative. All he knows how to do is talk about cattle eating grass…”

Finally, Mo Ran raised his eyes and looked at the window sill, which was covered in a layer of sparkling snow.

The world was pure white.

“Wanning.” He embraced him, his heartbeat echoing in his ears. He whispered, “I’ve always loved you.”

He slowly closed his eyes. The faint dimples of the pear blossoms were immersed in the whiteness of the snow.

His heart beat slowly, bit by bit.

Suddenly, a branch of a plum tree outside the window was covered with snow. The snow was too heavy, and the branch broke, creating a sudden disturbance. The snowball and the tree branches fell together, creating a crisp crackling sound.

After the commotion, Chu Wanning could no longer hear the sound of heartbeats.

He waited for an instant, he waited for a moment, he waited for another moment, he waited for a long time.

There was no more sound.

No sound… Nothing.

It was a terrifying silence that chilled the bones.

It was a terrifying silence that would cause one to despair for the rest of one's life.

The end.

Stop.

Rest.

The room was deathly still, terrifyingly quiet.

After a very long time, Chu Wanning did not move. Chu Wanning was still lying on the bed in Mo Ran's embrace. He did not even get up, did not raise his head nor did he speak.

His little disciple, his Mo Shixiong, and his Immortal Taxian-Jun, wanted him to sleep in peace.

He said he would hold an umbrella for the rest of his life and tell him stories. He would love him for the rest of his life.

It's cold outside, it's snowing heavily.

I'll warm you.

Chu Wanning was curled up in his arms, not moving at all, on his chest, where the heat had not yet subsided.

They were leaving for home tomorrow.

He wanted to rest well with Mo Ran.

Chu Wanning reached out his hand and placed it around Mo Ran's waist.

In the dark night, he said, “Okay, I’ll listen to you, I’ll sleep. But tomorrow, when I call for you, you have to remember to wake up.”

He was pressed against his chest, which no longer rose and fell, and his tears soaked into Mo Ran’s clothes.

“Don’t stay in bed.”

Good night, Mo Ran.

The night is long, but I will stay with you. May you have a good dream, a fire, and a light.

And a home.

Ch. 280 [Sisheng Peak] Good and Evil Talk

On the morning of the second day, the sun shone through the window.

Chu Wanning opened his eyes. The bed was warm, one person's temperature could warm two people's bodies. He looked quietly at Mo Ran's face. To him, this was the most handsome person in the world, the best.

He did not move. He was thinking, what kind of porridge should I cook today?

He had already finished yesterday's porridge. Mo Ran drank four full bowls like he was starved, not leaving anything behind.

He kissed Mo Ran's cheek and asked, "Can I make you some more?"

The man slept soundly, his pitch-black eyelashes drooping down like two rolls of grass. He was so gentle that it seemed as if he would open his eyes at the next moment. He would pull him over with a smile and said, "Hungry. Tonight, you should go cook a bowl of porridge for me."

It also seemed that he would affectionately and sweetly tell him, "Whatever Shizun does is good, I will like it."

The corpse was already cold. The kiss on the cheek was cold, without any warmth at all.

Chu Wanning did not cry.

He got up and covered Mo Ran with the quilt. Then he went out to the yard to gather firewood and make a fire. He cooked seriously and cooked

well.

The water boiled and the fog rose. The rice porridge bubbled and bubbled. He removed the foam with a spatula, added some salt, and covered it with a wooden lid to simmer.

People who had already been reborn once couldn't be saved again by the Rebirth Technique.

Chu Wanning stood by the stove blankly. There was a moment of clarity in his spiritual sense, and that moment was enough to take his life. He quickly stopped the trembling of his fingertips and lifted his hand to cover it up.

Once the porridge was cooked, someone would eventually drink it.

He had the fragmented memories of Mo Ran. When he was a child, Mo Ran was very poor. He could not eat until he was full and could only enjoy a steaming hot biscuit for an entire day.

Mo Ran won't waste it, so he will wakes up.

When the porridge was ready, he went out to the yard to clear the snow. Then he broke a new rose and took it back to cut off the branches and soak it in a small clay jar.

The plum blossoms had a fragrance of ten li. If Mo Ran was walking on the road, he would still be able to smell it.

No, his mind was in chaos again.

What was it like walking on the road, what was it like seeing the world… It was the same as yesterday and a few days ago. However, his face was thinner and thinner, and his face was even paler.

He'll wake up.

For two lifetimes, whether it was hatred or resentment, love or pity, ever since they met, Mo Ran had never taken the initiative to leave him. That was why, gradually, he soaked his life. It became the wind, the time, the spring that flowed through his fingers, and the light that covered his long hair.

He was his day, his night, his world.

Chu Wanning strolled in the world. In this earthly world, the snow will fall, cicadas will sing, the autumn lotus will die, summer flowers will be born. Everything would be the same as before, so why would Mo Ran leave?

He would stay with him, day after day, waiting for him to wake up. It was just like how Mo Ran had made a contract with Chu Wanning's corpse in his previous life. In this life, both Yin and Yang were at fault, and Chu Wanning had done the same thing as Taxian-Jun.

"Only on the day when I leave will you leave."

Standing in the Red Lotus Pavilion, Mo Ran, who was wearing a black robe, said to the sleeping Chu Wanning.

"Stay with me."

Today, in the depths of the Nanping Valley, Chu Wanning was clad in white, overlapping with the previous emperor.

He reached out his hand and caressed Mo Ran's bloodless face. "Stay with me."

A golden light rose and his spiritual energy flowed into the corpse. From then on, even if the Jade Descends Underworld and the Earthly Paradise, as long as Chu Wanning was still alive, Mo Weiyu's corpse would not rot. It was only after many years, when Chu Wanning passed away and the circulation of his spiritual energy stopped, that they would both die together.

They would turn to dust, scattered into fine powder, and scattered into the ground, turning into dust.

He would leave with him.

The Tianyin Pavilion's fire burned fiercely, casting flickering shadows on the walls. Mu Yanli stood alone in the middle of the hall with her hands clasped behind her back, her eyes closed.

Suddenly, the door to the palace hall opened. A person walked in.

She didn't turn his head around. She indifferently asked, "You're here?"

"I'm here." That person took off his cape and hat, revealing a beautiful face that could topple nations. It was precisely Shi Mei. "Sister Mu, are you not going to the back hall to take a look?"

"There's nothing to see. But it's about you cutting open people's chests and cutting their brains. The smell of blood is too strong, I can't take it."

"What can we do? The path of the Medical Sect has always been like this." Shi Mei laughed, "Even if it was Guyue'ye's Jiang Xi, he wouldn't be so fragrant if he were to use a knife on a dead person."

Mu Yanli frowned. She didn't plan on talking much about cutting open corpses, so she asked, "Speaking of which, you've been using this

technique for a few days already. When will the Emperor be completely reborn?"

"His rebirth can't be counted as a rebirth. He only has a single conscious soul in his body. At most, he'll just be a living dead person."

"What we want is just a living dead person," he said. "The more obedient, the better. What about those pieces of spiritual core, are they still useful?"

"Pretty much. Although it's not complete, its power is still terrifying. Mo Ran is indeed worthy of being called the number one cultivator in the endowment. It is enough to open the path for us."

"I hope there won't be any more accidents this time."

"It's hard to say whether or not he'll get into business. I'm currently casting a spell to restore his Spiritual Core inside Taxian-Jun, and it will take at least ten days. In these ten days, I hope that Big Sister Mu can help me with two things."

"Go ahead."

"First of all, after Taxian-Jun is fully recovered, we will be going to do that great thing. At that time, no matter how foolish these cultivators are, they will know Mo Ran is speaking the truth and I'm afraid they will come to stop us together." The Elder paused, "Although there are not enough shrimp soldiers and crab generals, it will still give you a headache if you have too many people."

"So?"

"Although the fighting strength of the Upper Cultivation World is strong, we do not have enough experience. The key was the Sisheng Peak. I hope

that Sister Mu can release some news, and start a conflict between the Sisheng Peak, and the various sects, and destroy this sect ahead of time."

Mu Yanli said, "Chu Wanning escaped after capturing his captive, Mo Weiyu. These two were originally at the Sisheng Peak, so it wouldn't be difficult for them to write an article about it. Not to mention that the Sisheng Peak was already under attack, and many people wanted to force them to disperse. That's easy to say. And the second thing?"

"Two." Shi Mei sighed, seemingly regretful, "Help me kill a person."

"Who?"

"Myself."

Mu Yanli turned het head and stared at him. The light from the fire illuminated Shi Mei's gentle face. "You from your previous life?"

"Yes."

"Are you crazy? Are you serious? No matter what you say he is still…"

She stopped and did not continue. She saw Shi Mei lift up his soft and thick eyelashes, revealing a pair of black pupils. The murderous intent beneath them had reached a crescendo.

"He is still me?" Shi Mei laughed, "You're right. But he is also a traitor."

"…"

"If he did not release Chu Wanning, would anyone have come to rob the prisoner?"

"…"

“If it wasn’t for him disturbing Taxian-Jun’s spiritual sense, would Chu Wanning have been able to take that half-dead Mo Ran away?” As he said this, a cold glint flashed across Shi Mei’s eyes, “It’s fortunate that he learned some techniques behind my back. He’s a blind person, so he escaped fast with his tracks concealed. He didn’t let me skin him alive.”

“I know he did not do this properly, but he is still a member of our race.”

“He is me. These two mortal worlds will eventually superimpose on each other. One of them is enough for me.” Shi Mei walked up the steps and stood next to Mu Yanli, “Just like you. Your illness from the previous life is already dead. But with the help of Sister Mu today, it will be the same.”

“But you don’t have to kill him. Our clan has suffered enough.” Mu Yanli looked at Shi Mei’s eyes a little anxiously, “A-Nan, we swore that as long as they were from our tribe, we would help each other and not kill each other.”

He looked at the dancing flames of the dragon and serpent, and said after a long while, “I thought the same thing when I was at Mount Jiao, I suspect that no one suspected him, which is why I gave him the chance to take advantage of me. After all, he is not the same as me.”

“…”

“I am still Hua Binan and Shi Mingjing.” In the end, he closed his eyes and sighed, “But what about him? He only remembers that he is Shi Mingjing. He has long forgotten who Hua Binan is.”

Flames crackled, orange sparks flew out.

In the end, Mu Yanli shook her head and said, “I can’t do the second part of what you said. He has already lost a pair of eyes for us, now that we can’t take him anymore, they won’t accept him either – he can’t go anywhere, he can’t do anything, why are you in such a hurry to kill him just because he betrayed you? Just because he is different from the path you chose in the end?”

After some time, he smiled, “You have always been decisive in killing, why are you so soft-hearted now?”

Mu Yanli suddenly raised her head. Pain flashed through her eyes. “Because he’s also my little brother. He’s also you.”

Her face was no longer so cold because of the emotions of the secular world. He no longer looked like a stone statue or an ice sculpture.

“A-Nan, whether it is in my previous life or this life, no matter how you turn into, I can’t do anything to you. I can’t do it.”

The tongues of flame in the brazier crept upward, dancing in interlaced red silk.

Shi Mei sighed, “… Forget it, this is a private matter. It’s up to you whether you want to or not. But the first matter is related to success or failure, so I ask Big Sister Mu to do it properly.”

At this moment, it was the evening bell that rang, and Mu Yanli descended from the corner of the pavilion’s roof with a solemn expression on his face. The Tianyin Pavilion’s Old Zhong had been established thousands of years ago, but his voice was still as sonorous as ever. Amidst the lingering sound of the bell, Mu Yanli slowly spoke.

“I see. Don’t worry.”

On the second night after the conversation with the Tianyin Pavilion, a serial killer case suddenly occurred in the Upper Cultivation World’s Bitan Manor. This matter had yet to be thoroughly investigated, and similar cases had already occurred in succession in the Fire Phoenix Pavilion, the Wubei Temple, and the Guyue’ye sects.

Soon, a single terror became a cycle, and people quickly discovered the crux of the problem —

Zhenlong Chess.

Chess is everywhere.

The town, the alleyway, and the Huadu Immortal School. No one was spared.

There were more and more pieces that had lost their sanity. Killing and arson everywhere, the various sects in the cultivation world could no longer attend to their own needs, no longer having the energy to care about the lives of their citizens.

Day after day, the rivers were dyed red with blood. City after city was left in ruins. This calamity was even more terrifying than any other Heavenly Rend.

It was because no one was even sure who the mastermind was, nor did they know how to end this sudden massacre. However, most of the cultivators believed that this disaster was orchestrated by Chu Wanning and Mo Ran, who were still missing. However, there were also people who were skeptical, such as the group of refugees gathered in the dilapidated

temple. They discussed, “If you were to say that it was Mo Ran who was causing trouble, it would be rather believable. But why would Chu Wanning help him?”

“Who knows, maybe for a share?”

Another person said, “I think it’s more than just a piece of the cake. You all have seen on the day of robbery at Tianyin Pavilion. If it were just an ordinary Shizun and disciple, would they still be so emotional? In my opinion, the relationship between Chu Wanning and Mo Ran is not normal at all.”

“Ah… You mean?”

“Long Yang’s right, Shizun and disciple together.”

His upper and lower lip met with his teeth, not sparing any obscenities.

Those people who were seated around him all revealed extremely astonished and disgusted expressions as they muttered, “It can’t be? He is the Immortal Elder Beidou…”

“Then don’t forget the time when Chu Wanning accidentally died while repairing the Heavenly Rift, his disciple, Mo Ran, risked his life to go to hell to save him. Although Shizun and disciple have deep feelings for each other, but this is a matter of life and death, if it were you, would you be able to do it?”

The other side fell silent.

One of the pods in the bonfire burst apart, producing a cracking sound.

“Have you guys heard about the Mount Jiao incident? Before Shi Mingjing was kidnapped, he said something.”

“What?”

“I don’t remember the specifics. At that time, the situation was very critical and many people did not think about it carefully. However, when they thought about it carefully later on, they always felt that there was a sense of ambiguity between the lines.”

Someone frowned and said, “But I heard Shi Mingjing is Hua Binan. Can his words be trusted?”

“Nonsense!”

Everyone was startled by the angry shout, and turned around to see a man staring at them with wide eyes, “How can you believe that! It’s obviously Mo Ran. He is filthy whereas Shi Mingjing’s pure!”

“Brother Li, why are you so excited…”

The man said, “Why am I not excited? My life was saved by Shi Mingjing!”

“Ahh…”

“At that time, I was at Mount Jiao. Hua Binan had poisoned us with a Gu poison called the Heart Drilling Worm. If it wasn’t for Shi Mingjing’s eye healing technique, I would have died on the spot! If benefactor Shi Mei is Hua Binan, why would he need to help us remove the curse?”

The burly man was getting more and more agitated as he spoke. In the end, tears had started to form in his eyes.

“In order to save us, benefactor was wounded in the eyes by Hua Binan. It is still unknown whether he is dead or alive, yet he is being blackened by fire, I… I’m not worth it for him.”

As he spoke, he began to wail. The rest of the people inside the temple were at a loss as to what to do. They all looked at each other.

On one side was Shi Mingjing and the Tianyin Pavilion, on the other was Mo Weiyu and Chu Wanning. Both sides were suspicious, but the latter was much more suspicious.

A female cultivator, who was in the middle of the crowd, suddenly whispered as she looked at the flickering fire, “Actually… That day on Mount Jiao, when we were fighting Xu Shuanglin, I was also in the team. I have seen what Shi Mingjing did and what Mo Ran did, and neither of them looks like a bad person.”

“But one of them has to be lying, right?”

The female cultivator shook her head, “Who is lying is of great importance, I dare not make a decision. But I want to say something I saw with my own eyes.”

Seeing that everyone was looking at her, she blushed a little and coughed, saying, “At that time, everyone was injured, Mo Ran and Chu Zong… Chu Wanning was also not in a good condition, so he sat to the side to rest. I accidentally saw Mo Ran secretly extend his hand… He touched Chu Wanning’s face.”

Ch. 281 [Sisheng Peak] I Would Like to Be More Than Good

“Ahh…”

Many of the older students couldn’t stand this dubious relationship and immediately covered their mouths with their sleeves and frowned.

“How is this even proper!”

The female cultivator held the bowl of tea in her hands and lowered her head, saying, “I thought it was weird, so I was stunned for a moment. But they were both famous masters, and I didn’t dare think of anything against them. However, when he looked back…”

“There’s something wrong with the two of them.”

She paused for a moment before continuing, “And the words that you just mentioned — the words Shi Mingjing said before he was taken away. At that time, his words were vague,

“I feel awkward and haven’t thought about it too much. Now that I think about it, he means that Mo Ran once loved him and then changed his mind and fell in love with Chu Wanning.”

Everyone fell silent.

Many of the previously inconspicuous details had now become clear.

Suddenly, someone whispered, “You all went to the Tianyin Pavilion right? Did you see when he came to rob the prisoner? When Chu Wanning comforted him, I could almost see him kissing his forehead.”

“AHHHHH!” The details were even more repulsive, but even more intriguing. “Who kissed who?”

That man scratched his head and explained, “Chu Wanning kissed Mo Ran.”

“…”

“Didn’t you see?”

Everyone expressed that they did not see clearly, so that person spread out his hands and said, “Alright, then I’ll just pretend that I didn’t say anything. Maybe I was mistaken.”

However, there were many times when “act like I didn’t say anything” was just a sentence of nonsense, and “this official has something to say, but I don’t know if I should say it” was similar.

Will the spilled water be reclaimed? The nausea became more pronounced. Shizun and disciple were together. It would be better if the disciple took the initiative.

However, if the Shizun took the initiative, then this taboo would have an even more fishy stench, and it would seem that the Shizun had an ulterior motive and did not respect the disciple.

These private discussions and speculations were not limited to just this run-down temple. As the biggest suspects, Mo Ran and Chu Wanning became the talk of the town.

As the saying goes, good things don’t go out, while evil things go a thousand miles away. The topic of “filial love between Shizun and disciple” would make one drowsy, while “love between Shizun and disciple” would make all the eyes on the table gather at a lively conversation. Even if there

were people who were suspicious and people who were dissatisfied, it did not stop the rumors from spreading.

Therefore, they speculated everything — that Xue Meng and Chu Wanning were tainted, that Shi Mei and Chu Wanning were not clean either. Thus, the originally clean Immortal Beidou became a perverted old man who liked to molest the handsome youth.

“Words aren’t always true, but they are never empty words.”

“Look at his three disciples, which one of them isn’t good-looking? Do you believe that he didn’t have such thoughts?”

“When Mo Ran just entered the sect, didn’t Chu Wanning refuse to take him in? I know a friend of mine at Sisheng Peak. He told me that Mo Ran went to the Red Lotus Pavilion for the night, and then Chu Wanning accepted him — why? You even need to ask, he slept over it. he question is, was Mo Ran good in bed?”

These details caused everyone to feel itchy in their hearts as they discussed about it with great interest.

“At that time, Mo Ran was only a weak crowned adult, Chu Wanning really wanted to go for it.”

“I suddenly understand why that female cultivator who peeked at him taking a bath was beaten half to death. She probably saw something that she shouldn’t have seen.”

After some ambiguous silence, a local thug laughed maliciously and said, “Hey, actually, I’m a bit curious. Tell me, when the two of them are sleeping, who’s up there and who’s down there?”

“Mo Ran must be down there. You guys should be aware of Chu Wanning’s temper. He’s so arrogant, he wouldn’t have found a disciple to sleep with him.”

“Now that I think about it, Mo Ran is really quite pitiful… Being forced into bed with an old man who has a fierce and difficult personality to handle. He’s not the most good-looking one, so it must be disgusting.”

“Sigh…”

However, these chattering were not the most intense of them all. As time passed, a few Zhenlong Chess pieces were recognized by the people around them. They were all Sisheng Peak disciples.

If one or two were a coincidence, then every time the clues pointed to the Sisheng Peak, no matter how innocent the sect was, they would inevitably become the target of public criticism, causing a great deal of panic.

In the past few days, there had been people who had come to the peak to argue, but all of them had closed the door.

“Sect Leader Xue is not here. If you have anything to say, please wait a few days.”

“Where did Xue Zhengyong go?”

Seeing the other party call out the Sect Leader’s name, the little gatekeeper became angry, “Since the change, my sect’s Sect Leader has been running around day and night, busy arranging chess pieces and doing things himself. Wherever there is trouble, he will be there. Go find him yourself!”

The people who are causing trouble sneered: “Busy taking care of the chess pieces? I think he’s busy manipulating the pieces and colluding with the criminal, Mo Ran.”

“What nonsense are you spouting?!”

“I’m spouting nonsense?” That person said, “Mo Ran cultivates forbidden martial arts, Chu Wanning helped him escape from prison, combining with Xue Zhengyong’s constant pleas for Mo Ran, and the disciples from Sisheng Peak everywhere these days being made into a Zhenlong Chess piece. If they say that there’s no tricks behind this sect, who would believe it?”

Xue Zhengyong sighed tiredly after hearing the report about the agitators. “Let the facts be louder than words, truth will speak for itself, history will judge if innocent or guilty. Don’t bother with what they say. Just let them do as they please.”

On this day, another person came to the mountain gate carrying a few corpses. They said that they wanted to make the Sisheng Peak pay with their lives.

It was already late at night when Xue Zhengyong returned. He was covered in blood and had a few injuries. As he listened to Madam Wang tell him these things, he washed the mud off his face. He took a deep breath and did not say anything immediately.

Madam Wang said, “We can’t go on like this. Do you think we should seek help from the Tianyin Pavilion…?”

“Ask for help from the Tianyin Pavilion?” Xue Zhengyong’s eyes narrowed, there was a claw mark left behind by a zombie on his cheek, “I think there’s

something wrong with the Tianyin Pavilion. That Mu Yanli is just like a clay Buddha, muddleheaded and simply shameful."

Madam Wang quickly covered his mouth. "Don't speak nonsense."

"…"

"I know you don't feel well." Madam Wang sighed and caressed his face. "But what can we do? They were the descendants of a God, a thousand-year-old sect established by the God of Heaven. Therefore, even three hundred years ago, no one dared to question the PingKing's calamity. What kind of strength do you have to shake it?"

Xue Zhengyong's eyes were filled with anger, as if he wanted to say something, but didn't know what to say. Finally, he threw away the towel he had used to clean the wound and went to the window alone. He stood with his hands behind his back, looking out at the crescent moon.

"What do you think is going on with Ran'er at the moment?" After a long while, he asked in a hoarse voice.

Madam Wang dragged her long robes and walked to his side. "Husband…"

The moonlight shone on the man's face. The smile that had always been a smile on his face had disappeared. He looked so tired, even a bit old.

"Although he is not my brother's biological son, he even killed my nephew. But all these years. Do you understand? All these years, I've been putting him… I…"

"I understand. You don't have to say it, I know it." Madam Wang's eyes were a little red. "Me too."

Xue Zhengyong buried his face in his palms and rubbed them in pain and agitation. Suddenly, he bent his body and began to cough violently.

He finally managed to stop his coughing, and when he moved his hand away, it was only the blood from his palm.

Madam Wang was stunned and immediately felt like her heart was on fire. “How did you receive such heavy injuries? Lie down and let me see.”

“Nothing to look at.” Xue Zhengyong wiped the blood dry with a handkerchief. “It’s just some internal injuries. I’ll be fine for a few days.”

“Tomorrow, you should stop running outside. Look at the other sect leaders, who are like you, who are able to do everything by themselves?”

Xue Zhengyong seemed to want to force a smile, but he was too tired. His heart and body were both exhausted, and his smile fell when it was halfway through. A few days ago, even Wuchang Town at the foot of the mountain was attacked, and nine people died. “You want me to sit down at this time?”

“…” Madam Wang opened her beautiful eyes and silently looked at him.

Xue Zhengyong patted his head and said, “You also know that it is impossible for me.”

Madam Wang bit her lips. “Then you should at least rest for a day. Your internal injury has already caused you to vomit blood, so don’t be careless. Have you forgotten how elder brother passed?”

The last traces of a smile disappeared on Xue Zhengyong’s face.

When he saw Madam Wang's eyelashes drooping and the faint rippling of water under her soft eyelashes, he could not help but be overcome with grief. "Don't, don't cry… My fortune is great… Ai, alright. I'll stay in the sect tomorrow and not go anywhere else. I'll rest for a day and then go out again. Is this enough?"

Madam Wang choked with sobs. "I can't take care of you, nor can I control you. I'll follow you wherever you go."

"Of course not." Xue Zhengyong laughed bitterly, "Alright, don't worry. Look at me over the past few decades. I've seen all sorts of storms and waves. Believe me, it'll get better."

The next day, Xue Zhengyong did not go out, but he did not stay idle either. He went through his meridians in the Compendium Pavilion and pondered deeply.

"Sect Leader, the Young Lord made some medicine for you, you have to drink it while it's still hot."

Xue Zhengyong said, "Leave it."

He was thinking about something important, but he was not in the mood to leave. He busied himself until the afternoon. Later on, because of the internal injury of the abdomen, he remembered to slowly drink the medicine that had become cold.

Walking out of the library, Xue Zhengyong asked the gatekeeper, "Where is the Madam and Xue Meng?"

"The Young Master just returned from the foot of the mountain. Madam is burning incense in the ancestral hall. Should we call them over?"

Xue Zhengyong originally wanted to talk to them and rest for a while. But just as he was about to speak, he felt a wave of dizziness before his eyes — he was old after all, no longer in his twenties. He would be able to recover very well from his injuries and sleep well.

He had to admit that he was old.

“Forget it, don’t disturb them. I’ll go to the meditation room to meditate for a while. If there’s anything, come find me there.”

“Yes, Sect Leader.”

Xue Zhengyong raised his hand and patted the disciple’s shoulder. It was probably because of the sudden change of events in the past few days, and his entire mind was a little desolate. Looking at the disciple in front of him now, he couldn’t help but sigh in his heart.

As for him, if he could do something for the sake of these youths’ good years, it would be for the best.

“Let’s go. I’ll have to trouble you with the books that I flipped through…”

Before he could finish his words, someone rushed over and knelt down when he saw Xue Zhengyong. With an expression as if a disaster was coming for him, he reported, “Sect Leader! This is bad!”

This scene made Xue Zhengyong’s abdomen hurt even more. Sigh, seriously, I should have let Tanlang have his diagnosis first.

His face was slightly pale, but he endured the pain and asked, “In a hurry, what’s wrong?”

That disciple said worriedly, “All the sects in the Upper Cultivation World came here to Loyalty Hall, and they even included the greatest sect under the heavens, Guyue’ye.”

Xue Zhengyong’s heart thumped, he had already guessed the reason, but he still said, “… What are they doing here?”

“In this period of time, there have been too many complaints and doubts regarding the Sisheng Peak. They said that they couldn’t sit by idly and do nothing. They wanted to question the Sect Leaders and ask them for an explanation.” The more the disciple spoke, the more frightened he became. He was on the verge of tears, “Sect Leader, look at their posturing. I’m afraid they want to force us to disperse.”

“…” Xue Zhengyong’s face turned pale. He gritted his teeth and pressed a few acupuncture points on his abdomen. He endured the discomfort and said, “This is not right. This is going too far.”

He turned around and said to the guard of the Compendium Pavilion, “Don’t speak of this matter to Madam so that she won’t worry too much.”

“Yes.”

After giving out the orders, Xue Zhengyong picked up the messenger disciple who was kneeling on the ground and said with a serious expression, “Follow me to the front hall.”

Ch. 282 [Sisheng Peak] Lonely Wolf in Despair

Inside the Loyalty Hall, Xue Zhengyong and the rest of the disciples were staring at the uninvited guests with sullen faces.

As expected, almost all the people from the big sects were still alive. Even Jiang Xi, who was quite understanding, was among them. Although he didn't want to target a sect, this matter was extremely important.

Moreover, there were simply too many clues which pointed to the Sisheng Peak. As the chief of the immortal gate, he had no choice but to lead the crowd here.

The disciples at the Sisheng Peak, who had been constantly been attacked these past few days, were originally unhappy. But today, they were suddenly pointed at their noses and scolded "long planned for disaster" and "hiding criminals".

He was furious. Moreover, the Upper Cultivation World was approaching aggressively, and their words were full of suspicion and contempt. As they chatted, the air was already filled with the thick smell of fire and medicine.

"I will repeat once more. The Sisheng Peak has never intentionally revealed the Forbidden Technique Scroll to Mo Ran, nor has I condoned Mo Ran from cultivating this path."

"He did not secretly refine Zhenlong Chess pieces, nor did he plan to rely on this forbidden technique to unify the cultivation world. Also, Yuheng and Mo Ran are both not in the sect at the moment, please be reasonable."

Amongst the Upper Cultivator Sects, the Bitan Manor, Jiangdong Hall, and the Sisheng Peak had the deepest grudges.

There were only a hundred or so people in Jiangdong Hall right now. On the surface, they all drew a clear line between them and Huang Xiaoyue, but deep down, they were not necessarily the same. They looked at each other, and one of them sneered, “Sect Leader Xue, you have no proof. Although you are innocent of the Sisheng Peak, But now all sorts of suspicions are directed towards your sect. A person’s heart is far away, who knows what you guys want to do?”

“Exactly.”

“All those Zhenlong Chess pieces that caused a bloody storm in the cultivation world these past few days were all related to the Sisheng Peak. If it was a coincidence, then it was too far-fetched.”

Someone from the Bitan Manor raised his head and said, “I wonder if any of you have ever understood that the Sisheng Peak replaced the lower cultivation world in slaying demons and exterminating devils. Often, they are not willing to take any action, and have been doing so for more than twenty years. They are fighting for the hardest and most tiring job, and they don’t even ask for anything in return after doing it. The first time was probably out of good intentions, but in these twenty years, don’t you guys think that it’s a little too absurd?”

Xue Zhengyong said angrily, “I started my family from scratch. The original intention of the establishment of the sect was to shield the citizens of the dawn of the cultivation world from the rain and wind. Xue’er is a generous person, I will be honest with myself.”

“Core heart?” That person sneered, “The kind-hearted Xue Zhengyong has taught a nephew who secretly learned a forbidden technique. He has raised a Grandmaster who killed and robbed people in prison. Now that the two greatest devils are the ones at the Sisheng Peak, how can Sect Leader Xue even have the face to bring up the word “Core”?”

Someone chimed in, “That’s right. Sect Leader Xue’s words were truly pleasant to hear. Haha, to shield the people of Dawn from wind and rain? No one in this world was stupid. No one would do something good for twenty years without hoping for a reward. There must be a conspiracy behind this!”

“And there are also so many pieces of unknown origin that were definitely not made in a single night. Perhaps in these years that he had been at the Sisheng Peak, he could be known to be a master while secretly raising a Zhenlong Chess piece…”

Xue Meng was also in the hall. He had been holding back his anger for the past few days, and when he heard this, he could no longer hold it in.

“Are you all done yet?”

“…”

Xue Meng raised his eyes, his gaze ruthless. “Not only are you secretly spreading rumors, you even ran to the Sisheng Peak to behave atrociously. Who gave you the guts?!”

Jiangdong Hall was at the end of his tether. After so many seniors had died in a row, he was already acting recklessly when it came to the Sect Leader. The new Sect Leader was a young girl who looked to be only sixteen or seventeen years old. Other than her beauty, there was nothing else about

her. Just like that, she had actually managed to get a position thanks to the embrace and love of a few of her senior brothers.

She probably thought that everyone in the world was the same as her unlucky senior brothers, and were completely manipulated by her beauty. Therefore, she giggled charmingly and said, “Ziming gege, don’t be angry.”

Xue Meng, “…”

“When you get angry, you lose your looks.”

“Pfft!” Immediately, someone laughed out loud.

Even though the atmosphere in the hall was tense, many cultivators could not keep their faces straight when they heard his words. Large sects like the Fire Phoenix Pavilion’s Taxue Palace’s disciples all looked at this person as if he was a fool. “Sect Leader.”

The girl felt more and more that all the men in the world were falling for her. She raised his snow-white neck and said in an intoxicated tone, “What grievances are there that you can’t speak calmly? As long as what you say makes sense, and with me as the leader, the heads of the top ten cultivation world’s sects will uphold justice for you.”

When these words came out, the Sect Leaders, who had pretended to be solemn and solemn, could no longer hold on.

Ma Yun from the Peach Blossom Villa was a merchant, so he reacted the fastest when it came to numbers. He was stunned for a moment before asking, “What? How many sects are there in the world of cultivation? Ten?”

Taxue Palace's Palace master, Mingyue Lou said expressionlessly: "He miscalculated. Just pretend you didn't hear it."

Ma Yun was a kind person, he immediately made two "oh oh" sounds and giggled without interrupting.

However, the faces of the Xuanjing Elder of the Wubei Temple and the few Taoists from the upper pavilion of the Fire Phoenix Pavilion were unsightly to behold. However, the complexions of all the Sect Leaders added up probably couldn't compare to half of Jiang Xi's sullenness.

Although Jiang Xi didn't say anything, he was obviously offended by that girl's "thinking I'm the boss". While stroking her Sect Leader's ring, he gloomily stared at that girl.

The girl was still in the limelight, "We are all discussing the matter. Everyone should express their opinions and speculations, that's not wrong."

Xue Meng's tone was full of fire as he said, "You have to tell a story and go back home to tell it. There's no place for you to talk nonsense in Shu!"

"?"

The little girl was stunned for a moment, and then suddenly burst into tears. She turned around and sobbed to the Senior Brothers, Senior masters and Uncles behind her, "He… he is unreasonable! He scolded me… I was just saying some words, why is he like this?…"

Jiang Xi: "…"

Mingyue Lou: "…"

Elder Xuanjing: "…"

Someone at the scene whispered, "Jiangdong Hall is finished."

"Who is this little girl? Even worse than Huang Xiaoyue…"

Mei Hanxue was also in the crowd. When he heard his words, he rubbed his nose and smiled, "You can't put it like that. It's better than Huang Xiaoyue. At least the little girl is not bad looking."

Once this girl started crying, Jiangdong Hall immediately became anxious for his senior brother. A white-faced scholar first took out a handkerchief and wiped her face before turning to Xue Meng, coldly saying, "Truly worthy of being Chu-zongshi's disciple, Mo-zongshi's cousin."

Currently, to Xue Meng, Chu Wanning and Mo Ran were like the reverse scales of a dragon; how could they be raised?

Xue Meng narrowed his eyes dangerously.

That fellow didn't know yet. With a smirk, he mocked, "You're a criminal, the younger brother of a devil. Where did your dignity come from?"

Before his voice had even faded, the cold light of Longcheng suddenly pointed at that person's neck! The four of them were silent.

That person did not expect that Xue Meng would actually make a move. The blade flashed a cold light, but seeing Xue Meng's extremely cold eyes and the difficulty in keeping his mind, that person's face became even paler. He opened his mouth, but no longer dared to say anything.

"Yes, I am mighty. Can't I be impressive?"

Xue Meng used the tip of his blade to stab at that person's neck. His hands were trembling in anger, and his strength was uncontrollable. It had already pierced through that person's skin, and his blade was covered in blood.

"But you, who do you think you are? Do you think you're qualified to be at the Sisheng Peak and speak rudely to me?"

Xue Zhengyong saw that Xue Meng had calmed down a bit and said in a deep voice, "Meng'er, sit down."

Xue Meng quickly turned his head, "Do I have to let them say it?!"

Xue Zhengyong: "…"

Xue Meng shifted his gaze away from his father. His eyes like a tiger and wolf gazed at every person who dared to look at him as they whispered to each other. His chest rose and fell.

"That's ridiculous. For so many years, the Sisheng Peak had not been filled with injustice, and disciples were running all over the place — for what? Vanity? Money? Forbidden arts?"

The Longcheng was high up in the sky, the snowflakes billowing about.

"Fellow immortal elders, righteous warriors, heroic elites, Sect Leader." Word by word, his words tore through the air, cutting through everyone's face. Xue Meng's eyes were bloodshot as he said, "Let me ask you…"

"Twenty years ago, when the Wuchang Town was about to become a ghost town, where were you?"

"Fifteen years ago, when the sky was splitting, where were you?"

“Three years ago, the enchantment around Butterfly Town was destroyed again, and ghosts ran rampant. The hungry were displaced, where are you now?”

There was a glimmer in his eyes, but his voice was hard and cold.

“All these years, how many times has this lower cultivation world begged you to help us? Is there any use in begging for mercy? In the past, how much money did Rufeng Sect have to pay to be willing to take action? The underworld refugees don’t even have enough to eat. How could they possibly have the money to make a move on the great buddhas?”

Everyone was a little embarrassed from his words, some of them did lower their heads to reflect, but there were also others who tried to force the dirty water onto a member of the Rufeng Sect, “That’s right, the Rufeng Sect was indeed black-hearted back then, but that has nothing to do with us. If I send someone to exterminate demons, the amount of money required will only be a few hundred silver. Young Master Xue, you can’t overturn a boat with just a stick.”

“Oh. A few hundred silver.” Xue Meng suddenly sneered. “Daoist masters, have you been to the towns in Shu?”

“…”

“Go look at the southern borders of Shu. Go look at the Fengdu Ghost City, look at the feet of Emei. Look at how those people live. Then, come and tell me, you only got ‘a few hundred silver coins’.”

Master Xuanjing sighed and said: “Young Master Xue, this old monk knows the pain in your heart.”

After a pause, he changed the subject.

“However, no matter what, the matter of a disciple cultivating a Forbidden Technique did indeed appear on the Sisheng Peak. Moreover, there were even Elders who deliberately shielded and obstructed the Tianyin Pavilion’s spiritual energy field. They even killed eleven cultivators of the Tianyin Pavilion in order to escape from this calamity. Just based on these two crimes, the Sisheng Peak cannot escape responsibility.”

Xue Meng’s anger grew stronger, like a black cloud covering his eyebrows, “Master, you saw how vicious the Tianyin Pavilion was. They wanted the lives of my Shizun and Mo Ran! If my Shizun didn’t leave, would you have still wanted to sit in place and wait for death?!”

He had a violent temper. As he blurted out those words, he immediately gave others an opening.

“Hmm? According to what you’ve said, Young Master Xue actually thinks that Chu Wanning and Mo Ran did the right thing?”

“There are so many reasons to kill. Fish begins to stink at the head.”

“Seeing such a notion of right and wrong is disheartening. I think that this Sisheng Peak truly cannot be left alive any longer.”

After hearing the last sentence, Xue Zhengyong’s Qi and blood began to surge, and the pain from his injuries became even more intense. He clenched his ten fingers and endured the pain. Then, he stared at the speaker and his face turned extremely gloomy. “This immortal elder is most likely joking.”

“They’re not joking.”

Xue Zhengyong narrowed his eyes and turned his head slowly as he tried to find the source of the sound. He murmured, “Jiang Xi…”

From the start till now, Jiang Xi had never spoken of slander, but he also did not speak out to help him. He was dressed in a light green robe with silver threads embroidered on it. Standing in the middle of the hall, one couldn’t see his mood.

Jiang Xi actually didn’t want to get involved in this mess, but if he didn’t open his mouth now, the situation would get more and more anxious, so he raised his eyes and said, “According to the rules of the cultivation world, if a disciple practices forbidden techniques, regardless of whether or not the sect is willing to directly instruct them, they are all unfavorable to the instructor, and there is no way to monitor them.”

Xue Zhengyong’s face was pale.

Jiang Xi continued, “To prevent future troubles, once discovered, these kinds of sects will immediately disperse their disciples and force them to shut themselves away. Sect Leader Xue is aware of this.”

Indeed, it was not unclear.

However, even though this rule was formulated, it had never been followed for the past hundred years in the cultivation world.

How many disciples were there in a sect? What did each disciple do? How could they control it? Looking back, it didn’t matter if it was the Rufeng Sect, Guyue’ye, or even the Wubei Temple or the High Pavilion, which family hadn’t had a few people practice the three forbidden arts before? For example, the one who had been famous for his rebirth technique — who would attack the Wubei Temple and close it down?

To put it bluntly, this rule was only for the sake of restriction, and was never fulfilled. Only in today's situation when the walls were being pushed by everyone and they were afraid that the Sisheng Peak was hiding a conspiracy, would they bring out this piece of empty paper and force the Sisheng Peak to turn upside down.

Xue Zhengyong didn't reply, he only described his defeat. He stared at Jiang Xi like a lone wolf who had been trapped in a desperate situation.

After a long while, he asked Jiang Xi, "Don't you think that this is absurd?"

Jiang Xi replied, "I think it's ridiculous. But since the Written Order is like this, I cannot help you identify it."

"The Written Order…" Xue Zhengyong suddenly laughed, and rubbed his knuckles against the carved beast head on the edge of his seat, letting out a long sigh, "Twenty years. The edict from the Upper Cultivation World was still strict. It was still the same when it was said that it was wide and it hadn't changed at all."

Jiang Xi seemed to be conflicted with this matter. He pursed his lips and didn't say anything more. On the other hand, several other Sect Leaders from the other sects began to speak up. "Sect Leader Xue, please follow this order and disperse the Sisheng Peak."

"The punishment for provoking someone, Sect Leader Xue knows what he should do."

"Everything has to be done according to the rules. You guys have caused so much trouble, do you dare to say that you're innocent?"

Amidst the buzzing sound, someone turned to Jiang Xi and said, “Sect Leader Jiang, before we came, we had already received complaints from all the large cities. This time, the Sisheng Peak will be blamed on us.

Jiang Xi: “…”

Everyone’s eyes were focused on him. Jiang Xi frowned, and after a while, he spoke slowly, “Your sect indeed has many doubts. The current situation is too chaotic, and we can’t act rashly. Sect Leader Xue, the Sisheng Peak shall be treated as a loose faction. In the future, if you get evidence of your own innocence, you can also…”

Before he could finish his words, he heard an angry shout, “Jiang Xi, don’t go too far!”

“… Young Master Xue.” Jiang Xi had always done things his own way, now he was himself was asking for order he was already in a bad mood. Now, he was even called “too much” by a little guy. He could not help but feel even worse. The veins on his forehead moved, and then he narrowed his eyes. “I’ve told you so many times, when elders speak, you must learn to shut up. You are also in your twenties, but when it comes to handling people, I am afraid that you are much weaker than Nangong Si who is also from the Young Master’s clan.”

When Xue Meng heard his harsh words, he became even more furious. He kicked away the cultivator standing in front of him and directly pounced towards Jiang Xi. He fiercely grabbed onto the front of Jiang Xi’s shirt and fiercely pressed him against the pillar.

His eyes were like bayonets, and his blood was like a tide.

He was not without resentment, “Jiang Xi! You still dare to compare me to Nangong Si? Why are you not competing with Nangong Liu yourself?”

Jiang Xi’s expression turned even colder upon receiving the offense. “Since you’re still young, let’s give you a free pass. Let go.”

Xue Meng completely ignored them. He had already been forced into a slightly crazed state as he continued to grind his teeth: “In my opinion, you are even more unworthy of being the head of the various sects than Nangong Liu! Your black and white are inverted, you’re too bad and too bad you can’t even differentiate between good and bad! You. You…”

Everyone was terrified, and Guyue’ye’s disciples didn’t even have time to react. They never believed that their Sect Leader would be treated so rudely in front of them.

Glaring daggers at Jiang Xi, Xue Meng gritted his teeth and stared at his cold eyes.

“Jiang Xi, you bastard.”

What was this? The Loyalty Hall was instantly in an uproar.

“Xue Meng! How dare you! You are just a junior, how could you speak to your esteemed elders!”

“What proud son of heaven, he ate a dog’s belly while recuperating!”

Jiang Xi slightly raised his chin as a ghostly light flowed in his eyes. He stared at Xue Meng for a while before slowly raising his hand and grabbing onto the hand that was holding onto him. He exerted his strength —

Ka-cha.

The crisp sound of tendons breaking and bones breaking.

“Ugh!”

“Meng’er!”

Jiang Xi threw Xue Meng to the side as if he was throwing away the remnants of his clothing, carefully smoothing out the creases on his clothes before he spoke.

Not towards Xue Meng, but towards Xue Zhengyong.

“Xue Zhengyong, you really taught a good son.”

Xue Meng’s hand was pinched to the point that it was dislocated, but he still furiously howled as he charged forward. But this time, Guyue’ye’s men wouldn’t let him do as he wished, and they all drew their swords to block him.

Jiang Xi finally lost his patience. With a fire burning between his brows, he said in annoyance, “Disperse.”

“Disperse!”

“The Sisheng Peak must be scattered!”

The black mass of people pressed forward. Nothing could make people more united than fear. Different mouths had the same meaning —

The Sisheng Peak must be dissolved today. This demon’s lair cannot be left alive.

Ch. 283 [Sisheng Peak] The Bonfire Finally Ignited

The atmosphere in the Loyalty Hall was tense to the extreme, one point was enough to ignite the fire. The disciples of Sisheng Peak and the disciples of the Upper Cultivation World stood facing each other, neither giving in to the other.

The bowstring was already stretched. If it were to pull it down again, it would either break or shoot.

At this time, someone from the crowd suddenly stood up. It was the Palace Master of the Kunlun Taxue Palace, Mingyue Lou.

Mingyue Lou's gentle voice broke the dangerous silence, "Please wait a moment. The rules are dead and the person is alive. Everyone, please empathize with them."

"Now that I thought about it, there was no proof to prove that the Sisheng Peak could be forged into chess pieces. Forcing the scattered factions to do so was indeed a bit too much. How about this, we temporarily put away the remnant scroll of the Forbidden Technique at the Sisheng Peak, and carefully judge it before making a decision."

Great master Xuanjing shook his head: "Palace master Mingyue and Sect Leader Xue have a deep personal relationship, you are biased. The Sisheng Peak has already offended the taboo in the cultivation world, so why would we need to be cautious?"

"Reverend, you're wrong. This rule has been broken by many sects." Mingyue Lou spoke in a gentle tone, but her attitude was firm. She said

gently, “If we’re going to plan things out, I haven’t forgotten the Master for incriminating affairs from your sect.”

“You-!” Xuanjing’s face darkened, he then brushed his sleeves, tidying up his expression once again, and said with his hands clasped together: “How can the art of saving be compared to a Zhenlong Chess game?”

“Then is the art of reviving someone counted as one of the three forbidden arts?”

The one who spoke was Xue Zhengyong. By now, the people closest to him had noticed that something was wrong with Xue Zhengyong. The normally domineering and awe-inspiring man was slightly anxious, the color of his lips bluish white.

Xuanjing said: “… Naturally.”

Xue Zhengyong closed his eyes and took a deep breath. Then he stared at Xuanjing again and said hoarsely, “Since that’s the case, how can the Great master exclude him from the rules because the Rebirth Technique can save people?”

Xuanjing hesitated for a while, not knowing how to explain. He stiffly said: “This is not the same thing.”

The disciples who were at the Sisheng Peak walked up to him in anger and questioned him: “Why is it not the same? There are many people in the Upper Cultivation World who have cultivated forbidden techniques, but they have just not succeeded. If you want to severely punish our sect because of this rule, wouldn’t it be better to lock you all up as well?”

Elder Tanlang said sinisterly: “The Wubei Temple is guilty, and Guyue’ye has Hua Binan. Why would he only use Sisheng Peak to speak about matters? If Sect Leader Jiang wants to shut down the Sisheng Peak, why not use your sect as an example to announce the dissolution of Guyue’ye?”

No one wanted to be turned against them like this. The various sects all felt a little guilty, and the people who were clamoring just now all quieted down, not wanting to draw trouble towards their own doorsteps.

He quietly covered up the blood that had been coughed out from his palm. He raised his eyes and said with a strong smile, “Since all the sects have done the same and the so-called Sisheng Peak to steal and refine pawns, attempting to subvert the cultivation world, even if it’s true, I will not be able to sit still. Then, please forgive me for my rudeness — everyone, please leave immediately.”

“This…”

They had originally thought that they would be able to disperse this foreign sect, but they didn’t expect that they would end up in such an awkward situation. Everyone’s faces turned ugly for a moment.

Jiang Xi had no intention of forcing everyone to scatter after Sisheng Peak. However, he couldn’t back down now. Seeing that everyone was silent, he closed his eyes and said, “Let’s go.”

Hearing this, a stone in Xue Zhengyong’s heart finally fell to the ground. He took a light breath and relaxed his tensed back. However, there was a sudden pain in his ribs. His eyes swept down and saw that the dark blue robe had mottled blood seeping out from the side of his waist.

The injury from yesterday was truly too severe. He must look for Elder Tanlang in a while……

Before he could finish, a disciple from the Tianyin Pavilion barged into the hall, sword in hand. All of them had ice-cold expressions and were approaching menacingly. As soon as they entered the room, they said in a loud and clear voice:

“Xue Zhengyong, you sure have some face. How could you say that you have never secretly refined a Zhenlong Chess on Sisheng Peak!”

None of them expected that someone from the Tianyin Pavilion would come, and they all turned around in shock. However, they saw dozens of submissive people in cloth clothing following behind them. There were even a few faces that looked very familiar. It seemed to be the village chief of a few small villages in Shu.

“What’s going on…”

The first senior brother from the Tianyin Pavilion said sternly, “Don’t you want evidence? Is this enough?”

Another disciple said to the group, “The Sisheng Peak is filled with filth, and the Sect Leader is full of wild ambition. He has been spreading fishing nets throughout the years, forcing ordinary people to sacrifice young boys and girls to train in the Zhenlong Chess Game. These are all witnesses, what else is there to identify?!”

Xue Zhengyong suddenly stood up, his eyes burning with fury. Blood gushed up his throat, “Nonsense!”

“Whether or not they are spouting nonsense doesn’t count even if you and I say it. You can ask them for yourself.”

The dozens of villagers were like a flock of frightened ducks, swaggering and flocking together. Their heads were lowered and their eyes were pleasant to the eye. No one dared to speak first.

With his sharp eyes, Xue Meng instantly recognized a familiar face inside. He said in surprise, “Village Chief Liu?”

That Village Chief Liu suddenly shivered like a slippery fish in hands who tries to swim away.

“What are you doing here?” Xue Meng was unable to react for a while. He seemed somewhat innocent and cute, even though this sort of innocence seemed so pitiful at this moment.

“I…” Village Chief Liu swallowed a mouthful of saliva as he pinched the corner of his robe with his skinny fingers. He kept staring at the ground, his legs swaying.

The man from the Tianyin Pavilion said in a domineering tone, “To be honest, if you’re lying, the Tianyin Pavilion will always be impartial and will never forgive you.”

Village Chief Liu shivered and knelt down fiercely, using his head to snatch the ground, “I… I, I will say it! All these years, the Sisheng Peak used the cover of exterminating evil and defending the way, saying that they won’t take a single cent. In fact, they have been coercing us to give them the boys and girls from the village…”

Xue Zhengyong flew into a rage and slapped the table as he stood up, “Bullshit!”

The voice of the Tianyin Pavilion was even louder than Xue Zhengyong’s, “Continue. What do they want with boys and girls?”

“I, I don’t know either.” The village chief’s forehead was covered in greasy sweat. He swallowed a mouthful of saliva and his shoulders shivered. “They said they were brought to train in the mountains, but I never saw them again. Xiao-Zi, Xiao-Shitou… None of them came back.”

The people from the Tianyin Pavilion turned to ask the cultivators at the Sisheng Peak.

“Among you all, do you have the child mentioned by this Village Chief?”

“…”

Of course not.

Xue Meng’s blood all over his body was boiling. Xiao-Zi and Xiao-Shitou… When he rushed over to save the small village, they had already been buried in the belly of the demon.

“Lies!” Xue Meng’s chest was burning with anger and his throat was filled with a sweet taste. He was so angry that he was on the verge of vomiting blood. “How can you bite the the hands that feed you, can your conscience rest?!”

Village Chief Liu’s expression was dejected as tears streamed down his face. However, he did not know what the Tianyin Pavilion was trying to use to force him, but he still insisted, “The Sisheng Peak is not a good sect…

They, they played it right in front of his face… Behind him… In Shu, I did… He has done countless heinous things…”

His tears and snot flowed, but he did not dare to look at anyone anymore. Instead, he touched the ground and wailed:

“The Sisheng Peak is oppressing the Lower Cultivation World!”

The crowd went into an uproar.

Normally speaking, the words of these tens of tribesmen would not be completely believed by cultivators. However, most of the people had come here to make Sisheng Peak disperse. They had already made their own decisions, and now that they had received such evidence, they could only accept it. They were furious.

“I knew they wouldn’t do it for nothing!”

“Xue Zhengyong, what other arguments do you have?”

Whether it was Xue Zhengyong, Xue Meng, or the disciples and elders at the Sisheng Peak, everyone was stunned.

Before this, many sects had joined hands to invade. However, they were still angry and could wave their arms while shouting out grievances and injustice.

However, at this moment, they were actually the village heads and dozens of civilians in Shu… They were people who had once offered eggs, white flour, and with tears in their eyes with gratitude had thanked the cultivators for their lives. They said that they would never be able to repay their debt.

These dozens of wolves in the mountains. They plunged the knife into the heart with their own hands.

It was painful and cold.

Like falling into a cave of ice as the entire body turned cold.

Those witnesses came forward one by one. One of them still had guilt in their eyes, while the second one was still trembling. The third one was already able to look straight at everyone, while the fourth one began to speak righteously. He was like a goose, with his head in the front of his head, and a flock of others following him.

As the saying goes, “Repeated rumor becomes the truth”. As they spoke, they became impassioned. As they spoke, they actually thought that they were speaking the truth.

Xue Meng felt his blood run cold and his teeth go cold.

He had thought that a man had a spine that could not be broken, but he had never expected that dogs could live and drink feces.

“Yes, it’s true…” It was Jia Village’s matchmaker’s turn to testify, “They forced us to give them our child as the reward for exterminating the devil. The Sisheng Peak does not take money but only small children. This is a rule that we, the Lower Cultivation World, all know.”

Jiang Xi frowned and asked, “Why do you still seek them when you already know about it?”

The matchmaker then used a peach powder handkerchief to wipe his tears, “There’s nothing I can do. I’m poor, and I can’t afford to hire a cultivator, so I can only send a child from the village… They said that they would be sent

to the Sisheng Peak to cultivate, but everyone knew what they were doing. These desperate children that are sent away… they won't survive."

As he spoke, he pounded his chest and stamped his feet, covering his face as he wailed.

There was also a scholar who came to testify, "Indeed, the Sisheng Peak doesn't accepts money but children, we still have to live our lives, so we dare not say anything. Fortunately, the heavens have eyes, so many wrongdoings will end on their own. The Sisheng Peak has finally revealed the tail of a fox. Ladies and gentlemen, please make the decision for the Lower Cultivation World!"

Someone immediately stood out from the Jiangdong Hall and said, "Don't worry, the Upper Cultivation World is currently in a state of glory. Everyone here today is a reputable and upright clan. All of them have a hundred years of history, so they will definitely act impartially."

The townspeople who had come to testify began to weep with gratitude as they approached the Sisheng Peak and complained of the evil deeds they had done.

They knew that since they had perjured themselves, there was no turning back. If the Sisheng Peak did not fall today, they would definitely settle it in the future.

For a moment, no one could be seen inside the hall. The only thing that could be seen were the evil spirits who were keeping watch as they opened their bloody mouths to bite down on the dilapidated wooden pillars and the simple and unadorned roof tiles and walls… Biting on the plaque that

had been hanging on the door of the ‘Loyalty Hall’ ever since due to the lack of funds.

Fresh blood.

Xue Meng was trembling. He closed his eyes and tears rolled down his face. “How can you say that?”

Did the Tianyin Pavilion promise them glory?

They would still force each other with their lives.

How could he say it out loud, how could he say it out loud…

The matchmaker’s crimson lips were still opening and closing, as bits and pieces of his words spread into Xue Meng’s ears like poisonous snakes — “The Sisheng Peak is to steal and refine chess pieces”, “To treat human life as grass”, “To abduct and capture children”.

Each word was twisted into a ferocious nightmare.

“They are bullying the cultivation world.”

“Wearing the clothes of a beast, behaving gracefully!”

“That Chu Wanning and Mo Ran were the ones who disliked them the most. They cheated so many innocent people just to make pawns…”

They were both filled with hatred, and their hands were trembling.

His rationality crumbled.

“How — how can you say it?! How can I do it!”

Anger, like an ant's nest, destroys the last dam in the heart. With a kacha sound, Xue Meng caught the elbow of the wrong place and drew his blade. The Longcheng tiger's roar resounded. Before anyone could react, the scimitar had already been dyed with blood.

The matchmaker who was in the midst of choreographing "Top Disciple of Sisheng Peak assaulted a young girl" was stunned. He looked down at his chest and spat out a mouthful of blood. Before he could even say a word, he fell to the ground with a thud.

Dead silence.

Strangely, the people from the Tianyin Pavilion stood beside the villagers, but did not intervene to stop them — because they were shocked? Or did he not react at all? The answer was unknown, and no one would ponder over it.

Everyone's eyes were focused on Xue Meng. The blood droplets dripped down along the edge of Longcheng's blade. One drop, two drops. It accumulated into a deep red pool.

Feng Yu couldn't escape when the abyss fell.

"AHH!" Suddenly, someone screamed out like an apocalyptic bell, "KILL, KILL…"

"Xue Meng recklessly kills witnesses! Xue Meng is going crazy!"

The hall became even more chaotic in an instant. It was unknown who moved first as the long suppressed flames of anger gushed and broke. The bowstring broke and the Sisheng Peak people and the Upper Cultivation World began to fight.

Private enmity, fear, rejection.

This battle contained too much selfishness that the scene instantly became out of control.

Amidst the shadows of swords and the gleam of blades, Xue Zhengyong endured the pain of the wound and growled, “Stop the fight, all of you stop!”

However, when the people at the Sisheng Peak listened to him, the cultivators above did not stop. Xue Meng’s heart was already crushed, so much so that his eyes turned moist red. While holding the scimitar and hacking away at evil spirits, he could not stop sobbing and crying.

Perhaps it was only at this moment that Meng’er truly understood the feeling that Mo Ran had felt when it was young.

In the House of Drunken Jade, when a machete was slaughtering an entire building’s worth of people, the despair, disgust, excitement, and self-loathing he felt. Nothing was important anymore. Anger had burned his heart, and only blood extinguish it.

Suddenly, a sword blocked his attack. The sword emitted a brilliant blue light, and it looked extremely familiar… but Xue Meng couldn’t recall it at this moment. He only roared at the ugly appearance of the Taxue Palace Mistress, “Scram! Don’t stop me!”

“Stop hitting him, if you continue, you will really cause trouble. Calm down.”

A familiar voice entered his ears.

Who is it?

Xue Meng could not remember, nor was he willing to think about it.

Pain and hatred broke his heart, a man's patience had its limits. Beyond that hurdle, God was like a ghost, and a saint turned into an Asura.

One remembrance of the Buddha, one remembrance of the Devil.

His eyes were red and filled with hatred. The hatred that had been burning inside him ever since he entered the Tianyin Pavilion had finally exploded outward, swallowing him in an instant.

"Scram!"

Longcheng and that blue sword clashed, but that crude looking man was not inferior in the slightest. He struggled against the sword as a pair of jade green eyes stared at Xue Meng's face.

"If you still don't calm down, you will only cause your death to be even more miserable."

"Who do you think you are!? It's your turn to meddle?!"

The more he hacked, the more vicious he became. However, his sword remained calm as it clashed with each other.

His blue eyes stared at the black, familiar eyes.

…… Who was it…?

"Ziming, stop fighting."

A slow voice rang in his ears. It wasn't much, but there was still a trace of anxiety and pity in it.

Xue Meng's frenzied and chaotic mind seemed to flash with a trace of brilliance. His fierce and fiendish attacks slightly halted, but his chest was still fiercely rising and falling.

At this moment, his face was covered in blood, and his hair was in a mess. He glared fiercely at the ugly man, "You…"

Before he could say anything, he felt a cold wind blow behind his back.

Xue Meng suddenly turned his head. It was already too late to lift Longcheng up. His arm had been cut open, leaving behind a hideous bloody wound that went straight to his bones!

"Meng'er!"

Xue Zhengyong saw that his beloved son was injured and rushed over to save him.

The Tianyin Pavilion's ten or so elites, who were all Mu Yanli's Death Soldiers, looked at each other as they pounced at Xue Meng.

These people's individual strength were all similar to the Elders at the Sisheng Peak. They had all launched their deathblow towards Xue Meng who was already injured, which was about to take Phoenix's life.

"Meng'er… Meng'er!"

However, the distance between them was too far. Xue Zhengyong was unable to come over, but more people had already encircled him, trapping him within. Xue Zhengyong was anxious to protect his son. His body was also wounded under the powerful attacks, and his blood was all over the place.

Xue Meng gritted his teeth and brandished his blade. He had retreated two people in one strike, but his arm was bleeding profusely and his entire wrist was trembling.

Suddenly, a red light flashed —

“Be careful!”

In the time it took for a spark to fly off of a piece of flint, the green-eyed man that had fought with him earlier had blocked a killing move for him.

The Tianyin Pavilion disciple squinted his eyes, “A traitor has appeared in the Taxue Palace? You want to stand together with the Sisheng Peak?”

The azure-eyed man did not answer, but kept his sword as cold as frost. He turned around and said to Xue Meng with a pale face and fierce eyes, “Go to uncle. Hurry up.”

“I…” Xue Meng covered the blade of his arm. In reality, he could not even hold on. The bones beneath his flesh were exposed to the air, and his entire arm was drenched in hot blood.

His lips moved as if he wanted to say something, but he did not. His gaze fell on Xue Zhengyong.

With just this glance, the last traces of blood on Xue Meng’s face faded.

He almost cried out miserably as he ran towards Xue Zhengyong, ignoring the danger. He roared, “Father!”

Xue Zhengyong’s eyes turned cold. He immediately reacted and raised his hand to block the man behind him with his fine steel wristguard. He then

threw the man to the ground. Xue Meng abruptly let out a breath of relief and squeezed to his father's side as if he didn't care about his life.

He grabbed Xue Zhengyong's arm fiercely, feeling sad and happy at the same time: "That's great, Father, I'm fine… I'm fine…"

Xue Zhengyong, on the other hand, had been injured from the previous attack, and a large amount of blood gushed out from his waist, but his body was already covered in red, so Xue Meng did not notice it. He grabbed his father's hand and said, "Father, I want revenge, today I want the lives of these people, and the lives of others, I —"

"Cough cough…"

The voice suddenly stopped.

Xue Meng saw Xue Zhengyong abruptly kneeling on the ground, blood gushing out of his throat.

"Father…?" Meng'er was instantly stupefied. He had never seen his father suffer such heavy injuries in his entire life. In that instant, his mind buzzed and he said, "Father, what's wrong? You…"

Xue Zhengyong's blood-stained lips opened and closed. He held Xue Meng's arm and said hoarsely, "Stop."

"… What…"

Xue Zhengyong stared at Xue Meng's face, but his peripheral vision also scanned the surroundings for signs of trouble.

Was this battle what he wanted?

There were shouts everywhere. Red blood and white brains splattered. Even before the mastermind was found, the various sects and sects had already started to kill each other…

Xue Zhengyong said, “Tell those at the Sisheng Peak to stop.”

“But they…”

“What can we do if we continue fighting?” Xue Zhengyong’s face was ashen, “Who can get what they want? Or is it because the sect is destroyed?”

Xue Meng did not say anything. His eyes were red, and even the tips of his fingers were trembling.

“Go…” Xue Zhengyong gave him a light push, and Xue Meng’s tears fell. He almost staggered to his feet, stood in front of his father, and yelled:

“Armistice! Stop fighting!”

Ch. 284 [Sisheng Peak] My Son Is Extremely Precious

As if all his strength and arrogance had been drained from his voice, Xue Meng abruptly closed his eyes, his cheeks hot and wet.

“Stop…”

However, it was just like a prairie fire. It was easy to burn, but very difficult to extinguish. After a messy battle, the hall was already filled with dead and injured people. The blood of these people had turned into hot oil, igniting the hatred and madness within them. For a moment, Xue Meng’s or Xue Zhengyong’s sigh, both didn’t get much of an attention.

Even if they did, the pairs of bloodshot eyes would not stop.

There was too much unease these days. One after another, murders, heavenly rift, Zhenlong Chess, people of Guyue’ye dying.

The Jiangdong Hall was in a mess. The Bitan Manor had been ownerless for many days, and there was no mourning temple or Buddhist temple that wasn't stained with blood. Many cultivators present had lost their friends and relatives in the past few days…

Who was the mastermind? Who was lying?

There was no answer, but all the directions pointed to the Sisheng Peak, and thus the accumulated hatred and fear exploded in this one battle.

It was difficult to stop it.

Xue Meng had not experienced many great battles, so he still did not understand what this meant. His chest rose up and down as he stood in

place, watching the crazy slaughter.

However, Xue Zhengyong already knew that things had gone out of control at this point, so much so that even the culprit wouldn't have expected it.

He gritted his teeth as he endured the pain of his wound cracking and the dizziness he had in front of him as he grabbed Xue Meng's shoulder. "Hurry up and leave."

"Father?!"

"Get out of here quickly! Go to your mother, quick!"

However, before his voice fell, seven or eight people had already gathered in front of the two of them, and each of their eyes were bloodshot from killing. "Xue Meng, you killed my Senior Brother. I want you to pay with your life!"

"Son of a beast!"

Xue Meng froze in place — He killed this person's Senior Brother? When… He had clearly never harmed anyone, he had never…

His mind was in a mess. In the confusion, he looked down and saw that the Longcheng in his hands was dripping with blood. He felt a chill run down his spine.

Yes, he did.

He killed — first the perjury matchmaker, then.

He couldn't remember. He had just started a mad slaughter. His hands were covered with blood, his face was covered with blood. His face and

hands were covered…

“AHH!”

Xue Meng suddenly howled like a dying beast. His forehead, tendons, and veins bulged, and his eyes were bloodshot.

Why did it become like this… Everything had changed since the day Mo Ran left. One by one, everything was falling out of his control, and he was moving further and further away from his former self.

“I killed someone… Father… I killed someone…”

He turned around in panic, only to see Xue Zhengyong’s terrifyingly pale face in front of him. Xue Zhengyong grabbed his hand and dragged him behind him. Then he himself used the iron fan to cut and kill him, creating a path of blood in the heavy encirclement.

“Let’s go.”

A man on the verge of collapse was giving his son, who was no longer a teenager, a chance to live.

“Meng’er, hurry up and leave.”

Xue Meng stood there stiffly without moving. At this time, another person rushed forward to kill. Xue Zhengyong could no longer resist as he raised his hand to grab the hilt of that person’s blade. Instantly, blood flowed like a fountain, causing his bones to be visible. Xue Zhengyong cursed. With his other hand, he took out a dagger from his waist and stabbed it into the man’s stomach.

Hot blood gushed out!

“Go!”

Xue Zhengyong roared. He suddenly caught sight of someone and shouted sternly: “Hanxue! Take him out! Take him away from here!”

Mei Hanxue had also been fighting in this direction. At this moment, he finally broke through the heavy encirclement and floated over to Xue Meng’s side. He first glanced at Xue Zhengyong, and his eyes actually showed a faint pain. Then, he grabbed Xue Meng’s arm and said in a deep voice, “Follow me.”

After he finished speaking, he brought Xue Meng, who had already become numb and absent-minded, with him as he charged towards the back door of the Loyalty Hall to fight his way out. Perhaps it was because of the Taxue Palace’s betrayal that everyone was distracted for a while. Mei Hanxue had brought Xue Meng to the entrance of the hall, and only then did someone react. With an angry roar, he pounced at the two of them and yelled: “You want to run after killing someone? Who will pay for their lives?”

Mei Hanxue swept his hand through the air, causing a series of clanging sounds, like metal breaking through the air, to repel the enemies in front of him. Just as he was feeling relieved, he suddenly heard Xue Zhengyong yell, “Watch out for the back!”

He suddenly turned his head, only to see a man with a face full of blood, slashing down with his blade, but it was already too late to block — At this time, a steel fan suddenly flew up into the air, and after tempering its spirit energy, it spun in midair, and pierced straight towards the man, instantly piercing through his chest.

“Uncle…”

“Father…”

The two young men turned around and saw Xue Zhengyong gasping for breath. Obviously, this attack had consumed a lot of his energy. The iron fan landed on the ground after hitting its target.

Blood stained the fan. Regardless of whether it was the beautiful Xuelang, or the ugly people, the words on the fan could no longer be seen clearly.

Xue Zhengyong made a gesture to the two of them with great difficulty and said softly, “Quick…”

Before he had even said anything, Xue Meng’s pupils contracted to reflect a heavy sword that was filled with spirit energy. A Jiangdong Hall expert was standing behind Xue Zhengyong with a ferocious blade in hand. Before Xue Meng could even make a sound, he had already turned towards his father —

A slash down!

Everything quieted.

Xue Meng’s eyes widened. Suddenly, he could not hear anything around him.

It was just like a calm sea that was ten thousand miles deep. There was no wind, no heat, and no light.

Black.

The blood flow throughout Xue Meng's entire body seemed to have frozen yet at the same time exploded. It was absolutely horrifying. His pair of eyes were cracking with fury as he stared at the person in front of him.

Because he had seen his son saved, Xue Zhengyong's face showed traces of relief and gratification. He froze at this moment.

He felt a sense of serenity.

The sea was deep and endless. The water was freezing, entering his bones and muscles until he was drowning.

It was very quiet, deathly still.

No sound… No sound…

No.

Until blood dripped down from the cracked top, down his eyes, and down his face.

Two lines, red like tears, dripping down.

At this moment, Xue Meng seemed to think that this was a joke, or perhaps it was a dream, or perhaps all of this could still be turned around and it's not too late.

But no.

Too late. If there was concern, then there would be weakness.

Wargods will also die.

"Father!"

With a roar, the mountain range entered the sea.

All the silence was shattered by this — waves rolling up, a thousand piles of snow, but the stones breaking the sky, the torrents pouring down, the seas churning, the waves splitting the sky!

Xue Meng ran towards Xue Zhengyong like a mad man. He shouted like a dying beast, tearing through the sky to cut off all the underlings' movements. Upon hearing his shout, everyone turned around in fright…

The waves parted, and he stumbled through the crowd towards Xue Zhengyong.

Xue Zhengyong stood there without even bending his spine. He just stared at Xue Meng like that, his tiger-like eyes wide open. Those eyes made Xue Meng feel like he was still alive, that he could still be saved, and…

Xue Zhengyong fell when he was just inches away.

With a thud, he almost fell straight down. The four of them were scattered and there were no longer any sounds of fighting.

Xue Meng suddenly stopped. He did not continue forward.

He just stood there, trembling all over. From a tiny tremble to a violent tremble, lips, fingers, there was not a single part of him that was not under his control.

he murmured, inquiringly, carefully.

He said hoarsely, "Father?"

The entire hall was filled with blood.

No one answered.

With a “Clang” sound, the Longcheng’s gate fell to the ground. Xue Meng slowly retreated, retreated… But where could he retreat to? Yesterday? It’ll never come back.

Any step in life, whether it is a mistake, whether it is painful, as long as it falls, there is no turning back.

The Loyalty Hall was deathly silent.

He stopped retreating, his body swaying violently. He then knelt on the ground, staring blankly at the scene before him. Tears could not stop flowing down his face. He raised his hand and tried to wipe it away, but he couldn’t wipe it away no matter how hard he tried.

At last he buried his face in his palm, and a little whimper came from his throat, like ink on paper — and then the paper was full of absurdity and completely stained with ink.

“Father… Father!”

The whimper eventually turned into a wail.

The people blocking Xue Meng’s path were unable to stand up again. With their broad shoulders and hearty smiles, they helped him block out the storms of life.

The days of the blessed youth truly ended at this moment.

The earth crumbled.

It was a mess. Everything was a mess.

The ruthless Jiangdong Hall cultivator froze in place, his heavy sword dropped onto the ground as he muttered: “No, no…It’s not me…”

He could not help but shake his head. Seeing Xue Meng kneel where he stood, seemingly in a state of madness, he was extremely afraid, trembling like a sieve. He wanted to flee for his life, but everyone’s eyes were focused on him. He had nowhere to retreat to.

“No… Listen to me… I only wanted to shoot down the weapon in his hand…”

He stared at Xue Meng, nervously swallowing his saliva.

At this moment, Xue Meng was still immersed in great grief. However, he knew that once Xue Meng raised his eyes, there was only one path for him — death.

“Hurry and invite Madam Wang over.” Elder Xun Ji was the calmest of everyone. As he looked at Xue Meng who was curled up on the ground, he still hadn’t stood up and was still crying. He instructed his disciple in a low voice, “Be quick, I’m afraid that no one will be able to stop the Young Lord later.”

Seeing the Sect Leader’s death, the disciple’s face was filled with tears. “But master, the Sect Leader forbade the Lady from coming. The Lady would never interfere in major matters. She…”

“Why are you still talking about this at this time?” Xun Ji said, “Quickly go!”

The disciple wiped his tears away and ran back to the mountain with a nod.

Only after the Sect Leader died did everything finally start to calm down. There were people in the hall who were in pain from their wounds, some

who were livid, some who were pursing their lips without saying a word. Another person whispered, “What’s going on? Xue Zhengyong’s ability shouldn’t be limited to just that. How could he not be able to dodge it?”

What they didn’t know was that Xue Zhengyong had been stabbed in the vital parts because he killed the evil spirits in Wuchang Town the day before, and had been injured in the vital parts of his body. They only sighed:

“Ai, the longer you stay at the heard, the older you become. The hero is late.”

Xue Meng did not listen to those rustling words. His eyes gradually became covered with blood due to tears and hatred. He sobbed, sobbed, and wailed. In the end, his eyes became a sea of red maple.

He lifted his eyes and stared at the invaders. His eyes burned with pure clarity and sincerity. Only blood and hatred remained, as well as enmity.

An angry howl! Longcheng burst into action!

Kill!

This time, Xue Meng really lost control of his mind. He screamed at the top of his lungs. He had become so terrifying that he lost all sense of reason. He was not afraid of death, nor was he afraid of pain. Who could stop him? No one could stop him.

Biesang Temple, Guyue’ye, Jiangdong Hall, Fire Phoenix Pavilion… Pui! He couldn’t see! He could only see the faces of the wraiths, as well as their distorted figures. He felt as if he was in Purgatory, in the midst of an endless sea of blood.

Hate!

Why?

Why our loyalty for twenty years had to be earned , but cannot escape a single misjudgment, a few gossips?

Why did he spend all his life bowing to someone, in the end, only paying something in the wrong with sincerity?

Why was he trying to nurture kindness and enmity?

Why so stupid.

Blood flowed like a river.

No one could hear his words, and no one was able to persuade him otherwise.

Xue Meng was going crazy. The phoenix desired blood, and his blood boiled into a fire. From the fire came a pair of scarlet red eyes of a vicious beast. Its bloody teeth bit through the throats of everyone who tried to stop him!

You know that year the cicadas were chirping in the middle of summer.

Xue Zhengyong smiled as he patted Xue Meng's head and asked, "What does my son want to do in the future?"

"Just be like Daddy." Meng'er's eyes were clear as he said, "Be a great hero. Be a good man and punish evil. Be worthy of living up to your words."

Blood sprayed on his face, and someone screamed miserably.

Who did he kill?

Seems to be someone's sister and wife.

It doesn't matter.

It was fine if she died. In any case, he wasn't a clean person anymore. In any case, they had brought this upon themselves… They forced him!

He massacred like a madman, and the crowd dispersed. He couldn't hear it. Can't hear…

Until that person's voice rang out.

"Meng'er."

It was as if the sound hit him where it hurts the most.

A trembling voice that was trying hard to suppress its emotions.

A soft and delicate fragrance rose up in the air, and the tip of his finger pinched the smoke before dispersing it.

Xue Meng was stunned.

"Seize him!"

"Don't let him go crazy again!"

People rushed in from all directions.

"Meng'er…"

Xue Meng was a tiger leopard that was being attacked by a pack of wolves. His entire body was covered in blood and his arm was trembling

uncontrollably. After this battle, he would probably never be able to use this arm to hold the saber again. He narrowed his eyes. Blood dripped from his eyes. He turned his head stiffly.

The back door of the Loyalty Hall was wide open, and boundless daylight spilled in.

Madam Wang appeared in the doorway, dressed in plain white. Her body was weak, her temperament gentle, and she never interfered in any affairs in front of the palace. She had always been like this.

It was only at this moment that he heard the news and arrived. She was a beautiful lady with grey hair and a wet dress.

Xue Meng asked hoarsely, his voice broken. “Mother?”

All of the disciples at the summit of the mountain bowed down, “Madam.”

The Elders bowed as well. “Madam Wang.”

There was not a single trace of blood on her face, and the only beauty was the coral red pearl on his earrings. She did not utter a single word. She first saw her husband’s corpse and his body fiercely swayed. Then she saw Xue Meng being suppressed by someone and falling to his knees. Her face became even paler.

The disciples were worried about her weak body. They were afraid that she would pass out the very next moment.

But Madam Wang only trembled slightly, her lips moving slightly. For the first time, she was unable to speak.

But the second time, she spoke. Her voice was hoarse, but she tried her best to remain calm.

“Let him go.”

These three words were softly said to those people who were violently suppressing Xue Meng.

Many of those people had never even seen Madam Wang’s face before. Now that they saw her, they felt that she was just an extremely weak woman, so they fiercely said to her, “Your son has killed so many people. How can you release him?!”

“I must bring him to the Tianyin Pavilion to be detained for trial!”

There were tears in Madam Wang’s eyes, but she continued to speak word by word, “Let him go.”

“…”

No one let go. Everyone was in a deadlock.

Madam Wang slightly raised her head, as if he was trying to hold back his tears, but to no avail. Bitter, salty tears rolled down her cheeks. She closed her eyes. Her slender body was trembling slightly, as weak as the wind.

Someone said, “The Sisheng Peak refused to be dispersed today, and countless cultivators of the Upper Cultivation World have been injured. Mo Ran and Chu Wanning were suspicious, so no matter what, they had to seek justice — murder to pay for it. Madam, I’m sorry.”

Madam Wang did not say anything, nor did she look at her husband’s corpse again. She silently walked through the crowd that she had

consciously dispersed. Step by step, she reached the high level of Loyalty Hall and stood in front of the position of Sect Leader.

Stand still.

Everyone below was buzzing loudly: “Sect Leader Xue’s death was purely due to coincidence, but Xue Meng deliberately killed.”

“That’s right, we must take him away.”

The sound was like a tide, rising and falling in waves, one after the other.

The cold wind blew into the hall, the curtains fluttered.

“Xue Meng is innocent!”

“Bam!” A loud sound rang out!

The entire hall was shocked.

The one who slammed the table was actually this weak and frail woman. Madam Wang’s eyes were wide open, and her beautiful face, like a lotus, was flushed red.

She didn’t know how to get angry, but the anger had already burned her heart.

She stood in front of the palace, her gaze sweeping past everyone —

“Meng’er is my child, Ran’er is my nephew, and Zhengyong is my husband.”

Her voice was quiet, but her words were clear and decisive.

“You all, dig out my nephew’s spirit core and took away his life. Now, you still want to take my son away in front of me?”

There were many women in Jiangdong Hall, but they couldn't understand what Madam Wang was feeling the most.

Immediately, a female cultivator coldly said, "Madam Wang, please speak some reason."

"That's right. If your nephew wasn't cultivating this forbidden technique, why would we dig for his spirit core? If your husband had listened to our advice, how could it have ended up in such a mess? If your son didn't kill countless people, why would we take him away? Madam Wang, you have to take good care of your own mistakes."

At this time, the hatred between the various sects and the Sisheng Peak had suddenly deepened, and none of them were willing to let them off easily.

"Close the door!"

"Take away all the people who just attacked! We had to severely punish them! Do you really want to let go of all these murderous demons?"

"We can't let any of them go, capture them all!"

Madam Wang stood at the top of the hall, facing this scene of chaos. The frail woman closed her eyes, then slowly opened his mouth, "The deceased are here. If they were alive, I would not allow you to attack again the Sisheng Peak, or touch a hair on my son's head."

The rest of the crowd found this funny, except for Jiang Xi, whose expression changed slightly. Beside the pillar, a female cultivator from Jiangdong Hall was the first to speak: "You really boast too shamelessly."

Madam Wang slowly walked down the steps of the hall. She ignored the female cultivator and said to everyone who was looking at her, “What ability do you have to bully orphans and widows?”

After walking down the last flight, she stopped on the dark red carpet embroidered with pollia and raised her pair of beautiful eyes. Her face was still gentle, but her eyes were firm.

She raised her hand, moved it, and removed a silver bracelet from her wrist.

The female cultivator who had mocked her narrowed her eyes and asked, “What are you doing?”

Madam Wang raised her hand. For some reason, a dazzling red light suddenly appeared in his palm. With a flick of her fingers, the silver bracelet was crushed into fine powder!

Many people were so frightened that they took a step back. Even the people at the Sisheng Peak were so shocked that they couldn’t speak. Xue Meng was also stunned. Among the crowd, there was only Jiang Xi — only Jiang Xi.

He stared at her. His face was extremely ugly, but he wasn’t surprised at all.

“The Sisheng Peak, will never change. Everyone who wish to close our doors and come step forward —”

Madam Wang brushed away the powder from the silver bracelet and raised her eyes to say something that would cause everyone’s faces to change in fear.

“Fight me.”

Ch. 285 [Sisheng Peak] Phoenix Searing the Heavens

As the silver bracelet broke, there was a distant phoenix cry, and the flames behind Madam Wang transformed into sparkling feathers. In that instant, red light overlapped each other, and flames soared to the sky! The vicious and violent flow of spirit energy was like a rushing lava, surging and devouring everything in its path.

She stood in the fire and raised her delicate hand. In that hand, a large amount of fire immediately gathered and poured into the plate and palm, making a hissing sound.

“What’s going on?! Isn’t her spiritual energy weak?”

“Xue Zhengyong is married to a woman who can’t learn spells… Wh… What the hell is going on with her?!”

Xue Meng was almost frightened. “Mother?!”

Jiang Xi also stepped forward and shouted, “Chuqing! Stop! How could you be able to accomplish such a feat with what you have done today?”

It had been a long time since anyone had called out Madam Wang’s name. An indescribable emotion flashed through her eyes that were red from the blazing fire, but it was quickly dispelled. She looked at Jiang Xi, “Sect Leader Jiang, if I didn’t do this, would you all retreat?”

“…”

“Will you let go of the Sisheng Peak and let go of Xue Meng?”

Jiang Xi gritted his teeth and said, “Stop right there. We can talk about everything else later.”

Madam Wang shook her head. “You have already dug out my heart once. I have already died in front of the Loyalty Hall. There is no third time.”

“Chuqing!”

“Sect Leader Jiang, let’s call it a day.”

Madam Wang’s clothes fluttered in the wind as her pupils gradually turned blood-red. Some sharp-eyed people noticed that her waist started to emit an intense red-orange light, and as it penetrated through his clothes, they couldn’t help but exclaim, “What’s that?!”

Jiang Xi cursed in his mind. He turned around and shouted at everyone, “Go down the mountain!”

“But things are not over yet, Xue Meng still…”

“If you want to die, then stay!” Jiang Xi said angrily, “This is Guyue’ye’s Phoenix Heavenly Flame! Do you all want to die?!”

The moment they heard the words “Phoenix Fire”, almost everyone’s faces turned ashen — a high ranking female disciple of Guyue’ye had her Phoenix tattoo stabbed into her waist. To be able to ignite a Phoenix Fire in times of danger was a well-known fact. However, even though they knew about it, no one had ever seen it with their own eyes.

The price they had to pay was too great. The least they had to to lose cultivation, and the most they had to pay was their lives.

The group of cultivators rushed out of the Loyalty Hall in a panic, like stray dogs. They scrambled towards the foot of the mountain to ride their swords. Only a few people were left in the large hall that was filled with swords just now.

Jiang Xi had not left yet, his silk ribbon fluttering in the wind as he looked back at Madam Wang. “Your Spiritual Core can’t withstand it at all.”

He squinted his brown eyes in confusion.

He was both angry and sad.

“That kind of tyrannical spirit core, the Phoenix Heavenly Flame? You can protect your son today, but what will happen after that?”

“If I don’t destroy the Heaven Flames, even my son will not be able to protect me today.” The flames on Madam Wang’s body intensified. Once this evil fire was ignited, it would erupt and never be extinguished.

She walked up the jade stairs, standing at the place where Xue Zhengyong had stood countless times with a smile on her face, her red eyes sweeping across all the disciples and elders at the peak of the hall.

“Fellow disciples.” She bowed slightly and said, “Zhengyong and I both believed in the truth of what we said before we parted. Today, the various sects had forced the Tianyin Pavilion to act suspiciously. In the eyes of the kings, right and wrong are seen in black and white.”

All the disciples looked at this woman who used to be so gentle.

Sparks flew off her clothes, covering his clothes in brilliant, mottled shadows.

“The Sisheng Peak was established for more than twenty years. They did not injure the innocent or commit injustice. Even if they are slandered and framed, they still live up to their expectations. However, I am too weak to affirm the truth and to return justice. “Don’t go today. I have asked for three things. I hope that all of you will be generous and help us out on account of our former friendship.”

All of the disciples lowered their eyes and said with tears in their eyes, “As Madam commands.”

As for Xue Meng, he choked with sobs as he murmured, “Mother…”

“After the Phoenix Heavenly Flames explode, it would last for at least three days. The first thing is that I hope that all the lords can preserve their lives, temporarily leave the Sisheng Peak and earn their own living.”

“This…”

Tanlang shook his head and said, “I prefer death to disgrace, I'm not running like a dog.”

When Madam Wang heard this, she smiled and said, “This isn’t a dog walking around. In the past, I heard that the Rufeng Sect’s Nangong Changying had a saying that makes sense.”

She had seen all of the disciples and elders in the hall before, just like the previous times when they had appeared before everyone.

“Nangong Changying once said that regardless of whether the Rufeng Sect is established or not, as long as there is still someone in the world who stands against greed, murder, resentment, stealing and debauchery the gentlemen of Rufeng sect will persevere.” Madam Wang paused for a

moment before saying, “I picked up his wisdom. What I want to say today is the same as well.”

“Madam…”

“When all the cultivators leave and the truth is revealed, everything will be decided. If you still have the heart, then you can come back to this place.”

No one in the hall said anything for a while, only the young disciples were crying sorrowfully, and their clothes were heavy with tears.

Madam Wang said, “The second thing is to ask you not to make things difficult for Mo Ran or Yuheng. I believe that the two of them have their reasons for doing this, and that the words that Ran’er said were not false.”

Led by the elders, all the disciples lowered their heads and said in a low voice, “The disciples of Sisheng Peak will never be enemies with Young Master Mo and Elder Yuheng.”

“Then, the third item.” Madam Wang sighed. “I’m afraid that it’s just like what Mo Ran said. The Gate of Life and Death will open again in the future. When the time comes…”

She paused, as if she didn’t know whether his insistence was right or wrong.

However, she still slowly continued, “I still wish for the various cultivators and commoners to see eye to eye when the time comes.”

Tanlang, with his strong temper, could not help but be furious: “Those beasts that tried to bite you, what is there to protect?!”

“The Madam wasn’t here just now. She didn’t even know how disgusting those people’s faces were!”

“There are so many people in the Lower Cultivation World. There are dogs, and evil people. Good will not always be rewarded. But when we founded his sect, it was not to receive praise and gratitude, but to live up to his sincerity.”

Her pupils became more and more scarlet, and the Phoenix tattoo on her waist also became brighter and brighter.

Madam Wang stood amidst the blazing flames. “Everyone, how vast is this world of mortals? The word ‘fair’ is really too vague. But even so, to be able to do me justice and help me with my heart is still a small matter that is feasible with a body of my size.”

She closed his eyes and sighed.

“Therefore, if the Sisheng Peak were to collapse due to the dozens of traitors who had suffered injustice, they would ignore the lives of the people and become the second Rufeng Sect… That is what Zhengyong laments the most.”

“We can’t change evil, and we don’t have eyes that can see through people’s hearts. But at least we can do it. Don’t let malice and hatred change us.”

Finally, Madam Wang smiled and said, “May the hearts of all of us remain unshaken for the rest of our lives, forever unchanging.”

As soon as she finished, Phoenix Heavenly Flame!

The seal of the Phoenix Heavenly Flame was finally completely undone. A powerful energy continuously flowed out of Madam Wang's seemingly thin body, and in an instant, a wave of flames surged out like a flood from a mountain.

Green Sky Palace, Sword Discourse Arena, Mengpo Hall, Naihe Bridge… Two mountain peaks, a river, a palace of frost, the Red Lotus Pavilion…

In that instant, it was completely enveloped by the spirit fire.

These flames could recognize the will of their master, and they would not burn a single blade of grass or tree that was on the Sisheng Peak. It was just like the elders and disciples that were still standing in the hall.

Madam Wang said, "Go."

No one moved.

She sighed and urged everyone, "Go, why are you still standing there foolishly? Hurry up and leave."

After repeating the process several times, some people lowered their heads and left. The Loyalty Hall gradually became spacious and empty. In the end, only Xue Meng and Jiang Xi remained.

Jiang Xi gave his one last glance before turning to leave. However, Madam Wang called out to him. "Wait a moment."

"… Do you still have anything else to say?"

Within the firelight, Madam Wang's expression was not very clear. Sometimes bright, sometimes dark, sometimes cold, sometimes warm. She hesitated for a long time as if he was suffering from some inner torment.

Finally, she closed her eyes, steeled her heart, and whispered, “Shidi, come closer. I have something I want to tell you.”

The moment he said this, both Xue Meng and Jiang Xi were stunned.

Xue Meng really couldn’t understand what Madam Wang had to tell Jiang Xi alone at this time. Jiang Xi obviously thought the same. He narrowed his eyes slightly, not moving an inch.

Although he and Madam Wang were fellow disciples of the same sect, they had parted ways and hadn’t met privately for many years. In addition to Xue Zhengyong’s new demise, he was also one of the people who denounced the Sisheng Peak – to be on guard, it was not as if he didn’t have one.

Jiang Xi said, “If there’s anything you want to say, please say it here.”

“…”

“There is nothing between you and me that cannot be told to others.”

When Madam Wang saw that he couldn’t persuade Jiang Xi, he turned his head and said to Xue Meng, “Meng’er, you go down the mountain first. For mother to have a few words, I can only say that he knows them all by herself with Sect Leader Jiang.”

“Mother…?”

“Quickly go. This has nothing to do with you.”

Xue Meng’s face was dirty to the point that it was tainted with blood. His tears flowed down, leaving behind streaks after streaks of marks as he embarrassedly wiped his face and choked with sobs, “I don’t want to

leave… You're all here. I don't want to go anywhere! I just want to be with you guys…"

"If you don't want to leave, then just wait at the Frost Hall." Madam Wang sighed. "When Mother finishes with Sect Leader Jiang, bring your father over."

"…"

At this moment, Madam Wang's face was extremely pale. There were also traces of blood leaking from the corners of her mouth. She frowned slightly and coughed lightly. She said softly, "Meng Er, be good…"

Xue Meng could not help but shake his head and wipe his tears away with his hands. He knew that his mother had ignited the Phoenix Heavenly Flame at this moment and that her life wasn't too long away. He shouldn't have gone against her wishes and wasted his remaining time.

In the end, he still left, leaving only Guyue'ye, brother and sister from the same sect, in the vast Loyalty Hall.

After Xue Meng left, the last breath he had left to support Madam Wang disappeared. She slumped into her seat of honor, no longer able to maintain her composure.

She stared at the counter in front of her for a long, long time. Tears rolled down her soft, jade-like cheeks, and then she began to cough violently and vomit blood.

Jiang Xi stood at the same spot. He saw that Madam Wang was coughing blood and wanted to step forward, but in the end, he didn't move. After a while, he said, "There's no one else here. What do you want to say?"

Madam Wang was coughing so badly that she couldn't answer for the moment.

Seeing that, Jiang Xi frowned and said with a gloomy face, "Because of the incident back then, your spirit core became more and more tyrannical. Afterwards, it was even difficult for you to continue practicing techniques, not to mention igniting the Phoenix Heavenly Flame. This will take your life."

Madam Wang caught her breath, her eyelashes moist. She looked at the tables on the stage, her eyes somewhat vacant. "Yes, I know."

The sea of fire had flooded them, but it could not burn them. It was as if there was a scarlet sea separating her from Jiang Xi.

"Then what else do you have to say?"

"…"

"If you have nothing else, then I'll be leaving."

Jiang Xi waited for a moment, but seeing that she was still silent, he lost his patience.

He turned to leave, but heard a soft sound.

"Shidi."

Raging flames danced in the air like red dust.

"Do you really look down on Meng'er?"

Jiang Xi was actually worried about nothing after he blurted out those words. "What?"

“The first time you met him in the Rufeng Sect, you had a fight with him. If I didn’t come later, I’m afraid you would have started a fight with him.” Madam Wang sighed softly. “Shidi, his temper really isn’t that good, but please consider the fact that he and you were similar when you were young… Don’t bother with him.”

Jiang Xi didn’t know what to say. He turned his face to the side and asked, “What do you mean?”

Madam Wang did not immediately reply. This patch of silence was like a rolling thundercloud that covered the two of them. It was as if a torrential rain would fall at any moment, causing the sky and earth to change color.

In this silence, Jiang Xi suddenly recalled a story from his youth. His heart was pounding, but the expression on his face was getting colder and colder. He didn’t say a word, but clenched his fingers into a fist and waited for Madam Wang to speak.

“Xue Meng…”

Madam Wang sighed softly, but her sigh was like a bolt of purple lightning splitting the sky, startling the world —

“Xue Meng, he is actually very similar to you. Junior brother, do you understand?”

Even though he had already predicted that something like this would happen, when he heard his words, Jiang Xi’s mind was still in a whirl, and his thoughts instantly went blank.

Who is like him?

Xue Meng?

That youngster who was so irritable and rude every time he saw him, causing him to despise him to the depths of his heart?

Ridiculous…

The hall was deathly silent. Jiang Xi was chewing on his meaning, as the truth that was sealed in the air cracked open layer after layer like chapped ice. Jiang Xi's face did not move, but the blood had already turned cold.

He was almost scared, but he also felt that it was ridiculous.

He suddenly turned around and stared intently at Madam Wang's face. He thought he had misheard, but he knew that it was impossible. Although the words were spoken softly, each word was clearly spoken. They were as clear as water, and they rushed towards him through the raging flames.

In front of his eyes, it became a sea of shock.

"Jiang Yechen." Madam Wang slowly lifted her moist eyelashes and looked at him with her black eyes. "Xue Meng, he is your child."

Ch. 286 [Sisheng Peak] Lang Boland Is Deeply In Love

"…" In the silence, Jiang Xi almost sneered, but his eyes flashed with fear. "Wang Chuqing, are you crazy? Do you know what you're talking about?"

The hand under his sleeves had already been clenched into a fist. It felt as if a mountain had cracked inside his skull. His entire body felt faint and dizzy.

"What can he have to do with me?"

Although Jiang Xi's attitude was tough, what Madam Wang had said had already frightened him, from fear to doubt, from suspicion to anger — he had been thinking that he was alone for so many years.

He no longer had any family members in the mortal world — Son? Tell him that Xue Meng was his son? It was simply… Ridiculous!

Madam Wang held back the blood in her throat and took a deep breath. She seemed to be ashamed, but she still insisted, "Junior is well aware of what happened back then. What relationship does Meng'er have with you? I will never lie to you."

"…"

After a moment of silence, Jiang Xi suddenly began to laugh. It was a rare occasion for him to burst into such unbridled laughter. The ridicule and rage filled his eyes as he laughed and laughed.

Every word was filled with chilliness.

“My son? Senior sister, if you want to be alone, you can tell me about love, but why make up such a ridiculous story! Your son has a personality and a temper. When have he ever been anything like me?”

It was probably because of the intense uneasiness in his heart. He tried his best not to admit it and made threatening gestures.

“You actually want to use such despicable method to earn money for me to clean up the stall you and Xue Zhengyong left behind? How could Xue Meng, Xue Ziming, be my son!”

In the depths of his consciousness, there seemed to be a voice coldly telling him, Yes, he is your child. Think about his age, think about how Senior Sister Wang left Guyue’ye at that time.

What was there to think about?

He bit back like a cornered beast, tearing his wits from the bottom of his heart to smithereens.

What makes you think so?

He had been single for more than twenty years and she had suddenly told him that he had a son. That son was always opposing him, and was born with an appearance that made him extremely disgusted. He had even adopted someone else as his father for such a long time.

Ridiculous.

He, Jiang Xi, wasn’t some good-hearted person who would never become a brainless fool. He would never be fooled, would never listen to such a joke, would never…

“Xuehuang.”

All sound stopped.

It was as if all the light had been extinguished at this moment. Jiang Xi looked around in a daze, as if he had been left in darkness for a long night.

This was the first time he was so at a loss.

Madam Wang looked at him and said, “Xuehuang.”

“… What do you mean?” His lips were moving, growing paler.

Madam Wang softly said, “Shidi, it’s not like you don’t understand.”

“…”

It was impossible for him to not understand.

Xuehuang was his weapon, although others could use it, they could not display the mighty power of the godly weapon. Only his blood relatives could make Xuehuang sincerely submit to them.

Jiang Xi couldn’t say a word for a moment.

She didn’t even need to try. If Madam Wang could speak to such an extent, what else could he do? He was actually forced into a corner.

He was speechless.

“… This matter…”

After a long while, Jiang Xi finally spoke with a hoarse voice and a pale face. After the initial frenzy, he was almost exhausted, “In this matter, Xue Zhengyong, he… he knew about it too?”

Madam Wang said, “He always knew.”

“…”

When she said this, her eyes were soft and painful.

When Xue Zhengyong saw her, she was seventeen years old, which was the good time when the Lotus had just opened.

That day, he happened to pass by Yangzhou on a little donkey with a piece of dogtail grass and coincidentally saw Wang Chuqing, who came to the port to buy fabric. Guyue’ye was a group of beautiful female disciples, but he didn’t look at any of them, and only took a fancy to Miss Wang who was in the crowd.

Xue Zhengyong was a straightforward person, so he went to greet her with a smile.

The other female cultivators mocked him for being frivolous, while Wang Chuqing was a bit embarrassed. She blushed and gave him a few words of advice before leaving in a hurry with her head lowered.

That girl was gentle and pretty. Xue Zhengyong fell in love with her at first sight, so he would often go to Guyue’ye to look for her. Every two to three years, during the middle of autumn, he would come looking for her. Until the end, Guyue’ye had spread the rumor that she was involved with a little hoodlum. No matter how good Wang Chuqing’s temper was, she couldn’t bear it anymore, and angrily chased him away.

Xue Zhengyong was also a little rascal and wouldn’t leave.

Madam Wang then said, “You can leave, it will be difficult for me if you do this.”

Xue Zhengyong said, “If you don’t have a boyfriend, and I don’t have a girlfriend, I’ll come and see you. If you ever get married, I’ll immediately disappear.”

Madam Wang was speechless.

Xue Zhengyong laughed. Seriously, he would definitely disappear faster than lightning.

He paused before asking his with some concern: “You… You don’t already have someone you like, do you?”

Madam Wang’s face instantly turned red. She lowered his head, his delicate flowers shining in the water. She softly said, “No.”

However, it was not the truth.

She naturally had someone she liked. That person was not only her lover, but also the dream lover of many of Guyue’ye’s female cultivators — she really liked his junior brother, Jiang Xi.

However, every disciple of Guyue’ye knew that Jiang Xi was a scum.

Among the younger generation, he had the most handsome appearance, the most swift and fierce movements, and the most pleasant voice.

And the most unmoved heart.

This man was eccentric, harsh in his speech, but strong in his abilities, ruthless in his skills, and extremely good-looking — a man who could easily harvest a girl’s heart, but Jiang Xi treated it as a pig’s heart, he would never value anyone, the women gave him their true love, he thought they were sloppy, the men gave their love to him, he called them perverts.

Jiang Ye was living his life like this, always hurting others without knowing it.

Like many other martial sisters, Wang Chuqing had always secretly liked Jiang Xi. But she knew that she was not peerless and was older than Jiang Xi, so she didn't dare to confess. After all, Jiang Xi had never accepted any woman's good intentions. If someone praised him, he wouldn't be able to hear it. If someone praised him, he wouldn't appreciate it. If anyone dared to make love with him, he would scold them until they didn't even know their own mother. All in all, those who could expose their worries to Jiang Xi were all heroes.

Madam Wang didn't think of herself as a hero, so she had thought that this love would eventually die with his time, and eventually be sealed away in a coffin. However, one day, the Sect Leader found them.

The Sect Leader replied, "Guyue'ye is the sect that specializes in raising the soul through the years of life. The majority of disciples are able to live past the age of a hundred. Furthermore, all of the previous Sect Leaders were bitterly cultivating the method of longevity, hoping to find a way to live forever.

Indeed, for the sake of the Immortal Art, Sect Leader Guyue'ye had made such an attempt, which naturally included the dual cultivation technique left behind by the Nine Heavens Profound Maiden.

She and Jiang Xi had the purest water element and the purest fire element. Furthermore, both of them were inexperienced, so it was most suitable for them to cultivate together. At that time, the Sect Leader came to find them for the sake of letting them cultivate together. Wang Chuqing had adored Jiang Xi for a long time, so she was very happy. Jiang Xi, however, was not

unhappy. He was focused on cultivation. He was extremely disgusted with love affairs and thought they were both troublesome and useless. He really didn't know how there could be so many idiotic men and women in this world.

"Love is an illness. If there's an illness, cure it early."

These words came from the mouth of Guyue'ye's number one beauty, Jiang Xi, who knew how many women had been hurt by these words.

In Jiang Xi's eyes, even the Mystic Maiden Room shouldn't have any feelings. Duo Cultivation was a dual cultivation. Since the Sect Leader had requested, he didn't dawdle and went into seclusion with his Senior Sister to cultivate according to the sect's secret scripture.

However, the love in the young girl's eyes could not be concealed. After a while, Jiang Xi gradually understood how his senior sister felt for her.

This made him very agitated and uneasy.

He cultivated with her only because of orders, without a trace of selfishness. Not to mention that the dual cultivation technique itself required unmoving mortal thoughts. When a man and a woman were combined, it was also for the sake of spiritual integration, so there was absolutely no room for love and desire.

Because of this, Jiang Xi and his senior sister solemnly brought up this matter many times, telling her to calm down and not to think about anything useless.

"If you continue cultivating like this, I'm afraid your cultivation will go berserk and your spirit core will become tyrannical."

But how could Madam Wang control her feelings? Finally, there was one time where, after her cultivation had ended, her state of mind became unstable and her spiritual flow became chaotic. Her spiritual sense was also unclear. Jiang Xi had spent a great deal of effort to suppress his Scorching Sun Spirit Core. This enraged him, and he asked her why she didn't listen to him repeatedly and continued to think nonsense.

"If this goes on, don't cultivate anymore, it will kill you."

At that time, she was also extremely sad. It was unknown where she got the courage from, but she actually cried and went all out to ask him, "Yechen, are you cultivating only because of the Sect Leader's orders?"

Jiang Xi had an extremely unsightly expression on his face as he retorted, "Why else would I do that?"

Although she already knew that Jiang Xi was like a cold spring, his heart was as hard as iron. However, when she heard him say this, she could not hold it in and tears began to roll down her cheeks. Feeling embarrassed, she raised her hand to wipe away the tears, but it only made her more and more embarrassed. She hurriedly got up and choked with sobs. "I'm sorry."

Then she turned around and left, never looking back.

After that, Jiang Xi didn't come looking for her again for several days, and when he saw her on the way, he no longer spoke to her.

A few of Guyue'ye's younger generation of beautiful ladies noticed the change, and gathered behind her back and laughed at her, "I was looking forward to it, and thought I could climb up to Senior Brother Jiang just like that. How is that possible?"

“A dual cultivation is a double cultivation, but she has so many emotions. If you cultivate to the point of going berserk and even implicating our Senior Brother Ye Chen, it will truly be harmful.”

“Forget it, what dual cultivation?” Her Senior Brother did all these things with her for her sake. She and her senior did all of this for her own selfish reasons. Everyone is clear about what she is thinking. Heh, I think she is just trying to take advantage of Senior Brother.”

“Shijie Wang is older than us, and her skin is thicker than ours as well.”

These words spread and reached Xue Zhengyong, who had come looking for Madam Wang as usual for the Mid-Autumn Festival.

Young Hero Xue was straightforward but not stupid. He quickly understood the whole situation. He immediately tidied up those chatty little girls in a rage and then ran off to find Madam Wang. However, when he saw her, he didn’t know what to say. He could only blankly stare at her. “You…”

Wang Chuqing raised her eyes, they were red from crying.

Xue Zhengyong was flustered, “Don’t cry, don’t stop the gossip, you, you… I think you’re fine, I. I…”

Wang Chuqing stood next to the willow tree, looking at the sparkling lake. “I didn’t tell you the truth before, but I have someone I like.”

“… Right.”

“Then why aren’t you leaving?”

Xue Zhengyong then scratched his head, “But that person doesn’t like you either… He doesn’t like you, I. I can still talk to you, and he can’t.”

“…”

Seeing his silence, Xue Zhengyong hesitated. “Can he control it?”

Madam Wang lowered his head and softly said, “He doesn’t care.”

What was Jiang Xi to her? From beginning to end, it had been his sect’s order, and it was his own wishful thinking.

Everyone in the school said that Jiang Xi was scum, but Wang Chuqing felt that if a man was sentenced to be scum just because he didn’t want to be loved by others, then it would be too mean.

Jiang Xi had never lied to anyone’s feelings, never given anyone hope. It was them who chased after him like moths to a flame, knowing that he was cold and heartless.

At this point, she also felt very embarrassed and wanted to let it go.

However, it was most likely because the disciple in charge of the medicinal food was in a daze and had made a mistake while concocting the medicine one day. Perhaps it was due to some other reason — Madam Wang had discovered that she was already pregnant.

She only felt flustered and helpless. He didn’t know how the martial sisters would comment on or mock her after this matter spread, nor did he know what kind of attitude Jiang Xi would have. She couldn’t do anything about it, so she anxiously sat there and decided to find the Sect Leader.

However, before she could knock on the door of the Sect Leader’s room, she heard a cold voice coming from inside. It was Jiang Xi.

“Shijie’s heart is unsettled, her spirit core is becoming more and more tyrannical, and now even the smallest of spells are unable to control her spirit energy. If this goes on, it might harm her body. I humbly request the Sect Leader to take back her dual cultivation token, and I can no longer cultivate with her.”

“Sigh, Xi’er, why don’t you talk with her again? Maybe we can…”

“No need for that. I’ve told his many times, but she’s not suited for this.” Jiang Xi said, “Chuqing is too easily swayed, it’s useless.”

The Sect Leader asked, “… Then what are you going to do next?”

Jiang Xi replied, “If there’s no one capable of clearing my mind, then I won’t dual cultivate anymore.”

The Sect Leader sighed, “… I know, go ahead. A pure and quiet state of mind is the most painful trial of the dual cultivation path. I wonder if Guyue’ye will be able to have a person like you, who will be so focused on things without distractions in the next few decades.”

However, Jiang Xi didn’t leave immediately. He stood in the same spot for a while before asking, “Is it difficult?”

“It’s extremely difficult.” The Sect Leader glanced at him, “You and Wang Chuqing have been together for so long, yet you haven’t wavered at all?”

Jiang Xi asked in confusion, “… Why would I… waver?”

The Sect Leader stared at Jiang Xi for a while. He didn’t see any hypocrisy in the young man’s eyes, which made him even more surprised. He hesitated for a moment before asking, “Jiang Xi, what is Wang Chuqing in your eyes?”

“Eldest Senior Sister.”

“What about when you dual cultivate?”

“… The subject of the dual cultivation.”

“Nothing else?”

“Nothing else.”

“…”

Noticing the Sect Leader’s complicated expression, Jiang Xi frowned, “Is there something else?”

“No.” After a long while, the old Sect Leader sighed, “After so many years, this disciple and disciple pair cultivation have always been unable to get by. You’re the first. Unfortunately, I wonder who will be able to accomplish this feat with you.”

That day, whether it was Jiang Xi or the head of the sect, neither of them knew that Miss Wang had already heard all of their conversation. Previously, Madam Wang still had a sliver of a dream, a sliver of hope. However, this exchange of words caused her entire body to turn cold and lose face.

Too embarrassing. She really didn’t know how to stand up in the sect anymore. She didn’t know what to say. In the past, her spine was already about to be broken by her junior sisters. If people knew that she had carelessly given birth to a child with her junior brother Jiang…

Just thinking about it sent shivers down her spine. She no longer dared to stay in the sect. At night she fled from the sect.

“… Didn’t you elope away with Xue Zhengyong?”

Madam Wang said, “No.”

Jiang Xi abruptly closed his eyes, unsure of what to say.

He was indeed a merciful person. His heart was filled with his own great path. In his entire life, apart from Madam Wang, he had never met any woman. Back then, he also felt that he had no feelings for this eldest senior sister. However, when he heard that Madam Wang and Xue Zhengyong had eloped and left the island, he still frowned.

He felt that relationships in this world were not as long as flowers and plants, and that women in this world were really unreliable. Even this senior sister who was deeply in love with him had left with other person just because he said so.

From then on, his aversion to matters of love grew, and even his teeth became cold.

Only today, after twenty years, did he finally hear the truth about the past from his eldest senior sister. It was just that the ‘Madam Wang’ of that time had become the ‘Madam Wang’ of today. The best years of their lives had already passed.

After a long time, Jiang Xi said very stiffly, “Then you… Why did you have to leave Guyue’ye?”

“I couldn’t live under the same roof with you anymore, Shidi.” Twenty years later, Madam Wang was finally able to calmly look at him. “Humans have dignity. I no longer had the face to stand at my teacher’s door.”

“…”

“I wanted to kill Meng’er in my womb, but I couldn’t bear it.” Madam Wang said indifferently, “That’s why I went through many places by myself. Then I gave birth to our child in White Emperor City. When Zhengyong found me and accompanied me, Meng’er was already a year old. He always knew his identity.”

As she spoke, she began to cough up blood again.

In the past, her cultivation went berserk and her spirit core became tyrannical. All these years, she had been suppressing it and never used any spells. Now, with the rise of phoenix fire and surging flames, her life had already come to an end.

Madam Wang slowly stopped coughing. Her breathing had already become disorderly, so she said, “Junior brother, the so-called ‘Zhengyong’ who kidnapped me to the Sisheng Peak and married me was something he said to the outside world. He was always afraid of my embarrassment. I’m also afraid that Meng’er would be embarrassed.”

Her gaze lingered for a long time, then fell on Xue’s body.

However, it only lasted for a moment before it was pricked.

She thought of that year’s wedding, and Xue Zhengyong said to her with a smile, “Well, from now on, don’t think about the past anymore. In the past, Guyue’ye, that bad guy always made you lose face. I won’t.”

“If you’re with me, I’ll let you enjoy life for the rest of your life.”

“As long as I am here, I won’t let you suffer any more.”

Madam Wang turned her face away. She was trembling slightly.

If a gentleman makes a promise, he will never be able to keep it up.

Xue Zhengyong had done it. When he was here, she never had to show her face, and she would never be troubled by others. Her tears, her humiliation, her blood, all came after he left.

“All these years, he did not care that I was weak and could not be pregnant again. He didn’t care that Meng’er wasn’t his flesh and blood. He treated him as his own flesh and blood. Xue Meng… Xue Meng has never suffered much since he was born…”

She closed her eyes, and her face became transparent.

“We can’t protect him anymore.”

Jiang Xi stood there, numb.

“Shidi, just consider these twenty years as my revenge against you… One had to hate it, loathe it… Count it on me alone.”

Madam Wang’s voice became softer and softer.

“Please help him. Do not let others harm him…”

In the end, she muttered with a voice as light as a feather, “Ye Chen… I beg you…”

The Phoenix Heavenly Flames blotted out the sky and blotted out the sun. Jiang Xi stood in this sea of flames, both heaven and earth burning with a similar scarlet color. He looked at the woman in the high seat. Her eyes were closed and downcast, as if she was asleep. He felt that she probably still had something to say. Moreover, she had clearly just promised Xue

Meng that they would meet in the Frosty Heaven Palace. Thus, he patiently waited.

He waited for her to stand up and told himself that it was all a lie, a joke, a farce.

He waited patiently for a long time. As her face became more and more sinister, her heartbeat became more and more dull, and her blood became colder and colder.

She did not speak again.

Madam Wang and Xue Zhengyong returned to their former homes together.

She was once a high-ranking female cultivator of a famous family, gentle and virtuous. Later on, people said that she was kidnapped by Xue Zhengyong to become his wife, and others said that she had eloped with him and became his wife. There were many people who didn't know the truth. In these past few years, many people at the Sisheng Peak felt that Madam Wang probably didn't like her husband very much, but because she was timid, she didn't dare to complain.

However, no matter what others thought, she had already decided to leave the moment she found out that Xue Zhengyong had died. She didn't know if it was a martyr or something else. Perhaps in the end, even she herself could not understand this woman's thoughts. Was she grateful or loving to her husband for the rest of her life? Were her feelings for Jiang Xi long forgotten? Actually, he couldn't see through it.

There were many things in this world where there was no definite answer.

In the end, all she could think of was a poem she had read years ago by the window.

“Only general will open his eyes all night long, to repay for not having been able to open his eyebrows in his life.”

At that time, when she and Xue Zhengyong were newly married, she would absentmindedly recall the time when she was a young girl in Guyue’ye’s time. She looked out of the window. The fog in Shu was always so thick, it was like clouds that were scattered and scattered, as if no one was there to sweep it away.

She didn’t know about the heavens and earth.

When someone walked over, she still thought that it was Jiang Xi as she was lost in his thoughts. However, when a piece of cold clothing was draped over her shoulders… The dream woke up.

She knew very well that Jiang Xi would never know that she was cold or warm.

Madam Wang turned around. Candles were still burning by the west window.

The young and handsome husband looked at her with a smile and scratched his head, “The sky is cold, be careful not to freeze.”

The Loyalty Hall’s interior was covered with a thick carpet made out of pollia patterns, which was Madam Wang’s favorite flower design. Jiang Xi walked out of the hall full of pollia flowers. His expression was still indifferent, even a bit more wooden than usual.

With a squeak, he pushed open the door.

He was prepared to leave this place, but when he opened the door, he saw Xue Meng, whose face was deathly pale and motionless.

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Jiang Xi didn't say a word. Xue Meng also did not say anything.

After a long time had passed, Jiang Xi finally said, with an extremely uneasy and sullen look on his face, "Since you've heard it all. I don't need to say more."

"…"

"Go and take care of the rest of the matters, according to the rules of the Sisheng Peak." Jiang Xi turned his gaze away. He didn't even want to look at Xue Meng again. "Your mother left me alone. I will be waiting for you at the foot of the mountain."

Xue Meng moved, but it was just a meaningless movement.

All the hot blood in his body seemed to have been sucked out. Just two or three movements of his knuckles had exhausted all of his strength.

Xue Meng suddenly turned to stare at the quiet, deep Loyalty Hall. The blood on the carpet was no longer clear against the flames, but his father was still lying on the ground. When he wasn't smiling, he looked old and his wrinkles were very distinct.

He had white hair on his temples.

Jiang Xi, on the other hand, was in his early thirties, always in the prime of his life.

Xue Meng slowly took a few steps forward, then stopped.

"You can go."

Jiang Xi turned his head and saw Xue Meng's lonely back.

Xue Meng said, "I don't recognize you. You are not my father."

After he finished speaking, he slammed the door. After a while, Jiang Xi heard Xue Meng's hoarse and sorrowful cries coming from inside, breaking his heart.

"…"

Jiang Xi stood in the cold wind for a long time, until his hands and feet were cold, and then he slowly walked down the mountain.

At the foot of the mountain, most of the cultivators had dispersed in fear of the Heavenly Phoenix Flames. Only the Taxue Palace had a few disciples left, among them was Mei Hanxue.

Seeing that Jiang Xi had come out, and according to etiquette, the younger generation members of the Taxue Palace bowed to him in respect. They then whispered, "Sect Leader Jiang."

Jiang Xi could feel the muscles on his face stiffen. He pursed his lips and turned his brown eyes onto Mei Hanxue. "Why aren't you leaving?"

Mei Hanxue said in a gentle but cold tone, "Waiting for an old friend."

Jiang Xi understood who he was referring to and said, "He won't be able to get down for a while."

Mei Hanxue said, "Then I'll have to wait for a while, even three or four days. If there's nothing else, I'll just stay here." He paused for a moment before continuing, "Also, Sect Leader Jiang. The Palace Mistress has a message for me to bring to you."

Unable to vent his anger, Jiang Xi asked, “What?”

Mei Hanxue bowed. “The Palace Mistress has decided not to blindly follow the teachings of the God’s descendant, the Tianyin Pavilion. She has also stopped collaborating with the various sects in the world of cultivation. Sect Leader Jiang is the leader of the immortal sects. From today onwards, for future actions you do not have to consider Taxue Palace.”

Jiang Xi was silent for a moment. With an unreadable expression on his face, he asked, “Are you planning to be independent from the immortals??”

“It’s scary to stand alone without any help.” Mei Hanxue’s eyes were still filled with happiness and a smile, but his expression was somewhat cold. “However, the most undesirable thing is blind obedience and following the so-called teachings of God.”

Jiang Xi stared at him.

He felt angry, stuffy, and toothless for no reason.

Back then, when he saw Nangong Liu sitting in this position, he only felt that many of Nangong Liu’s decisions were ridiculous and laughable. But when he really did reach this step, he discovered that there were many things that he could not help himself with.

Was it his intention to kill Mo Ran?

To blindly listen to the Tianyin Pavilion, was he sincere?

He had tried his best to dissuade them from going against Sisheng Peak, but the sects all retorted that as the leader of the immortals, what could they do in the end? In the past, he could even lead Guyue’ye to stay out of

this matter, having his own attitude. And when he ascended to the throne, when Guyue'ye became the greatest sect under the heavens, he discovered that he already had nowhere to return to.

In the end, he would become the next Nangong Liu.

Jiang Xi closed his eyes and left without a word. Mei Hanxue bowed to him as he was well versed in books, and then he bowed again behind him. He said lightly, "Greetings to you, Sect Leader Jiang. Farewell to the cultivation world."

He did not reply. Dressed in green clothes with gold threads and dark patterns embroidered on them, he walked away without looking back.

Previously, he had ascended the mountain and replaced Nangong Liu's glory from yesterday. The audience burst into applause and cheers. At that time, he had thought that he would definitely be different from his former self, that he would be able to rely on his own strength to change the sun, the moon, and the world. At that time, he was ambitious, hot-blooded, and greedy.

But now, he understood.

It turned out that the applause of that day was not to welcome a brilliant deity. Instead, it was a funeral for a free spirit soul.

From then on, the martial world was vast, and the world was vast. It was easy for them to meet Sect Leader Jiang, and it was difficult to find Jiang Xi.

After Xue Meng buried his parents, he had never left the Sisheng Peak. Later, when the heavenly fire was extinguished, Mei Hanxue was ordered to go up the mountain to search for him. Finally, he found the unconscious

Xue Meng in the Frosty Sky Hall and brought him back to the Taxue Palace on Mount Kunlun.

At the same time, the palace Master of Taxue Palace announced that from then on, there would no longer be a need to support Kunlun and Kunlun would no longer be bound by the laws of the cultivation world. Thus, he cut it off.

Later on, Jiang Xi summoned everyone to the spirit mountain to discuss the recent events. At the meeting, Jiang Xi proposed that the important case should be reopened after three trials, namely, “court hearing”, “the court hearing”, “the people hearing”, and “the public hearing”, and not to listen to the words of a family.

Even though he had yet to point out which sect the “family statement” referred to, everyone already understood that he was somewhat dissatisfied with the status of the Tianyin Pavilion. Therefore, Jiang Xi’s move was strongly refuted —

“The Tianyin Pavilion was created by a god. Pavilion master Mu interrogated it using the divine weapon left behind by the God of Scale. Nothing is more just than an Empyrean God.”

“If Sect Leader Jiang acts so recklessly, you might be punished by the heavens.”

There were even some who believed in the Tianyin Pavilion, who were excited about Mu Yanli’s words and actions as a doctrine. They had no idea where he got the courage to rise to their feet at the meeting.

“The Tianyin Pavilion is the glory of the cultivation world for the past few thousand years. It was because of the presence of the Tianyin Pavilion that

many people would hesitate before committing adultery in the cultivation world. Sect Leader Jiang, are you going to extinguish this sacred fire in the cultivation world?”

Jiang Xi said in a stern voice, “From your point of view, the Tianyin Pavilion is a pure white, immaculate place?”

“The Tianyin Pavilion was founded by a God for a thousand years, so it can’t be wrong.”

“All of us Immortal cultivators can ascend into the Dao of the Heavens after death. Sect Leader Jiang, if you think that the deities in the sky are wrong, then where is your cultivation belief?”

There were too many people who were conservative. They were all in a frenzy as they fought to defend the Tianyin Pavilion left behind by God. In the end, even though Jiang Xi’s face was ashen, he was still powerless to contend against him.

In the end, it didn’t matter.

But paper could not contain fire, and the truth would eventually surface. After the Sisheng Peak had been scattered, the chaos did not slow down. Instead, it became more and more intense. Three days later, a violent storm began in Shu.

The first to lose control of themselves was the Wuchang Town. A group of people dressed in cloth and wearing filial clothes headed towards the Upper Cultivation World’s Tianyin Pavilion, insulting them in protest.

“When did the Sisheng Peak accept children?”

“Where did you find such a beast in the Tianyin Pavilion! He actually called the Sisheng Peak a thief! Can your conscience rest?!”

“Cultivators and immortals. Wuchang Town is at the foot of the mountain. Why didn't you dare to come to the foot of the mountain when you inquired about the crime? The group of heartless traitors you found, the lackeys who avenge their grievances, are nothing more than a reason for your own brutality and ugliness! A group of murderers! Please clean Sect Leader Xue's name!”

“Please clear the name of Sect Leader Xue!”

The old cultivator who was saved of the Linyi Tribulation Fire had tears in his eyes. His eyes were filled with anger as he shouted, “You want to frame us, you are not humans at all. You are evil beings! It’s a ghost!”

Some cultivators could not bear to watch any longer, so he raised his sword and said angrily, “Is that enough? The Tianyin Pavilion was set up by a god. With all the obscenities in his mouth, he’s not afraid of going to hell after death?”

Everyone was silent for a while. Suddenly, a storyteller took out a fan, pointed it at the door, and sneered, “Go to hell?… Then, cultivators, listen carefully —” He cleared his throat and continued in a controlled voice, “The Tianyin Pavilion is not as good as the pigsty!”

The crowd burst into laughter as they clapped their hands to show their speed.

One of the Young Masters sighed, “Teacher, this is the most exciting part you’ve heard in the past ten years.”

“That’s right! The Tianyin Pavilion is not as good as the pigsty!”

Shouts rose and fell one after another. The cultivator’s face was as pale as a pig’s liver. He could neither curse nor curse, so he stood still for a moment, then left with a pale face.

Because these people were commoners without spiritual energy, the Tianyin Pavilion simply didn’t place them in their eyes, allowing them to freely make a ruckus. However, he did not expect that more and more people would arrive from all over the place. On the second day, the disciples of the pavilion finally could not hold themselves back anymore and reported to Mu Yanli.

“Pavilion master, the plaza is already filled with citizens who have come to avenge the death. Do you think we should go out and say something?”

“There’s no need to explain it to them. This kind of person would just give himself up after shouting a few words. He’ll leave.”

“But now…” The disciple mumbled, “More than a thousand people are blocking the door…”

“Over a thousand people?”

She got up from the rosewood bed and walked over to the window while stepping on the thick leather carpet.

The eyes looked down, and from the window of the brocade pavilion, one could see the vast expanse of white that covered the main square of the Tianyin Pavilion. The people dressed in cloth were all dressed in mourning clothes. Some were cursing loudly, while others were sitting upright on the ground with a stubborn look on their faces.

A crease appeared between Mu Yanli's eyebrows.

The direct disciple said cautiously: "It's been two days and we haven't lost a single person. On the contrary, we have gained more and more people. The residents of the large and small towns and villages began to rush to the Tianyin Pavilion. If this goes on, we might really be unable to find someone to do the perjury and get exposed."

Mu Yanli: "…"

"Pavilion master, what should we do?"

Mu Yanli pursed her lips, but before she could reply, she heard a warm, jade-like voice from behind her. "If you can't wrap your head around it, then don't."

When that disciple saw Hua Binan, he hurriedly bowed his head and greeted him, "Senior Sacred Hand."

Mu Yanli frowned. "Why are you here? Not staying with Taxian-Jun to guard the place?"

"The spirit core shards have all fused into his heart. But he won't wake up for a while." Shi Mei walked to the window and looked down indifferently, "It looks like there are quite a few people. They're really free."

Mu Yanli looked a little worried. "You're still spouting sarcastic remarks at such a time. Currently, I relied on the Tianyin Pavilion's prestige to keep the situation from going out of control, but I don't know how much longer I can last. There were many fools among those cultivators, but there were also some who were not stupid. If the group of people below were to

continue, then I'm afraid that before Taxian-Jun is awake, the situation will change greatly."

However, Shi Mei smiled: "Don't worry, Sister Mu. No matter how great the change, the Tianyin Pavilion is safe."

"What do you mean?"

"In order to become an Immortal, one must ascend and become an Immortal. You shouldn't offend the descendant of the God of Heaven just because you were on the ground." Shi Mei said, "Actually, the Sisheng Peak is innocent. Don't those cultivators know that? Do you not understand whether it is perjury?"

"…"

"At that time, they chose to believe it because they were afraid of a conspiracy at the Sisheng Peak, afraid of Mo Ran. It was because they themselves wanted to eradicate this sect that they were willing to believe the evidence of dozens of people." Shi Mei's fingers touched the windowsill and lightly said, "Their hearts are clear."

The personal disciple beside him said, "T-but let these commoners clamor about it. They can't do anything about it, we still need an explanation, right?"

"So I just said. "If you can't, then don't."

"What do you mean?"

"Let's just drive them away."

Mu Yanli: "… The Tianyin Pavilion could not help but say these words directly, and would not chase people away without a reason. If you do this, I'm afraid it will attract a lot of criticism."

Shi Mei lightly said: "Didn't I explain everything just now? Whether the Tianyin Pavilion was right or wrong, they already knew. But they would not rise up for a while. By the time they turned around and came back, our Taxian-Jun will be already awake. You know what that means?"

"…" Mu Yanli seemed as if she wanted to say something, but felt a bit conflicted. In the end, she closed her eyes, turned around, and said to the disciple, "Go and disperse them."

After the most loyal disciple left, only Mu Yanli and Shi Mingjing were left in the Warm Pavilion.

The two of them stood by the window, watching the scene below.

The disciples of the Tianyin Pavilion filed out, their golden white robes rippling in the sunlight. When the commoners saw them coming out, they thought they were finally going to speak, so they all stood up. They surrounded the group of disciples.

Because they were so far away, Shi Mei and Mu Yanli weren't able to hear what they were saying, but their anger could be seen with the naked eye.

Suddenly, for some unknown reason, a commoner rushed forward to grab the Tianyin Pavilion disciple. He raised his hand and gave him a resounding slap —

The scene turned chaotic!

Mu Yanli opened her eyes wide, and the crowd below her surged. They pushed and shoved, and the ten-odd Tianyin Sect disciples surrounded the two of them in a barrage of fists and kicks.

What was this? No matter how calm Mu Yanli was, she couldn't do anything when she saw her disciple being publicly insulted and beaten up. She was about to open the window and let the disciples use spiritual energy to protect themselves when her hands were caught.

Shi Mei said: "Let them fight."

Mu Yanli replied, "The Tianyin Pavilion has a rule that without an order, cultivators are not allowed to attack the common people. If I don't make a sound and my punches and kicks are merciless, they might be in danger of losing their lives."

Shi Mei calmly said: "Then one will die."

Mu Yanli: "!"

Anger can make people lose their reason, especially when a group of people gathered together to beat up a few people.

Soon, the crowd froze.

They slowly spread out in a small circle. Within the circle was a new disciple who had just entered the Tianyin Pavilion. Mu Yanli couldn't even remember his name. That disciple was lying on the ground, and a puddle of blood gradually spread out from underneath his body.

Shi Mei let go of Mu Yanli's hand and said: "Okay, now we have a reason to crush these ants to death. Let's do it."

It’s an excuse.

As long as an excuse is found, violence and pressure can be easily accomplished.

The door to the Tianyin Pavilion opened, and a large number of disciples quickly came out, each of them holding onto a sword as they rushed towards the common people who had no spiritual energy at all.

The crowd instantly fell into chaos.

They first chased them away, then wielded their swords to kill them. Screams, furious curses, and reprimands intertwined. People dodged, shouted, and frowned. No one dared to turn around and run.

“If you continue to tangle with me, don’t blame the Tianyin Pavilion for being merciless!”

“Since when did the Tianyin Pavilion have any feelings for you?” Suddenly, a shaky voice rang out from the crowd. It was actually the village head of the village, “Today, this old man wants to seek justice for himself. Even if I die here, I won’t have any regrets.”

Ling’er, who was in the village, was even more upset and furious. He stood together with his aunts and uncles in the village and did not retreat. “If you want to kill me, kill me. Today, let us see if you can kill all the people of Shu to block our way!”

The leader of the Tianyin elite gnashed his teeth and said, “A group of vicious and unruly people lined up to seek death.” Seeing the group attack together, the Incantation of Law flashed.

Whoosh! The arrow pierced the ground and burst into golden light! Subsequently, the bright yellow enchantment rose into the air and blocked both sides with a loud bang.

The Tianyin elite bellowed, “Who is it?!”

A white light shot up into the sky. In the blink of an eye, the horned bow pierced through the clouds and the wolf’s howl pierced through the sky! Amidst this astonishing and powerful spiritual force, a heroic and beautiful cultivator leapt down to the ground. She grasped her bow and stood coldly before the common folk of Shu, her entire body wreathed in smoke. And behind her, stood a wolf demon that was as tall as two grown men. It had snow-white fur and golden claws, and its eyes were bloodshot as it ruthlessly exhaled.

The master in question narrowed her eyes. “Ye Wangxi…”

Ye Wangxi raised her hand and put away her bow swiftly. With her other hand, she drew her sword and stood alone in the wind. Her gaze was firm and fierce.

“It’s you again?!” A person from the Tianyin Pavilion recognized her and glowered at her. “You remnant evildoer of the Rufeng sect!”

Ye Wangxi did not utter a word. She took a step forward with her long legs.

“Last time I saw you insisting on sending Mo Ran some water, I knew that something was wrong with you!” The elite of the Tianyin Pavilion said, “You are indeed in cahoots with Mo Ran! They are all villains!”

The long sword was unsheathed, flowing like water.

Ye Wangxi narrowed her eyes and said, “You all know who the true culprit is. However, there is one sentence that everyone has spoken correctly.”

She paused for a moment, then opened her mouth again:

“I am indeed on the side of Mo-zongshi.”

The leader of the soldiers said with a cold sneer, “Ye Wangxi, you, a woman, want to fight against us alone?”

Her eyes flashed with a fiery light, and she suddenly threw the sword in front of her, the valiant spirit had actually managed to directly pierce the long blade that was not a Divine level weapon into the stone floor, creating a long crack on the ground!

She gritted her teeth and said, “I have tolerated you for a long time. Don’t put the word ‘woman’ on your mouth all day!”

“…”

In the past, when all the cultivators had seen Ye Wangxi, she had always been patient and patient, always settling things peacefully.

It was the first time they had seen her in a rage.

“Listen carefully.” She did not back down as she stared at the men, “In the past, the Sisheng Peak had never struck down on our Rufeng sect, and more importantly, they protected the citizens in the sea of fire — even though the Sisheng Peak no longer exists today, I will not let you hurt a single one of them here!”

No one in the Tianyin Pavilion had ever fought face to face with Ye Wangxi, so they did not know her strength. They only felt that she was a little girl

crying beside her Young Master. Therefore, some people could not help but sneer, “Little girl, do you know what you are saying?… With just you alone, you want to protect the group of fallen quail behind you? What a big tone you have. Where did you get your skills from?”

“Then open your eyes wide and see if I have the ability to do so!”

The scabbard was thrown to the side, and the blade of the sword was like frost.

Ye Wangxi did not waste her breath on them anymore. With a snap of her fingers, he leapt onto the demon wolf’s back with her long legs. Then, she raised her hand to pull out the sword that had been stabbed into the ground and rushed towards the group of cultivators, whether they were contemptuous or waiting.

Inside the pavilion, Shi Mei looked down at the bustling scene without batting an eyelid. His watery lips moved as he sneered, “Hmph, I thought I’d never see the female war god again in my previous life. I didn’t expect that in the end, she was still forced onto this path.”

“War god?”

Shi Mei didn’t answer, but looked at Ye Wangxi with a hint of pity, “Elder sister, look. In one’s life, there may be many twists and turns. But in the end, the result was the same. What kind of person was she in her previous life? She’s fated never to be able to escape.”

Blood spewed out as the flaming lightning collided. In an instant, the sounds of battle shook the sky. She was actually surrounded by countless blade lights and sword shadows, and the barrier behind her was blocking all the ordinary citizens who could not use spiritual energy.

This woman was dressed in black, and had a slender waist and long legs. When she held the sword, she was Ye Wangxi.

However, Naobaijin coordinated well with her, and the quiver of arrows embroidered by Madam Rong hanged from her waist.

At that moment when she was holding the bow, she was also Nangong Si.

She had experienced much more in this life than she had in her previous life. She had been helpless, lost, and even had such a short time when the clouds opened and the fog cleared.

The evening when Nangong Si had gifted her with the jade pendant, the clouds on the Bridge of Helplessness had been perfect. She thought that she could finally relax her tensed chivalrous bones and return to being that gentle girl who cried and laughed without restraint.

But Nangong Si died.

His death came without warning. Before he left, he even said to Ye Wangxi, who had remained behind to kill the enemy, “I know you’re afraid of the dark. I’ll be back very soon.”

But he never came back.

Therefore, in the end, Ye Wangxi was still the same as her previous life. She had lost her weakness and her armor. As she slowly digested the remaining tenderness, she slowly accepted his solitary self. In her heart, she silently organized two funerals for herself —

Elder Xu died and took away Xiao Yezi. She personally buried her foster father’s cup of wine, peaches and plums in spring breeze.

Nangong Si died and took Miss Ye away. She personally extinguished the torch she had carried for A'Si for ten years.[173]

The War God sealed off the graves of girls and women.

She turned around and walked alone to the front of the Tianyin Pavilion to confront the soldiers.

Shi Mei looked down at the fierce battle and said to Mu Yanli: "Call out all of the high ranking disciples of the Tianyin Pavilion to come out and fight. This woman cannot be left alive."

Mu Yanli was slightly shocked, "All of the high ranking disciples? She… she is just a girl…"

Shi Mei smiled: "This lady has caused Taxian-Jun to suffer a lot in his previous life. If you underestimate her, you'll have to experience how hard her bones are in the future."

The valve opened, and all the high level Tianyin Sect disciples came out. Ye Wangxi kept the barrier open while battling with the crowd.

She was still wearing the royal blue headband from the Rufeng Sect, dodging in and out of the way, her hair ribbon fluttering in the wind. Mu Yanli had sent out a death command, and the Tianyin Sect disciples continued to attack her. Although Ye Wangxi was strong enough to deal with a group of enemies, she did not retreat.

"Add them in." Shi Mei was like a fish watching a fish by the pond. He looked down at the situation below and lightly said, "Anyway, today she delivered herself to my doorstep. I can't let her return alive —"

"A-Nan, look over there!"

Suddenly, Mu Yanli interrupted Shi Mei. Following his gaze, Shi Mei saw a layer of blue and silver smoke rising into the sky.

It was actually the elders at the Sisheng Peak, leading their disciples here!

Due to the protection of Madam Wang, the remaining combat power was still clad in the armor of the Sisheng Peak. Stepping on the dazzling silver sword, it came crashing down from the depths of the clouds, majestically spreading out.

Behind them, over a thousand disciples were glaring at them.

The Xuanji Elder said in a clear voice, “The so-called descendant of a deity in the Tianyin Pavilion is this way to bully the fewer?”

Tanlang, on the other hand, was gloomy and violent. His brown eyes were fixated on the ground. He did not have so many words to say. The five words were succinct and concise. His anger could be clearly seen: “Go to hell!”

“…” Facing the onslaught of such a torrential storm of soldiers, Shi Mei’s face was slightly gloomy. He didn’t know whether to laugh or mock him.

“What a bad fate. In every single war, victory and defeat must first be decided between the ones at Sisheng Peak.” As he spoke, he looked at the surging crowd.

There was no sign of Chu Wanning in the crowd. After the looting of the Tianyin Academy, where did Chu Wanning and Mo Ran go? That Mo Ran had been dug up so many times, he was definitely not going to survive. Then what about Chu Wanning?

Was he staying by the new tomb of Mo Ran, or had he simply died along with Mo Ran, just like he had in his previous life?

Regardless of which possibility it was that had annoyed him, but in Shi Mei's heart, there was a vague sense of unease. He turned and walked back into the house.

"Where are you going?"

"Let's go take a look at the situation with Taxian-Jun. Think of a way to wake him up early. When he wakes up, the Gates of Life and Death will open once more… no one will be able to stop us."

A slender finger caressed the rune of the Tianyin Pavilion as the secret room rumbled open. Shi Mei walked down the long stairs and followed the path engraved with exquisite ancient runes. After passing through three card barriers, he arrived at the deepest part of the stone room.

The ground was covered in ice, and a mist filled the air. A piece of jade was embedded in the greyish green dome, and it was currently flowing with a holy light. Beneath this piece of jade was a crystal coffin that was emitting a cold air. Shi Mei stopped in front of the coffin and lowered his head to look at the man lying inside the coffin.

"Taxian-Jun Emperor Mo Weiyu…" His gaze fell on the light array on the man's chest. "You've slept for a long time. You should get up now, right?"

It was clear that his words did not have much of an effect. Taxian-Jun's eyes were still tightly shut, and his lips were bloodless.

"The flow of spiritual energy is so chaotic." Shi Mei placed his hand on Taxian-Jun's head. After sensing his surroundings carefully, he stared at the

handsome face thoughtfully, “Did you have a nightmare?”

Naturally, the person in a daze would not answer him.

His expression was very gentle, as if he was looking at an otherworldly divine weapon that was about to be forged. He said slowly: “Although this is your own Spirit Core, but Spirit Cores are things that are closely related to the heart. When it merges together, it will at least make you feel uncomfortable.”

His voice was bewitched, and he cast a spell of hypnosis.

“Taxian-Jun, no matter what you dream of, don’t believe it. It’s all fake. Come, wake up. Wake up and you can get anything.”

He lowered his body so that it was almost close to his ear. It was extremely coquettish and alluring.

“Shi Mingjing, Chu Wanning, and even your mother will be back soon.”

“Hurry and wake up.” He mumbled to the Emperor in his dream, “I’ll wait for you.”

Ch. 288 [Sisheng Peak] Grandmaster and Emperor

It was a dream.

Taxian-Jun opened his eyes and found himself standing in a vast expanse of land. The clouds were a deep red, and they were so low that they could be easily touched. There were lush reeds all around, floating in the air, and there were people whispering among the reeds, and there were people laughing,

Some people were crying, and those sounds were very soft. It was as if a veil had brushed past the tip of their fingers, and the sounds were like the contact of water.

He walked on, startling the dark blue flurries in the depths of the reeds, and then he saw a great, still river, larger and slower than any great river he had seen before.

On the surface of the river floated a few small boats, and the voice of the ferryman drifted from afar: “I have entered the Thunder Abyss, and my limbs have been turned into paste. My skull falls into the wilderness,

His eyes turned to dust. Eat my heart, Red Ants shine. Peck at my stomach, vulture vast… Only the soul would return… Only the soul will return…”

Only the soul returns, yesterday like flowing water.

He seemed to have been here before. When?

Taxian-Jun looked around. Everything was so familiar, but as he thought about it more carefully, his mind went blank.

“Hey, you.”

Someone suddenly spoke behind him.

He suddenly turned around, but saw nothing other than fireflies.

The voice was very hazy and illusory, “You go ahead, I’ll be right in front.”

Although being pointed out and doing things was very annoying, he still couldn’t resist his curiosity. With a sullen face, he walked towards the depths of the firefly’s dancing reeds.

Soon he saw a dilapidated mill, a small, overgrown yard littered with broken shingles, and in the center of the yard, on a black slab of graphite, sat a man, his back to him, staring up at the sky.

“Who are you?”

When the man heard his voice, he did not turn around immediately. Instead, he sighed. “I might be someone who wants to leave now.”

“Go? Where to?” Before the man could reply, he asked in a slightly anxious tone, “Where is this place?”

“The other side of the soul. Did you see the river?” Riding on a bamboo raft and traveling with the waves, we will head to the Underworld.”

“…”

“You have to wait seven or eight years for your reincarnation. Once you enter the door, there will be a guard whose intestines will leak out of his body, measuring the merits of your entire life. Anyone who has committed a deep sin will be directly escorted to the eighteen levels of the Infernal

Realm.” The man’s tone remained gentle and gentle as he spoke of the aftermath of his death, as if he was reliving some past events.

“The first floor is called Nanke Township, where there is a poor scholar who sells paintings, but he is probably not poor now, and I’ve burned a lot of paper money for him since. And there’s also that old man who sells wontons, if we go further in, we’ll encounter a palace that was built by the Fourth King of the Ghost World.

Taxian-Jun interrupted, “What gibberish! What are you trying to say?”

The man was quiet for a moment, then suddenly asked, “Taxian-Jun, are you afraid of death?”

Taxian-Jun laughed coldly, “What’s there to be afraid of?”

“I thought so too.” The man said, “So, I chose to take poison and commit suicide. I used to think I had nothing else to ask of the world, and that I was not afraid of death.”

After a pause, the man lowered his head.

“But I don’t want to go now. He’s still in the world, and I can’t let him go.”

After saying this, the man lightly jumped down from the graphite and circled under the clear moonlight from the dark shadow. The wind blew from the other side of the Soul River. For a moment, the air was misty and and the fireflies gathered and dispersed.

Taxian-Jun’s expression changed slightly: “… It’s you?”

Mo Ran walked toward him. His heart was empty, a black hole leaking air, his face was handsome, his nose was high, and his eyebrows arched. He

was almost the same as the first time they met at Mount Jiao. However, this time, he appeared much calmer, and there was no longer the confusion and fear he had at that time.

“Why are you…”

“As you can see, I’m not alive.”

“…”

“But I don’t know why, I seem to be different from the others as well. It's been seven days, but there’s no Black and White Impermanence that can rope me into the Underworld. I’ve been wandering around here.”

Taxian-Jun narrowed his eyes.

“You don’t have to be nervous. With my spirit core in your body, you won’t be able to live any longer.” Mo Ran looked towards the vast Soul River and said softly, “But I don’t want to leave either… I want to go back.”

Hearing what he said, Taxian-Jun was startled at first, and then raised his hand to stroke his chest. After a few moments of silence, suddenly he revealed a twisted slightly hideous smile and said “Your spirit core is with me now? In other words… Hua Binan succeeded? He has done it, and I will soon be free to come and go, and then —”

Before he could finish, he was interrupted by Mo Ran.

Mo Ran turned his head and looked at him indifferently, “Do you know who Hua Binan is?”

“…”

He walked towards Taxian-Jun, and as he got closer, he raised his finger, which was emitting a white light, and gently pointed it between his brows.

“Actually, it is useless to tell you. He’s done something to you here, and he’ll get rid of a lot of things that aren’t good for him manipulating you. However, since you still have a wisp of soul, you should at least remember some of it… Don’t be so mindless and easily manipulated.”

He didn’t know why, but the moment Mo Ran touched him, he suddenly felt an excruciating pain in his skull. It was as if fragments of him were flying past his eyes.

“What are you doing?!”

Mo Ran did not answer. He only cupped his face and looked at him very quietly and somewhat sorrowfully. “If you could only know the truth about everything, that would be great.”

“You…”

“This way, even if I leave, I can feel more at ease.”

Taxian-Jun gritted his teeth and said, “What truth?! What nonsense! Let go of me!” As he spoke, he furiously tried to free himself from the grip of Mo Ran, but all his strength seemed to have gone to waste on the cotton wool, and the spell and the legs passed through the translucent body in front of him.

Mo Ran closed his eyes and sighed softly, “Did you know? I really want you to see what I’ve experienced since my rebirth, and I really want you to have all of my memories.”

“Perhaps it is because I am too stubborn that my soul has not been taken away. That is why I can see you here.”

As he spoke, he leaned forward and pressed his forehead against Taxian-Jun.

“Let’s turn back. Forgive yourself.”

When he heard this line that was very similar to the one Chu Wanning had in his previous life, Taxian-Jun’s entire body shook. However, before he could vent out his anger, a bloody scene flashed before his eyes.

He once again saw the Ghost World’s Heavenly Rift.

During the great calamity that had changed his life, everyone was too busy crying and crying.

Taxian-Jun was floating in the air like a kite. The people below him were all wailing and screaming as blood splattered everywhere. He looked around. Where was Shi Mei? Where is Shi Mei?

He could not find him, he could not find him. His heart was burning with fury — Suddenly, he stopped.

Amidst the smoke, a familiar figure was moving. Taxian-Jun flew over and was surprised to see that it was the him of his youth. Insensible, dying.

What was going on?

As if answering him, Taxian-Jun saw the scene change. Someone was carrying his broken body on their back, crawling through the mountains of corpses and the seas of blood with great difficulty.

Who is it?

Those bloody hands… Whose.

He could no longer crawl, yet he was still unwilling to let go. Who was the person that was dragging him?

Taxian-Jun flew down to the ground and circled around the two men. He stared at the blood-soaked man whose face was hard to discern — in the end, when he saw the man clearly, he felt as though he had been struck by lightning.

“Chu Wanning?”

How was this possible… How is this possible!?

Someone seemed to be angrily howling in his ear. Although the voice was far away, the person’s anger was like a bayonet that pierced the heart. He bellowed, “The stairs are still stained with a trail of blood; that’s the road he took to bring you home.”

“The Discernment Barrier is twinned! Whatever damage you took, he also suffered the same!”

“How can you say that he didn’t save you… How can you say that he didn’t save you…”

His entire body felt cold.

Taxian-Jun opened his eyes all of a sudden, and his eyes were completely red. He stared at Mo Ran, and gritted his teeth as he asked, “What are you showing me? If that was the case… Ridiculous!”

He was filled with rage, but when he looked into his eyes, he suddenly froze.

Mo Ran stared at him. His dark, calm eyes were actually moist. “I’ve tried my best to hand over all my memories to you.”

“Who wants to see what happens between you and him?! Who wants to know what happened after you were reborn! Yet, you betrayed Shi Mei… You are not the same as me at all!” He was almost furious. “Who wants you to act on your own? Get lost!”

The rage of countless people was not stirred in Mo Ran’s eyes.

Mo Ran looked at him with pity in his eyes. He stood in front of Taxian-Jun, and from the corner of his robes, a golden flame suddenly ignited. His ethereal body melted little by little, turning into specks of light.

“Actually, you don’t need to say anything. It’s time for me to leave as well.”

“I gave you all of my memories with my own soul force. This is something that defies the will of the heavens, I don’t know what will happen to me in the end.” At this point, Mo Ran paused, then smiled, “Perhaps I will be tolerated by the Six Paths of Samsara, or maybe I will be directly sentenced to the Infinite Hells.”

“…”

“I’ve thought of the best possibility. Perhaps my soul can follow the spirit core and enter your body together with it.”

He did not care about what he said before, but when he heard this, he suddenly frowned, “Don’t even think about it!”

Mo Ran looked at him with a smile that was not a smile. “Are you afraid?”

“What’s there to be afraid of?” Taxian-Jun had received a great offense. He narrowed his eyes, “But this body belongs to me, don’t even think about seizing the treasure nest!”

“You just don’t want to accept some facts.”

“…”

“You don’t want to accept the truth that I’ve already admitted and you’ve turned a blind eye to.”

“Shut up!”

Mo Ran looked at him calmly as the illusions disappeared faster and faster, instantly reaching his waist and chest… Before he disappeared, he raised his hand to try and touch the hair on the side of Taxian-Jun’s head. However, it was as if Taxian-Jun had been stung by some highly toxic substance, and he took a step back in disgust.

The specks of golden light in his body, like moths drawn to fire, suddenly surged towards the heart of Taxian-Jun. He felt a familiar energy resuscitating within his body, a power that was blazing and fiery, like a river flowing beneath a rock.

The power made him feel warm, but it also made him extremely disgusted.

“Don’t even think about merging with my soul…”

“I don’t want to leave. I will try my best.”

Taxian-Jun went berserk, “Get the hell out of here!”

But Mo Ran just stared at him. “I’m sorry. In the end, I still have to fight with you for this body.”

“…”

“If only your ability had recovered.”

“Mo Weiyu.” The golden flames quickly ignited the tip of his finger, engulfing that young and handsome face. “Don’t be the emperor Taxian-Jun.”

As soon as he finished speaking.

Destroyed like ashes…

At the same time, the secret chamber of the Tianyin Pavilion was instantly illuminated by the blinding golden light. It was as bright as day, causing Shi Mei to be unable to open his eyes for a moment. He suddenly raised his robes to cover his face. Only after a long time did the intense light slowly fade away.

Shi Mei had never been in a situation like this before. He suddenly waved his sleeves and looked inside the ice coffin with a pale face -

And was met suddenly with a pair of dark, purplish eyes.

Taxian-Jun slowly sat up from within the coffin. His face was ice-white, and his lips had not recovered any color. He looked as if he had been carved out of cold jade and formed from dark spring water. Even his black robe that was embroidered with golden threads was suffused with a cold mist. The light that shone on his body also seemed to have frozen over.

Taxian-Jun raised his hand and placed his slender white fingertips on the edge of the coffin. Then, he rolled his eyes and looked at Shi Mei.

“…”

Even though he knew that he was Shi Mei, under such a cold gaze, he couldn’t help but take half a step back.

“You…” With his Adam’s apple bobbing up and down, Shi Mei forced himself to stay calm. “You’re finally awake.”

Taxian-Jun did not answer. His face was extremely sinister, even more so than before.

He was gasping for breath, his back was drenched in cold sweat while Mo-zongshi’s final smile was still flickering in front of his eyes. He closed his eyes, trying to sense if there were any unnecessary three or six souls in his body.

Shi Mei stood at the side and saw the change in the expression on the disciple’s face. He hurriedly placed his hand on the disciple’s forehead and started chanting an incantation to calm the restlessness in the heart of the emperor Taxian-Jun.

“How is it?” After chanting the Soul Suppressing Curse, Shi Mei stared at his face and asked.

Taxian-Jun did not immediately reply. After a long while, he raised his hand and moved his five fingers. The manicured nails were like ice and did not have the slightest hint of blood on them.

He rose from the coffin.

“I seem to have had a very long dream…” Taxian-Jun Lord spoke his first sentence in a hoarse voice.

Shi Mei’s eyes were very wary: “It’s all fake.”

The Emperor’s black robes were like clouds, and the golden threads were like water. He stepped out of the coffin, and his expression was somewhat gloomy. “I think so too.”

He stared at Shi Mei, and Shi Mei stared back at him. After a while, Shi Mei asked in a low voice: “Do you still remember who you are?”

“…”

There was a moment of silence.

The cold and handsome man seemed to chuckle, and his thin lips parted: “Why don’t you remember? Immortal Taxian-Jun, Mo Ran.”

He paused for a moment, lowered the curtain of his eyelashes, and made a lazy bow to the extremely strict Shi Mei. “I am willing to serve master.”

A hint of ecstasy flashed through Shi Mei’s eyes, but he still didn’t dare relax. He took out a crystal from his Qiankun bag. That thing was shining with a green luster and had a strange appearance. It was the strongest crystal used to test a cultivator’s spiritual energy.

His Adam’s apple bobbed up and down in anticipation as he walked over and handed the crystal to Taxian-Jun.

“Can you light it up?”

"…" Taxian-Jun's eyes roamed about. He glanced at the rock coldly, then said slowly, "How hard is that?" As the sound of his voice faded, he clenched his fists tightly as the meridians in his hands bulged.

In just an instant, the most powerful spirit power in the world poured into it. Not only did the crystal instantly shine, there were even cracks appearing on its surface.

Shi Mei held his breath as he stared at the stone, his eyes unmoving for a moment.

Suddenly, with a crisp "pa" sound, the stone exploded between the pale and narrow fingers of Taxian-Jun stage cultivator, and was then blasted into smithereens by the fierce spiritual energy.

Ash!

"What is this?" Taxian-Jun, however, casually flicked out a pinch of powder and sneered coldly, "I'm not playing around."

Shi Mei suddenly relaxed. He took a few steps back and sat down on a stone chair.

This… It was the strongest battle force in the world… Did it finally belong to him now?

Shi Mei couldn't help but tremble violently. The dim light in the stone room shone on his face. Was he in ecstasy? Or was it relief? The light was wobbly and not very clear, even eerie.

After a long while, he saw Shi Mei bury his face into his hands, and mutter under his breath: "Mother, did you see that? I did it."

He suddenly turned crazy, he got up and looked at the empty walls, then towards the stone room where no one else was, he shouted with all his might, “Did you see that? Almost! Did you all see that?”

No one answered him. He began to laugh loudly in this empty secret room. Tears began to flow from his eyes as he laughed — it was a drop of golden tears.

It was exactly the same as the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Song Qiutong.

Ch. 289 [Sisheng Peak] Visiting the Old Half as a Ghost

The nightmare of the cultivation world had become even more insolent in the recent days. Zhenlong Chess spread like a plague through the world. The person behind the scenes was like a lunatic, not fussing over the host's identity at all. Be it an old man or a young child, they were all in the books.

No one could guess what he was trying to do by spreading the net so wide.

Someone mourned for help from the Tianyin Pavilion, but the Pavilion master suddenly declared that she would not be able to leave. Even if someone fled to starve to death in front of the pavilion, the door would not open. Gradually, these people understood with great unwillingness — perhaps from the beginning…

They were wrong.

But it was too late. Mo-zongshi was dead, Chu Wanning's whereabouts were unknown, and the Sisheng Peak was destroyed. The various sects were busy with their own affairs, and more and more Zhenlong Chess pieces that had lost their consciousness wandered around the mortal world, killing and arson.

It had already spread throughout the cultivation world at an alarming rate.

Jiang Du, Yang Zhou, Shi Zhong, Lei Zhou… The sculptures and paintings of the buildings and the snow on the deck all emitted a dull lament under the scorching and scorching flames. The walls collapsed and the countless wind and moon were solemnly blown away under the tribulation of these flames.

On the Star Observation Platform of the Tianyin Pavilion, Shi Mei was staring at the chaos near the mountains and rivers. He stood alone for a while before the faint sound of footsteps came from behind him.

The woman's silk shoes stepped on the thin snow and covered it with his hands.

"What about Taxian-Jun?"

"He left this morning."

"… You've sent him to do it? Why are you so fast?"

"There is nothing to wait for. I have already done all the preparations that I needed to do. It depends on him."

After saying this sentence, after a long while, he opened his mouth again. His usually calm voice had a slight tremble to it.

"Elder sister." He whispered to Mu Yanli, "After so many years, after two lifetimes, I finally managed to do it…"

Mu Yanli turned her head to the side, and saw that his peach blossom eyes were glistening with moisture. He seemed extremely excited, but also extremely aggrieved.

The man closed his eyes and trembled uncontrollably. "Let's go."

He said in a low voice, "The Portal is about to open. We'll take all the pieces we made and send them over there."

"All the chess pieces?"

"All of them."

“But so many people…” Mu Yanli’s face was a bit pale, but when she saw the pained and excited expression on Shi Mei’s face, she still firmly said, “… Good. I understand.”

She turned around and left. Just as she was about to step off the edge of the Star Observation Platform, Shi Mei suddenly called out to her.

“Wait!”

She turned her head and saw that Shi Mei had turned sideways under the dim yellow sky. The strong wind was blowing against his cloak. He looked at Mu Yanli as if he wanted to say something, but his eyes were red and he did not.

Mu Yanli looked at him for a while and then she said, “Don’t worry. Even if it’s cruel, I won’t betray you.”

Shi Mei suddenly closed his eyes. It seemed that he was always so sensitive and weak in critical moments.

His voice trembled slightly. “I have betrayed myself in this life…”

“He didn’t betray you. He betrayed the entire clan, all of us. His hands are bloodless— but he has condemned us to hell ever since.”

“…”

“I understand your helplessness. No matter what people say about you in this world,” said Mu Yanli to Shi Mingjing. “In the clan of the Butterfly-Boned Beauty, you are a well-deserved hero.”

He left.

Shi Mei watched as her back gradually disappeared into the distance. Then, he turned around and placed his bony hand on the jade ornament. The cold feeling spread to his heart.

“Hero?” Shi Mei raised his head and looked at the dark clouds in the sky. After a long sigh, he said, “It’s impossible for me to become one. There’s no hero that carries such a heavy burden on their life.”

There seemed to be a moment of disappointment in his eyes, before it turned into ice.

“I, Hua Binan, have spent two lifetimes in this struggle against heaven and earth. I do not believe that the heavens cannot be changed — now that the Gate of Life and Death, the most Zhenlong Chess pieces, these forbidden techniques are all in my hands, I would like to see who in this world can stop me.”

His knuckles were the color of jade.

“Forget about heroes. I just want a way out.”

His words scattered into the wind.

“For us.”

In the vast Snow Region of Mount Kunlun, a black silhouette swiftly swept past.

The wind was blowing like a knife across his cheek, but he could not seem to feel the cold in his narrowed, purplish eyes.

He was flying like a hawk over a cliff. Jumping on top of the jumbo, light footstep, quick and agile. There were so many patrolling experts in the

Taxue Palace on Mount Kunlun that no one noticed his arrival. The snow that he walked on didn't have a single trace.

Very quickly, this man arrived at the highest point of the Taxue Palace. From here, he could see the snow-covered Heaven Lake. It was misty and tranquil, filled with mist.

The lightning fast black figure stopped.

The man stood at the summit of Mount Kunlun, straight as a bayonet, his dark eyes fixed on the surface of the lake. The wind picked up, blowing away his cloak, revealing a handsome face that was pale and devoid of blood.

It was Taxian-Jun.

After going through the second tempering, he now had Mo-zongshi's spiritual core, and had regained his strength as strong as it was in the past and will no longer disobey the orders of the "master".

He finally became the killing blade and spiritual energy source that made Shi Mei completely satisfied.

However, ever since the Tianyin Pavilion awakened, Taxian-Jun's mind would be filled with scattered fragments — previously, he had always thought that he hated Chu Wanning, that he loved Shi Mei and that his feelings for him were related to these two.

However, he vaguely felt that something was wrong.

Recently, he would often hear a vague voice and see some vague images.

He saw Chu Wanning carefully wrapping the wontons in Mengpo Hall and heard himself say to Chu Wanning, “Shizun, let’s start over again, okay? Don’t you worry about me. Okay…”

He saw a crescent moon hanging over the sea cliff, shining only on the two of them. He held Chu Wanning’s hand tightly while Chu Wanning kept his head down. His usually fierce eyes were moist and red. He heard Chu Wanning say to him, “I’m not good. I’ve never been loved by anyone before…”

He saw him and Chu Wanning sleeping on the bed of the inn. The weather outside was heavy, and it had nothing to do with them.

He saw Chu Wanning lift up the curtain of his eyelashes and look at him —

Suddenly, his heart palpitated.

Taxian-Jun suddenly opened his eyes.

What are these?

He saw Chu Wanning looking at him so gently, the kind of look in his eyes that never came back after he had tortured him with an aphrodisiac, humiliated and imprisoned him.

Taxian-Jun felt his head hurt. He raised his hand, and the light of day shone upon the cold spikes on his wrists. He rubbed his forehead and cursed softly, “What nonsense is this?”

He stood on the roof for a moment, stunned. It was snowing heavily in Kunlun, and soon, it was covered in frost. He was slightly surprised, because deep in his heart, he felt that this was also good. It was like a good

dream, and yet he felt at peace because of the gentle gaze Chu Wanning gave him.

"… This Venerable one has gone crazy."

He blinked his eyes, pushed these ridiculous thoughts to the back of his mind, and moved on.

Shi Mei's order was for him to go to Kunlun, where the spirit energy was most concentrated, and completely open the gate to his previous life. So he should go north. However, when he saw the heavenly lake, he couldn't help but circle around it.

That was the place where he would forever lose Chu Wanning.

Taxian-Jun stood in place for a while, but in the end, he couldn't help but walk in that direction in a daze. However, just as he was passing by a nearby veranda, he suddenly heard a familiar voice.

"Father… Mother…"

This voice was very familiar. He suddenly stopped in his tracks and hid himself in the shadows, revealing a pair of pitch black eyes as he looked down.

Then he saw it clearly and couldn't help but sneer. "I was wondering who it was. So it was you."

In that courtyard, there was only Xue Meng. Xue Meng was holding a jug of wine as he leaned against the table. He was already drunk.

"This time, your parents weren't killed by me." Taxian-Jun enjoyed Xue Meng's drunken state with great interest as he stroked his chin. "But when

you are sad, I am very happy. I haven't forgotten who made a hole in my chest earlier."

"How is it? Isn't the feeling of heartache great?"

The courtyard was quiet, and no one else was present.

Taxian-Jun stared down at the ground for a while. Suddenly, he made up his mind. With a flash of his black shadow, he arrived in front of Xue Meng.

The drunk phoenix did not notice his arrival and continued to caress the pot of wine, wanting to drink the nectar within it again.

Suddenly, a cold hand reached out and grabbed the red clay teapot, stopping his movements.

"You… Who…?"

"Guess."

Xue Meng forced open one of his eyes that was swollen from crying and sleepily looked up along that hand. His handsome face was filled with mockery.

Taxian-Jun had never seen Xue Meng in such a depressed state. Although he was convinced that Xue Meng in his previous life also secretly collapsed many times behind him, this was the first time he had seen it with his own eyes. He licked his lips and felt very excited.

He bent over and stared at Xue Meng as if he was staring at a prey. "Interesting. It turns out that the disciple that Chu Wanning was most proud of would get drunk and turn into a pile of mud."

As he spoke, he sat diagonally on the edge of the stone table and then raised Xue Meng's chin.

"It's been a long time since I've seen you when you were young. After staying in the mortal world for so long, I have almost forgotten what kind of domineering face you had when you were a youth."

His fingertips gently caressed it.

He brushed his cheeks, the bridge of his nose, and the space between his eyebrows, then poked his forehead in a manner that was neither light nor heavy.

"Xue Meng, do you know? There is one thing that I am actually quite regretful about." He looked at Xue Meng's startled eyes, and gradually revealed a smile that would cause chills, "In my previous life, I was kind enough to let you live, but you wanted to kill me instead. Sometimes I think. Shouldn't I have killed you in the first place?"

"Humans are supposed to be comfortable living, but those who die might not be in pain." Taxian-Jun's voice was low and gloomy. "Xue Meng, do you want to accompany your parents?"

As he spoke, he bent down.

His cold breath brushed against Xue Meng's cheek, and his two cold fingers even touched the artery on the side of Xue Meng's neck— All this time, he had been staring into Xue Meng's eyes.

He looked at his reflection in those hazy, teary eyes, like a ghost that had descended into the world.

“In truth, everyone living in this world will die in the end. You and I are brothers for half our lives, after all. Since I met you here, why don’t I send you off first to help you escape.”

He exerted force with his fingers and was about to kill.

“Brother…”

Suddenly, a whisper, like a sprout breaking through the earth, could be heard.

Taxian-Jun was startled.

As Xue Meng looked at him, he seemed to be able to distinguish the appearance of the person in front of him amidst his drunkenness. His teary clothes made him stagger to his feet as he choked with sobs.

“Brother…”, he called to him.

He only knew that the person in front of him was Mo Ran, his elder brother, that his family, that his most carefree days of youth, had finally returned.

This time, Taxian-Jun heard it clearly, and he was sure that he didn’t hear wrongly. Thus, he was somewhat astonished, and his face unexpectedly did not know what sort of expression to wear.

The brain was in chaos again.

In a blur, an image flashed past Taxian-Jun through his eyes. He saw himself and Xue Meng sitting in the Red Lotus Pavilion, brewing tea and brewing wine. Under the moonlight, they clinked cups.

…Was this what that Mo-zongshi did again?

“Brother.” At first, he was still trying his best to hold back his sobs, but in the end, he sobbed and choked on his words, which eventually turned into a wail of grief, “Don’t go… Don’t leave me behind…”

After a while, he seemed to have thought of something else, and his entire body suddenly started to tremble. His lips were green and white, “Don’t kill my father, don’t force them… I was the one who killed those people. Don’t hurt my parents, just come at me…” Large teardrops rolled down, dampening Taxian-Jun’s chest, “Don’t… Don’t dig out my brother’s heart…”

Amidst this heaving sob, Taxian-Jun slowly lowered his hand. He stood there stiffly for a moment, wanting to push Xue Meng away. But Xue Meng held him so tightly that his hands and feet were full of blood.

Gradually, the area closest to his heart was soaked with tears.

In the end, Taxian-Jun ran like the wind and dashed up the roof rafters. He lowered his body on the porch and looked at Xue Meng, who was hugging his knees and crying in the snow.

The Xue Meng in his memory had always been fierce, arrogant, aggressive, sharp, and harsh. However, the child that was left in the snow and wind was the one who could no longer find his brother.

He looked at Xue Meng standing there, crying for a very long time. Afterwards, Xue Meng stood up, either because he had woken up from his drinking or because he was tired from crying. He stood blankly in the courtyard for a while, then carried the wine jug towards the depths of the Plum Blossom. The young man walked aimlessly, his mind in a trance, slowly walking away —

Taxian-Jun looked at the snowy ground. There were two lines of twisted footprints, but he no longer turned his head back. He continued to travel deeper into the snowstorm until he could no longer see Xue Meng's back.

In the wind, there was a sudden and powerful singing. It was a short song Xue Zhengyong had sung before he died. Now, it flowed out of Xue Meng's throat and echoed through the Taxue Palace in Mount Kunlun.

"I pay my respects to an old friend like a ghost. Only in this drunken state do I have a chance to get along with each other." A voice rang out. It was still young, but it had already become ancient. "Under the main horn of the mountain, it has already decayed."

The snow had dyed the young man's black hair.

That hoarse voice, mixed with the sound of the wind and snow, was filled with desolation.

"Heaven's Light Dream shatters everything in the distance…" It was getting further and further away. Or perhaps it was not Xue Meng who had walked far away, but the young man finally sobbed, each word choked with sobs. "Abandon my old body."

Give up my old body.

He was only twenty-two years old, but only in his drunken dreams could he see his old friends laughing and seeing each other again. He was only in his prime, but he could only see a pot of Du Kang, Gao Tang's love, and two or three old friends.

Xue Meng raised his head, as if he was trying to hold back the tears in the corner of his eyes. However, he did not know whether he had held back.

The snowstorm had already blinded him.

He closed his eyes and let out a long howl, trying to stop Xingyun. It was as if he was kowtowing to the heavens and crying out to the earth.

“We are willing to extend our lifespan to Duke Zhou. Let him carry the wine, and we will return it!”

As the clouds gathered, he dropped the wine jar in his hand.

Spreading his hands, Xue Meng fell straight into the snow. He didn’t want to go any further. What was in front of him? Everywhere was a world of ice and snow. There were no more familiar figures, no more homes.

Even though he had dreamt of Mo Ran just now, it was all fake. It was all just a reflection of the moon in the water, fading away in the blink of an eye.

Xue Meng lay in the snow. After a while, he raised his hand and covered his eyes.

His thin, blood-red lips slightly parted as hot tears flowed down his cheeks.

“Why did you all leave? Leave me alone.”

Xue Meng suddenly choked and lost his tone.

“Why is that… Why did you leave me alone…”

In fact, he had lived two lifetimes, and in the end, he was the only one left.

Taxian-Jun listened to the lingering sound of the howling wind as it swallowed him up. He looked towards the direction where Xue Meng had disappeared to. He stood there motionlessly on the roof while the wind

blew against his cloak, fluttering it. He raised his hand and touched his chest, not knowing what to feel.

I worship half of my old friend as a ghost.

This was true for Xue Meng, but it was also true for Taxian-Jun?

In his previous life, Wu Shan Hall was completely empty. In the end, he was the only one left, and no one else was present. He did not know where the incense burner in his room had once been, nor did he wear the clothes he had worn as a teenager. Sometimes he would blurt out a joke when he was trying to study, but everyone around him was respectful and tense.

No one knew what he was talking about, no one understood him.

Those who knew him were either in the underworld or at the ends of the earth.

Taxian-Jun slowly came to the edge of the celestial pond. The weather was bad, the distant fog was thick, and the snow seeds on the pond were flowing rapidly. He stood there without a sound, like a heartless, unfeeling statue of wood.

He allowed the frost to cover him.

“Chu Wanning…” He sighed softly, “If only…”

What if it was back then?

He did not continue. His eyelashes were folded and his eyes were closed.

In the past, there had never been anything like this. If he was the Immortal Emperor, then no one in the cultivation world would have been able to

compare to him. He did not know what regret was, what turning back was.

What happened happened.

He did not regret it, and he did not admit defeat.

Even if it was a mess of flesh and blood, even if he had to abandon the traitors, this was the path he had chosen. Even if it was filled with thorns, he would still force himself to continue walking.

However, in the vast sky, in the middle of the snowy sky, in a place that no one would ever be able to see or know about. After standing there with his hands behind his back for a long time, he finally did something unexpected — he knelt down.

At the place where Chu Wanning died in battle, he kowtowed for a long time.

He bowed.

Second bow.

He kowtowed three times.

Taxian-Jun raised his head. Under his hat, his eyelashes were frosted over, and his expression was solemn. No one knew what he was thinking about. He then stood up, as if he had fulfilled a wish he had for many years. Without a word, he moved his cloak and robe, heading towards the most abundant spiritual energy in Mount Kunlun.

Since the Emperor was out, no one in the world could stop him. Shi Mingjing had chosen the right one. He possessed the strongest and most

powerful spirit energy in the world and a formidable cultivation base that was unrivaled.

The Gates of Life and Death were about to open.

Ch. 290 [Sisheng Peak] Hanmei and Tisheng

Xue Meng lay on the ground. When he was drunk, he was confused and completely unaware that he had just met the greatest devil in the world. He was still lying on his back in the snow. The snow on the peak of Mount Kunlun was still drifting down, like the willow leaves on a spring day.

The autumn reeds covered him.

After an unknown amount of time had passed, someone approached from within the snow, holding a bright red paper umbrella. Xue Meng squinted his eyes, and then he saw a clear and cold face.

“Mei…”

Xue Meng mumbled the two words “Hanxue”. He was too tired.

“Mm, it’s me.” Mei Hanxue didn’t say much and helped him up from the ground.

Xue Meng lay on Mei Hanxue’s shoulder, but he did not leave. Instead, he asked, “Do you have any wine?”

Mei Hanxue said, “No.”

Xue Meng acted as if he didn’t hear anything. “Okay, okay, okay. Then why don’t you have a drink with me?”

“… Nope.”

Xue Meng was silent for a moment, then laughed. “Look at you, you dog. I didn’t drink it before, but now that I’ve drunk it, you tell me that I haven’t. Are you messing with me?”

“I don’t like alcohol.”

Xue Meng muttered a few more sentences. It sounded as if he was cursing someone. Then he pushed away Mei Hanxue and walked into the snow. Mei Hanxue was holding onto an umbrella as he looked at his slightly hunched back.

Instead of chasing after him, he asked, “Where are you going?”

He did not know where he was going. He only hated the fact that he had not drunk enough wine to kill himself.

Mei Hanxue replied: “There is no way back.”

Xue Meng suddenly stopped moving and stood there blankly. After a while, he suddenly burst into tears, “I just fucking want a drink! You won’t even let me drink it! If you don’t drink, then don’t drink, and you lied and said you don’t drink! Are you even human?!”

“… I didn’t lie to you.”

Xue Meng did not take it in at all as he wailed, “Are you guys human?”

“…”

“I’m not feeling good, can’t you see that?!”

Mei Hanxue said, “Yes.”

Xue Meng stared blankly for a moment, and then felt even more wronged. Even the tip of his nose had turned red. “Fine, fine, fine. Even if you can tell, you won’t drink with me. Are you afraid that I will drink you for nothing and won't give you money? I’m not that poor…”

He went to his pocket and actually mumbled something. He took out a pile of broken coins and counted them back and forth a few times.

Mei Hanxue stroked his forehead, his head obviously hurting. “Xue Meng, you’re drunk. You should rest first.”

Before Xue Meng could reply, the sound of rustling footsteps came from behind him.

Another gentle voice sounded out, “Big brother, why are you arguing with a drunk person?”

With that, a hand with a silk sheath reached out, carrying a sheepskin bag, and a silver bell on his wrist. Mei Hanxue glanced back.

Behind him stood a man who looked exactly the same as him. However, the smile on his face was deep, and his expression was extremely gentle.

“Actually, there are only two ways to deal with drunkards.” The man grinned. “Concuss him or knock him out.”

Mei Hanxue: “…”

As the man spoke, he winked at Mei Hanxue and said, “I know you don’t drink. You can go back, and I’ll drink with him.”

Light green smoke curled up into the air. It was graceful, graceful, and full of love. However, the smoke was everywhere else.

Taxue Palace’s Eldest Senior Brother’s room was filled with the rich, expensive fragrance of ambergris. This place was covered with a white, fluffy carpet, and every step of the way, one of the steps went straight up to one’s ankles.

Mei Hanxue was sitting on the white carpet with his bare feet and his head in his hands. His toes casually rubbed against each other as his jade-like eyes stared at Xue Meng, who was sitting cross-legged in front of him and gulping down the wine.

After thirty minutes of drinking, Mei Hanxue smiled and asked, “Hey, Ziming, aren’t you surprised?”

“Surprised about what?”

“There are two of us.”

Xue Meng, “… Oh.”

Mei Hanxue shook his head. “I forgot that your alcohol tolerance is very low. After you get drunk, your brain is probably different from an ordinary person’s, so there’s nothing surprising about you.”

Xue Meng, “Hmph.”.

“I don’t know if you’ve noticed, but that day at the Sisheng Peak, the person who helped you block the sword was my big brother.”

“I can’t remember.”

Mei Hanxue said, “You’ve seen his weapon, Shuofeng. A sword made of silver black iron.”

Xue Meng frowned and thought hard. But on that day in the Great Hall, the person who held me back was very ugly. The weapon wasn’t silver, either. “It’s…”

“It’s blue. Because he was angry that day, and he was very anxious, so he put the elixir into it. He doesn’t usually pay attention to his spirit, but my brother doesn’t really like to be cruel.”

“…”

“We actually know how to use that sword differently. I’m a Wood, Water, Spirit Core, and he’s a Water, Fire, and Spirit Core.” When the time comes, you will see three types of spirit currents, green, red and blue, but…”

He did not continue, because Xue Meng did not seem too interested in this matter. After hearing half of it, Xue Meng began to drink his wine, his expression indifferent.

Mei Hanxue narrowed his eyes.

He suddenly felt that Xue Meng’s appearance was not like his usual domineering attitude, but instead carried a trace of coldness. This coldness made Xue Meng not like himself, but rather like another person.

But who?

Mei Hanxue did not think about it for a while, and he was too lazy to think about it. His work had always been done in the same way that the Brainless Golden Beast breathed out, lazily drifting about wherever it went, seemingly without any bones.

Xue Meng drank another bag of sheepskin and then asked Mei Hanxue, “Do you have any more of this wine?”

“Yes, but you’ve already drunk too much. You can’t ask for more.”

Xue Meng said, “I’m not drunk from a thousand cups.”

“Are you sick?” However, he still handed the wine to him, and said warmly before he left, “This is the last pot. If I give it to you again, and if my brother finds about it, he'll cut me alive.”

Xue Meng slowly drank his wine, his expression very cold.

He was not like Xue Meng.

While drinking, Xue Meng suddenly whispered, “You have a brother.”

“Ah!” Mei Hanxue laughed. “I've been talking about him for a long time now and you only now acknowledged it.”

Xue Meng’s eyes were a little unfocused. His eyelashes were long like a butterfly resting on the ground. He then muttered, “I also have a brother.”

“Yeah, I know.”

Leaning against the beam column, Xue Meng crossed his legs. After sitting for a long time, he felt a little numb. He stretched out one of his legs and stared at Mei Hanxue for a while.

Suddenly, the ice-cold expression on his face disappeared and was replaced by a dazzling brilliance. However, under this radiance, Xue Meng still did not seem like Xue Meng.

He smiled and asked, “Hey, how does your brother treat you?”

Mei Hanxue was surprised by his sudden change in attitude. Was this man drunk like this? But he still said, “… It’s pretty good.”

“Ha ha-ha, you sure are gentle with your words. What kind of good method do you have? Would he forge a weapon for you, or would he cook

you a bowl of noodles when you were sick?”

Mei Hanxue smiled. “Neither, but he will help me block the women.”

Xue Meng, “…”

“I don’t really like watching old lovers cry. The things he can’t handle are things he do for me. He did a lot more than I did. He had no feelings, and he didn’t drag his feet. But he just doesn’t have much fun, so he’s too old to even hold a girl’s hand.”

Xue Meng wrinkled his nose. “What’s your brother’s name?”

“Méi Hánxuě.”[174]

“Like you?”

“The words are different.” He smiled. “He is a cold man. He deserves his reputation.”

Xue Meng mumbled, “Why did you do this…”

Mei Hanxue replied, “It’s convenient to do things. For some things, it’s not strange for two people to do it. However, if others think that it was done by one person, then they would feel that it’s very mysterious. The Palace Master intentionally allowed us to do so, so she has been bringing me and Big Brother since we were young.”

As he spoke, he opened the lid of the smoker, picked up the silver spoon and began to fiddle with the remaining embers inside. He then poured in some spices which were able to calm the mind and dispel the cold. His voice was very soft.

“He and I have been carrying human skin masks with us. When he puts them on, I will show them my true appearance. When I put them on, he will act as his real self, and in a flash, more than twenty years has gone just like this.”

“Aren’t you all tired?”

“I’m not tired. It’s pretty fun.” Mei Hanxue smiled. “But my brother must be tired. He always says that I owe too much debt outside that he even walks around those female cultivators.”

Xue Meng had never experienced the feeling of being surrounded by female cultivators. In fact, he felt that he was about the same age as Méi Hánxuě. He had not even touched a woman’s hand before.

However, there was nothing to show off about this sort of thing. He drank dryly, silently, without a word.

Mei Hanxue had thought that he was drunk and that his brain was abnormal. But unexpectedly at this time, Xue Meng suddenly asked him, “Why did you save me?”

The tone changed again, this time very gently.

This kind of gentleness appeared on Xue Meng’s face in a way that was far too out of place. It was even more piercing than his previous brilliance.

Mei Hanxue finally could not stand it any longer. He sat up and raised his hand that was tied to the silver bell. He turned Xue Meng’s chin left and right as he looked, saying, “Strange, it’s you. But what’s different? What’s going on?”

Xue Meng did not struggle at all and allowed him to pull and analyze. His pair of black eyes quietly looked at Mei Hanxue, and after a while, he asked, “Why are you helping the Sisheng Peak? Do I know you well?”

“Not really. I played with you when I was little, but one day it was me and one day it was my brother who played with you. In fact, I’ve only been with you for about ten days.”

“Then why are you willing to take me in?”

Mei Hanxue sighed. He extended a slender finger and poked Xue Meng’s forehead, “Your mother and father saved my mother’s life before. She’s from Shattered Leaf City, and Shattered Leaf has a lot of evil spirits. “After she gave birth to us brothers, she sent us to the Taxue Palace on Mount Kunlun. Afterwards, there was chaos in the city and heavy casualties. She managed to escape but was heavily injured.”

The new spice has a sharp scent of cedar.

Mei Hanxue smiled. “After a long and arduous journey, she didn’t have any money left. By the time she reached the foot of Mount Kunlun, she was already dying.”

His expression was still very gentle, and between his forehead, there were red droplets of water that were shining.

“At that time, it was Uncle Xue and Aunt Wang’s first visit to the Taxue Palace on Mount Kunlun. They saw my dying mother, but they did not ask about her background, did not accept her money, and took the best medicines to treat her. After finding out that she was here to search for her son, they even carried her on their backs to Mount Kunlun.”

Xue Meng was speechless for a moment as he blankly listened.

After a long while, he asked, “Then what happened to your mother?”

“She was too sick.” Mei Hanxue shook his head, “There’s no way to get back from that injury, so she died. But thanks to Uncle and Aunt, we’ve seen her for the last time.”

Outside, a little wind blew in. The smoke in the room dispersed, and the wind chimed in from the corner of the eaves.

It was like the sound of water.

“All these years, my aunt and uncle have always said that there is no need to say anything. It was just a simple gesture. In the end, they even forgot about it themselves, but my brother and I still remember it.” Mei Hanxue raised his jade eyes and looked at him peacefully.

Too much time had passed, and when he talked about it, the pain was invisible, only gentleness.

“That day, it was Uncle Xue who carried my mother on his back, while Aunt Wang held an umbrella by his side. They were afraid that my mother would suffer from another cold. The first thing my aunt and uncle said after entering the hall was not to do business at the Sisheng Peak or to form an alliance or make friends with the Taxue Palace. They asked if there was a pair of twins from Shattered Leaf City.”

Her light golden eyelashes drooped down, covering the clear pool of water.

“To be honest, that is the most outstanding Sect Leader and Lady Sect Leader that I have ever seen in my entire life.”

Xue Meng choked with sobs. “My parents…”

Mei Hanxue answered, “Yes, your parents.”

Xue Meng buried his face into his palm. His shoulders trembled slightly. He was crying again. It seemed that the tears in his life were about to run out in these few months of collapse.

He cried. He finally turned back into Xue Meng’s appearance.

At this moment, Mei Hanxue suddenly remembered.

Just now, he had coldly said, “I’m not drunk.” That was Chu Wanning.

He brightly asked, “Do you have a brother too?” It was Mo Weiyu.

He said softly, “Why did you save me?” It was Shi Mingjing.

He was trying, clumsily, to remember their faces, their bits and pieces, their glances, their smiles, their sitting or standing, their anger or annoyance.

In the past, he was used to having Chu Wanning’s cold stubbornness, Mo Weiyu’s scorching heat, and Shi Mingjing’s gentleness. In the past, he had a Shizun, a cousin, and even a close friend.

Suddenly, a night of rain and duckweed. Mountains and rivers shattered and the wind blew.

The rain had stopped and he was alone.

They all disappeared.

Xue Meng alone drank a jug of turbid wine. After that, he became three people by himself.

He cried, laughed, cold, hot, and gentle, and he liked them, respectfully, definitely, awkwardly.

He thought that perhaps he didn't express it well. His love for his Shizun always seemed to be very dull. His fondness for his cousin was always sharp. His love for Shi Mei was always very indifferent.

After he finished drinking, Xue Meng slowly curled himself up. He had shrunk to such a small size, and his eyes were red.

He said, "It's my fault. What I did was wrong…"

Come back.

I am no longer arrogant, no longer arrogant, no longer hesitant, no longer indifferent.

Xue Meng sobbed, his forehead pressed against his knees as his entire body trembled. As he sobbed, he said, "Come back… Don't leave me alone."

If he could return to his old friend, if he could start all over again. He did not want the reputation of a proud son of heaven, nor did he want the dignity of a Young Master of Sisheng Peak.

He just wanted to tell them directly and passionately…

I really, really love you, can't do without you, all your life have to do with you.

He was willing to use his spirit core, and he was willing to pay a thousand gold coins.

He is willing to give it all. To see the deceased gather again and look at them greedily, even if it's for a while.

Mei Hanxue sighed as he saw him grieve. He raised his hand and touched his ears. He was about to say something when he heard a muffled sound. It was like thunder had crashed through heavy clouds and the earth was shaking.

The tremors continued for a while, as if there was a giant beast awakening in the depths of the snowy plains. It was as if it could release its breath at any time and swallow the sun and the moon.

Mei Hanxue knew that something was wrong. He settled down Xue Meng and was about to go out when he saw his brother holding his sword, pushing aside the veil and striding in.

The eldest brother’s expression was solemn and extremely gloomy as he said, “Immediately go to the main hall.”

Mei Hanxue was stunned: “What’s wrong? What was that movement just now?”

His elder brother, who was usually cold, pursed his lips and said, “A huge mysterious formation has appeared in the northeast. I’m afraid Mo-zongshi is right. The Gate of Life and Death is about to open.”

Ch. 291 [Sisheng Peak] The End of Two Generations

Taxian-Jun stood at a height of tens of thousands of people in the sky. His black robe fluttered like ink.

He narrowed his eyes, his sleeves flapping wildly. The spiritual power in his palm was like a dragon swallowing the sun, tearing apart the cold mist and the invisible time and space.

“Boom!”

Suddenly a thunderous sound echoed out as the bolt of lightning shattered the sky in an instant!

After a few breaths of dead silence, the heavenly lake’s water crazily poured, the snow in Mount Kunlun angrily surged, the yellow clouds rolled up the ground, and a cold wind blew all over the sky… Once, when Chu Wanning came to this world, he only tore apart a small mark.

Later on, Shi Mei spent a lot of effort to repair that trace and also came to this world.

But those two space and time cracks were only minor injuries. They would very soon be restored to their original state by the power of grandmist. Even later, on top of the Mount Jiao, Xu Shuanglin had used the five godly weapons to open up a Great Heavenly Rift.

That would only temporarily break the barrier between them.

But this time, the cracks that Mo Ran had personally torn open were completely different from the previous ones. The sky was suddenly

suffused with a scarlet color. At the same time, two suns and two moons rose up, emitting a weak glow as they hung high above the dome.

From the south of the river to the north of the desert, from the tip of the sea to the horizon. For a moment, almost everyone stopped what they were doing, raising their heads to look at this bizarre and terrifying constellation.

Wuchang Town. His mother hugged him tightly. The mother kissed his face and whispered, “Stop crying, stop crying. Baby is good. Mother is here. Mother is here.”

Yang Zhou city. An old woman with a head full of hair was leaning on her walking stick with a hunched body and a hoarse voice, “This… Why were there two moons and two suns in the sky… Heavens, oh heavens, just what exactly is happening…”

Flying Flower Island. Third Madam Sun raised her thick eyebrows and stood on the shore with her hands on her hips. She sternly ordered everyone to turn off the lights and hide inside the house. She also ordered the servants to bring all the homeless people from the island to the mansion.

She stared at the vision in the sky, her eyes ablaze.

Not to mention the great sects like Guyue’ye, Fire Phoenix Pavilion, and Wu Sang Temple, regardless of whether they were willing to accept it or not, almost all cultivators clearly understood one thing at this moment:

The Gates of Life and Death had truly opened.

Mo Ran’s was high up in the wind, and his eyes were filled with a bloody aura. His eyes flashed with an excited and crazy light.

He was urged by Shi Mingjing back and forth several times. He was dead, then brought to life, and died again and was alive again. The memories were even more fragmented, and there was only a ray of consciousness in the body supporting him.

So he was all crazy, even more unreasonable than before.

Destroying the heavens and destroying the earth.

Very quickly, half of the surrounding mountains and rivers were covered by the black cloud. Taxian-Jun raised his head and laughed heartily — but why was he laughing?

He did not know, nor did he want to know.

His mind was in a mess, and inside his chest, there was only the unceasing order given by Shi Mei.

He narrowed his eyes and looked at the layer of sparkling and translucent barrier underneath the rolling black clouds. His lips formed a sneer, then he raised his hand and said in a low voice: “Bu’gui.”

Bu’gui appeared.

Taxian-Jun’s fingertip brushed against the blade of the saber, one by one, until it shone.

Then, he ruthlessly hacked at the two barriers that blocked the world of mortals.

It was dead silent for a moment.

Suddenly, the hinterland rumbled, and the Myriad Manifestation Steps appeared.

The Space-Time Gate of Life and Death was finally opened, broken, and shattered by him.

In an instant, the mountains and rivers changed color.

His ferocious and tyrannical spiritual energy and the aura of the Immortal Martial Spirit caused this rift to expand so thoroughly that it could not be sealed within the next hundred years!

The task was completed.

Taxian-Jun stood at the crack in the sky. He squinted his eyes for a moment and then turned around to look at the mortal world. He paused for a moment, then turned around and walked into the world that truly belonged to him…

When the wind stopped whistling in his ears, he raised his eyes.

Before his eyes was a vast expanse of white. He once again returned to the world where he claimed the title of emperor. He returned to his previous life, to the Taxue Palace on Mount Kunlun.

“Your Majesty.”

“Welcome back, your Imperial Majesty.”

Standing on the hazel plains, he saw large numbers of people rushing toward him, kneeling like tides on the snow, kowtowing and kowtowing to him.

Taxian-Jun didn't say anything as his hawk-like eyes stared at the cultivators in front of him. Each and every one of them was covered in a black cloak.

He couldn't see the end of these people. They stretched all the way to the foot of the mountain.

The leader was a shaky old man, the wind blew his white hair, he was Liu-gonggong, who had served him for many years.

The year Taxian-Jun died, Elder Liu was sent back to his hometown along with the other palace maids. He originally thought that everything would end here, but not long after, a Medical Sect Saint Hand called Hua Binan appeared out of nowhere, baring his fangs and making Taxian-Jun's corpse into a living corpse to control it.

However, this living corpse still retained a certain level of emotions and willpower. He was dissatisfied with the mute servant that Hua Binan had sent to serve him. He didn't give up until Hua Binan had found the people from Wushan Palace back.

Later on, for reasons unknown to Old Liu, Hua Binan disappeared from this world, leaving only the Emperor to fend for himself in this world.

As time passed, even the most foolish of people could tell that the Emperor had always been controlled and Old Liu was no exception. But what could an old man like him, with half his neck buried in dirt, do?

He had no relatives or family, and his friends had all died long ago.

Because of this trust, Liu-gonggong's eyes were filled with both joy and worry the next time he saw him. In the end, he looked more real than the others.

Taxian-Jun moved his lips: “Old Liu.”

“Your Majesty. His Majesty is finally back,” Elder Liu said, kowtowing to the king.

“… Do you know?” When Taxian-Jun said these words, he didn’t even realize that he looked like a kid who was in a hurry to share the good news with his elders. “I’ve met him again.”

Liu-gonggong was stunned, “… Chu-zongshi?”

“Yes, I’ve seen it many times. My spirit core has also been restored. When the important matter is completed, I can —”

When in the elderly man’s middy eyes he caught a glimpse of his excited face, Taxian-Jun suddenly stopped talking and looked around in embarrassment at the kneeling crowd.

Fortunately, no one dared to laugh at him.

He pursed his lips, making himself cold and dignified once more. With a brush of his sleeve, he said, “Enough. Don’t kneel. Everyone, get up and follow me back to the Wushan Palace.”

Along the way back to Shu, the place was lifeless and empty.

There were not many living people left in this world, and he had long since gotten used to it. It was just that after staying in another world for a while and seeing the bustle of people walking back and forth, he would still feel a little lonely when he returned to this hell of people.

That night, he opened an aged pot of Pear Blossom White Flower and drank alone in the empty Wushan Palace.

Ever since he obtained Mo-zongshi's spirit core, his body had recovered significantly, allowing him to do what many living people were able to do. For example, drinking wine or eating food. However, no matter how much he repaired it, the corpse was still a corpse. The taste that he could taste with his tongue was not even 30% of what it was when he was alive.

Still, he was satisfied.

After three rounds of drinking, he was slightly drunk. He rested his forehead on the soft couch as he thought back to the past, bored out of his mind. These memories were not pleasant at all. It was always disconsolate to drink.

He hadn't wanted to think about it before, but now he wasn't afraid.

The two mortal worlds had already been cleared. No matter how unhappy they were, their past would soon change. He narrowed his eyes and twirled his fingers around the red tassels, muttering, "Chu Wanning…"

He stood up and headed to the long-sealed Red Lotus Pavilion. When he arrived at the door, he saw Liu Jing walking out. Upon seeing each other, both of them were stunned.

"Your Majesty."

"What are you doing here?"

As he spoke, his gaze fell onto the basket of things like a feather duster and a broom that Liu-gonggong was carrying.

"Cleaning up?"

Elder Liu sighed. “That’s right. I don’t know when His Majesty will come again. I’m afraid that the item will rot from not using it for a long time. That’s why I have to tidy it up every day.” Elder Liu paused. “This place still looks the same as before. Your Majesty, please enter.”

Taxian-Jun suddenly didn’t know what to say.

He walked alone to the lotus pond. The pond was filled with spirit energy, so the flowers stayed there. He tilted his head and listened to them for a while, then slowly recalled the afternoon when he was also on the bridge. The summer was so scorching that it made one’s head spin, and he suddenly became interested. He pulled Chu Wanning along and kissed the man on the forehead.

At that time, aside from sex, they didn’t seem to have much warmth towards each other. This sudden kiss with a slight hint of intimacy made Chu Wanning a little surprised.

The cicadas on the trees chirped a few times, but the frogs in the pond didn’t show any signs of weakness.

He looked at the slightly widened phoenix eyes and found them even more interesting. He said, “Since there’s nothing to do, why don’t we play a game?”

Before Chu Wanning could refuse, he placed his finger on his lips, “Shh. Let me finish.”

“…”

“Let’s make a bet. When I count to ten, if the frogs in the yard scream, you will lose. You have to bring a pot of sour plum soup for me. If the cicadas

on the tree chirp first, then even if I lose, I… I'll take you down the mountain to relax."

Going down the mountain was indeed a huge temptation. At first, Chu Wanning didn't want to bother with him, but as time went by, Taxian-Jun has already clearly grasped his softness, and the conditions he put forward made it impossible for him to refuse.

The handsome man smiled. "Then, shall we begin?"

"One, two, three…"

Both of them listened to the croaking of the frogs or the chirping of the cicadas, but the Emperor's luck was probably poor. He began to count, and the cicadas became increasingly lively, while the frogs lazily stopped, as if they were about to give up.

"Eight, nine…" The more he counted, the more it dragged. It was too obvious that he would be a scoundrel if he dragged things to the end. Chu Wanning turned around and looked at him coldly.

Taxian-Jun was quite shameless. After being stared at like this, he actually stopped at the ninth level and stopped counting. Instead, he asked Chu Wanning, "Do you think this frog is dead?"

"…"

"Otherwise, why didn't it make a sound?"

"…"

"Wait a moment, I'll see if it's still alive. Otherwise, it won't be fair." He picked up a pebble from the ground and threw it at the lively green frog.

“Ten!”

“Croak!”

Shocked, the frog jumped into the pond, causing ripples and the sound of the frog to float away. Taxian-Jun laughed out loud as he wiped off the dirt on his fingers and said to Chu Wanning, “You’ve lost. The first one was the frog.”

Chu Wanning was about to leave when his sleeves were pulled back. Having gotten a bargain, Taxian-Jun was in a good mood. He ignored the anger of the other party and said with a smile, “The sour plum soup requires ice, especially the kind that requires ice.”

“Do you still have any shame?” Chu Wanning said while gritting his teeth.

“That thing can’t relieve the heat, so what’s the use of it?” Then, he poked him on the forehead and said, “Go on, remember to put less sugar in.”

It was probably because his mood that day was really good. Under the scorching sun, he drank a pot of ice-cold plum candy, which was so sweet that even the croaking of the frogs sounded pleasant to the ear.

In the evening, he suddenly said to Chu Wanning, “Soon, it will be three years.”

“What?”

Seeing his reaction, the young Emperor’s face showed slight displeasure. “Since I’m called Emperor. I’m the emperor. It’s been almost three years.”

As he spoke, he tried his best to find even the slightest ripple in Chu Wanning’s eyes. Unfortunately, the result was quite frustrating. He

wrinkled his nose, feeling somewhat gloomy and unwilling. After pondering for a moment, he suddenly said, “You have followed me for three years.”

“…”

“Since this pot of Ice Plum Soup tastes pretty good, let me take you for a walk down the mountain. But you can’t go too far. Only the Wuchang town.”

The carriage was ready, the bamboo curtain, cool pillow, the tea cup and folding fan were ready.

Standing in front of the main entrance of the mountain of corpses, which had been rebuilt three times, Taxian-Jun touched the emerald ring on his white horse’s forehead. He turned his face to Chu Wanning and asked, “Does it look familiar? This is the carriage that you liked to sit in when you were travelling in the past. It’s fine to leave it here, it’s not something that can’t be thrown away.”

Chu Wanning didn’t show any joy, but he stepped on the branch like before and pushed aside the bamboo curtain to enter the cabin.

The servant was dumbstruck as he turned his head to look at the Emperor Taxian-Jun under the sunset in fear.

Regardless of the reason, it was normal for him to kill innocents. He really did not know what kind of courage Chu-zongshi had to actually act so disrespectfully and dare to be a step ahead of His Majesty.

However, the servants did not expect that Taxian-Jun didn’t seem to mind. He even squinted his eyes and smiled with interest: “Look, this man thinks he’s still elder Yuheng.”

Just as he was about to follow them into the carriage, he heard a woman's gentle voice coming from behind him.

The woman said softly, "A-Ran."

Ch. 292 [Sisheng Peak] The Heart Is Like the Sea

Taxian-Jun turned his head and saw Song Qiutong dressed in gorgeous clothes, looking very beautiful and charming. She was leading her maid servants towards them.

He stretched out his hand to lift the curtain and stopped. Without batting an eyelid, he closed the bamboo curtain and asked, “What’s wrong?”

“Since I have nothing better to do, I might as well take a walk and eat.” Song Qiutong bowed slightly, her gaze soft as she looked at the carriage. “Is A-Ran going out?”

“Going to the night market of the Wuchang Town.”

She smiled, submissively but affectionately: “It’s such a short way to ride in a carriage. You’re not alone, are you?”

His patience with her was not bad, so he smiled and said, “Not alone.”

Song Qiutong gaze roamed about, her gaze falling upon the yellow rosewood pedals. The girl’s thoughts were meticulous, she only needed a single turn to have the answer. Her expression was stiff at first, but then she revealed a happy look: “Ah, could it be that it’s little sister consort Chu?”

“…”

One could almost imagine the expression on Chu Wanning’s face when he heard the address, “Mmm. It's him.”

The expression on the woman's face became increasingly bright and gorgeous. It was to the extent that even the clouds in the sky seemed to be overshadowed. "This is great. We have stayed in the palace for three years yet we had only seen consort Chu on the day of the wedding, and she was still wearing her veil. What kind of good day is it today, to think that we would meet each other."

She smiled and said, "Do you wish to invite us two sisters to meet?"

Taxian-Jun shook his head: "He has an aloof personality, he doesn't feel comfortable seeing strangers. Still a mute. Don't bother."

Although Song Qiutong had always listened to Mo Ran's words, her heart was itching. What's more, she could be said to have accumulated resentment towards consort Chu for a long time, ever since the day of their marriage she was abandoned by her husband for no reason.

She was humiliated. Afterwards, she heard many gossip from the palace maids, saying that the Emperor's wedding night was left in consort Chu's room until almost dusk the next day before he came out.

"He didn't stop the whole night! That sound really took a person's life."

"I heard from the people on duty that they counted with their fingers at least seven or eight times. His Majesty is too capable."

There were even more court ladies who giggled. "Isn't the one who can do it esteemed Imperial Consort? Seven or eight times in a night. I'm afraid the little prince will be here very soon."

However, what made Song Qiutong most embarrassed were the whispers such as, "The empress is so beautiful, I didn't expect her to lose his favor

on their wedding night." "This isn't etiquette at all. His Majesty really doesn't give face to the empress!"

She felt as if Imperial Consort Chu had slapped her face. The burning pain on her face has not abated in the past three years.

In the end, even her servant girl had a grudge in her heart as she gritted her teeth and ruthlessly complained, "I wonder which mountain's fox cultivated its quintessence to the point where His Majesty is confused and disoriented."

She then advised her, "Empress, don't be too sad. Although His Majesty sleeps with her almost every night, she is not pregnant. Her health is probably not too good, and she will not have a child for the rest of her life. His Majesty was just playing with her. Sooner or later, he will get tired of it."

Song Qiutong forced a smile. How could she have the face to say some words?

He had been extremely careful not to allow her to become pregnant in the few pleasures he had had with her. The only time he had vented his anger on her was not long ago. After he got drunk, he had a huge argument with consort Chu and came to visit her in the middle of the night.

She had been fast asleep by then, and when the curtain was suddenly lifted, she was met with a pair of scarlet eyes that had lost all sense of reason. She didn't even have time to react before he rolled her over and ripped her out of her clothes. In the midst of his reckless and crazy torment, her hair was gripped in a tight bun, and she heard him gasp in her

ear: “Who are you writing to secretly behind my back? You care so much about him?”

When the rain was heavy, she was so agitated that her entire body went soft. However, she heard him muttering something behind her, “You can’t see anyone… you can’t go anywhere. You can only be my consort Chu… No matter how unwilling you are…”

Song Qiutong recovered from her shameful memories. She arranged her expression and smiled with her beautiful eyes. “Although Your Majesty doesn’t mind the etiquette, she is still a sister. I always wanted to meet her and give her some gifts.”

Taxian-Jun didn’t seem to want to let go of the bamboo curtain. “He has everything. There's nothing lacking.”

Since things had come to this point, Song Qiutong had no other choice. She could only speak warmly to the emperor before watching him board the carriage and walk away with the vixen.

Deep within the bamboo curtain, atop the soft seats, Taxian-Jun had endured the laughter until his lower abdomen hurt. He continued to speak with a serious tone, “As an Emperor, I am too free to be pampered by you. I’m afraid that’s inappropriate.”

“…”

Chu Wanning’s face was gloomy as he looked at the window, not saying a word.

The golden rays of the sun shone through the thin curtains, casting layers of light and shadow across his thin, transparent face. Taxian-Jun stared at it

for a moment, then leaned over and laid down on his lap.

Chu Wanning stiffened his spine, not looking at him, but asking, “Aren’t you hot?”

“My beloved concubine’s voice is so cold, it can cool me down in the summer.”

“…” Chu Wanning finally lowered his head and looked at him; his gaze was colder than his voice.

He truly felt angry. No man would be willing to be a concubine to another man. Song Qiutong’s call of “little sister consort Chu” made him feel like he was being choked. Even his eyes were red because of shame.

At the beginning, Taxian-Jun, the reason why he had given him the title, was to let him have a taste of what it was like to be inferior to a woman. Song Qiutong was his wife, and he, the exalted Beidou Immortal, had been reduced to being a concubine by a junior.

“Are you angry?”

“…”

“It’s not like I let her see you, what are you feeling wronged about?”

Taxian-Jun wanted to tease this man, but dusk came and the last rays of the setting sun shone through the bamboo curtains, illuminating Chu Wanning’s face. Taxian-Jun realized how cold and distant those eyes were, so he moved his lips but didn’t say anything in the end.

He suddenly felt very bored.

Neither of them spoke again.

He came to the Wuchang Town and bought a lot of things. Sugar painting, flower cake, candied fruits, lanterns, he had bought everything he could buy and loaded himself into a carriage. However, Chu Wanning only looked at the lively scene outside the bamboo curtain, ignoring the dazzling scene behind the curtain.

Chu Wanning was not happy, so he couldn't help but feel a little irritated.

"Forget it, I'm not going back tonight." He suddenly said, "We'll live in the town."

The coachman found an inn and went in with Chu Wanning, who had put on his cloak and hat.

The waiter was yawning, seeing the guest's high spirits, he yawned and asked with a smile, "Guest, do you live here?"

"I would like a good room."

Although Chu Wanning's face was hidden under his hood, the waiter still looked at him curiously as he was obviously a man.

Chu Wanning said, "… Two rooms."

After hearing what he said, Taxian-Jun could not help but feel angry. "What is your relationship with me? Is there a need to open two rooms to deceive people?"

If the waiter's gaze from before was still filled with suspicion, at this moment, he suddenly came to a realization.

Taxian-Jun was quite satisfied with the waiter's gaze. He even felt some viciousness as he consoled him. After opening the door, he dragged Chu Wanning up by the arm. Before he even closed the door, he kissed him, his lips full of urgent and intense words.

Outside the window, the lights were still on, but none of them had anything to do with it. He pressed Chu Wanning onto the bed, and amidst the creaking sounds, he heard a soft sigh.

"Mo Ran, what's the point of doing this?"

"…"

"What's the point of doing this to us?"

The words were so sharp that even after thinking about it for so long, his heart still ached.

Taxian-Jun opened his eyes.

He was still standing in the Red Lotus Pavilion. Those memories were all gone.

But for some reason, there seemed to be an image flashing before his eyes, and he seemed to hear the sound of the pouring rain. He seemed to be a ghost of the dark night, peeking through the vine-striped windows of the inn.

He saw the same house, the same two people, but the rain outside the window was different, it was similar to the atmosphere of love in the bed.

He saw himself and Chu Wanning entwined together on the bed. The room was very dark, but he was sure that he could see Chu Wanning's face —

misty desire, slightly closed eyes, entwined with his own, ashamed and passionate.

In this vision, he stared at the man beneath him with deep affection, pleading and determined, “Tonight, I just want to make you feel good.”

He lowered his head and kissed the fragile part of Chu Wanning’s body. As if he had heard the man’s breathing, Chu Wanning’s fingers dug into his black hair, “Ah…”

Taxian-Jun suddenly felt as if his skull was about to split open as he held onto his forehead.

These two memories intertwined and bit each other in an attempt to gain the upper hand. Which segment was real? Which part was a nightmare? He did not know, and did not dare to think further.

With great difficulty, he calmed his heart and then rushed away, leaving the Red Lotus Pavilion.

He arrived at the Sword Discourse Arena and stood in front of the white jade railings, gazing at the distant shadows of the mountains. His chest rose and fell slightly. What was that alluring memory?

Could it be that this was a life that Mo Ran of another world had experienced…

He could not help but think back to Chu Wanning’s moist and gentle eyes. He raised his neck and panted on the couch.

Taxian-Jun suddenly tightened his grip on the fence.

Could it be that Chu Wanning was willing to go to bed with that lecher Mo-zongshi?

He didn’t know why, but even though the two of them were the same person, Taxian-Jun’s anger suddenly flared up, causing his eyes to turn bloodshot.

If this really was another memory of his own, then he suddenly felt incomparably resentful and unwilling.

Why? Why?

After he was resurrected by Hua Binan, he returned to this world as a walking corpse. What was left for him was the Wushan Hall that was riddled with wounds and a disgusting mess.

What did he see when he ran to the Red Lotus Pavilion in a panic? It was a house that had been devoid of any spiritual power, a flower that had fallen to the ground, and an empty house.

And the lotus pond where the deceased no longer existed.

He was dragged out of hell by Hua Binan, but Chu Wanning's body had turned into dust, and there was nothing left to be found.

He remembered walking slowly to the lotus pond, looking down at it expressionlessly for a moment, then bending over it, he dipped his finger into it and scooped up the water. The cold pond was deep and bone-chilling cold.

He shivered involuntarily. Water trickled through his fingers, and he slumped to the ground.

Thus, what was left for him after returning to his world?

Every day he hated living in this world more and more, but he wasn't in control of himself, and he had to obey Hua Binan's orders.

Later on, Hua Binan found a crack in the Gate of Life and Death but refused to tell him who left it there. That guy happily went to another mortal world and left him here to work hard. However, the only thing he was happy about was that in order to let him do things with a plan in his heart, Hua Binan would occasionally find a way to send him some news.

Thus, he found out that he still had a portion of his spirit souls that were reborn in that era. He found out about the news of Shi Mei, Xue Meng, Ye Wangxi, and the others who had died long ago.

He had also received news of Chu Wanning.

The letters Hua Binan sent him were always short, and he treasured words like gold. He also hated Hua Binan's handwriting. The brush tip was sharp like a scorpion's pincer.

However, these letters had become his biggest hope for the living dead, as if they were the breath of someone who had drowned in the depths of the ocean. He kept every letter, and when there was no new one, he reread the words that made him sick to death a few hundred times.

He thought he must be crazy.

At night, when the servants were having dinner, he loved the liveliness. Thus, like always since his rebirth, he ordered everyone to gather in front of the palace. He lolled in the soft seat, watching them eat, and asked them how they felt from time to time.

Taxian-Jun usually didn't like to read books, but in the past few years, he didn't have anyone by his side. There was nowhere for him to spend the night, so he could only flip through the bamboo slips to amuse himself. Reading and reading, thinking of a few words of pleasure.

For example, if he wanted someone to eat a fried guoba, he would say, "Here, have a taste of thunder for this one." He would want someone to chew on a spinach, and he would say, "You try the red-lipped green parrot in the bowl."

It was hard to make an illiterate read a book, and if the illiterate still enjoyed it, there was only one thing to be said: there was no other pleasure in his life.

At the feast, someone came to report, "Your Majesty, senior Sacred Hand has returned as well."

"Alone?"

"He brought the Tianyin Pavilion's master Mu with him. They said that they would first arrange for the sacrifice and then come back to meet with His Majesty."

Taxian-Jun, holding the purple grapes in his hand, said indifferently, "Then let them take their time. This Venerable One is happy."

The person added: "In addition, senior Sacred Hand said he has something to tell His Majesty."

"What?"

"You have to be careful in the near future. The world is chaotic, so 'he' will definitely come."

“…” After a while, he smiled and said, “I understand. I understand.”

Of course he knew he would come.

The two worlds crossed each other, millions of victims fled, Mo-zongshi lost his life, and the Sisheng Peak fell. Chu Wanning was the same as him, he would probably come looking for him with a death wish.

Taxian-Jun didn’t fear him. In fact, he even had some hidden expectations.

It was late in the night, and the palace was lit up by twinkling candles. There were 9,999 lampstands in the Wushan Palace alone, lighting up the darkness and making it an extremely bright day.

Taxian-Jun called Liu-gonggong over and said, “Go teach them to extinguish half of their candles.”

The lights were too bright, so he lowered his guard for fear that Chu Wanning would find too difficult to sneak in.

Liu-gong did as he was told. He stood in his original spot and waited for Liu-gong to come over and tell him, “Your Majesty, half of the fire has gone out.”

He looked at the dim yellow light in the courtyard and was still very dissatisfied. After thinking for a moment, he said, “I might as well extinguish it all.”

Liu-gong: “…”

The candles in the Wushan Palace were extinguished one by one, but the heart of Taxian-Jun began to light up bit by bit. He had a feeling that Chu Wanning was about to arrive. That person was probably dressed in white,

with a face full of resentment. His words were filled with the morals of the world, and he probably wanted to avenge Mo-zongshi.

He felt excited just thinking about it. He ran the tip of his tongue over his white teeth and lips. He only left the last bronze lamp in the depths of Wushan Palace, which was the fire he left for the despairing moth, telling him that he was here, waiting for him trush to death.

Late at night, the rain began to fall outside the window.

Taxian-Jun put on the most solemn golden silk robe he had ever seen. He tidied up the bed, made a soft bed and pillow, and then walked around the room. He still felt that there was something missing, and finally ordered someone to bring a jar of aged white pear blossoms.

The man, warm and well-dressed, was standing by the window, watching the rain come down. From the beginning to the end, he had not even summoned Bu'gui.

However, he was deceiving himself as well. While guarding the bed with the wine, he viciously thought to himself, "Hmph, when Chu Wanning comes, I'll let him know that the blade is ruthless!"

Ch. 293 [Sisheng Peak] Emperor's Long Door Resentment

But in the middle of the night, Chu Wanning had yet to arrive.

At first, Taxian-Jun felt a sense of unease, then it turned gloomy, and then it became a worry.

As he paced back and forth, he couldn't help but to think, what was going on with Chu Wanning?

Whether it was to ask for the truth or to try to stop him, he should come to the Wushan Palace to find him after the Gate of Life and Death had been teared open. Based on his personality, even if he was missing an arm or a leg, he would still come and find trouble with him.

Why not?

Sick? — Impossible. That guy will come if he's sick.

He did not know? — Perhaps he did not know before, but when the world changed color after opening up the two realms, how could he not know?

Then…

Suddenly, he stopped. The black shadow looked extremely creepy and eerie under the weak light of the candle. It was extremely terrifying.

Was he dead?

Before he could think about this further, his fingernails had already sunk into his palms. Taxian-Jun clenched his teeth. The muscles all over his body were trembling.

With eight years of company at the Wushan Palace, two years of mutual dependence on the bones. He spent most of his life with Chu Wanning. Later on, when he returned to the world and saw that there was not even a trace of Chu Wanning’s ashes left, he became even more frenzied.

He could accept the fact that Shi Mei had passed away. He could only do his best to revive him.

However, he could not accept Chu Wanning’s death.

The night was even darker, and the only candle he had left was nearly burnt out. The lanterns and flowers were like pools of water, and his shizun had yet to come.

The fear in his heart grew deeper and deeper, like ink stains on a piece of paper that was constantly smeared with blood. He circled back and forth like a vulture, back and forth.

In the end, he sat on the soft couch like a cripple.

But at that moment, he heard a faint, inaudible sound from the roof.

In an instant, the light and heat seemed to have returned to his body. His eyes were shockingly bright, and they were also filled with hatred.

if you have him a mirror at this point he would realize his expression and musical performance were more or less the same as Chen A'Jiao, that sort of waiting for someone who wouldn't come, the fury of a woman scorned.[175]

He gnashed his teeth. Without waiting for the opponent to make a move first, he kicked open the door of the hall and swept up the roof amidst the torrential downpour.

“Chu Wanning!”

Crazy as a madman.

“He’s dead. Why are you so depressed? After he dies, do you not even want to care about the world you think about?”

Before he could see what was happening, he had already hacked down with his saber. Three to four blows rang through the rain, the sound of metal weapons clashing against each other.

“Didn’t you say to put the life of all living beings before yours?! It was only now when it's too late that you came to fight against this Venerable one. What Yuheng Elder and Beidou Immortal. You are just like the rest of us!”

The other party began to speak, his voice muffled by the torrential rain, “What nonsense…”

Taxian-Jun narrowed his eyes.

He immediately recognized that the voice was not Chu Wanning’s, which made his anger clear. When the other party slashed at him again, his eyes turned cold, and his hand shot out like a blade.

He only heard a “Zheng” sound. From start to finish, the opponent’s weapon had never shone with its godly brilliance. Under the brutal offensive, it broke into two pieces and clanged against the roof tiles.

“… Whose bastard is this?” After recognizing the wrong person, Taxian-Jun became even more furious, “You don’t even have a decent weapon, and you still dare to assassinate this Venerable One.”

With a wave of his hand, Bu'gui pointed at the top of that person's head. With a few cold words, he said, "Raise your face."

"…"

The man looked up slowly.

The sudden clap of thunder split the air, lighting up his pale face.

Taxian-Jun wrinkled his nose, his expression extremely dangerous. "It's you again?"

Xue Meng stood up, his hands trembling slightly. Taxian-Jun's gaze followed his gaze and saw the two pieces of Longcheng's broken blade shining brightly on the wet roof. He slowly came to an understanding.

He narrowed his eyes and looked at the young man who was drenched through his eyelashes.

"Looks like I shouldn't say 'again'." Taxian-Jun said in a dense voice, "And it should be said that… It's you, my good brother."

Thunder rumbled, and the eardrums seemed as if they were about to be crushed.

Xue Meng closed his eyes.

"This is the first time you've exchanged blows with me. You are truly a young, naive man, much cuter than you ever were before."

"… Give me back…" Xue Meng's voice was choked with sobs the moment he opened his mouth to speak, but he still said, "Return my parents' lives."

"You have already told this to this Venerable One in your previous life."

He suddenly opened his eyes, furious and pained at the same time. “You have to pay back my brother’s life!”

This time, Taxian-Jun didn’t say anything. After a while, he laughed coldly, “It’s good to be a Grandmaster. Just one or two of them and they’re all thinking about him.”

“…”

“But did he ever tell you that he was my reincarnation? He remembers all the sins and hatreds of his previous life.” His eyes were cold and sharp. “He’s a liar!”

Xue Meng and Taxian-Jun stood facing each other on the roof like two black horned beasts.

The more he spoke, the more indignant he became, so his expression became even more twisted, “That bastard lied to the peace and stability of the world, lied to his brothers and sisters, lied to his friends and family. He lied about Mo-zongshi’s good reputation — he deserves to die. How is he different from this Venerable One?”

Xue Meng gritted his teeth and said, “You’re not the same at all.”

“Ha! Laughable!”

The rain flowed down through the cracks in the tiles and formed a torrent of water beneath their feet. “What’s different? What’s different? How clean do you think he is? Even if you soak in the rain for a hundred years, you still won’t be able to wash off his filth!”

Xue Meng’s long eyelashes were drenched by the rain. “He and you are two different people!”

“Fuck you and your mother.” Taxian-Jun casually said in an incomparably vicious manner, “Just pretend to be blind.”

Madam Wang had just passed away. Hearing these words, it was naturally extremely ear-piercing. Xue Meng angrily shouted as he ignited the flame in his palm, sending a magical curse flying towards the Emperor.

Ten years from now, Xue Meng would not even be a match for Taxian-Jun, let alone this little bastard in front of him.

The Spiritual Flames hadn’t even touched his hair yet. Instead, he had raised his hand and grabbed Xue Meng’s arm that hadn’t been pulled back in time. His pair of black and purple eyes slowly looked down.

“The two people below the corner of the roof, immediately scram out for This Venerable one. If you do not move, this Venerable One will crush the young bird’s claws.”

The two brothers, Mei Hanxue, climbed up to the corner of the roof while one of them carried the guqin and the other held the sword.

Taxian-Jun did not seem surprised as he glanced at the two of them and sneered: “Your lives are truly interesting. No matter which mortal world, they would unconditionally stand together with Xue Meng.”

The big brother didn’t say anything, but his younger brother, Mei Hanxue, smiled. “What else? Does His Majesty think that everyone is like you, to repay kindness with hatred, be resentful and cold-blooded?”

These words somewhat touched Taxian-Jun’s sore spot. Chu Wanning’s face, Xue Zhengyong’s face and Wang Chuqing’s face flashed past him one by one.

To repay kindness with hatred… Cold-blooded love…

He was silent for a moment before he squeezed out a trace of cold ridicule from the heavy rain. “The two of you are really not afraid of death.”

The veins on his arm bulged as he grabbed Xue Meng’s hair and continued, “Xue Meng is at least a junior brother that Immortal Elder Beidou protected with all his might. You two have nothing to do with me, so I won’t be afraid to chop you both into pieces.”

At the mention of Chu Wanning, Xue Meng became even angrier. “You still have the face to talk about Shizun? You beast! Beast!”

“Why don’t I dare to mention him?”

As he spoke, he lifted Xue Meng up with one hand and stared at Xue Meng’s drenched face.

He suddenly thought of the scattered memories that belonged to Mo-zongshi. He thought of the moonlight on Flying Flower Island, the night rain in the Wuchang Town, and even the mist in the Miaoyin Springs… Suddenly, jealousy bloomed like wild grass.

He coldly said, “Tell me, why can’t I mention him?”

“…”

“Who is he to me? Didn’t your honest brother tell you?”

Xue Meng was stunned at first, then his eyes abruptly widened. “What… what nonsense are you talking about…”

“You’ve been feeling it, haven’t you?” Taxian-Jun stared into his eyes, as if he was trying to force his prey into a corner. “From your interactions with them to from the idle chatter of the bystanders.”

At first, Xue Meng was stiff, but soon after, he began to tremble violently.

His trembling caused Taxian-Jun to be extremely excited.

Yes, that’s it. He had dirtied Chu Wanning and tainted Chu Wanning. Wasn’t Mo-zongshi being cautious and respectful when he saw the ghost, afraid that his relationship with Chu Wanning would be made public?

He just couldn’t let that hypocrite have his way.

“What? You still don’t know?”

“No… No, no, no, don’t say it.”

“That means you know?”

Xue Meng was trembling and his scalp went numb. “Don’t say it!”

Taxian-Jun began to laugh loudly, his gaze filled with savagery and madness. “It seems like you know what’s at the back of your mind.”

“Mo Ran —!”

“Chu Wanning belongs to this bed.”

Suddenly, he became absent-minded, as if the sound of the torrential rain had died down.

Therefore, he began to peck at the young man’s heart even more with baring his fangs and brandishing his claws. He said with a cold smile, “In

this lifetime, and in the previous life, your Shizun had been lying on the bed and being done by me. The Wind Cliff Inn in the Wuchang Town, the Miaoyin Springs at the Sisheng Peak, and the rooms in the Peach Blossom Villa.

Xue Meng's entire body had turned into ice, and his eyes were filled with black ash.

"Right." Suddenly recalling another detail that belonged to Mo-zongshi, his eyes flashed with a cold and venomous luster. His thin lips parted as he said, "The elder brother that you protected has done so in front of you."

"…"

"Before you went up Mount Jiao, you found him in Chu Wanning's room. At that time, you even reached out your hand and touched Chu Wanning's forehead, asking if he had a fever."

Xue Meng's face became paler and paler.

Taxian-Jun smiled, "Can you imagine why Chu Wanning's face was flushed and his eyes rippled?"

"Stop it!"

Angry shouts would naturally not be useful, but it would only make Taxian-Jun more cruel: "Because in the area between the curtain and you, under the bedding. That good brother of yours is playing with your Shizun right then."

Xue Meng's face was white, red, and blue. He turned his head back and forth several times, and he actually couldn't bear it any longer. He started vomiting in spasms, and goosebumps appeared all over his body.

The human demon was extremely satisfied with his reaction. He laughed out loud as his eyes shone with a fervent light, “What, do you think your brother is different from this one? He did all this unruly stuff, but he just didn’t tell you. How much do you think he —”

“Boom!” A loud explosive sound interrupted his words.

Taxian-Jun suddenly turned around, only to see that in the west, the Heaven-Piercing Tower was ablaze with countless monsters that turned into golden beams of light and flew into the sky, appearing amidst the torrential storm.

“… What’s going on?”

Just as he said that, he heard the clanging of a zither in the distance, like the cries of phoenixes, the music of immortals, together with the zither music, caused all the monsters to transform into their human forms, as if they were moved by the zither music, and pounced towards a certain direction on the ground, the most valiant and fearless wood type monster.

In an instant, his pupils contracted as he muttered, “Jiuge…?”

He did not care about Xue Meng, and did not even have the leisure to look at Xue Meng again.

In front of Heaven-Piercing Tower, there was already a sea of fire. There were countless Zhenlong chess pieces with considerable cultivation that were currently fighting against a group of demons. As for the two halves of the battle, they were separated into two men who were also wearing snow-white robes.

One of them was Hua Binan, who was standing with his hands behind his back.

The other was a murderous look in Chu Wanning's eyes.

Seeing Yuheng flying in the middle of the sea of fire, Taxian-Jun relaxed his heart – Chu Wanning had finally arrived. And then he got angry — because even though Chu Wanning came, he didn't come to find him first. Instead, he went straight to Hua Binan.

It was all in vain for him to wait so long for him!

"What are you doing over there?" Hua Binan's spiritual energy was naturally weak. At this moment, he relied on those Zhenlong chess pieces to fight against Chu Wanning. He squinted his eyes at Taxian-Jun, clenched his teeth and said, "Why aren't you coming to help me?"

Taxian-Jun's head hurt, but he immediately agreed.

He jumped down from the sky and stood in front of Hua Binan. A ghostly light flashed in his hand and he held Bu'gui tightly in his palm.

"You go first. This place will be blocked by me."

Hua Binan was beaten into a sorry state by Chu Wanning, so he had no way to escape. Seeing that Taxian-Jun had made his move, he finally heaved a sigh of relief.

"Be careful. Lock this man up after the fight. Don't let him spoil our business again."

With that, the shadow disappeared into the night.

Taxian-Jun turned his head, “Chu Wanning, I knew that you wouldn’t just stand by and watch. However, I never would have thought that you would know how to find him first and make a move on him.”

“…”

Chu Wanning’s face was pale, and the emotions in his eyes could not be seen. No one could tell what he was thinking.

“Why didn’t you come to this Venerable One first? Hmm?”

Chu Wanning did not reply. In reality, he and Taxian-Jun were more like corpses at that moment. It was as if the soul within the body of the Beidou Immortal had died. Only a layer of instinct was supporting him, making him do the last thing in the world.

Taxian-Jun jumped up and fought with Chu Wanning. He exchanged several moves and his hand movements were extremely fast. He squinted at him through the fire and rain. “Because you think you can’t beat me?”

“…”

The saber light in his hand hacked down, colliding with the zither sound’s spiritual energy. “Because you don’t know how to face Xue Meng?”

“…”

The pain was made him more and more vicious. His blade technique was extremely fast and his momentum was shocking. Because he had absorbed Mo-zongshi’s spirit core, it was even sharper than before. In an instant, he had already closed the distance between him and Chu Wanning.

“Is it because…”

Jealousy was seeping between the molars.

At this moment, the golden light met the jade light. The blade fell, Jiuge cried out, and with a flick of Chu Wanning's finger, an unbreakable protective barrier appeared.

In that instant, the spiritual flow hissed and gushed out, and his saber was pressed against his barrier.

They faced each other across the membrane where the flower petals flowed.

"Is it because…" Suddenly, the light in Taxian-Jun's hand weakened, and when it lit up again, it was no longer the wood element's jade-green, but rather the fire element's red.

It was Mo-zongshi's most commonly used spiritual current color.

Chu Wanning was stunned.

Fire and gold were still glued together, and the splashes of glory were like a torrential downpour. Behind the barrier, the handsome face of Taxian-Jun suddenly turned gentle.

"Or is it because, Shizun…" Under his thick eyelashes, his eyes were filled with deep emotion and sorrow. "Can't bear to see me die a second time?"

With a "Zheng" sound, the wrong string was strummed, and the light of Chu Wanning's enchantment suddenly weakened. At this moment, Bu'gui hacked down with all his might. In an instant, the golden light shattered into pieces, scattering out into the shadows of the haitang blossoms.

The powerful spiritual energy caused his entire body to fall to the ground. Seeing that he was about to fall into the muddy water, a hand wrapped around his waist. Chu Wanning knew that he had fallen into his trap, so he shouted in a low voice, “Mo Weiyu!”

Under the heavy rain, Taxian-Jun laughed out loud due to his crafty scheme. The corners of his mouth curled up as he was finally satisfied and cruel.

He could no longer maintain his gentleness. When he opened his mouth again, his face was already filled with fierce green teeth. “You’re finally willing to talk to me.”

“…”

Taxian-Jun grabbed him by the cheek, his nose was almost touching his nose, and his lips were touching his lips. He said in a gloomy voice, “If you don’t say anything, I’m afraid I’ll think you’re mute.”

Ch. 294 [Sisheng Peak] Entangled Wind and Rain Night

This was not a good place for a conversation. Emperor Taxian-Jun brought Chu Wanning back to the Wushan Palace as a gust of wind and rain. At the corner of the eaves, Xue Meng and the others were no longer around. Thinking about it, Mei Hanxue was such a smart person that he knew what it meant to retreat temporarily.

Putting their feet up to kick at the door, they entered the warm, dry main hall wrapped in the wet rain and wind.

The light that he had left behind to wait for Chu Wanning had already gone out.

Taxian-Jun didn't care, since the moth didn't fight against the fire, he could just reluctantly be a spider hunting, bringing his prey to his lair with his eight dense pincers.

He pushed Chu Wanning onto the bed and looked at the silent man with an ice-cold expression.

He felt that he had a lot of things he wanted to say, but when he moved his lips, the words that came out of his mouth were neither salt nor light.

"What's wrong? Do you really need me to be like him so you can raise your head and take another look at me?"

He pulled off Chu Wanning's face, forcing his dark eyes to meet his own. Beneath the his hands, the face was wet and cold.

"Chu Wanning, you better learn something." He gritted his teeth and said, "There is no longer a Mo-zongshi in this world. No matter how reluctant

you are, he will not be able to return."

Chu Wanning seemed to have been stabbed by needles. His numb face actually started to tremble. This kind of reaction caused Taxian-Jun to feel even more jealousy and hatred. Suddenly, his heart burned with anger, and he went over to cover his opponent's ice-cold lips.

He was familiar with everything from kissing to undressing. It was true that the man in front of him was a tough nut to crack, but he had gnawed on it for so many years that he knew exactly how to take a bite and eat it.

The method of resistance was the same as in his previous life. Taxian-Jun easily dispelled his attack and then took the pill from the bed, sending it towards his lips without any explanation.

"It's a reunion after all. This Venerable One doesn't want to see your reluctant expression. Here, eat it."

Seeing Chu Wanning struggle with a frown, his eyes turned cold. The strength in his hands was so strong that it almost made him bleed. He forced the pill into his mouth, then immediately bent over and sucked the thin lips.

He stuck his rough tongue in, pushing the medicine that could disintegrate bones and soft intestines into Chu Wanning's throat.

"Ugh…"

A strong smell of rust wafted from his lips. The soft, moist tongue was pressing the pill against his throat. Chu Wanning was unable to struggle free, he finally swallowed it whole.

Mo Ran let go of him and he immediately arched his body and began to cough violently. He was so disgusted that he started to retch.

“Your throat is so shallow?”

“…”

“Why didn't you seem to vomit when you had him in your mouth?”

Chu Wanning’s complexion suddenly changed. He turned his head back and opened his eyes wide, as if he had seen a ghost in broad daylight. He stared at the pale and mocking face of Taxian-Jun.

“What? Do you think that no one knows about you and him?” As he spoke, he looked proud and angry at the same time, “Actually, the things you did, this Venerable One knows better than anyone.”

He took off his rain-soaked robe and went to bed. The soft fur felt fell in an instant, his broad, well-proportioned shoulders slightly hunched, his arms propped up, looking down at the man lying beneath him.

His wet hair hung down, and raindrops fell on Chu Wanning’s cheeks, falling into Taxian-Jun’s eyes.

Taxian-Jun’s eyes were dark. He bent over, stuck out his tongue, and licked the sparkling water droplets away.

He felt Chu Wanning’s body tense up and he chuckled, “Why are you still so sensitive?”

“…” Chu Wanning would have scolded and told him to scram back then, the current him was more sorrowful than death. He bit his lower lip and did not utter a single word.

Even though it was just the tip of his fingers and his bones, he could not help but tremble slightly. He hated it.

Seeing that he was in pain, Taxian-Jun began to calm down. He looked at the person below him, whose face was gradually turning red from shock and the effects of the medicine, and slowly said: “Speaking of which, he hasn’t gotten behind you, has he?”

Waving his hand downstream, he whispered in his ear:

“Tell me, are you still as tight as before?”

He had a handsome face, but he can say such dirty words. His voice became more and more bewitching, and the caress of his fingers became more and more wanton. The effect of the medicine became more and more distinct as he caressed it.

“If you don’t answer, I’ll go in and see myself… Let me see if you missed me…”

That medicine was very effective and it worked extremely quickly. Chu Wanning’s back was already numb, and he could not exert any strength. He could only allow Taxian-Jun to penetrate his body and rest his legs on his shoulders.

He suddenly closed his eyes, his eyelashes trembling.

This was different from the past, since Taxian-Jun had never bothered to put on a foreplay, so he didn’t have much warmth in him. Chu Wanning could clearly hear him take off his clothes, and the next moment, the scorching heat was pressing down on him, ready to attack.

At this moment, someone knocked on the door. “Your Majesty, senior Sacred Hand invites you to —”

“Get out!”

Along with the explosive shout was the sound of the shattering of a porcelain pot. He grabbed a nearby teacup and smashed it onto the door as soon as the servant, who did not know how to take his time, entered.

The door to the hall immediately closed, and no one dared to enter again.

Taxian-Jun’s rough thumb caressed Chu Wanning’s lips, “Look, there’s only you and me here now. There can only be you and me.”

Outside, wind and rain were mixing with thunder and lightning.

Outside, the wind and rain crossed with thunder and lightning.

Before today, Wushan Hall had been cold and desolate for many years. Taxian-Jun focused on the reactions of Chu Wanning under him, looking at the effect of the drug as his skin flush crimson. He felt that the extinguished fire in his heart has finally come back tonight.

His consort Chu, his Wanning, his resurgence in this world…

At this moment, all the warmth returned as he is back in his arms again.

“No one will ever bother us again, Shizun… this Venerable One’s consort Chu.” Taxian-Jun leaned down to Chu Wanning’s ear and softly said, “They say long separation is even more intense than newlyweds. You have been separated from this Venerable One for so long, you see, this Venerable One is not an irresponsible husband.”

As he said, his hand slipped down and grasped Chu Wanning's hand.

He held Chu Wanning's curled up trembling fingers and with indescribable strength, one by one opened them and leaned to kiss them. Then with strong force he took his hand all the way down to hold his already hard, thick, angry dick.

"Ahh…" Taxian-Jun deliberately moaned. He had made up his mind to let Chu Wanning feel the humiliation of serving a man, let Chu Wanning figure out that the one in front of him was his fearless Taxian-Jun, rather than that Mo-zongshi.

Mo-zongshi…

Thinking about how he had been with Chu Wanning, jealousy and envy burned in him, making his eyes red.

Taxian-Jun, while holding Chu Wanning's hand on his dick, gently rocked into it. He whispered hotly in Chu Wanning's ear low "Do you feel it consort Chu?"

"……"

"This Venerable One owes you so many years of favor, you think about it much?" His Adam's apple is rolling with desire, and the low, hoarse voice was almost pressed into the blood of Chu Wanning, "It doesn't matter. It's a long night… We can do it as long as you want. This Venerable One must feed you until you become insatiable."

He was so thirsty for him, thirsty to the point of death, thirsty to the point of frustration, thirsty to the point of jealousy, so thirsty that he wanted to be able to consume his blood and bones. He made it to say that Chu

Wanning wanted it but it was actually accompanied by a selfless dedication to meet each other's desires.

It is true that the emperor, and only the emperor, can raise the wisp of emotion that belongs Chu Wanning. He suddenly opened his wet red phoenix eyes, and stared at him with anger. Taxian-Jun sighed with satisfaction: "It's been a long time since you looked at this Venerable One like that."

"When I see your eyes like this, I know it's you."

When the words fell, he leaned suddenly, and caught Chu Wanning's soft ear. It was originally one of Chu Wanning's most sensitive places. At this time, after taking the drugs, he couldn't control it. The thunderous shock rushed from his back, and Chu Wanning trembled. But his reaction in exchange got Taxian-Jun's more licking and sucking, the earlobe was swallowed in the mouth, and the tongue imitated the rhythm of the genitals thrusting into the ear, licking moist and hot.

During the intense stimulation, Chu Wanning heard Taxian-Jun mutter in a low voice: "There should have been an earring here…"

The voice was like a tyrant suppressing endless anger, and like an abandoned dog burying endless melancholy.

In his previous life, Taxian-Jun had pierced a hole in Chu Wanning's ear and now he kissed it a few times repeatedly, desperately trying to prove that this person had returned to him, his actions suddenly became a little rushed and rough. He clutched Chu Wanning's hand, forcing Chu Wanning to hold his dick. He whispered "Hold it yourself, put this Venerable One in."

Chu Wanning gritted his teeth and wanted to break away from his hand, but the strength was amazing, not to mention that he used all his strength, and the meridians on his strong arms were all protruding.

Just pushing it on the soft hole Taxian-Jun insisted: “Put it in yourself.”

The head of his cock was wet, and it began to open him up slowly. He stayed like that for a while breathing heavily. Taxian-Jun wanted so badly to just thrust into him ruthlessly in one go, and make this man that he thought about endlessly every night, to get wrapped in him.

And Chu Wanning… Chu Wanning’s lips had been bitten to the point of bleeding, his eyes wide open, he gasped, but did not say anything, did not obey. He felt depressed to look at the man in front of him, after a long time, he choked: “Mo Ran……”

Mo Ran, you’re not like that…… You are not like this… in past life…and in this…

I didn’t protect you. Two lifetimes, watching you descent to madness, watching you die.

I am not good, I failed you completely…

“Why are you……” Taxian-Jun was startled, “Are you crying?”

Is he crying?

He did not feel it, the fire in the body was too hot. Taxian-Jun seemed to have made up his mind to let him turn into mud, he had previously fed him a strong love medicine. Until he spoke, Chu Wanning hadn’t realized that his eyes were moist and tears slipped down, flowing to the sides.

Taxian-Jun's look became very strange for a moment, like anger, like jealousy, dazed, like…

Chu Wanning closed his eyes.

He thought he was probably crazy to see a touch of heartache in those black purplish eyes.

It was an illusion, nothing more.

But in this silence, Taxian-Jun suddenly held him up, as if afraid that he would scatter and disappear, he held him tightly in his arms. He did not speak again, did not force him to do anything, he let Chu Wanning sit on his thighs, after a while he deeply kissed him.

"Wanning… Wanning…"

The kiss was wet and impatient, painful and crazy, Taxian-Jun's large hand caressed Chu Wanning's waist, and then suddenly from the depths of the pillow he removed a bottle, already ready, it could even be said that it had been prepared for too long.

As soon as Chu Wanning saw it, his mind went numb.

Thousands of ancient love poison ointment.

The kind of ointment Taxian-Jun had used on him once previously. Even if his heart was chaotic and sad, Chu Wanning still felt a fear deep into his bones — he has seen the efficacy of this ointment, and now he has also been fed the other medicine. Taxian-Jun… this madman, he was still…

Chu Wanning was almost struggling to push him away, but there was no strength in him.

“No… Mo Ran…you don’t want to…”

“Shh.” Taxian-Jun’s eyes were dark, “This Venerable One and he are not the same. You will know that only this Venerable One can serve you. What is good about that hypocrite?”

His fingertips dipped in ointment, and inexplicably inserted into the Chu Wanning’s hole.

Chu Wanning stuffed a moan, the line of his back tight, but the more he was so, the more Taxian-Jun stabbed into his body, stimulating him.

“Your lips are bleeding… Let people see, let them think that this Venerable One bullied you again.” Taxian-Jun said while holding him, staring at him with the pair of dark eyes, “You do not want everyone to know what kind of used goods you are, how the dignified Beidou Immortal, looks high with such pride…… but in bed, by this Venerable One, dry countless times.”

“…” Chu Wanning’s breath was burning but he still could not help but shudder.

“My consort Chu… Ah, this Venerable One over the years often thought… if you were a woman, would our ending be much better than this? I don’t know how many children I want you to have for this Venerable One.” The other hand stroked Chu Wanning quickly, and moved from the waist to his flat stomach, lovingly stroking it.

“In that case, both you and me would have been good.” Taxian-Jun whispered while touching him, “Looking at a child from the two of us, we would have left each other some face. It may not have ended up like today.”

Eyes slid inch by inch, from Chu Wanning's forehead, to the frowning sword eyebrows, to the straight bridge of the nose and to the stubborn thin lips.

Taxian-Jun's eyes cold said: "Unfortunately, it's just a dream."

And he drew his fingers out, using more and more of the paste. How long could he hold on for? He knew the limits of Chu Wanning.

He had trampled those too.

Hot and humid fluids leaked out from him. Taxian-Jun no longer wanted to idle, no one knew his mood at the moment. The food all over the world was tasted by the Emperor but in fact, at the moment his heart flet like he had tasted the Forbidden Fruit. He wanted to immediately devour the person in front of him, completely occupying him. Holding him all night in warm arms as if he would disappear.

He was afraid.

He was so afraid of Chu Wanning leaving.

So he wasted no more time, he held his hard, swollen cock against the already wet hole and the huge head slowly pushed into hot heat.

"Ah……!" Chu Wanning moaned, his body taut. The hot thick cock stabbed in him. He gasped under the body of Taxian-Jun, cold sweat soaked his bare back.

Taxian-Jun closed his eyes as he felt the waves of pleasure flow through him. In that moment, it was almost as if he had never experienced loneliness and death. All these years of loneliness were as if they were written off.

He has his Shizun again, his consort Chu, his Wanning. He's fucking him, he's on him, he's inside him, completely surrounded by him. He felt his hot cock get tightly sucked by Chu Wanning's insides. His body clinging to him, loving him, but also longing for him.

"Shizun, you are still so tight inside."

Chu Wanning closed his eyes, his body trembling all over. His lust was burned up, the skin flushed all over. He felt shameful and sad, but these emotions were washed away by drugs, and the stimulation and comfort of Mo Ran's invasion was spread all over his body like ink stains on paper.

Taxian-Jun raised his head, biting his ears, holding him tighter. Chu Wanning gasped from pain as his huge cock pushed inside deeper and deeper.

"It hurts?" Taxian-Jun waited for his reaction, and then said hoarsely, "Endure it. You open just fine, Shizun. I will make sure you never forget who you are with, how good I make you feel."

Perhaps because the drug messed with his mind, everything was becoming more and more hazy for Chu Wanning. Or perhaps just because Taxian-Jun did not say "this Venerable One " in the forgetfulness, but a pure "I", Chu Wanning's eyes swayed a trace of warmth. That sharp cold look he gave nearly half of his life, but at this moment it was actually soft.

Those eyes stimulated the thirsty Emperor. He sat up on the bed, covered with fur, pillows messy on the bed, he held his waist high and started thrusting fast and deep.

Chu Wanning, biting his lips, refused to make any sound, but the more intense it got, and the more he listened to Taxian-Jun's unrepentant gasps,

he gradually lost some control, a broken muffled gasp spilled from his lips. The sound was very light, but Taxian-Jun sensitive to it started thrusting more excitedly.

“Louder.”

“……”

“What are you trying to prove Wanning? It’s not like I didn’t made you scream in my previous life. To the point that you begged this Venerable One to fuck you, to engage you, your legs wrapped so tight around the waist, to cum inside you, to stay inside after…”

Chu Wanning’s blush deepened. Taxian-Jun’s voice in his ear about those about scandalous old accounts was like he was showing off treasures. He punctuated his statement with a particularly rough thrust.

His actions were rough and relentless. Each time he thrusted deeply and pulled almost all the way out slowly and pushed inside again. He suddenly stopped and laid on his back pulling Chu Wanning on top to lie on him, close to his chest. He shoved inside him again while fiercely kissing him.

“Ah……”

The angle suddenly changed against the sensitive spot of Chu Wanning’s body, Taxian-Jun could feel him suddenly go limp, moist and viscous body fluids flowing out of him. He smiled in a low voice: “Is it good? Isn’t your husband the best?”

He did not expect Chu Wanning to answer, and also knew that Chu Wanning would never answer.

The Emperor almost in a sad complacency, said: “I know you like to be fucked here, every time we do this, you start leaking. That’s so shameless.”

That being said, the cock was ruthless against it. He was buried deep in Chu Wanning’s body, for a moment he was not willing to draw out, so he simply stayed inside and shallowly rocked inside him. It was the most sensitive place of Chu Wanning, stimulated by drugs, stimulated by such a crazy and vigorous sex, only to feel the huge head against the place that let him go all numb. This non-stop manipulation, Chu Wanning lost consciousness for a moment. He could not help but whisper out: “Ah… ah…”

Taxian-Jun with great validation, moved his large hands up to hold Chu Wanning’s tight waist and he slammed quick and urgent: “Louder, Shizun……”

Chu Wanning was reluctant, biting his lips tightly did not made any sound. But Taxian-Jun was relentless against that spot and deliberately pressed on it, gushes of fluids leaking out from him. Chu Wanning simply could not stand the stimulation, he seemed to be dying, suddenly he loosened his lips and in almost desperation shouted: “Ah, ah ah……”

“Do you like it? Are you happy with your disciple? You suck this Venerable One so tight, Shizun…… Why are you sucking your disciple like this?”

Chu Wanning at this time was almost incoherent, he couldn’t hear what Taxian-Jun was saying. His red eyes opened slightly. He was powerless to just lie on Taxian-Jun strong chest, and give into the violent manipulation.

The pair of black and purple eyes were filled with lust, full of boundless spring, Taxian-Jun stared at his Shizun in pain, his eyes almost obsessed. He

grabbed Chu Wanning's hand, took him to touch his lower abdomen, while gasping low: "I've fucked you so deep. Shizun, do you feel it?"

Chu Wanning was barely conscious by then, barely hanging in, he could only gasp red-faced : "ah…ah ah Mo Ran……"

Mo Ran……

Mo Ran.

Many years flashed before his eyes, from youth to adult, scenes from both lives intertwined together. Chu Wanning's mind felt fragmented like it was torn to pieces. The desire, love and the drowning pleasure, it seemed like an illusion. He didn't know which life was real, which life had gone. Under the collision of extreme pain and extreme joy, everything was broken. His world was shattered into fragments, falling like snow, and every fragment was a Mo Ran's reflection — laughing, crying, good, crazy. He saw the figure of Taxian-Jun and Mo-zongshi mingle together, at the end of the vast snow, holding an oil paper umbrella, quietly looking at him. That pair of purple black eyes at times seemed good, and at times seemed evil. In the end, the snow fell harder, and both Taxian-Jun and Mo-zongshi disappeared.

At the end of, stood the one he first met, the young Mo Ran frail and weak. That youth looked up from beneath the umbrella, and smiled, "Xianjun, I'm going to go now… Please pay attention to me… Please…"

For the last time. Please take care of me.

For the last time.

Please take care of me.

No matter which one of me, after this war, perhaps we will part…

Please pay attention to me. In the beginning of our apprenticeship, I looked up to you for such a long time, and you never acknowledged me. In the end, I only have this broken body to force you to entangle with me. Please don't hate my madness and my ignorance.

Please pay attention to me. Please.

"Mo Ran……" nearly out of it, Chu Wanning's heart suddenly throbbed painfully. When he gained consciousness he had already embraced Taxian-Jun's body. He swallowed harshly, "Mo Ran…"

Taxian-Jun was startled, because even in the most lingering and gentle few times of the previous life, Chu Wanning did not take the initiative to hug him.

He stayed still for a while, and then suddenly with a low growl flipped Chu Wanning on his back and lifted his long legs and began to push into him again.

Chu Wanning frowned his sword-like eyebrows. In his eyes he could see Wushan Palace but it's as if he is in the inn at Wuchang Town. At that time, he and Mo Ran had made love for the first time. It had been just a moment, but it seemed to be separated by a hundred years.

He raised his head and released a muffled: "Ah…" the voice was very emotional, although not loud, but all the blood in Taxian-Jun's veins started boiling. He was almost ruthless in his thrusts, eyes reflecting only him.

"Wanning……Wanning……"

The hot sweat dripped down, as if to glue two naked bodies together. In their previous life they had done this over countless times on this bed.

Taxian-Jun changed the position many times. He seemed to want to make up for these years of absence. For a while he took Chu Wanning lying in bed from behind, for a while he let Chu Wanning ride on top of him, for a while even put Chu Wanning out of bed, against the wall. That's his consort Chu, he wanted to do whatever he wills. He would caress him lovingly, pity him, torture him, and possess him completely.

He wanted Chu Wanning be his in every reincarnation, every lifetime. No one could take him away, no one could rob him. Not even himself.

Finally, he pushed Chu Wanning back on the large bed. His instincts seemed to be telling him something. Even though he clearly knew it was impossible, but he still wanted to make his lover have his child, like a primitive beast. Like this, he held up Chu Wanning's waist, and kissed him fiercely on the lips while aggressively fucking into him.

"Baobei, you are too good." the man gasped, the pleasure gradually increased, the speed of pumping faster and faster, the breathing sound was also erratic. Chu Wanning felt like he was dying, his fingers tight against the sheets, while his body convulsed.

"Ah……ah……slow, slow…"

"Almost there." He bowed his head and kissed Chu Wanning's sweaty forehead, his Adam's Apple rolling, "Baobei, lift your hips higher, let me cum inside"

The pleasure from Chu Wanning's insides clenching around him caused him to furrow his brow, and he nearly moaned. Immediately, he began to

ruthlessly thrust into him. Chu Wanning's legs were wrapped tight and even his toes were trembling.

"I want to come, come inside you… Wanning…" Taxian-Jun looked down at Chu Wanning's face, he stared at the flushed face, eyes obsessed and crazy.

With the last dozens of fierce thrusts, it became erratic, losing rhythm and becoming closer to the brutal pounding at Chu Wanning insides. Suddenly he growled and powerful semen suddenly shot out, wave after wave in Chu Wanning's most sensitive place.

The two held each other and almost at the same time shouted: "Ah…"

They came together, except Chu Wanning wasn't like Taxian-Jun. Since they'd started, Chu Wanning had already come twice. This time, he barely had anything left. Taxian-Jun, on the other hand came too much. He lifted Chu Wanning's leg and forced him to accept all of it which made him moan with the intensity.

After a long time, Taxian-Jun put Chu Wanning's leg down, and leaned heavily on his body. He felt that Chu Wanning wanted to move, wanted to pull the pillow out from behind him. But he raised his hand, held Chu Wanning's wrist and stopped him. Staring at Chu Wanning's erotic dazed face after the climax, the black and purple pupils flashed a strange light.

His invincible sworn enemy.

The shizun he couldn't defile.

A clean Beidou Immortal in the eyes of the world.

A man he wanted but couldn't have…

Finally he was fucked until his legs spread wide, filled with his come, tight thighs which couldn't close. The taste of the strong conquest is simply ecstastic. Taxian-Jun had just vent the desire but it again began to stir.

Chu Wanning was his addiction, as long as his eyes stubborn, moist with tears but still fierce, so much as a glance at him, his heart would ignite wildfire, moving all the way to his groin…

So he grabbed Chu Wanning's hand, kissed the back of it, and whispered: "Don't move. Stay still for a while."

"……"

He still hadn't pulled out his cock, he could feel that the inside was hot and wet, the sticky fluid was squeezed out where they were joined tightly. Taxian-Jun swallowed, and captured Chu Wanning's lips with his own. He kissed him insatiably "Feel that? It's all still inside, don't let it out. After a while this Venerable One will continue again."

Taxian-Jun told no false words.

This night, he entangled with Chu Wanning repeatedly several times, till the half a piece of animal skin pelt had slipped down, semen covering most of it obscenely. It was only until the middle of the night that Taxian-Jun came in Chu Wanning's body for the last time. He stroked Chu Wanning's already wet waist and abdomen, and kissed his face.

His Shizun, his consort Chu, who was once pure and untainted, but at the moment passed out from being fucked by him, naked, lustful. Chu Wanning's skin looked as if it had been soaked in finest Pear Blossom wine, flushed beautifully. A pair of phoenix eyes stared, unfocused, his breathing

rapid. Redness spread from the ends of his eyes, and his lips were slightly open, trembling unconsciously.

Taxian-Jun stared at the moist quivering lips. He could not help but think of this how he was never willing to show weakness in front him, but had willingly sucked that Mo-zongshi's cock…

His anger burst into flames, even though he has done it so many times. He again pushed into him. Chu Wanning at this time has already had a dry orgasm too many times, he was almost unconscious, so instinctively a hoarse cry came out: "Ah…"

"Why are you crying out. You are still sucking me so tightly" Taxian-Jun smiled low, "This Venerable One is good, right?"

He naturally could not answer, but it didn't not matter, at least Chu Wanning's body was honest. At least Chu Wanning had been completely opened by him, hot and trembling. This powerful body became so sensitive under him, and the aftertaste of the climax made him so sensitive, as long as he moved, Chu Wanning could not help but frown his eyebrows, and his body would spasm.

Only he could do this.

Taxian-Jun thought so, he lifted his hand to touch the other's face, Chu Wanning instinctively shrunk a bit, but still the large hand pinched the jaw, stroked on the cheek. His face was clear but was wet with tears.

After such an fierce and crazed entanglement, Taxian-Jun seemed to have finally confirmed something. He sighed softly, "Wanning. You've finally retuned. Don't leave anymore."

Black purple pupil reflected the strong but fragile face. Dazedly, Taxian-Jun leaned over and kissed Chu Wanning, sighed contentedly.

“Go to sleep.”

He pulled over the messy brocade quilt, covering both of them.

Taxian-Jun slept while holding onto Chu Wanning. Just like that snowy night on Nanping Mountain, the night before Mo Ran died, he was also holding him in his arms, until the light dimmed, until dawn broke on the horizon. These two people were the same.

As the lust was fading, Chu Wanning felt like a puppet who had been manipulated. His body was full of sweat and fluids. He couldn’t say or do anything. He stayed in this state for a long, long time. Slowly, his consciousness began to return. He began to hear the rain outside, he could feel Taxian-Jun’s breathing, his embrace…

After a while, he looked towards Taxian-Jun, who was resting with eyes closed.

“……” For a second, Chu Wanning felt an intense stab of fear. He didn’t know which era this was. The person next to him was so cold. He was afraid this body would be like the one at Nanping Mountain, and gradually lose its life, its heartbeat gradually stopping. His started to tremble with fear — Why? This was just an empty shell, a living corpse. But why was he reacting like before, with the same emotions and behavior? But of course Taxian-Jun wouldn’t answer. Or perhaps Taxian-Jun himself doesn’t know.

The chaotic thoughts and emotions gradually faded, and his gaze became clearer. Chu Wanning forced himself to calm down. He indeed was able to, in such despair and pain… to force himself to calm down. Wushan Palace

was filled with the strong scent of desire, right… this was Wushan Palace. Not Nanping Mountain. The one holding him was not Mo-zongshi, it was Taxian-Jun.

This was his long dead lover, disciple, husband… just a living corpse. Chu Wanning endured the sorrow in his throat, and slowly suppressed all of his emotions. He removed them, obliterated them.

At the end of these two lives, the two of them embraced each other in the depths of this desperate situation. Everything slowly came back to ease.

The last lingering fell to the night.

After an unknown period of time, the sound within the room gradually died down.

Under the heavy curtain that had been drawn down, the blanket that had fallen down randomly was revealed. The bright and dim light from the dense flame outside the window made it difficult for anyone to see it. The heavy rain didn't stop. On the contrary, it got heavier and heavier.

Chu Wanning opened his eyes in the dark night, the man beside him had already fallen asleep. Perhaps it was because he had grown accustomed to it after so many years of being together, or perhaps it was because Taxian-Jun thought that it would be very safe to feed him the Flexible Muscle Powder. Half of his well-proportioned body was still pressed down on him, heavy enough to make him breathless.

Chu Wanning turned his head and looked at the man's face.

When the Gates of Life and Death had just opened, he had come into contact with Taxian-Jun. He could still remember the ice-cold feeling and

the deathly stillness of his chest.

But the person right next to him right now had a heartbeat.

The unearthed spirit core once again gathered itself into a heart-like object within Taxian-Jun's body.

— Don't think too much about it. Mo Ran is dead. No matter which world it was on, they were all dead.

This was what Chu Wanning told herself amidst this slow and powerful heartbeat.

Mo Ran was dead. This was only a soulless body.

You know what you have to do.

His heart was as hard as iron, and a brilliant light began to gather in his palm. However, the light would sometimes turn bright and sometimes dim, and then finally extinguish.

Chu Wanning silently stared at the man in front of him.

The light was very dim. When Taxian-Jun closed his eyes and lowered his eyelashes, it was even harder to tell if it was from his previous life or his current life.

Chu Wanning suddenly felt that this time was very similar to the rainy night when they first slept together in the Wuchang Town. That night, he had actually woken up as well. He had leaned over and gently kissed Mo Ran's sleeping face.

No. No, no, no.

Mo Ran was already dead. Even if he had a heartbeat, it would still be a corpse. Even if it could speak, it would lose its spirit soul.

Dead.

However, why did he still remember what happened after he reincarnated? Why did the emotions in his eyes look so clear and full? Why…

Chu Wanning was startled, he could not bear to think about it any longer.

Gritting his teeth, the light in his hand rose up and summoned Huaisha, condensing it into a shining golden dagger. The instant he turned around, he closed his eyes and mercilessly stabbed towards Taxian-Jun's chest!

With a "chi" sound, he didn't have a sword hilt!

Chu Wanning suddenly opened his eyes. There was no trace of him around him. The sharp blade formed from sand pierced through the bed. In the end, the divine weapon, which could cut through metal like mud, was unable to pierce through the living corpse of the emperor.

The rain was too fast. One of the windows in the east had been out of repair for a long time. It had bounced open in the middle of the night. A torrential downpour poured in, creating a chilly wind.

A white lightning bolt tore through the sky and struck the interior of the room, and a cold, snow-white light shone upon the terrifying face lying beside the bed.

"The Venerable one still naively thought that you probably wouldn't attack again."

"…" Chu Wanning slowly turned around.

Taxian-Jun leaned against the bed post. There was a shallow cut on his bare chest. It was a scratch he had left when he dodged. He didn't care and just coldly looked at Chu Wanning, "I didn't think you would still want to kill me."

He rushed forward with astonishing speed and caught hold of Chu Wanning's wrist in an instant. With a crisp 'kacha' sound, he dislocated his arm.

"Isn't it unexpected? I seem to be more powerful than ever before?" Taxian-Jun stared at the pain on Chu Wanning's pale but still silent face, "You must have never seen any of these."

He paused, as if mocking himself, "Actually, there is nothing to be surprised about. If you were left alone. You are not familiar with anyone, and you can never let your guard down. The most interesting thing every day was only cultivation. After seven or eight years like this, you will also have made great progress."

The bright light of Huaisha disappeared and was replaced by a fragmented shadow, merging back into Chu Wanning's bones and blood.

Taxian-Jun "In the past, my moves were all given to me by you. But not now."

"…"

"How long has he been reborn again? I've been suffering in this world for almost that long, and now I've even obtained his spiritual core." As he spoke, he rubbed Chu Wanning's eyebrows with his thickly callused thumbs, "With Shizun's ability, it's impossible to kill me."

After a while, he seemed to have thought of something and said, “Shizun might not know what I’ve been doing in this tattered world all these years.”

His tone was intimate, and he never called himself “this Venerable One” again.

“I’ll bring you over to take a look now.”

The place he wanted to bring Chu Wanning to wasn’t too far away. It was at the peak of the mountain, the weakest place in the world of cultivation.

During the previous battle, his clothes were all soaked, and he even ripped off Chu Wanning’s clothes. However, Taxian-Jun wasn’t worried about this. He used his fingers to carry the orders from the Spirit Butterfly. Moments later, Liu-gonggong brought a pile of laundry into the hall.

From behind the curtain, Chu Wanning saw the old servant that he hadn’t seen for many years. He didn’t know what to feel.

“Your Majesty, the clothes have been delivered.”

“You’re the only one who knows where to put all these old clothes. They’re packed pretty quickly.” Taxian-Jun said calmly, “Let’s leave it here. You can leave.”

Knowing that Chu Wanning was in the tent, the old servant’s hands trembled a little. Although he wanted to take another look at the old master, due to the etiquette, he lowered his head and stumbled out of the hall.

The clothes fit perfectly, they couldn’t possibly not fit, because they were an old item from Chu Wanning’s previous life.

Mo Ran sat on his long legs at the side and silently watched as Chu Wanning put on his clothes. His eyes were a little blurry, no one knew what he was thinking, just like how no one knew why Chu-zongshi had been dead for so many years and the Emperor hated him the most but still did not burn his clothes.

It was something that no one needed anymore.

The rain was still heavy, and the dark clouds in the night sky were churning as strange phenomena appeared everywhere. However, Taxian-Jun lazily opened up a rain barrier, enveloping the both of them within. As they walked through the pavilions, they could only see the dark and gloomy rain. The scenery and the servants' faces were so blurred.

"Your Majesty, Grandmaster."

"Greetings, Your Majesty. Grandmaster."

After walking past the Three Lives Palace, they could already see the ominous red light rising from the back of the mountain on the Bridge of Helplessness. Taxian-Jun was walking in front when he turned around and glanced at Chu Wanning with a smile that was not a smile, "The Sisheng Peak is at the point of the confluence of Yin and Yang, the barrier is the weakest. You used to come often to make up for it, but have you felt any auras other than the ghost aura?"

Chu Wanning did not answer, but clenched his fingers into a fist under his robe.

He already knew what he was going to see — Shi Mingjing had torn open the Gate of Life and Death, controlled the Zhenlong chess game, swept

through two worlds, and the last thing he was going to do was definitely not that simple.

"…"

"Since you are in this mortal world, you must have passed by many villages and towns." Taxian-Jun slowed down his pace, and walked beside him. He spoke in a calm tone, "Do you think that the villages and towns are terrifyingly quiet?"

Together they passed the narrow path that led to the back of the mountain and brushed away the lush vines.

After turning another corner, he would reach the cliff at the back of the mountain.

Taxian-Jun suddenly stopped in his tracks and stood at the corner. Behind the cliff, it seemed as though a raging fire was burning, causing the mountain to turn crimson. He turned his face to the side, and that strange red glow extended to his eyes. He grinned at Chu Wanning with a sweet smile.

"This one has achieved many years of success here. Shizun, please."

Ch. 295 [Sisheng Peak] Martyrdom Is Hard

What lay before their eyes was a bridge.

The bridge was built from the edge of the cliff and stretched all the way to the end of the sky. In the far distance…

There was a floating stone gate, and it was impossible to estimate its size with the naked eye. It stood tall amidst the clouds, thunder and lightning mixed with torrential rain could not extinguish the scarlet flames emanating from its surroundings.

“Shizun, do you still remember? In the past, you told us that a long, long time ago, after the devils went to Gouchen the Exalted to help Fuxi wipe off the demons, they drove the demons out to the human world, and hoped that they would stop after that.”

Taxian-Jun placed his hands behind his back and looked towards the grand and majestic stone door, and said: “The Demon Lord was defeated, and he fled with his armor. After returning to the Demon Realm, because of his defeat, he felt even more ashamed. Therefore, he ordered all the doors that are linked to the mortal world to be sealed, since then, it has nothing to do with the secular world.”

He paused for a moment and continued, “But there is no absolute in everything. Just in case, the Demon Lord has left a final opening… This is the one in front of us.”

Bang! A thunderous sound was heard.

“The Door of Martyrdom.”

However, Chu Wanning's gaze was not on the Door of Martyrdom. Ever since he came here, he had been staring at the bridge that connected the land of demons and the mountain behind the Sisheng Peak.

When he saw that bridge, he was first shocked, then his face turned deathly pale. In the end, his entire body seemed to have been shattered, almost like a crazed demon.

He turned his head abruptly, "Mo Weiyu, are you crazy?! This bridge…"

"This bridge is so spectacular." Even though he had seen Chu Wanning's reaction, Taxian-Jun still smiled, raised his eyelids and asked, "What's wrong with you? Don't you like it?"

…… Like it?

In front of him was a five-foot-wide bridge without half a log and half a nail. From the beginning to the end, it was formed from the overlapping of a human body!

The corpses were piled on top of each other, suspended high in the sky, forming a bridge of corpses that could not be seen. The corpses were of both men and women, both young and old. They were densely packed like ants, and they directly led to the grand Devil Realm gate. How many were there? It was simply incalculable.

"Since it is a Door of Martyrdom, there must be a Path of Martyrdom."

Taxian-Jun's expression was indifferent, it was as if these corpses were no different from the stones he picked up on the roadside. The wooden stakes he felled from the forest were no different from what he'd felled from before. Then he blew his whistle, and a bright blue light flashed in the

distance, as if something were running toward them from the far end of the bridge.

“Actually, there are some secrets about the demon realm that Shizun isn’t clear about.” Then, he turned around and smiled, “If you don’t mind, this disciple will talk to Shizun for a bit.”

Chu Wanning: “…”

“Shizun only knew that during the great battle between Fuxi and the Demon Lord, Gouchen the Exalted rebelled and built the first ‘sword’ in the world for Fuxi. However, he did not know that the Demon Lord had been harboring hatred in his heart for this, and had deliberately wanted to take revenge on Gouchen the Exalted. Although he could do nothing to the Lord of All Soldiers, he could punish the people of Gouchen’s tribe. He expelled his mother's clan from the demon realm.”

Taxian-Jun hold his sleeve, staring at the faint blue light in the distance and spoke in a low voice.

“Demons have a tyrannical spiritual energy since ancient times. It is because of this powerful bloodline that their physical energy consumption is enormous. Only by continuously eating the flesh of grain and fish that grew in the Demon World can they maintain a normal flow of their spirit cores.”

“After the mother race of Gouchen the Exalted left for the mortal world, due to the lack of suitable food for a long time, their spirit cores gradually shrank and changed. In the end, most of them became useless trash. The only demon characteristics they possess are that their bodies are suitable for cultivation and breeding.”

Taxian-Jun paused for a moment, then turned to look at Chu Wanning, “Shizun should know the origins of Gouchen's mother race, right?”

“…” Even if he did not want to answer, it was a matter of great importance. After a moment of silence, Chu Wanning gritted his teeth and said, “The Butterfly-Boned Beauties?”

“That’s right.” Taxian-Jun clapped his hands and laughed. “That’s the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast.”

“The Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast are also extremely strong demons. In order to pass on its heritage, it has taken a very long time for it to transform into a cultivation cauldron, giving birth to its physique. A body that was originally suitable for dual cultivation with a powerful spirit core could allow their children to continue to grow stronger with each passing generation. But the door to the Demon World is closed, and they can no longer get any more spiritual energy, so the strong spiritual cores are no longer there. All that is left is their spiritual bodies.”

“Of course.” He seemed to have thought of someone, and his black eyes dimmed for a moment. “And also the extraordinary looks that demons are born with.”

He did not need to explain, as Chu Wanning was very clear about this.

In the world of cultivation, there were only two ways of thinking about Butterfly-Boned Beauties: eating flesh, and using them for dual cultivation.

Previously, during the Xuanyuan auction, Song Qiutong had been used as an item for auction, but wasn’t that why she was being auctioned? Even someone as reasonable as Jiang Xi wouldn’t treat the Butterfly-Boned

Beauty as a living person, not to mention those cultivators with inferior characters.

“A beautiful face and an alluring body. If they were used on a powerful expert, that would only add to their beauty.” As he spoke, he cast a glance at Chu Wanning.

After a while, he continued, “But if these two things appear on the weak, it will be the feather in the snow, the white fox in the dark. It’s bound to be violated and massacred.”

The line of blue light in the distance was still slowly approaching, approaching…

Taxian-Jun: “At first, the Butterfly-Boned Clan still retained the demon race’s strength and was able to symbiosis with mortals. But slowly, it became weaker and weaker until it was almost completely annihilated. As you and I have seen, in the early days of the primordial era, the strong ate the weak. As for the rest, in order to protect themselves, they have no choice but to conceal their identities.”

“… How can they hide this?”

“Well, this is the first time you’ve asked me anything since we’ve met.” Taxian-Jun rolled his eyes and said flatly, “Actually, it’s very simple. You should remember that when Song Qiutong cried, her tears were golden. This is a characteristic of the demon race. If you want to conceal your identity, you just have to not shed tears.”

Chu Wanning did not utter a word.

It was easy to say to not cry, but it was not easy to do it.

The Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast's beauty was naturally stunning, it was a beauty that was chosen from the crowd, if it aroused suspicion, the cultivators would have ways to force them to shed tears.

"Those Beauties who were not discovered survived, some lived in seclusion in the mountains, while others chose to marry ordinary people… Those who were married to mortals had given birth to children that were sometimes demon-blooded and sometimes ordinary. If one was a demon, it would be difficult for a child to control themselves. Tears of grievance would fall from their eyes, and if others saw that they were golden, then the adults and children would all face disaster. If they were ordinary, then there would be nothing to be happy about, because the demon blood would still exist in their bodies, and who knows what kind of generation will produce a Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast.

Hearing his words, Chu Wanning suddenly thought of a person and said two words with a slight crease of his brows.

"Song Xingyi…"

"Oh, the one called Song Xingyi, lord of Huabi, a few hundred years ago." Taxian-Jun nodded, "That's right, during the process of reproducing, there will occasionally be extremely lucky children. They are just like ordinary people, when they cry they don't shed golden tears, and their bodies won't have any obvious cauldron characteristics. In fact, because their bloodlines are so well mixed, they can quickly produce a spirit core, and their spiritual energy is tyrannical and does not lose to the pure demons. However, the possibility of that happening is extremely small. After a few thousand years have passed, those who have reached the Grandmaster Realm can clearly be counted on one hand."

As he spoke, he stretched out his five slender fingers and waved them in front of his eyes in a somewhat mocking and seemingly interesting manner.

After a while, he continued, “Therefore, in such a precarious situation, many of the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast Seats want to return to the Demon World. As long as they returned, they would no longer have to live a life where they were on tenterhooks and could not shed tears. They would no longer have to worry about someone selling them for dual cultivation or ravaging them for food. In those years of war and chaos, in which people frantically searched for Butterfly-Boned Beauties to earn a living, they did not need to cut their own face.”

After speaking slowly for so long, he could finally make out a faint blue light in the distance. It seemed that five horses were galloping towards him from the Path of Martyrdom.

Taxian-Jun said, “However, it won’t be that easy to return to the demon realm. The Demon Lord had a blood feud with Gouchen the Exalted. In his eyes, Gouchen the Exalted was a traitor, a traitor to the Demon Realm. Therefore, it would be impossible for them to rise up from the roots of the nine clans for generations to come. Of course he doesn’t want the fallen Beauties to return to their homeland.”

“…”

The rain was still pouring down fast, overflowing the ground.

Taxian-Jun watched as the carriage drew near. Only after a long time did he continue, “It was only when the first Demon Lord was annihilated and the second Demon Lord ascended the throne, that the new Emperor relaxed slightly.”

Chu Wanning's eyes shifted slightly, "He allowed the Butterfly-Boned Beauties to return to the Demonic World?"

"He granted permission." Taxian-Jun smiled, "But, as Shizun saw, he set up a natural barrier that can't be overcome unless someone uses forbidden techniques. If the Beauties want to go home, they have to do it."

Chu Wanning's heart tightened, he finally understood the whole story.

Taxian-Jun pointed at the bridge of the Dead Sea in front of him and said, "Look at the Path of Martyrdom in front of you. It is the only bridge that connects the entrance of the demon realm with the human world. This bridge must be voluntarily sacrificed by the living people in order to be slowly built downwards."

He chuckled, "It's already lucky to find one person who is willing to sacrifice his own life to pave the way for someone else. It's also lucky to find five, but it's really hell to find a hundred. If you are alive and well, who will willingly die for the sake of the descendants of the demon race?"

Chu Wanning looked up, "So, they have to play Zhenlong chess."

Taxian-Jun did not expect him to reply. He was stunned for a moment before baring his teeth, "Correct."

He turned his head and looked at the magnificent Path of Martyrdom, his pupils gradually narrowing, "These people are people who, over the years, I have used my Zhenlong chess game to confuse the mind, making them willingly sacrifice themselves."

"… How many people did you kill?"

Taxian-Jun rolled his eyes. His black and purple pupils stared at Chu Wanning for a long time before he spat out two words, “All of them.”

“…!”

“Almost everyone.”

The bridge before his eyes seemed endless and without boundaries. It was as if everything was very quiet in the torrential rain, and it seemed that there were ghosts screaming and crying, roaring hoarsely and begging for mercy.

Chu Wanning shuddered.

“Do you know how long this bridge is?” Before Chu Wanning could reply, Taxian-Jun said calmly, “I’ve almost killed everyone in this mortal world. I’m afraid not even ten thousand are left alive. However, this bridge has only been more than half filled — the rest, even if we kill the last ten thousand people, will not be able to be filled.”

“… So, you want to open the Gate of Life and Death?”

“You can always think of the worst answer at once. That’s right. I need to open the Gate of Life and Death and acquire enough Zhenlong chess pieces from another mortal world before I can finish paving this path.”

The torrential downpour did not affect their surroundings at all. They looked at each other, their brown eyes staring at the dark purple and black clouds. Finally, they were met with a furious scolding from Chu Wanning.

“You’re crazy!”

Within the purple lightning, Taxian-Jun only formed a sneer, “I knew you would react like that.” As he spoke, he turned his gaze away. The carriages were approaching, and he could gradually make out the details of their appearance.

“Gate of Time, Zhenlong Chess.” He paused. “It’s best to have a rebirth technique. When someone had done all this, the Devil’s Gate would open again. They can all return to their homeland.”

“…” Chu Wanning trembled. His anger and fear rendered him speechless.

“You must want to ask why the Demon Lord allowed them to go home because he had to break these forbidden arts, right?” Taxian-Jun looked at the approaching horse carriage with a rare look of understanding, “It’s actually very simple. The three forbidden arts were created by Gouchen palace, representing the ability of the demon race to travel through heaven and earth. However, in the end, they were viewed as the source of disaster.

He paused for a moment before continuing, “The Clan of beauties were convicted because of Gouchen, so it is only natural that they demonstrate their irreconcilable determination to sever all ties with Gouchen. They have to stand opposite of Gouchen the Exalted and violate Fuxi’s heavenly might in order to obtain the Demon Realm’s forgiveness.”

Suddenly, with a long hiss, the five Heavenly Horses broke through from the flames of the Path of Martyrdom, facing the miserable wind and rain in the world, standing upright in front of the hoof bridge.

Taxian-Jun’s black robe fluttered in the wind. He stepped forward and stroked a Heavenly Horse that had the skull of a skeleton, then said to Chu Wanning, “Breaking the restriction technique disobeys the orders of

Gouchen the Exalted, and swore to be Fuxi's enemy. As expected of the descendant of the demon race. All of Hua Binan's plans are for the Butterfly-Boned Beauties, Shizun, do you understand now?"

Ch.296 [Sisheng Peak] Just Like the Time in His Dream

Understand?

What was there to not understand? Shi Mingjing had concealed his true identity from the very beginning. For so many years, he had always avoided talking about his own parents.

Even though he mentioned it occasionally, there were still a few mournful looks in his eyes, making it hard for people to continue questioning him.

There were loopholes in lies, and words tended to lead to mistakes. There was no way Shi Mei wouldn't understand such simple logic.

Thinking about it now, no matter how wronged or wounded Shi Mei had been since he was young, he had never shed a single tear…

"Come up, this Venerable one will bring you to the end of the Path of Martyrdom."

The carriage was made of gold and was embedded with statues of demons. Two statues were carved on the shaft of the carriage, and on the left was a bearded man. His eyes were wide open, and he held an imposing aura in his hands.

The one who carved must have some grievances because the man carved was extremely ugly and looked tiresome. On the right was a plump woman with low eyebrows and closed eyes, ugly, but still within tolerable limits.

The most uncomfortable thing was that in front of the five horses pulling the carriage, there were five things suspended with spiritual energy, limbs and a bloody head. These were fake, they were carved out of wood, but

Chu Wanning had seen the fake Gouchen before at the bottom of the Jincheng Lake, so he could easily recognize that it was actually Gouchen's appearance.

“All the carriages and horses in the demonic world are the same.” Taxian-Jun glanced at the tiny head. “It’s been like this for thousands of years.”

Inside the carriage, Taxian-Jun sat comfortably on the little bell on the Demon Horse’s bridle. “You should have guessed who those two little guys on the shaft are,” he said.

“… It’s Fuxi and Nuwa.”

“That’s right.” He smiled. “The Demon Lord hates the God Realm so much that he would like to see the god help him pull the carriage for the rest of his life.”

“… How can Shennong be spared?”

“I’ve never heard of this from Hua Binan. However, according to the legends, Shennong was a gentle and magnanimous man, and he normally didn’t care too much about fights and killings. He didn’t have a very close relationship with Fuxi and Nuwa either. I imagine that in the past, that old schemer didn’t participate in the Fiendgod battle very much.”

Chu Wanning did not say anything else and turned to look at the red Path of Martyrdom outside the window.

The demonic horse was extremely fast, and after the time it took to make a cup of tea, it had already brought them to the end of this long, bloody bridge.

After he got off the carriage, he saw the edge of the bridge made of bones. In front of him was a boundless sea of clouds, and the Devil Realm Gate was several hundred times larger than it had been when he was at the Sisheng Peak. It was so huge that it seemed to connect the heavens and the earth above as it descended upon the earth, splashing the Infernal Realm in the rain and the night. When a mortal stands before it, it is like a mayfly to a giant tree, or a millet to the sea.

Chu Wanning looked at the colossal door that led to heaven and saw exquisite relief carvings of the five realms. The devil realm was the strongest, followed by demons, ghosts and humans, and the divine realm was the lowest. These relief sculptures were impressive, but they faintly revealed an unfathomable weirdness.

“Do you think it’s strange?” Taxian-Jun walked to his side and stood by his side as he looked at the giant door. “When I first saw it, I felt that something was wrong.”

“…”

“It took me less than an hour to figure out the problem.”

However, he did not intend to waste any more time to make Chu Wanning stare at the door for an hour, so he said, “The carvings on the door were not made of the same material, but were forged later. It’s the Immortal’s Bone.”

Chu Wanning suddenly turned around.

“In the prehistoric era, when the gods and devils fought, the Demon Lord skinned and skinned all the captives and immortals, turning them into

floating sculptures, and embedded them into the doors to the Demon World."

The strong wind made his clothes flutter.

"From today onwards, all living beings heading towards the Demon World will see just how many gods and devils have been captured by the devils. It also means that the demons behind the gates will never interact with the gods."

After looking at the strange phenomenon for a while, Taxian-Jun said, "It's about time. Now that you know what we're going to do, do you still have so many complaints?"

"… To kill all those who went through two lifetimes, just to pave the way back home." Chu Wanning looked up, even though he knew that Taxian-Jun was just a puppet, he still could not help but say coldly, "Without any complaints, do you want me to say that you've done well?"

Taxian-Jun was about to reply when he suddenly heard a commotion behind him.

They turned around and saw Mu Yanli leading thousands of people from the back of the mountain. She did not expect the two of them to be here. She was stunned for a moment before her gaze landed on Chu Wanning.

"Why did you bring him here?" He stared at Chu Wanning, but her words were directed at Taxian-Jun, "Aren't you afraid of causing trouble?"

Taxian-Jun said coldly, "With just a glance, I know what he will do next. No need for you to worry."

“This place is an important place for the Butterfly-Boned Clan to return to. Did you know —”

He didn’t want to hear her waste any more words, so he interrupted her and said, “Then amongst you trash, who can fight him to a draw?”

Mu Yanli choked.

“By my side, he is even more inescapable than if he were in a cage with ten layers of Forbidden Spells. This reputed one has the kindness to share our worries with you, why are you blabbering so much nonsense?”

“You-!”

“Why? If you are not convinced, I will immediately send him back. From now on, I will not bother to do anything about it. Try to keep an eye on him yourself. Don’t let him get close to his again by accident and easily take his life.”

Mu Yanli was left speechless for a while. After a long time, he changed the subject and angrily said, “… Forget it. I’ve got some pieces. Fill them in. In addition, A-Nan has detained some people from this world, and they are detained at the Sisheng Peak. After you’ve tidied up the matter in front of you, quickly go back and create some new chess pieces.”

After he finished speaking, she flicked her sleeves and left. Taxian-Jun glanced at Chu Wanning, revealing his white teeth as the dimples on his face deepened.

“You’re lucky to have a new batch of materials. Would you like to see how I made the bridge?”

The scene of a living person offering sacrifices to build a pontoon bridge was too horrifying. That day, after he returned, Chu Wanning had a nightmare.

In the dream, Taxian-Jun stood at the end of his Path of Martyrdom, stepping on broken bones. His heart, liver, spleen, stomach, and every piece of minced meat had grown a bright red mouth.

“I don’t want to die…”

“Give me back my life… Give me back my life…”

He saw half of Xue Meng’s face among the corpses. He saw Xue Zhengyong’s eyes, Madam Wang’s body, and the hand with a thin mole on it.

He ran towards them with all his might, shouting, “Xue Meng! A Sect Leader! F —”

His voice was cut off.

He saw that under the blood-red light, Mo Ran slowly turned his head and saw that it was still the same disciple uniform from before. His eyes were gentle and sad as he said, “Shizun, save me…”

“I don’t want to die, I don’t want to die like this… Save me…”

Suddenly, he woke up from his stupor as he gasped for breath. His face and back were covered in cold sweat. He wanted to stand up, but his wrist had been bound by Taxian-Jun Lord’s forbidden spell, leaving him unable to move.

It was quiet in the room, and he was the only one there, the sand in hourglass dripping slowly, like the tears of the dead converging into a river.

“Someone…”

In recent days, he had become slender and thin. He was sitting on the bed now, too thin, and the thick covers were almost completely over him.

Memories from his past life, memories he had missed in this life, piles of corpses, and a hopeless future.

One by one, the pieces fell on his shoulders and grind the bones to ashes.

Chu Wanning’s eyes were empty. He slowly recovered from the nightmare, but reality was no better than the nightmare. His expression was broken.

“Someone…”

Liu-gong hobbled in, he looked much older than Chu Wanning remembered.

After all, this world was too far away from the world he lived in when he died in his previous life.

“Grandmaster, are you having a nightmare?”

The old servant could see through him at a glance, Chu Wanning nodded tiredly.

“I’ll go heat up a pot of ginger tea for you…”

“No need.” Chu Wanning raised his moist eyes and looked at him through the darkness, “Where is Mo Ran? Still on the Path of Martyrdom?”

“…”

“How many people did he kill?”

Elder Liu was silent for a long time before sighing, “Grandmaster, there’s no need to ask.”

The drip flowed on for a long, long time. The rain and wind outside was very bleak.

“This old servant does not know how to cultivate.” However, he also knew that the day that the Gate of Life and Death was opened was the day that nothing could be turned back. “Actually, all of these Grandmaster understand as well.”

After a while, he suddenly closed his eyes and gripped the red magical chain on his wrist. Ever since his attempt to assassinate him, Taxian-Jun had been on guard against him. When he had nothing to do, Taxian-Jun would personally watch over him. When he went out to pave the way for the return of the demons, Chu Wanning would be locked in the Wushan Palace.

“Grandmaster… Forget it. It’s been two lifetimes, you’ve done enough.” Elder Liu’s voice was old, like an autumn leaf about to fall, “The last few days, let’s look at it like everyone else.”

“It’s all over. There’s nothing else we can do.”

“Have a good life. Stop torturing yourself…”

Liu-gong then brought a bowl of ginger tea and watched Chu Wanning drink it. The old man used to be very cautious, knowing what to say and

what not to say. This was also the reason why he was able to stay by Taxian-Jun's side for so long.

But on this rainy night, he looked at the extremely haggard Chu Wanning, whose face was even whiter than a porcelain cup. He looked at the rainy night outside and suddenly had a complicated feeling.

Liu-gong didn't know how to console him, so he could only stutter: "Drink some more, at least you will have to finish this bowl. It is said that nightmares are caused by the cold of the body. After drinking it, you won't have nightmares."

After a while, he mumbled in a daze, "My son used to have nightmares. Give him some to drink, and he'll sleep soundly…"

However, the mumble was too soft that Chu Wanning did not hear it.

When the old servant had served him tea, he went out slowly with a tray and wiped his eyes before he went out of the room. The old man's heart softened, but he could not do anything. Thus, his back became even more hunched.

He disappeared down the corridor.

Actually, Elder Liu was right. To stop Shi Mei, the best time was before the Gate of Life and Death was opened. If missed, it would be almost impossible to reverse the situation.

Chu Wanning sat in the empty Wushan Palace. He knew that he lost to Shi Mei in the end. In his previous life, he discovered the truth too late, and his sacrifice and scheming only delayed this calamity for about ten years.

In the end, everything returned to its original point.

He did his best, but in the end, nothing came of it.

There was more than one book that recorded that when time and space had ruptured and Heaven's punishment was about to arrive. In fact, even if it did not come, these two worlds were already in complete chaos. This was the last period of time. Many people knew this in their hearts, but the divine intent of Taxian-Jun was incomplete, so he didn't feel anxious at all. He was living a very carefree life.

When he returned that day, he brought a pot of Pear Blossom White.

He poured himself a cup of wine as he said to Chu Wanning, "The Path of Martyrdom is more or less paved."

"…"

"When I've done this for him, I'll be free." He took a sip of the pear blossom white that he hadn't tasted for a long time, then smiled. "Oh, it's the same taste."

After finishing his sentence, he looked up at Chu Wanning, "When they return to the Demonic World, do you want to stay with me in this mortal world, or do you want to cross the gates of life and death to let me follow you back to the previous world?"

Chu Wanning looked at him and asked, "Where is Shi Mei?"

"Shi…"

He was stunned for a moment, then his black brows slowly furrowed. His expression was somewhat blank and somewhat painful. He put down his wine cup and raised his hand to rub his forehead.

Chu Wanning watched his every move as he thought to himself, “Hua Binan has indeed confused his thoughts. To Taxian-Jun, the matter of ‘Shi Mei’ doesn’t make sense anymore, so there was no way for him to ponder over it further.”

In the end, Taxian-Jun felt a splitting headache. He suddenly slammed his cup down, and under the candlelight, he stared at the man in front of him with his sleepy and slightly red eyes.

“I don’t know.”

He opened his eyes and pulled Chu Wanning over. He was still sitting at his original spot. After a while, his forehead was pressed against Chu Wanning’s waist. He was sniffing the fragrance of haitang blossoms.

“Don’t ask me.”

In the following days, Taxian-Jun’s manner were almost exactly the same as in his previous life; it even became even more severe.

This body that should not have feelings seemed to be afraid that Chu Wanning would disappear or die again, so he used his strongest technique to trap him. During the day, Taxian-Jun would forge Zhenlong chess pieces and lay down the Path of Martyrdom. When he returned at night, he would be entangled with consort Chu endlessly. It was as if only the most intense sexual love could quell the uneasiness in his heart, as if only going deep into the warmth of Chu Wanning’s body could confirm that this was not a dream.

“Wanning…”

In the dead of night, the man sleeping beside him muttered.

“Please pay attention to me…”

Even though he knew it was impossible, at this moment, he still felt that the person he was entangled with had a soul. The heartbeat under his chest was heavy and powerful, his face the same as the dead youth.

When he spoke in a hoarse voice, there was even something similar to love in his voice.

Ch. 297 [Sisheng Peak] From the Butterfly-Boned Beauty

On the sixth day, the door creaked open.

The rain outside was still pouring down. Someone had put away the wet oil-paper umbrella, and was walking into the hall with his rain-soaked clothes.

“Shizun.”

The person was dressed in a funeral white robe with a headband. His peach blossom eyes were filled with emotion, but there was a tinge of green in them. This was the first time since the battle at Heaven-Piercing Tower that Shi Mei went to the Wushan Palace to look for him.

“Before, I wanted to visit Shizun, but I couldn’t do so. Only until today did I finally have some free time. If you come too late, don’t blame me, Shizun.”

Chu Wanning only glanced at him once before turning his gaze away.

Shi Mei didn’t mind this at all. He sat down in front of Chu Wanning. Perhaps it was because the paving was smooth, but he seemed to be in a good mood, and his eyes were shining brightly.

“Are you still angry?”

“…”

“The Devil Realm’s gate is about to open, does Shizun have nothing else to ask me?”

Chu Wanning still did not answer, he looked out the window at the rain. His weakness and blankness were only shown in front of someone he deeply

loved. Shi Mingjing had used up all of his heat, so he became a rock that no amount of persistence could melt away.

Shi Mei sighed, “I came here to have a heart-to-heart talk with you, so at least tell me something.”

Chu Wanning finally threw a word at him, “Scram.”

Unlike before the great battle, the closer one got to success, the calmer one’s attitude became. He was not angered by Chu Wanning’s coldness. Instead, he smiled and said, “You’re right.”

The rain was drumming on the damp windows, the Gate of Life and Death had messed up two worlds, any abnormality was normal, Chu Wanning even felt that the storm would not stop forever, it just continued to fall like this, submerging the two worlds.

Shi Mei didn’t mind. He got up and poured two cups of tea. He then handed one to Chu Wanning and said, “Since you ignored me, I’ll tell you some things myself. I don’t like to explain myself, but I don’t want to have too many misunderstandings with Shizun either.”

While the tea was still warm and hot, he blew away the green leaves and slowly took a sip.

“What should I say? I’ve done many evil things since I was young and I’ve never spoken the truth, but I truly do not like to recklessly kill the innocent.”

Chu Wanning unconsciously clenched his fist, the veins on the back of his pale hand bulged.

“Shizun, you see that Path of Martyrdom, right? I only wanted to add in those people that are inferior to animals in this world. In any case, that kind of person’s death was not worth lamenting. But then I realized that it was so long, so long that I had to take two mortal corpses to fill it up. I don’t feel too good about it either.”

“…”

“I don’t like the taste of blood on my hands, so I’ve hardly ever killed anyone with my own hands. I didn’t lie to you.”

“You didn’t lie to me.” Chu Wanning suddenly said, “I believe you never killed anyone with your own hands.”

Shi Mei raised his eyebrows as if he was surprised.

Chu Wanning turned around, his eyes as cold as ice, “You’re kind, you’re soft-hearted, you don’t want to kill innocent people, you don’t like to have blood on your hands. So you never do these things yourself. You created a Taxian-Jun, you made him slaughter the Rufeng Sect, you made him into a bloodthirsty tyrant — he does all the things you don't want to do yourself. You’re brilliant.”

“Shizun’s words are a bit unfair.” Shi Mei sighed, “I never thought of killing the Rufeng Sect. That is his personal grudge.”

“There is no personal grudge and hatred that would make him commit such a monstrous sin.”

“Without the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred, would he not have committed such heinous crimes?”

Chu Wanning looked into Shi Mei’s eyes, “He wouldn’t.”

Shi Mei only chuckled and waved his hand, indicating that he didn't want to pester any further. He said: "Forget it. There was nothing to argue about. In short, I once told Xu Shuanglin that I hoped that this world would be able to stay alive, with mediocre people and where good and evil would be rewarded accordingly. These are all truths, I am not lying." He paused for a moment and continued, "But for the Butterfly-Boned Beauty clan, giving kindness to others is equivalent to killing themselves. Our way back to the village has to be paved with blood. I have no choice."

Chu Wanning closed his eyes.

As Shi Mei spoke, he refilled his empty tea cup and sighed, "Shizun may not understand why I am able to sacrifice almost everyone's lives in two dimensions for the sake of the Butterfly-Boned Clan's return to the Demon World. Actually, it's not that hard to understand…"

He looked at the rising steam.

The room was very quiet. The only sounds that could be heard were that of Shi Mei and the voice from before.

"Has Shizun ever seen a herd of wild cows under siege?"

"Eyes red from killing, going on a rampage. They could not wait to pierce all the people and beasts in front of them with two horns. This is the instinct of survival."

Chu Wanning knew what he meant. The Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast Clan was like a group of beasts that had been forced into a desperate situation. Greedy faces surrounded them, ready to tear them apart.

“As far as the Beauty Feasts are concerned, there are only two options. Either completely exterminated or returned to the demon realm. This is a choice between life and death.” As Shi Mei said this, his eyes dimmed a little. “If the cultivation world hadn’t treated the Beauty Feasts as a business and wantonly humiliated them, if we were still able to survive in this world, no one would have done such a terrifying thing.”

He was silent for a while, his thoughts churning, his gaze gradually changing from gloomy to confused, from chaotic to cold, and finally to crazy again.

It was like the life he had lived up to this day.

“The cattle have no intention of killing. However, once the butcher’s knife fell, his companions would lose their lives one by one… Shizun, how do you want us to forgive this world?”

“The cultivation world will not create a history book for the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast, because these people will only treat us as livestock or as dual cultivation furnaces. However, our clan has always remembered that in the eleventh year of the Human-Demon War, almost all of the pure blood beauties were killed. In the next few thousand years, even though we have to be extremely careful not to reveal our identities, we are still unable to escape the greed of cultivators.”

“Four thousand years ago. Two thousand five hundred years ago. Nine hundred years ago. Seven hundred years ago. The blood of a beauty who had snuck into the midst of mortals was searched out, flesh was eaten, blood was drank, and assaulted under house arrest… They wish to exterminate our entire clan.”

Shi Mei's fingers gripped the teacup as veins began to appear on his wrist.

"Actually, if they really want to kill, then finish it all at once. But how could those cultivators give up on such a good cultivation formula?"

Chu Wanning: "…"

"Shizun has read many books, so you should know what Guyue'ye did as the Sect Leader in order to prevent the Beauty Clan from being completely destroyed." Shi Mei raised his eyes. A scarlet tinge could be seen in his peach blossom eyes.

Chu Wanning was indeed aware of this matter. Every book that introduced Guyue'ye would mention about it, treating it as a glorious achievement.

The Medical Sect's Guyue'ye went to search for twenty young Butterfly-Boned Beauties, and recruited cultivators with strong and robust bodies to had a day and night relationship with them, to get them pregnant. After the pregnancy, the Sect Leader used elixirs to induce labor, and within four months they would be able to give birth to a baby. The woman who had just given birth was once again tainted, and continued to be forced to conceive, to give birth… This repetition allowed the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Clan to continue.

But it goes on like a pig or a sheep to be slaughtered.

No, not like it. They indeed became the pigs and sheep to be slaughtered.

When a child was born, the boy would immediately be divided into pills, or directly sold to a rich person like the Rufeng Sect. Whereas girls were kept in captivity, and after they were of age, they became a new breeding ground.

“For mating.”

Chu Wanning could still remember the shock and disgust he felt the first time he saw this phrase appear in the “Guyue’ye Immortal Pills”.

Shi Mei laughed, and for the first time, his smile became somewhat miserable and green: “They used the method of refining the Gu to train in the beauties’ area. He actually got praises from the cultivators.”

“A living person… All alive. Just because they have mixed some of the blood of the ancient demons, which could bring benefits to their cultivation, they decided to treat the living as livestock.” In order to hide his pain, Shi Mei raised his hand to drink another cup of tea, but his fingers were trembling.

“The elixir that can stimulate the growth of an embryo is extremely damaging to the mother. None of the beauties who were raised such have lived past the age of thirty. However, a short life is a good thing for them. They can quickly end their nightmare of having sex or being able to only reproduce.”

When he said the words “mating” and “breeding,” there was a sharp pain in his face, as if he had been slapped in the face. For a moment, he couldn’t help but want to curse out loud, but in the end, his mouth moved and only two words filled with ridicule came out.

“Good.”

Chu Wanning opened his eyes and his gaze fell on Shi Mei.

This man, who had always been either indifferent or unpredictable, was now like the most ordinary of avengers, his face carved with clear hatred.

Shi Mei was silent for a while, as if he had thought of something and couldn't bear it any longer. He set the teacup down and rubbed his face in his palms. Finally he took a deep breath and looked up, his eyes red.

In Chu Wanning's memory, Shi Mei's emotions had never been so real and concrete.

"Shizun, do you still remember how Guyue'ye stopped raising beauties?"

"…" Chu Wanning did not know what he was feeling at the moment. He said hoarsely, "A murder case had occurred."

In the end, the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast was not a vile creature, and the Soul Devouring Insects would still bite back, let alone living people.

In the generation of Jiang Xi's master, there was a young girl in the Butterfly-Boned Beauties' Feast area who was unwilling to give in and was extremely scheming. Unlike the older sisters, she was neither suicidal nor numb to death.

She used her beauty and sweet words to seduce a high ranking disciple of the Tianyin Pavilion who came to see the goods at Guyue'ye. That disciple was also a lecherous person, so he couldn't help but fall into this beautiful woman's bed that night. The next day, she begged her lover to rescue her from Guyue'ye, making an oath that she would be under his control for her whole life, to help him cultivate.

The Tianyin Pavilion disciple had a lustful look on his face as he agreed to her request. In the end, the girl escaped from his side within a few days, and he didn't know where he found the seed of fire. Xing Ye returned to Linling Island, burning Guyue'ye's side courtyard.

That night, the beauties who had been placed under house arrest all fled one after another with her help. Over a hundred of Guyue'ye's disciples were burned to death by the fire…

The other sects came to watch the crisis, and while they said some words of comfort, they secretly mocked Guyue'ye for not being able to stand up to a woman. Because of this, the face of the Medical Sect plummeted. The Sect Leader was furious, so he ended his support for the Butterfly-Boned Beauties.

"Since you want to laugh, then don't come ask for medicine in the future. In any case, there are so many people fleeing. If the various cultivators are capable, they might as well go hunting for themselves."

Therefore, when Jiang Xi became the Sect Leader, only Song Qiutong remained in Guyue'ye's hand. She had originally said that she would stay behind to serve the Sect Leader. However, Jiang Xi was a person who did not want to get too close to women. He was especially annoyed with women and thought that it was a disaster for them. Even though many of the elders in the sect were dissatisfied, he still decided to auction off this woman.

Seeing that Chu Wanning was able to recall these memories, Shi Mei finally smiled and said: "I want to admit something."

"… Tell me."

"That day at Xuanyuan Pavilion, yes, it was the day Miss Song was sold. I went too."

Chu Wanning was stunned.

Shi Mei said, “I went. I was in the first tier seat. and they were offering a price of thirty-five million.”

Listening to Shi Mei’s words, Chu Wanning had a vague impression of that day. At that time, Mo Ran was also with him. He wanted to save her life when he saw that Song Qiutong was pitiable, but upstairs, there was a box with a screen covering it, and the guest inside had bid thirty-five million. Then he had thought of asking Mo Ran to take the money to suppress this person’s bid…

“It was you?”

“Mm, it was me.” Shi Mei’s expression gradually calmed down. He smiled and said, “I swore a long time ago that I would protect every Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast that I can help. Song Qiutong is a member of my clan, I got the news and wanted to redeem her. Of course, I also wanted to I also wanted to use Bu’gui to incite the killing intent within Mo Ran in this lifetime. In the end, who knew that the half of your soul left in his body would protect him so well that it would even resonate with you… Forget it. All of this is in the past, what’s there to say?”

“Anyways, Shizun knew that it was Ye Wangxi who bought her in the end.”

“Since she’s one of your people, then why did you…”

“Why did I stand aside and allow her to die? There’s nothing I could do about it. I needed to conceal my bloodline. Actually, all the orders to Mount Huang were issued by me at that time. She was just a pretense. Under other circumstances, I might have been able to save her life. But in front of Xu Shuanglin… Shizun also knows that my spiritual energy is weak,

and Xu Shuanglin was my source of power at that time. He treats me as his best friend, but I befriended him as Shi Mingjing of Sisheng Peak."

"…"

"If he knew that I am a Butterfly-Boned Beauty, would he still be willing to conspire with me? I've already said this before. In the eyes of most cultivators, we are pigs, dogs, cows, sheep, and Xu Shuanglin is no exception. Just look at his attitude towards Miss Song."

Chu Wanning's mood was heavy, he didn't know what to say for a long time.

On the other hand, Shi Mei wanted to speak more with him, so he continued, "Let's get back to what were discussing before. We were talking about that Butterfly-Boned Beauty who escaped from Guyue'ye."

"…" Chu Wanning lowered his eyes and remained silent. After a while, he looked at Shi Mei's beautiful face. He had actually noticed something in the old narration and the Shizun's manner, and he almost sighed. "That's your mother," he said. "That girl."

Shi Mei stared blankly at first, but then his spine relaxed and his facial features softened.

He smiled wryly at last. "You can always guess correctly. That's right, she was my mother."

Ch. 298 [Sisheng Peak] A Man Is Not as Good as the Heavens

The rain drummed on the eaves. In the silence, Shi Mei took a sip of tea and, as if he had made some sort of decision, said, “Let me show you something.”

He took out a rusted copper mirror from his Qiankun bag. The edge of the mirror was carved with a flying phoenix, a roaming dragon, and the universe was carved with the sun, moon, and universe.

“This mirror is called the Mirror of the Day before. It is a relic of my father. My father’s surname is Mu… Shizun should have guessed it already. Mu Yanli and I are half-siblings.”

As he finished speaking, he bit his finger and dripped blood onto the mirror. The mirror began to foggy, and when the fog dissipated, a hazy image appeared on the mirror. The illusions gradually formed, forming a clear scene and face…

It was the pavilion of the Tianyin Pavilion. In the picture, it was a scorching summer day. Under the pavilion, there were lotus blossoms blooming in the lotus pond, and red dragonflies were flying low.

A noblewoman dressed in luxurious clothing stood next to the rail-board, a cinnabar mark on her finger. She was currently feeding a plate of pastries to the fishes and the pool was filled with light because of that. This woman was very delicate and elegant, but she was also very cold.

When she turned around to speak to the attendant, he could see that she had a pair of phoenix-like eyes. She looked beautiful but had an arrogant fierce face.

Chu Wanning frowned, looked at her, and then looked up at Shi Mei.

“She’s not my mother.” Shi Mei seemed to see through Chu Wanning’s doubts and smiled, “she is Sister Mu’s biological mother, from the Lin family.”

Not long after, a young woman dressed in a silk dress and a Tianyin Pavilion maid entered the picture through the bronze mirror. She was only around seventeen or eighteen years old, with a gentle and virtuous face. Shi Mei gently stroked the mirror and said: “This is my mother… She was the descendant of the Lord of Huabi, Song Xingyi. Guyue’ye had raised her like an animal and hadn’t given her a name. After she escaped, she wanted to give herself a name, but Song is the surname of the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast, so she didn’t dare to take it. So she used Huabi’s homonym, and since then called herself Hua Gui.

“To return home means that after my mother found out that the Butterfly-Boned Clan could return to the Demon World, she hoped to bring all of her clan members home.”

She was speaking respectfully and gently to Madam Lin. Chu Wanning noticed that the Lin Family had always been cold on the screen, and the other maids were all in fear. Only Hua Gui had a sweet smile on her face as she gave her utmost sincerity to her mistress.

Chu Wanning looked up, “How did she enter the Tianyin Pavilion?”

“It was that high-level disciple from the Tianyin Pavilion who helped her. Actually, what was written in the book was not the truth. After escaping from Guyue’ye, my mother didn’t leave his side. They were so passionate that my mother begged him to find a way to release her people. That

disciple listened to everything she said, and thus stole the Heaven's Note Pavilion's fire tribulation, helping her."

Chu Wanning felt a small crease in his forehead and thought to himself, So that's it.

The records in the history books were not always correct. Some truths would slowly be eroded by the flow of time. When the people of that era were old and no longer fresh, no one would know the true appearance of the past.

"After two years, the cultivation world has gradually forgotten about the incident with Guyue'ye's fire tribulation. It just so happened that Madam Lin of the Tianyin Pavilion gave birth to a daughter, and Madam Lin was eccentric and was not good at taking care of children. Therefore, she needed the help of a few quick-witted young ladies. That disciple took this opportunity to bring my mother into the pavilion. From then on, my mother became the Madam Lin's maid."

Hearing this, Chu Wanning looked back at the bronze mirror. It was unknown when the mirror's surface had changed. Madam Lin was reading by the window, and Hua Gui was standing by her side, holding a baby in her arms and coaxing it wholeheartedly.

At first glance, the scene looked very gentle. The mistress was graceful, the servant girl was loyal, and the child was delicate and innocent.

However, after careful consideration, he felt a surge of emotions.

"… She later took over from Madam Lin."

“… Right. After staying in the Tianyin Pavilion for a long time, my mother has seen through this sect’s transcendent status in the cultivation world. At that time, she was still somewhat naive and came up with a plan that she thought was better than returning to the demon realm.”

“What?”

“Become the Madam of the Tianyin Pavilion. A descendant of the gods, their words are worth a thousand gold. She thinks that as long as the Pavilion master can open his mouth, no one in the cultivation realm will harm her anymore — at least no one will blatantly harm the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast.”

The light and shadows changed, the bronze rust on the mirror retorted darkly. It was still the original viewing platform, but it was already an unknown year of winter.

Below the stage, the lotus flowers were all withered and withered. No dragonflies, no red carp in the pool. Those bright creatures and the cold beauty of the past, Madam Lin, had all disappeared. It was replaced by the flying snow, the faint fragrance of winter plums, and the back of a woman wearing a thick white fox fur coat.

After a while, a man approached, and she looked back at him, her beautiful face caged in the fine, flapping fur of a fox. She smiled at him, the new snow fading.

At this moment, it was unknown what methods Hua Gui used to remove the original owner of the Tianyin Pavilion. Madam Lin died not long after. The disciple who had helped her in the past was also dead.

She finally got what she wanted and became the pavilion Master of the Tianyin Pavilion, the descendant of the gods.

The sky was a leaden gray with heavy snow. Hua Gui walked up to her husband, blessed him, and then, smiling, reached out her hand to stroke the hair of the little girl beside him.

“… It’s Mu Yanli?”

Shi Mei laughed: “Yes.”

“…”

“Shizun, don’t you understand why Elder Sister Mu, as a daughter of the Lin Clan, only cares about my mother and doesn’t care about her own mother?”

Chu Wanning ignored the question and continued to observe the situation in the mirror.

At that time, Mu Yanli was at most four or five years old. She was carried by Hua Gui without the slightest resistance. She was even hugging Hua Gui’s delicate neck and laughing heartily as if she was having fun with his stepmother.

“Madam Lin was naturally depressed, silent, and had no feelings of admiration for children,” Shi Mei replied. “After Mu-jiejie was born, her illness became more and more serious, to the point that she could injure or maim her. Once, when my mother wasn’t watching, she took the scissors and stabbed the back of Mu-jiejie’s hand four or five times, and when my mother came back, she saved Mu-jiejie, who was crying to the point of tears.”

“A mother who would stab her or a mother who would love and take care of her since she was young. Mu-jiejie chose the latter.”

The scene changed. There was a thin layer of frost outside the window, sticking to the blessings of longevity. Should be a year after the Spring Festival, Hua Gui sat at a small rosewood table to write.

Beside her sat two children, a boy and a girl. The girl was tall and cold, while the boy had gentle eyes. They were Hua Binan and Mu Yanli from when they were children.

“Alright.” Hua Gui smiled as she picked up the piece of paper and blew on it, before smiling, “Look at your mother’s drawing of the Medical Sect’s elixir manuals. It’s not bad, isn’t it?”

Mu Yanli still had a childish voice as she said in a high-pitched voice, “Mother, of course it’s nice to watch.”

Shi Mei was even younger, so he didn’t even know how to sound like a child. He could only sit at his original spot and smack his fingers while watching the two of them laughing merrily.

“My father was obsessed with his cultivation, and he was usually neglectful towards me and my sister. The enlightenment that Sister Mu and I had was taught by my mother personally.” Looking at the scene in the mirror, Shi Mei recalled, “She taught us how to read and write, as well as some basic spells.”

“She can use magic?”

“Just a little.” Shi Mei paused for a moment. “A fake move that frightens the common people, I’m afraid that it can’t even beat the weakest

cultivator."

"…"

"But she's willing to accompany us, to stay with us day and night." Sighing, Shi Mei's gaze became a little stiff, "No matter how she works and plans, how she treats outsiders. But she treats me and Sister Mu with such kindness."

The scene on the surface of the mirror spun faster and faster, as if time had slipped past the gaps between his fingers like a shuttle of water. In many of these situations, Mu Yanli and Shi Mei gradually grew up.

And in the process, almost every step of the brother and sister was guarded by Hua Gui.

On a stormy night, she coaxed Mu Yanli to sleep.

One afternoon in the middle of summer, she fed Shi Mei with red bean and coconut soup.

All of these things happened bit by bit.

"Later on, when I reached the age of enlightenment, my father personally taught me the techniques of the Tianyin Pavilion. However, my talent was lacking and I was unable to learn them. He was very disappointed. At that time, I also thought that I was a useless person. After all, Sister Mu had successfully reached Foundation Establishment when she was eight years old. And even after I put in all my effort, I didn't even feel the slightest bit of Qi."

The little Shi Mei sat by the pond in a daze, a smaller sword resting on his small knees.

Hua Gui dragged the long robes with a frown on her face as she walked over the wooden bridge. She looked around and found the child who was alone and lost in thought. Her anxious expression finally relaxed.

She walked to his side, bent down, and said a few words to him. Then she carried him in her arms and walked back to the end of the garden.

“Because she had once stayed in Guyue’ye for a long time, she had seen many people with weak spiritual energy who could gain a place in the cultivation world through the Medical Sect. She did not overturn everything in one blow just because of Guyue’ye’s abuse of Beauties. She persuaded father to let me start cultivating the path of medicine.”

Previously, when Shi Mei told him about the intimate relationships between men and women, Chu Wanning knew that Hua Gui had some tricks up her sleeve. However, he did not know how strong she was, so he was unable to say.

And when he heard that, he could suddenly feel the sharpness of this woman…

To her, Guyue’ye was just like a hellish nightmare, devouring the first half of her life. If it were any other person, even if they didn’t hate the Medical Sect to the bone, they would still dislike the Medical Sect. However, she was very clear about what the Medical Sect was, what she needed, and how she was supposed to do it.

She had a pair of extremely calm eyes. Even if her hatred was as deep as the sea, she would not act rashly.

“Her plans have always been methodical. One step at a time, she might have already thought of the next hundred steps. So apart from taking care

of me and big sister Mu, she still has the energy to go around gathering the whereabouts of her family members.

However, it was obvious that the status of the Butterfly-Boned Beauty remained unchanged. Moreover, Chu Wanning remembered that this Madam Hua had passed away a long time ago. There must be a hidden meaning behind this.

Chu Wanning had a vague conjecture in mind as to what was going on with the Butterfly-Boned clan and the descendant of the god race. He asked, “Later on, Madam Hua’s identity… It was exposed?”

Shi Mei didn’t immediately reply. His eyes shined with an overly bright light. At first glance, it looked extremely sharp, like a deep hatred. But on closer look, it was like the sadness of the tide.

“It shouldn’t have been exposed.” He said, “Father has no brains at all, and couldn’t tell what’s wrong with Mother at all. But no matter what, he was still a descendant of the gods. Even though the God race’s blood in his body is minuscule, he still had some innate ability to sense it.”

He lowered his eyes and looked at his mirror. The scene had already shifted to the Pavilion Master’s room, where a man with slight spots on his temples was lying in bed.

“When I was nine years old, this man had a very strange illness. Even the best doctors could not find out the cause of the illness.”

Shi Mei sneered: “Actually, after knowing the inside information, you should know very well. He is a descendant of the Divine Queen, and my mother is a descendant of the Infernal Queen. After the war between the gods and devils, the Demon Lord had laid down a curse — from today

onwards, for generations to come, gods and devils cannot join hands. Those who break this curse will die for sure."

"Father's strange illness was caused by this ancient curse, but it was unknown to him. As for the God Realm, perhaps it was due to pity, or perhaps it was because it wanted to embarrass the Demon Lord. Anyway, one night, in a dream, a god spoke to my father and told him exactly what had happened. Furthermore… he said that if he wants to survive, he needs to sever all ties with the witch."

Chu Wanning looked at Shi Mei's ferocious face, waiting for him to continue.

He knew that things were definitely not as simple as cutting it in two.

"After he woke up from his dream, my father was furious," said Shi Mei. "The Tianyin Pavilion had always wanted everything to go their way, but his status in the cultivation world was extraordinary. Everyone treated him as a god and respected him. But this woman… This piece of rotten meat that looks like a pig or dog to be butchered, and is a dual cultivation furnace, to think that she would actually scheme against him and deceive him."

"…"

"She even almost killed him. How vicious. So…"

He took in a deep breath. No matter how well he had suppressed his emotions, his voice was still hoarse.

He held the teacup tightly. The tea was already cold, so he did not finish it. With a thought, he exerted too much force and the porcelain cup exploded with a bang.

The tea juice splattered everywhere…

The surface of the mirror had also been splashed with tea. The image was blurred by the amber color of the tea juice. One could vaguely see that the man on the sickbed had summoned Hua Gui.

He walked barefoot out of bed, pretended to have nothing to do with her, and walked to the door with a smile. With his back to Hua Gui, he closed and locked the door.

The man turned to his wife. In the distorted mirror light and water stains, a face that looked like a leopard surfaced.

Shi Mei suddenly trembled. He abruptly reversed the mirror and turned his back on the mirror, no longer looking at the mirror.

The veins on the back of his hand bulged like tree roots of a coiled dragon. Fear and hatred surged through every blood vessel.

After a long moment, he buried his face in his hands. His voice sounded extremely exhausted.

“He…”

He only said one word before stopping.

“This beast…” It was as if there was a monstrous flood of hatred that was about to be vented. It seemed as if there were thousands of words it wanted to spit out. However, once the ten thousand horses and thousand armies reached its throat, it didn’t know which words it should say first.

He should have seen this mirror many times before, but after all this time, even after all these years, he still hated it.

Slowly he stopped shaking. In the end, the hatred turned into a seemingly ordinary sentence.

“On that day, my father, descendant of god, ate my mother alive.”

Ch. 299 [Sisheng Peak] Life Is Hard to Stop

Looking at Chu Wanning's pale face, Shi Mei laughed maniacally and said, "Yes, my father ate my mother alive. Living… I was nearby at the time. Hearing her cry, I ran over. I didn't know what had happened, so I anxiously knocked on the door. I asked mother what had happened… No one answered me. She's been screaming from the other side of the door."

His thin lips parted, and he said, "The door opened."

Dead silence.

It was probably the same as the deathly stillness when the door was opened.

His father's mouth was full of blood. His arms tore at his mangled mother.

He was like a child whose spirit soul had been split apart.

Nine years old.

His father had already gone mad. The flesh and blood of the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast Clan could nourish a person's cultivation base. Since he was on the verge of death, she should repay him!

Even this evil creature in front of him! A vile creature that would make him suffer a retribution! Evil child!

He held out his sticky hand to the child, who was cold to the point of not being able to say a word. His eyes were wild and twisted.

At that moment, Shi Mei didn't even have the time to react. He stared blankly at the scene in front of him. There was neither grief nor fear in his

eyes. It was as if he had been sucked dry, leaving an empty shell poking into the ground.

The man's hand moved closer and closer, and a drop of warm blood fell on his cheek, like a tear mark.

He raised his head and stared blankly at this unfamiliar wraith.

"Father…?"

"Run!" Behind him, Hua Gui's piercing scream pierced through the clouds, "A-Nan, run!"

One of her arms was torn off by the blade, the tendons and bones of her legs were broken, and the woman was crazily squirming on the ground like a maggot.

"Run! Run! Don't look back! Don't come back! AHHH!"

In response, the man suddenly turned around and stomped his foot hard on her face.

Hua Gui tilted her head, a golden tear trickling down from the corner of her eye.

She tried her best to say, "Run…"

Kacha.

Her throat was broken…

Run, she said.

Every day, since then, Shi Mei has been running. Every hour, every day, every night, as he would run crazily out of the Tianyin Pavilion and into the vast mountains. If he didn't run, he would not be able to take it any longer and would collapse.

He collapsed.

No matter where he fled to, no matter how many years had passed, he could hear his mother's shrill, terrible scream: "Run! Run!"

He ran from the depths of the alley into the vast wilderness, through the golden waves of wheat, from the depths of darkness to the arrow of dawn ripping through the universe, the world a soft crimson.

Like blood.

Blood oozing out of his body, slowly dripping from the corner of his mouth.

"Ah… AHHH!"

His shoes had long since fallen off, his feet were worn and rotten, the gravel had sunk in, and the blood was bubbling.

Golden tears finally ran down his cheeks. He ran like a cornered beast through the decaying grass and reeds, cutting his legs and feet.

He didn't dare to stop. He didn't dare to see which way was right. He could only try to run towards the nearest one. He didn't dare to stop. He would die. If you stop, you will die.

He did not stop.

In the blink of an eye, more than ten years had passed.

They will die. The Butterfly-Boned Beauty race will die if they don't go home.

"I was picked up by Sect Leader Xue later on… At that time, the Tianyin Pavilion master was searching for my whereabouts. I didn't dare to speak the truth, nor did I dare to cry. He asked me where I came from, where my parents were, and I lied to him… After that, he brought me back to the Sisheng Peak… A few years later, a Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast Clan member who was saved by my mother finally managed to find me. She had always been a disciple of the Tianyin Pavilion, and in order to not be suspected by others, she personally destroyed her own face when she entered the pavilion… She escaped my father's eyes and gave me all my mother's things."

"According to the records that my mother had collected over the years, there is a thick basket of books on the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast's name, buds of Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flowers, and on the method to open the doors to the Demon World that she once researched."

Chu Wanning closed his eyes slowly, "… So you took the path she wanted to take, and did what she was going to do."

"Yes. I would continue cultivating the path of the Medical Sect. In order to not arouse the Sect Leader's suspicions, all those years I ventured out of the mountains using my full name, Hua Binan."

"Hua Binan's reputation was getting higher and higher. It was so high that even Jiang Xi noticed me. He extended his hand towards me — and I did the same thing as my mother all those years ago. Even though this sect once treated Beauties as animals, even though it had been wary of my mother for a long time, in order to have a place in the cultivation world as

soon as possible, and to get everything I needed to go back home, I promised myself. From then on, there will be two identities, the disciple at the Sisheng Peak, and Guyue'ye's alchemist." Shi Mei paused for a moment before continuing. "Later on, the Pavilion Master of the Tianyin Pavilion died and Elder Sister Mu took over his position. She had been constantly searching for the culprit who had killed her foster mother… In the beginning, I didn't dare to trust anyone anymore, but after a few attempts, I finally decided to meet her at the Tianyin Pavilion and told her the whole story."

Speaking to this point, Shi Mei smiled, although his eyes were still cold: "As Shizun has seen… I didn't make a mistake, she's on my side."

"…"

"Although she is not a Butterfly-Boned Beauty, she views my mother as her birth mother and her race as her own. She's been helping me all these years."

Helping Hua Binan. Helping Shi Mei.

Helping her half-brother.

When Shi Mei finished, he put the broken pieces away and returned the mirror back to the Qiankun bag.

The rain outside was like the souls of the Butterfly-Boned Beauties who had died in the past tens of thousands of years. There was probably Hua Gui there too, as well as his mother. He was screaming, "Run! Run… run! Don't stop, don't look back."

“There is no way out.” In the end, Shi Mei rubbed his face with exhaustion and said in a hoarse voice, “Shizun, we have no way out. Whether we destroy the humans or us, that is the only choice. I can’t choose the latter.”

It was like the end of the world. It was like a bayonet or lightning splitting through the air.

The sound of rapid rain, the sound of thousands of horses galloping, the glossy leaves soaking in the ground, all in the bright, dazzling light.

Suddenly, the door opened with a bang, and a strong wind wrapped around the rainstorm.

The pale-white lightning illuminated the two people who had turned around in the hall. Mu Yanli was standing in front of the doorstep. She did not hold an umbrella, and her entire body was soaked through. Her eyes appeared extremely messy.

“Nan, we still need the last 30 pieces of Zhenlong Chess before we reach the entrance of the Devil Realm.”

Before she could finish speaking, Shi Mei suddenly stood up, and his fingertips trembled uncontrollably: “Where’s Taxian-Jun? Thirty pieces of Zhenlong Chess is but a split-second to him, almost allowing him to complete them all and then…” At this point, he suddenly stopped.

When Mu Yanli entered the room, Chu Wanning could see that other than joy, there was also terror on her face. “I don’t know what happened to Taxian-Jun, but he suddenly fainted. And his heart is also…”

“What?”

“It’s also extremely unstable. The spiritual core is collapsing, as though it will never wake up again—”

Shi Mei suddenly became angry: “Impossible! That’s his own spirit core. I have concocted it over a thousand times, how could it suddenly collapse?”

He stopped.

Suddenly, as if he had seen a ghost, he turned his head with a pale face, and turned towards Chu Wanning, who was on the bed with his hands and feet tied up.

“Could it be…” His lips trembled, opening and closing. “Could it be… You did it?”

The sound of the storm outside only made the room quieter. It was like a tomb, like a dark abyss. The light and shadow of the candlestick were like the silk of a banner, dancing in a hidden and mysterious manner.

In the dead silence, Chu Wanning closed his eyes and opened them.

“… Right. It was me.”

A boom resounded, the thunder seemed as if it was going to shatter the clouds, causing the earth to shake and the mountains to shake. The rain poured down like a waterfall.

Shi Mei’s heart trembled as he staggered a step forward.

“You… You can still…”

“Now that you’ve told me about you. Then let me tell you something about me too.”

Shi Mei: "…"

"In my previous life, my spirit core was destroyed, and I only had the power of Jiuge left. That's why I was powerless to fight against Taxian-Jun." A golden light suddenly appeared on his wrist, and there was only a crisp metallic sound as the chains broke and the spirit talismans were set ablaze!

Chu Wanning stood up on his bed and raised his beautiful eyes.

"But for the rest of my life, the days when he placed me under house arrest were enough for me to bury the incantation deep in his heart." When he said those words, Chu Wanning's face was expressionless.

Grief, pain, pity, regret. Nothing. A deathly tranquility.

"The spell will continue to erode deeper and deeper, eventually causing his spirit to flow and his heart to stop beating. Your godly weapon will still be destroyed by me."

"…"

"… Sorry, Hua Binan. I can't let you go home."

Shi Mei couldn't have expected this turn of events. His face was whiter than jade and colder than ice. He stared at Chu Wanning in disbelief, his lips trembling.

"It's over." As Chu Wanning spoke, the light in his palms intensified.

"… You're crazy!" Shi Mei looked at that golden light and suddenly went crazy, his eyes filled with a wild beast's look, "You want to kill him?! You actually want to kill him… You have the heart— you have the heart!"

No one could see the emotion that flowed in his dark eyes. “I do,” Chu Wanning replied.

“…”

The golden light grew brighter and brighter, but Chu Wanning’s expression became uglier and uglier – even though he was only a broken branch of the Fire Emperor Wood, he still had a vague impression of many of the Divine Wood’s spells. This included the “Tianwen Ten Thousands Coffins”, which also originated from the vague outline of the skull.

He had thought it was a coincidence, but then he realized it wasn’t.

As a God Wood himself, he had been left with many imprints by the Divine Wood. As long as he tried to recall, he would be able to recall many ancient secret arts, such as the Life and Death Gate. For example, the Corpse Splitting Art that he had used now for the first time.

The Corpse Splitting Art was related to the war between the gods and devils in the prehistoric era. According to legends, after that battle, the human race on the continent suffered a great number of casualties. Those who survived struggled in the sea of corpses soon became infected by an epidemic disease… At that time, Fuxi had wholeheartedly wanted to exterminate all of the bandits, while Nuwa had fallen into a deep slumber due to his injuries. The only person left to save the world was the Divine Wood.

Therefore, Divine Wood inserted a stalk of the Heavenly Flame Emperor Wood into the East Extreme Sea. There were thousands of branches and hundreds of millions of flowers and fruits growing in the depths of the abyss.

“Divine Wood, ten thousand coffins.”

The moment he finished speaking, the roots of the Flame Emperor Divine Wood spread out from the bottom of the East Sea, covering the entire cultivation world in an instant! Those coarse or slender, rough or soft roots must be uprooted and silted.

“Slaughter the corpse and collect the coffins!”

The roots wrapped around the rotting corpses on the ground and turned them into ashes… The rotting corpses in the sky and earth had disappeared. Their ashes had turned into fertile ground, and fresh flowers had bloomed on it. The Flame Emperor Wood had accomplished the first thing it had done in the mortal world. After that, it had retracted hundreds of millions of its roots back to the Eastern Sea.

—

This was the oldest record of the Flame Emperor’s Divine Wood in the annals of history.

Chu Wanning’s eyes lit up by the bright brilliance in his hands.

This was the Divine Wood’s spell. He would, because he was a part of the Flame Emperor’s Divine Wood. Now that he had activated his technique, that person… Soon there would be nothing left.

Just a corpse.

Chu Wanning was in extreme pain as he thought, what… can't I bear.

“You… Chu Wanning, you…”

Shi Mei stared at him, anger and madness flashing through his eyes. His plans for two lifetimes were all here, and he could no longer remain calm.

“Stop right there!”

Hearing this voice, Chu Wanning raised his head and looked at him quietly, just like the rainy day many years ago when he saw a child standing under the roof of the school on the Sisheng Peak.

At that time, he never would have thought that Shi Mei’s identity was actually the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast’s seating area that he escaped from.

His initial impression of Shi Mei was entirely based on the words of others. He had heard that a new child had appeared at the Sisheng Peak. That child had always been diligent in his studies, but unfortunately, the Core was too weak to cast any spells. Moreover, because his talent was too poor, no elder was willing to accept him as a disciple. Even Xuanji had tactfully refused him after testing his spirit root.

That year, the rain dripped down from the black tile roof. The boy, who was like a lotus, helplessly looked up as he held a stack of thick books in his arms.

Chu Wanning was a little taken aback, “… It’s you?”

He recognized the unsociable child and walked over to him with the oil-paper umbrella in his hand.

“Ah, Elder Yuheng.” The little guy was startled and hurriedly bowed his head in salute, the books stacked to his chin causing him to stagger, “Greetings Elder.”

“… It’s so late, and you’re still at the academy?”

“I… I had no choice. I needed to look at a lot of things, but I didn’t have the time to finish reading them.”

Chu Wanning lowered his eyes, his gaze landing on the < Legacy of the Medical Sect’s Hundred Herbs Collection >.

Because of this, the child appeared a little embarrassed. “My aptitude is dull, I can only take a look at the content of the Medical Sect… I thought that Guyue’ye was better…”

Chu Wanning was a little confused, he frowned and said, “It’s just a book, what’s there to be nervous about?”

The child lowered his head even further. “I was wrong.”

Hiu slim body kept its position low, making him look pitiful if he didn’t want to attract attention. Chu Wanning could not help but recall the conversation between them.

“That Shi Mei is very obedient, but he doesn’t have much talent. What a pity.”

“In truth, he isn’t suitable for cultivation. Sigh, even the Sect Leaders don’t know what he is thinking. Why bother taking in someone with no intelligence to cultivate with? If you pity him, it would be good for him to go to Mengpo Hall and get a job of washing vegetables and cooking.”

“However, he seems to be interested in the Medical Sect. Tanlang, are you not going to consider accepting him?”

Elder Tanlang said lazily: “He’s too soft, I don’t like him, I won’t accept him.”

A umbrella stretched forward, and raindrops fell like pearls onto the oiled paper.

The jade colored knuckles gripped the handle of the umbrella as the bones were still. Chu Wanning lightly said to the child, “Let’s go, it’s too late. I’ll send you off.”

A small white flower in full bloom was trembling on the eaves. Shi Mei was stunned for a moment. He first bowed, then hid in the shadow of the oil-paper umbrella.

In the slanting wind and drizzling rain, they disappeared into the distance.

Shi Mei’s eyes were bloodshot, his entire body was taut like a broken bowstring, and he shouted angrily: “Chu Wanning! Why did you stop me?! At this point, what use is there for you to stop me?! What should be killed has already been killed, but it is only the last 30 lives! As long as 30 people died, so many of the Butterfly-Boned Clan would be able to live for over a thousand years! They can finally return to the Infernal domain. Why are you doing this? Why are you doing this?”

He was like a blind dragon with a broken claw. That face no longer had the gentle shadow of the past.

“Even if you were to destroy Taxian-Jun, the dead cultivators wouldn’t be able to be revived. There is no hope in this mortal world either. You… You…”

Chu Wanning said, “Before the Heaven's Punishment arrives, it’s impossible to save this mortal world by ending the Gate, but the other one can still be saved.”

“I just want another thirty lives!”

“… Then there should be one less.” Chu Wanning closed his eyes, the light in his palm instantly brightened to the extreme, “Tianwen, ten thousand people coffins!”

It was as if the god had bound the corpse. As he shouted, the sound of the earth could be heard from afar.

His palms suddenly closed!

In the far back of the mountain, the unconscious Taxian-Jun was already tightly bound by willow vines.

Shi Mei’s lips turned white, and his pupils shrunk down to a small dot: “… Why are you… So ruthless…”

“…”

“Not giving us our last chance. To kill your own disciple. I just. I only want thirty lives…”

One was covered in corpses, while the other one was filled with the wind and rain. It was unknown what sort of changes would occur after the Demon Area was opened. Ever since the ancient demons began fighting with bloodlust, they had turned traitor and fought fiercely with Fuxi to expel them from the mortal world.

Chu Wanning was clear that this was not 30 lives…

Even if it was just thirty lives, who would deserve to die? Who should pave the way for the return journey of the Butterfly-Boned Beauty clan, and who should be sacrificed?

The golden light in his palm grew brighter, and it was reflected in Shi Mei's eyes. It seemed like the light was going to dig out his lungs. He was so angry that he wanted to move forward, but a barrier was raised in front of Chu Wanning.

He couldn't get through.

Without Taxian-Jun, Shi Mei was like a butcher who had lost his sharp blade, leaving behind only a pair of paws… Both he and Mu Yanli could not be a match for Chu Wanning.

In his despair, Shi Mei's eyes turned red as if they were about to bleed. What should he do? What should he do?! He…

Suddenly, he remembered something. This caused the butcher, who looked like he was facing a fierce beast, to stagger towards his backpack and pull out his last sharp weapon. He pointed the weapon at the man who was determined to ruin his life.

"Good, good. Shizun, you are ruthless. Let's do it."

"…"

"Make your move."

Chu Wanning didn't know why his attitude suddenly changed, but he suddenly put his hand on his forehead and laughed out loud. He then lowered his head to look at Chu Wanning's face, and bit into every word on his face, "You can do it, Shizun. Just cut him into pieces. In the worst case

scenario, neither of us will get any benefits, and both of us will lose miserably!”

When Mu Yanli saw his crazed look, she could not help but feel a dull pain in her eyes. She whispered, “A-Nan…”

At this time, Shi Mei could no longer listen to her words. He held that kind of berserk energy which came from a battle beast on the verge of death, and said while baring his teeth:

“Kill him — kill him.”

“…”

After spitting out the venom and blood, Shi Mei’s dead black eyes were focused on Chu Wanning through his fingers. One word at a time.

“Along with the last wisp of his soul, that is infatuated with you!”

Ch. 300 [Sisheng Peak] The Emperor's Heart Is Like My Heart

The thunder and lightning came in through the open door of the hall, cutting off Shi Mei's face.

In the glaring light, only the eyes were dark.

It seemed that even the God of Fire couldn't light them up again.

Chu Wanning's expression changed, but he did not ask. No matter what Shi Mei said, it was hard to fathom his intentions, but even so, the light on his hands couldn't help but dim down.

This mistake was caught by Shi Mei.

He grasped it like grabbing flowing grass in a hurricane and said to Chu Wanning, "Shizun, you don't really think that Mo Ran is completely dead, do you?"

"Do you really think that…Taxian-Jun is just an empty skeleton?"

Pausing, he continued. "Shizun, you might as well think about it. How could there be a corpse in this world that could think and act so stubbornly… Who could do it? What can be done? Even Zhenlong chess is not up to this."

"…"

"You know what?" Shi Mei stared into Chu Wanning's eyes, and slowly revealed the secret he was hiding, "Inside Taxian-Jun's body, there is still one piece of consciousness that has yet to dissipate."

Before he said that, Chu Wanning's eyes were empty, as if he was a dead body walking. After saying this, Shi Mei could clearly see the waves in his phoenix eyes. He let out a sigh of relief, but he still didn't dare to be careless.

"Shizun also knows that my spirit core is weak. I can't cast any very powerful spells on my own. So I can't control the chess game. However, the Medical Sect has their own methods."

When Shi Mei said this, it was as if he was looking at the corpse of Taxian-Jun after he had committed suicide by taking poison. Lying in the grave of Heaven-Piercing Tower……

At that time, he didn't know what went wrong, but his mind went blank. How could his sharp blade, his Hundred War godly weapon, die?

Mo Ran's conscience should have long been devoured by the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower'! What could torture his heart so much that he could kill himself?

"In the previous life, the top ten sects were attacking Sisheng Peak together. After seeing Mo Ran's corpse, those people were planning to dismember his body into five pieces. However, I tried my best to persuade them in the crowd as a master of the Medical Sect. At last we were able to preserve that body."

Every word he said, he was staring intently at Chu Wanning.

"I couldn't lose his power. So I managed to turn him into a walking dead man. Although his abilities wouldn't be as good as when he was alive, he could at least make do with it for the time being… But you know, maybe it's

because he was still missing someone before he died, so there's a little bit of obsession in his heart that's too strong for me to clear his soul clean."

"No matter what method I used to force the soul, that strand of soul will not dissipate. That strand…" His words were clear. "Supported him as he walks towards the soul of Heaven-Piercing Tower."

"— Your soul."

Stopping in his tracks, Shi Mei stood at the center of the hall.

At this moment, he could already see the other's ashen face, tightly pursed lips, and the meridians popping out from the back of his hand.

He saw the pain and hesitation in Chu Wanning's heart, so he was completely relieved. Slowly, he regained his composure, "That wisp of soul did not reincarnate, and it was still lingering around Taxian-Jun's corpse. That's why it was so stubborn towards you after it was revived. As for Mo-zongshi… You should also feel that he wasn't as attentive to you when he was reborn. His feelings for you were born again later."

As Shi Mei narrated the truth of the matter, his expression kept changing.

"Taxian-Jun has the most stubborn love he has for you in his previous life."

He noticed that Chu Wanning's fingertips were trembling, so he licked his lips and took another step forward like a slippery snake.

"Shizun, look. Right now, I only need the last thirty people. 30 people would be enough to exchange for his life. Are you willing?"

Outside, the wind was howling and the demons were dancing wildly.

He waited for Chu Wanning's reply, thinking, what a good deal this is!

The man in front of him looked cold and otherworldly, but in reality, both of his lives had been ruined by the deep love in his heart.

He was sure he would.

After a while, Chu Wanning lowered his eyes. No one could see his expression clearly, "… You said that there is a strand of soul within his body."

"Yes."

"If you're given the last thirty people and let him finish paving your way home, are you just going to let him go?"

"Yes."

"…" Chu Wanning did not answer immediately, but mumbled, "That's why, when I saw him, much of what he said came from his heart."

With a weak point, it was very easy to convince someone, even if it was the Immortal Elder Beidou.

Shi Mei's victory was already in his hands, so he relaxed even more and said: "Yes, it's all from his heart. Although he was not the original complete Mo Ran, at least he still has his soul. At least he still has his consciousness."

"Shizun, please listen to me once." He advised gently, "Don't do it. You, me, and him will all be much better off."

Chu Wanning still did not look up. He sighed, "… Shi Mingjing."

"Hmm?"

“Do you still remember what your last wish was when you entered the Sect?”

He was somewhat at a loss at being asked like this, but after thinking for a bit, he still replied: “I was forward to your pity. I needed a home.”

After he finished speaking, he had an ominous feeling as he added, “However, back then, I really wanted to treat Shizun as my family. I’m not talking about the return of the butterfly demon sect…”

Chu Wanning did not deny it and asked again, “Then do you know what was his wish was when Mo Ran first became my disciple?”

“… What is it?”

Chu Wanning finally raised his head and looked at Shi Mei. His eyes gradually became colder, and the depth of the silence in his eyes was even deeper than before.

“He said he wanted to have a godly weapon like Tianwen. This way, more lives could be saved.”

The man spoke plainly and simply, as if he were speaking from home, explaining the wishes of his lover. Before Shi Mei could even react, he saw a golden light burst out from the hall and a strong wave of spirit energy cut through the air, preventing others from getting close to it!

Shi Mei snapped out of his daze and shouted:

“Chu Wanning!”

A sharp, twisted scream broke through the roof tiles.

“Chu Wanning! Are you crazy?! You’re crazy!”

Shi Mei was both furious and desperate. Under the blinding light, he tried his best to force his way towards the man in white in the middle. Beside him, Mu Yanli was helping him, supporting him, and trying to persuade him.

But what good was that?

‘Crack!’ “Collect… the coffin!”

“Don’t —! Stop! Stop right there!” Hearing the voice of Chu Wanning in the metal wind, Shi Mei became even crazier. His eyes were wide open as he angrily shouted, choked with emotions, and cursed at everything in the world.

However, as the golden light rose and went, its dazzling brilliance pierced the pupils of his eyes, causing mottled specks of light to flicker. It was over.

The strong wind stopped.

Dead silence.

The pale-faced Chu Wanning stood on his knees, the haggard Shi Mingjing was on his knees.

His spiritual energy slowly faded.

After a while, they all heard a dull rumbling sound coming from the direction of the mountain in the distance — that should be the sound of Taxian-Jun’s corpse turning into dust.

Shi Mei stared at Chu Wanning, the intense emotions on his face disappeared after the battle. His hatred and anger were all broken, revealing a trace of fear.

He didn't know what he was afraid of. Fear that he would be able to kill Mo Ran with his own hands? Fear of the future? Terrifying… What was there to fear?

It seemed to be the end of the world.

Shi Mei finally murmured: "… Dead? He… Dead?"

"Chu Wanning, you killed him… He once stood in front of you in the Red Lotus Pavilion, begging me to do something to him, not to you. Yet, you still killed him mercilessly… Yet, you are so heartless…"

Terrifying to the point that it became a wild laughter in the end. Although he didn't have any intention to laugh, he just raised his head and laughed loudly. Mu Yanli, who was beside him, cried, and kept on persuading him, "A-Nan… Enough… That's enough…"

Shi Mei just laughed. Tears fell down his face, and the golden tears fell onto the ground.

"He's dead. Taxian-Jun had died… Good, it's over. Chu Wanning, you can't afford to lose, you're heartless, you can't afford to play."

Chu Wanning stood at his original position with no expression on his face.

He was like a corpse. He was a corpse.

"Shizun, I've underestimated you."

Shi Mei's voice trembled.

"You are much more ruthless than I thought."

Chu Wanning remained motionless, as if he had lost the last of his heat.

He had thought that Mo Ran had already died, but a moment ago, he also knew that there was still a strand of a soul in this world with a body, and there was also a fragment of Mo Weiyu.

But he also crushed the fragment to dust.

Yes, he was heartless, and he could not refute it.

That youth, that youth, that man, that lover who would laugh and be annoyed, or be whole or broken. The only person in this world who didn't fear him, respected him, and tolerated his lover, the one who used his own flesh and blood to protect him from disaster.

The one who had replaced him, the one who had been devoured by the Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower, the one who had replaced him, the one who had become the Lord of Darkness.

At the age of sixteen, he had paid the only price to protect his fool.

He'll never come back.

"When it rains, I want to save more earthworms."

"Shizun, it's Pear Blossom Bai, please drink this."

"The welcome gift I gave you is really ugly… It's ugly, ugly, ugly."

"Wanning. I missed you."

He had once smilingly learned to write, there are tens of thousands of houses, sheltering everybody, the world is full of joy, and the wind and rain are as peaceful as a mountain.

“Do not hold a grudge if you want to repay a debt of gratitude.”

But in the mountains of corpses and the sea of blood, he had been floating for two lifetimes.

Don’t hold a grudge. Don’t hold a grudge.

“I don’t have any ambitions. After learning the spells, I’ll be able to save more people when they run into some problems…”

That was what he had said to Chu Wanning when he was still young and was still conscious.

At that time, he had hoped with all his heart that more people would live.

Before he fell to Taxian-Jun, he had worked so hard and with so much perseverance to love every single one of his beautiful lives. He was even willing to give up his soul to thank and protect everyone who treated him well.

“Although I am very stupid, I will do my best to improve my techniques. If I do my best, Shizun won’t blame me for being stupid, haha.”

In his memory, the youth scratched his head and smiled, showing mercy to Chu Wanning just like that. Back then, his bright dimples seemed to be filled with white pear blossom, and he had been drunk for the rest of his life.

Chu Wanning closed his eyes.

His hand finally began to tremble.

In the midst of the blur and dizziness, there seemed to be a cool breeze blowing across his face, kissing his moist eyelashes. It was as if he had heard Taxian-Jun's voice, which was both slow and gentle. The voice caressed his ears and sighed softly at his temples:

Fame, wish, blood, flesh and blood, heart, soul, corpse, and ashes.

I'm sorry, I only have so much.

I did my best.

Wanning, you have to do it yourself.

He suddenly opened his eyes and raised his head. His phoenix eyes were filled with mist, and in this void, he seemed to have really seen the spirit of Taxian-Jun's soul floating before his eyes. His expression was gentle and handsome, and his smile was filled with happiness and sadness.

"Mo… Ran…"

The soul, which should have been as pure as a cold plum, glowed with radiance. He leaned over and embraced him, kissed him, slipped through his outstretched hand, and finally scattered in his bosom like an epiphyllum flower.

"This is bad!"

Suddenly, the Tianyin Pavilion rushed in as they shouted in panic, "Not good!"

Mu Yanli was the only one in the room who could still be considered calm. She turned her head with tears in her eyes and said in a stern voice, “I know that something happened to Taxian-Jun. Don’t —”

“What?” The disciple was stunned, then stamped his foot and said, “Not Taxian-Jun! It was at the foot of the mountain! All the sects in the world of cultivation have attacked us together!”

Ch. 301 [Sisheng Peak] Reduplication of the Past

Within the torrential rain, a newly formed group of rebel soldiers stood in front of the mountain. There were cultivators from all the different sects.

The time and space of the Gate of Life and Death had opened, and everything was still unknown. In front of them were many dangers; thus, the hearts of these newly formed Allies were all unsteady, they all had different plans.

Almost no one wanted to take the lead. They were all worried that the Zhenlong chess pieces that were hibernating at Sisheng Peak would once again confront the masters of tigers and wolves that Mount Jiao had once encountered.

They looked into the distance, their hearts anxious — Could there be a demon sitting with his eyes closed within the rain-shrouded Wushan Palace, waiting for the group of heroes to use their weapons so that they could tear everyone into pieces?

Someone raised a torch that was ignited by an Incantation, raised his head and looked at the majestic mountain peak, muttering to himself, “Unexpectedly… The Tianyin Pavilion would actually do such a thing… I still feel like I’m dreaming.”

“Stop sighing.” The Bitan Manor’s Zhen Ku patted that person’s shoulder, “Since you have the time to talk so much, why don’t you think about how to attack the mountain and quickly end this nightmare.”

Someone else gloomily said, “I’m afraid it’s not that simple. Mu Yanli had the Divine Blood Body, Hua Binan was a part of the Medical Sect, and that

Emperor of Taxian-Jun… It's that Mo Ran, that guy's magic is profound and his personality is insidious. We should still be cautious."

"We must not let our guard down."

This cultivator's words won the approval of many people.

If Xue Meng from his previous life were to stand here, he would definitely feel that his life was going around in circles and would eventually return to its starting point.

The scene before was so similar to the night when the ten great sects had attacked Sisheng Peak and Taxian-Jun had killed himself.

Unfortunately, the person in the crowd right now was not the Xue Meng from his previous life, but the young man who had just lost his parents.

Although he was handsome, his face was haggard. In order to wear filial piety, he did not wear the bright silver armor that was at the Sisheng Peak. He was dressed only in plain blue, and his ponytail was tied up with a white ribbon.

Xue Meng opened his mouth and said, "Let's not even talk about this. If this continues, we will not be able to salvage the situation. What do you mean by being insidious? If you are afraid, you will stay here. There's no need to go up."

Everything was the same as in his previous life. Just like back then, when Xue Meng said this, the surrounding people exploded.

Once again, he became the target of public criticism.

“Young Master Xue, your words are really too excessive. What do you mean afraid of things?” The female cultivator from the Jiangdong Hall had her eyebrows raised high, “You are not afraid. A few days ago, you went to the Wushan Palace to assassinate the emperor Taxian-Jun. And the result?”

“…”

“You were the one who lost, and you even dragged Brother Mei down to clean up the mess with you!”

“You…”

A slender white hand blocked Xue Meng’s path, silver bells jingling on his wrist.

Xue Meng said angrily, “You don’t have to meddle in other people’s business!”

“How can it be called business when it is about the son of my benefactor?” As he spoke, he turned his head to smile at the female cultivator who was blushing at every occasion.

“Besides, the words of such a good-looking lady aren’t pleasant to the ears. Of course, I have to guide her so that she can correct her mistakes.” He said politely, “Helping Xue Meng is helping a friend of mine, and not just to clean up the mess. Heaven and Earth are on my side, my heart is clear. I hope that young lady does not wrongly accuse me.”

In the martial world, who didn’t know of Senior Mei’s charm? The female cultivator was instantly speechless, and her face swelled up like a pig’s liver.

Seeing him like that, the female cultivator’s dao companion felt the top of his head turn green, so he taunted: “Interesting, Young Master Xue is

invincible yourself, we are all cowards, why don't you go up the mountain and scout first? In any case, you are the most familiar with the Sisheng Peak, and I heard that the Emperor Taxian-Jun is your cousin Mo Weiyu's past life. No matter what, he won't take your life."

Many people revealed an awkward expression when they heard the words "Taxian-Jun."

Back then, Mo-zongshi had told them the truth. Back then, they had thought that he was plotting something, and that it was full of nonsense. But now, things had come to the surface. Everything was as Mo Ran had said, and many people were beginning to feel uneasy.

Unfortunately, not everyone had the same attitude. An elderly cultivator lightly coughed and said: "Actually, I feel that the identity of that Emperor Taxian-Jun still needs to be verified."

Xue Meng coldly looked at him. "Verified what?"

The old man said, "What I mean is, although that Taxian-Jun is the same as Mo Ran, it doesn't necessarily mean that Mo Ran said it was from his previous life. After all, anything is possible."

"That's right, I still feel that the one Guyue'ye killed was Mo Ran himself, that his previous life was a reason, an excuse!"

Even at this point, there were still some among the crowd who believed that Mo-zongshi was lying and that they had not wrongly accused him.

After all, there were some among them who had once spoken out and humiliated him back in the Tianyin Pavilion. Someone had thrown a stone leaf at him on the third day of the trial and mocked him. Furthermore,

admitting that Mo-zongshi was speaking the truth was equivalent to admitting that they have been deceived and slandered a good person. To some people, this was simply too embarrassing.

Sometimes it takes more courage to admit fault than to make a mistake, and cowards clearly lack it. In order to maintain that they did not make a mistake, they were determined not to let Mo Ran make their mistake known. No matter how much grievance, humiliation, and guilt he suffered, he would never be at peace for two lifetimes. They still wanted him to bear this crime.

To these “gentlemen”, the innocence of others compared to their own face was nothing.

When Mei Hanxue heard this, he complimented him with a smile, “Daoist master Sun, you are truly a proud and unyielding character that cannot be broken.”

The old man was stunned. After pondering for a long time, he realized that Mei Hanxue was laughing at him. He couldn’t help but be furious. He rushed forward and wanted to fight him, but was stopped by an old monk.

Great master Xuanjing advised: “Alright, both of you, stop quarreling. Listen to what this old monk has to say first. It doesn’t matter what status Taxian-Jun has. What’s important is how we should deal with him and how we should deploy our forces after we reach the mountain.”

He turned around and asked Xue Meng amiably, “Young Master Xue, you’re the one who fought with Taxian-Jun. From your point of view, how good is this person’s martial prowess?”

Xue Meng gritted his teeth, clenched his fists and said, “Gathering the power of all the Sect Leaders here is not necessarily a win.”

“Ha!” That Daoist master Sun raised his white eyebrows. “What a proud son of heaven. He really does know how to increase his strength and extinguish his own prestige!”

Great master Xuanjing was a little shocked, “In that case, this person should be quite a bit stronger than Chu-zongshi. No wonder Chu-zongshi was kidnapped by him…”

“Capture? Who didn’t know about the dirty affairs between Chu Wanning and Mo Ran? In my opinion, it’s not kidnapping at all, and Taxian-Jun isn’t some kind of a past life. This whole thing was orchestrated by Mo Ran, who was also in the same group as Chu Wanning! If you don’t believe me, let’s go up the mountain and see!”

Xue Meng’s face suddenly paled. If it was before, he would have already angrily roared and pounced towards this old man to smash his mouth, but not long ago, he had just learned the truth behind the matter between Shizun and Mo Ran. He himself was disgusted to the extreme, he was actually just standing in the same place, looking downcast, and unable to say a word.

While he was in a sorry state, a tall, light green figure lightly covered him.

Jiang Xi said coldly, “You are too audacious. If the events after the mountain are not what you said, then I don’t think you need to keep that bewitching tongue of yours.”

The old Daoist’s facial muscles twitched, and his lips seemed to want to say something. However, after muttering to himself for a long time, he was

unable to spit in front of Jiang Xi. He finally shut his mouth.

Jiang Xi cast a sidelong glance at Xue Meng and didn't say anything more. He lowered his head and pondered for a while, then said to the others, "Let's not delay this any longer. First, we'll arrange the targets for the decisive battle, then we'll act immediately." His gaze turned towards the other Sect Leaders and Elders, as if he was confirming something, "Excluding the chess piece Zhenlong, who is known to be at Sisheng Peak?"

People around him replied, "We'll definitely meet Mu Yanli."

Jiang Xi asked, "Has anyone fought with her before?"

A female cultivator raised her hand. "I exchanged a few blows with her during the internal strife."

Jiang Xi asked, "How's your movement technique?"

The female cultivator thought for a moment and said, "Sending three elders should be enough to stall her."

"Alright. Which three Elders are willing to lock onto Mu Yanli after the battle starts?"

The people at Sisheng Peak had long regarded Mu Yanli as a thorn in their side. At this time, three Elders immediately came out; Xun Ji, Tanlang, Lu. The three of them were from the same sect, and they all had excellent skills in healing and offense. Jiang Xi agreed without hesitation.

Jiang Xi asked again, "What else?"

"There is also a group of close attendants from the Tianyin Pavilion. This number of people is not very good. However, there are at least six or seven

hundred of them and their strength is hard to estimate."

Jiang Xi mused, "The closest martial art to the Tianyin Pavilion is the Wubei Temple…" He raised his eyes to look at Great master Xuanjing. "Grandmaster, are you willing to let the disciples of the temple watch the Tianyin Pavilion's attendants during the war?"

"This…" Great master Xuanjing secretly decided the pros and cons of this move.

The drawbacks were obvious. The number and strength of the disciples within the Tianyin Pavilion were unknown. It was best for them to be weak, but if they were strong, then the Temple's vitality would be greatly damaged. At the very least, they no longer had to face the most frightening of all, Taxian-Jun.

Thus, he nodded his head, "This old monk will naturally share the worries of the world."

"What's left is Hua Binan…" Jiang Xi sighed and closed his eyes, "No need for that. Although Guyue'ye couldn't be said to be familiar with his every move and every move, he at least had the same origin as us. During the great battle, I ask that the elders of my sect keep an eye on this person, and not show any mercy."

After all these arrangements were made, all that was left were the Zhenlong chess pieces and Taxian-Jun.

Jiang Xi's eyes swept across the crowd, but other than a few cultivators, most of them suddenly felt as if they had cervical spondylosis. Their heads were all lowered, and some even reached out to touch their necks, as if they were in great pain.

“Mistress?”

Mingyue Lou nodded. “The Taxue Palace should be able to help.”

Jiang Xi then asked the pavilion master. The Taoist also nodded and said, “It’s our responsibility.”

But apart from this, the other sects were either afraid of trouble or were unsuited for battle. Those in charge were more or less hesitant. There were even some people who muttered, “Since that Taxian-Jun through Space and Time Lord was able to tear open the Gate of Life and Death, the power of those Sect Leaders is definitely not enough.”

“That’s right, isn’t this the same as seeking death?”

Someone then sighed, “If only the Rufeng Sect was still here. The cultivators of the seventy-two cities have so many City Lords, sigh… What a pity.”

“Huh?” Suddenly, a Jiangdong Hall cultivator raised his voice, “What about that Ye Wangxi girl? Wasn’t she very good at fighting? Most likely, their strength would be comparable to ten Nangong Liu. They would definitely have the battle power of a sect head. Where is she?”

Jiang Xi’s face darkened when she was mentioned. He gloomily replied, “Before we left, we settled down a group of refugees in Guyue’ye. At that time, we decided to keep a cultivator in guard to prevent the chess pieces from pressing on their territory — No one automatically submitted. In the end she stayed.”

That cultivator let out an “ah” and revealed an awkward expression.

Jiang Xi said gloomily, “They are true heroes here. Why do you need a little girl everywhere?”

“…”

After a while, there were still few people in the crowd who wanted to take the lead. The young and beautiful new Sect Leader of the Jiangdong Hall stammered: “I think we still have to think about it carefully. After all, this is not a joke. Let’s wait a little while longer.”

Hearing the word “wait,” Xue Meng immediately became so angry that his lips turned blue. He did his best to suppress his anger and asked, “How much longer do we have to wait? How secure can it be if we wait a little longer?”

“But we can’t go up the mountain and die.”

“Success or failure will be decided in one move. Young Master Xue, be careful.”

Great master Xuanjing also advised: “Young Master Xue, be careful of this ship. Now that the world had turned upside down and the Sisheng Peak had disappeared, no one knew what kind of changes would occur in front of them. At present, all of the top cultivators in the cultivation world were gathered here. If all the sticks were to fall into the water, who would be responsible for it?”

“Yes, what should we do if the Sect Leaders and cultivators are killed…”

Xue Meng had been holding back this whole time, but now he could not hold it in any longer. He suddenly raised his head, his eyes blood-red. “Your

Sect Leader is not dead yet, and he's already thinking about what to do. Then, what about Sisheng Peak?!"

"…"

When the topic of Sisheng Peak was brought up, everyone could not help but think of the Sect Leader and his wife who had been wrongly accused and had both perished.

"I don't know what to do about Sisheng Peak." Xue Meng's voice was slightly hoarse. "I don't have a cousin, a senior brother, a mother, or a father. Now, even Shizun…"

Xue Meng's eyelashes trembled slightly, and his Adam's apple moved, as if he was doing his utmost to swallow his pain. However, that pain was too deep for him to bear. He closed his eyes and then opened them again, "The Lords are afraid of death, because they still have a legacy. I am not, so I am not afraid of death."

Mei Hanxue who was standing beside them frowned and whispered, "Xue Meng!"

But how could he listen?

No one in this world could stop him anymore.

Xue Meng said, "If you don't go, I'll go by myself."

"Young Lord!" The disciples at Sisheng Peak all stepped forward to advise against it, but Xue Meng had already made up his mind and displayed his murderous intent. He turned around and left everyone behind. The anger and grievance he had been enduring all became tears rolling down his cheeks that no one could see.

Standing amidst the torrential rain, Jiang Xi gazed at his back, “You…”

Hearing his voice, Xue Meng walked even faster. His Longcheng was already shattered. He did not even have a decent sword. However, he still walked towards the majestic Sisheng Peak without looking back.

“Xue Meng!”

After a few moments of hesitation, a hoarse shout finally came out of Jiang Xi’s throat with great difficulty.

Jiang Xi walked up and before his hand could touch Xue Meng’s shoulder, he saw the young man suddenly turn around. A fiery light flashed in his round bird-like eyes as he angrily shouted, “Scram! Don’t touch me!” With that, he flung Jiang Xi’s hand away and left without giving anyone a chance to speak.

On the steps, the moss grew and the bamboo grew.

Xue Meng breathed heavily as he sprinted through the torrential rain. In front of him was a world that was moist like a dream.

Then, Madam Wang had once stood beneath the moon and watched a peony blossom. At that time, Xue Zhengyong was a mighty man who had returned from the battle and raised his spear. As Xue Meng walked through the white stone gate, he saw Shi Mei lowering his head and muttering to himself. He ran past the heroic pillar and saw Mo Ran looking at the moon. He saw the bustling disciples in the wind and rain coming back from class, laughing on the bridge.

He sped up his pace as if he were running for his life, like a tiger in the woods. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw an old peach tree. He saw his

young self kowtowing nine times under the tree, he raised his head with a smile and said to Chu Wanning, who was waving his white robe,

“Disciple Xue Meng greets Shizun.”

He suddenly closed his eyes.

Sisheng Peak carried too many memories, floating before his eyes. There used to be so much fire here, but now there’s so much dust.

Xue Meng walked on the road. The wind and rain were blowing, and the memories of past fading away.

“Don’t follow me… Don’t let me see this again…”

He muttered as he shuttled back and forth among the lingering shadows, fleeing from the time of the high-spirited youth. When he stood on the peak of the mountain, he was soaked through under the rain. He was like a phoenix whose feathers had already withered, shivering slightly.

Cold.

His bones were frozen to ice.

He narrowed his thick eyelashes and looked at the distant palace. The candlelight was dim. This was Sisheng Peak in his previous life. The last time he came here to assassinate him, he didn’t pay any attention to it…

Suddenly, he caught a glimpse of three tombs standing in front of the closer Heaven-Piercing Tower.

This was something he had never seen in his own sect. He could not help but walk over to take a closer look. Out of the three tombs, one of them

had the “Deep Fried Empress” gouged in it, while the other had been flattened. The stone tablet had fallen to the side.

The last one was very old.

In front of the tomb, there was a faint shadow, standing alone.

The person stood in front of the grave, his robes stained with blood, his wide sleeves reaching the ground. He raised his hand to stroke the words on the tombstone.

Xue Meng was shocked. His skull felt as if it had been pierced by an arrow and all the blood in his body surged. He shouted, “Mo Ran!” He hacked at Longcheng, but his waist was empty.

Only then did he recall that Longcheng had already been destroyed. It shattered during his last confrontation with Taxian-Jun.

The man who had his back to him seemed to be unable to hear anything, only slowly bending over the tombstone as if he was finally reaching the end of an extremely weary journey. Xue Meng saw him gently rub his forehead against the cold stone.

Xue Meng’s palm suddenly ignited with a flame. Orange light scattered in all directions.

He hacked towards the back of Taxian-Jun without a care in the world.

“Bam!”

With a loud bang, the firelight did not hurt anyone, only the stone tablet that had grown old with age had shattered.

He looked left and right, but there was no one around, not even a Immortal Emperor, not a black figure, not a single person.

The rain poured down around him like a torrential downpour. It was as if he was the only one left in the world. However, the tree shadows seemed to be hiding in the dark forest, hiding in the grass, waiting for the next moment.

“Taxian-Jun! Taxian-Jun!”

He shouted and his voice was instantly crushed into dust by the thunder.

Did I see wrongly?

How could it be wrong? It was clearly such a clear view of his back. He had clearly been standing here just now, yet that person had actually reached out his hand to touch the stone tablet, the stone tablet…

Suddenly, he stopped.

Xue Meng bent over, lifted his hand and slowly picked up the stone tablet that had been smashed into pieces. He picked up half of it, and in an instant, he felt as if he had fallen into a cave of ice!

Astonishingly, the words on the monument were:

The Tomb of Chu Wanning

Whose grave? What tomb?

Xue Meng suddenly stood up and staggered backwards. The white light of the lightning shone on his miserable face. Xue Meng shook his head and muttered, “No… No… What was going on… How is that possible?”

He swallowed, trying to calm himself. He squatted there for a while, breathing heavily before finally recovering. Squinting his eyes, he examined the tombstone again.

The monolith's body was already very mottled. It had been at least ten years, and it was not new. The monolith was carved with varying depths, as if it had originally been carved with something. Later on, someone had erased the original handwriting and carved these seven words anew.

Shizun.

Chu Wanning's tomb.

This was the grave of his previous Shizun?

Xue Meng's lips were blue and his entire body was trembling. It was unknown whether it was grief, anger, fear or something else that was rolling in his chest… He buried his face in his hands and wiped away the wet rain.

So, what kind of love and hatred did he have for the future he did not know?

He did not know, just like he did not know what had been carved on this monolith, and for what reason, the inscription had been changed.

I don't know.

Xue Meng rested in place for a while, but when he opened his eyes, he saw that the dark golden shadow had appeared again. This time, the distance was even closer, and the lofty mountains and rivers that were embroidered with golden threads could be clearly seen.

The figure seemed to be something between a soul and a living person. It was neither completely alive nor completely dead. As that person looked at Heaven-Piercing Tower from afar, Xue Meng vaguely heard him whispering to himself. “Shizun, you… Rely on me.”

The voice was ethereal, like a dream.

“I’m going home. I’m going home. I’ll go home,” he said, but there was a hint of confusion in his voice.

“Shizun…”

With a boom, it was as if thunder had smashed the earth apart. The belly of the mountains and rivers faintly trembled, and all of his internal organs went numb.

“But I don’t have a home…”

The black and gold figure suddenly turned around. In this stormy rain, Xue Meng could clearly see his face, the face of Mo Ran.

As if he didn’t see him, Mo Ran continued to mutter to himself, “I don’t have a home anymore… I want to go back. I want to go back!”

He became anxious and desperate, “Let me go back, let me go back! I want to see him. I want to see him!”

Amidst the thunder and lightning, the black shadow rose into the air. Xue Meng was caught off guard by the cold and violent black wind. The shadow passed through him, carrying a bone-piercing chill. It was colder than rain. He was so dazed that he fell to the ground.

“I can’t die… I want to see him!”

Xue Meng could clearly hear Mo Ran's low shout. The black shadow flew like a whirlwind towards the mountain behind Sisheng Peak. When he came back to his senses, he had already lost sight of the rising ghost. At the back of the mountain, a sky-splitting red light was spurting out!

……

What happened? What was that shadow just now?

Ghost?

He turned white and sat stiffly — until someone slapped him in the back.

At this time, Xue Meng's entire body was stretched to the limit, and upon contact, he fiercely jumped up, as if he had gone mad, and said with extreme helplessness: "Who?! Who is it!?"

Mei Hanxue held him down: "Don't be afraid, it's me."

Behind him, in the forest, an extremely ugly person from the Taxue Palace walked out. However, he had a pair of light green eyes that Xue Meng was familiar with. It was Mei Hanxue's big brother with the cold mouth.

His elder brother, Méi Hánxuě,[176] stepped out of the forest, holding two swords in his hand. One was his godly weapon, Shuofeng, while the other was…

"Xuehuang."

Méi Hánxuě walked up to the shivering Xue Meng and handed Jiang Xi's sword to him.

“Sect Leader Jiang wanted me to hand it over to you on his behalf. He said you could use it, and you didn’t have to refuse it for some reason.”

His younger brother was still curious. “May I ask, what’s your relationship with Jiang Xi?”

“Let’s go.” His words were mercilessly cut off by his big brother. “Let’s go to the Wushan Palace to check on Chu-zongshi’s situation.”

As Méi Hánxuě said this, he shot a glance at Xue Meng and used his Shuofeng to knock on his shoulder. Without saying a word, he dove into the depths of the rain.

As for his twin brother, he sighed and patted Xue Meng on the head before following his brother to Wushan Palace, in the wind and rain.

Ch. 302 [Sisheng Peak] Wushang Palace of Broken Soul

The Wushan Palace was the former Loyalty Hall. After Taxian-Jun ascended to the throne, he adjusted the layout and divided it into three areas: the front hall, the middle courtyard, and the back hall.

The two Mei brothers did not go in immediately. They stood at the door and waited for Xue Meng to follow them. His eldest brother then told him, “This palace is not right. There is the Bewitching Miasma inside.”

“What is the Bewitching Miasma?”

Mei Hanxue explained, “It is a kind of fragrant miasma similar to the Chimen Escape Armor. It can be found in the Plum Forest of the Taxue Palace, and will always be there.”

With an ashen face, Xue Meng asked, “What can it be used for?”

“It will make it impossible for the invader to find his way.” Mei Hanxue said, “This kind of miasma has no effect on your people, but for the intruders it can distort the scene and make people unable to find the real entrance. You know what people say about the Wall-Hitting Ghost, It’s probably something like that.”

Xue Meng, “…”

Méi Hánxuě said coldly, “They are trying to stall for time. Most likely, someone is fighting in the rear palace.”

Mei Hanxue asked, “What do we do? Can we get around it?”

Méi Hánxuě shot a glance at him. “You’ve lived in the Taxue Palace for more than twenty years, and you’re asking me?”

“… Cough.” The younger brother was somewhat embarrassed. He turned to Xue Meng and said, “There’s no other way. I can only enter and find the source of the miasma and disperse it.” After glancing at Xue Meng’s expression, he consoled,

“But don’t worry, I’m most adept at this. I often use the Taxue Palace’s Bewitching Miasma at the back of the mountain to avoid the female cultivators who come looking for trouble. Give me an incense stick of time and I should be able to break it.”

At the mention of this, his big brother’s face turned black, and his voice dropped like ice.

“You really have the face to say that.”

At this moment, Xue Meng was not in the mood to listen to their idle chatter. He took two steps forward, and with a creak, he pushed open the front door of the Martial Palace.

Just like a ghost opening its stinky mouth, the carved lacquer door slowly opened, the interior was lit up by candles, it was completely silent. As Xue Meng stepped in, he could indeed feel the faint fragrance of flowers permeating the air.

When he turned around, the Mei brothers were already gone. It seemed that before the miasma dispersed, the three of them would see a different scene, and would not be able to see each other at all.

At this moment, a familiar voice came from the high throne in the great hall.

“Xue Meng…”

A chilly wind blew, and the black gauze curtain fluttered. Shocked, Xue Meng shouted, “Mo Ran?!”

The voice sighed, “It’s you, right? Are you here?”

Xue Meng’s throat moved as he tightened his spine. He lifted his sword and walked towards the dark depths of the hall.

The tip of the sword lifted the curtains, and then he saw it.

Sitting on the high seat, there was a handsome, pale man with his eyes closed. The man was reclining in the Cinnabar chair, wearing the crown of the Nine Bones. His eyebrows were pitch black, and his nose was sharp. Although his nose was high, it had a very fine curve to it. A pair of light colored lips were pursed, but not much of an expression could be seen on his face.

It was Taxian-Jun.

Taxian-Jun’s face was pale, his white corpse had a tinge of green, as if he had been poisoned. In front of him was a plate of fruits. The grapes were dark purple, the apples were thin, and the mountains and rivers were painted on a silver plate, but the man on the throne didn’t even lift his eyelids. He wouldn’t look.

Illusion? Real?

What was divided was not really true. Xue Meng's mind was buzzing. When he came back to his senses, he heard himself say, "Mo Ran, you…"

It seemed as if Taxian-Jun still hadn't woken up from his dream. He still had his eyes closed, but he still replied, "… What?"

Perhaps the man in front of him was too weak, or perhaps in the torrential rain, Xue Meng had already vented out his boundless anger. At this moment, facing the illusion on the seat of honor, exhaustion was greater than anger.

He also did not know if Mo Ran would answer, nor did he know what the meaning of his actions were. He only mumbled numbly, asking those questions that were accumulated in his chest and were about to crush him:

"Why are you doing this. Did you come back from a new life? You. You and Shizun… You all really…"

Of course, Taxian-Jun didn't reply. He merely snorted, then slowly opened his eyes.

In the midst of the bright lights, he glanced at Xue Meng and said, "It seems like you and Shizun have not seen each other since the Taxue Palace two years ago."

Xue Meng froze for a moment. "What?"

Taxian-Jun smiled and continued, "Xue Meng, do you miss him?"

Xue Meng was stunned and asked, "What Kunlun's Taxue Palace? What two years' absence? What kind of nonsense is this?!"

This blurry illusion was actually the last conversation that he had had with Xue Meng when he had taken the poison in his previous life. It was also the last words that Taxian-Jun had left behind in the mortal world.

The illusion came up at random, and coincidentally happened to show the time before the two of them parted ways in their previous life.

But at this moment, Xue Meng didn't know. Blank and angry, anxious and frightened, he stared at the man in the seat and asked, "What nonsense are you talking about?"

Taxian-Jun's eyes were looking at him, but it also seemed as though he wasn't looking at him at all.

It was as if through this real Xue Meng, he was looking at another shadow that did not exist.

He talked to the shadow by himself, "Return it to you? Stupid words. You should think about it, why would I allow Shizun to live in this world with such a deep grudge between us?"

Xue Meng was speechless.

Right… This was all an illusion. Even if he didn't say anything, Taxian-Jun would continue speaking without stopping. He was talking to someone he couldn't see.

What was he talking about?

Because Xue Meng could not understand the words of Taxian-Jun, he did not remember too much. But the eyes of the man on the throne were crazy and cold, stubborn and contradictory. This made Xue Meng's entire body turn cold — this was not his brother. He did not recognize it.

Taxian-Jun was still vicious, “You wanted to remind me that he beat me to a pulp and made me kneel down in front of everyone to plead guilty? Or was it to remind me that he had stood in front of me for your sake, for the sake of someone unrelated to him, repeatedly stopping me from doing good deeds and ruining my great cause?”

Like a blind, clawed dragon, the Emperor retained his final ferocity, exhausted, in the mud.

He could not stop mumbling as if he was crazy or foolish like a demon. He looked very vicious, but he was actually very tired.

He said, “But we were master and disciple once. His corpse is resting at the Red Lotus Pavilion on the southern peak. Lying among the red lotuses, I have preserved it very well, as if he had fallen asleep.”

He added, “His corpse was sustained by my spiritual force, so it will not rot. If you miss him, then stop wasting your breath on me. Hurry up and go before I die.”

Xue Meng took a few steps forward as Xuehuang tightly gripped its hand. It was sweating profusely as it muttered, “What are you talking about…”

In his previous life, who died?

Whose body was resting in the Red Lotus Pavilion?

Whose corpse would have to rely on the spirit energy of Taxian-Jun in order to not rot… Who?

In fact, from Taxian-Jun’s words, from the grave he saw in front of Heaven-Piercing Tower, Xue Meng already had an answer in his heart. However, his

mind felt as if it was filled with ice, and his upper and lower lip constantly trembled.

Who died… Who died!

Suddenly, his face distorted, he rushed up to the hall. He reached out to tug at Mo Ran's clothes, but his five fingers directly passed through the illusion.

Taxian-Jun's face in his hands, he said hoarsely: "Go. Go see him. If I die and my spiritual power is cut off, he will turn to dust."

As soon as he finished speaking, the man closed his eyes in disappointment. The poison had already taken effect.

As for Xue Meng, his eyes were wide open as his entire body trembled…

How did all this turn out like this? What kind of nonsense had happened in the mortal world?

"You killed him?"

Xue Meng's voice rustled as if about to destroy everything. "It was you who killed him?"

"…"

"Do you know everything about your rebirth? Do you have all your memories?"

Naturally, no one would answer him, but Xue Meng still asked.

In this world, there were many answers. Knowing them would not make people happy, and would only make them suffer. Yet, despite knowing

these answers, they still had to ask.

Cruel truth and tender lies, which is love and which is hate?

“If you knew… Why did you lie to us? Brother… How could you bear it… How can you bear it…”

The other’s face looked as though it was about to spasm. No one would look good when poison was acting up. Fresh blood flowed out from the corner of Taxian-Jun’s mouth. He stood up, staggered and stood up, then walked unsteadily out of the hall.

“Where are you going?”

Xue Meng stretched out his hand towards that illusory image.

“You want to —”

Suddenly, his five fingers fell into a ball of warmth.

Xue Meng quivered, and the fragrance of the flowers disappeared from his nose. At the same time, the black and gold figure of his back that was walking towards the sunset disappeared.

“Mo Ran?”

He was gone.

With the illusion gone, Xue Meng’s eyes and expression were very blank and shattered. Dreams and illusions, his previous and current lives, which one was real, which one was fake? The life and death gate of time and space split open, causing the once red world to be thrown into chaos.

What was the real thing that happened, the Mo Ran that was the true Mo Ran, who was the real self?

His gaunt face had a pitiful, shattered expression, and even his eyes were glazed.

After a long time, his eyes gradually focused.

In the brown pupils, Mei Hanxue's silhouette was reflected.

"Wake up." Mei Hanxue released his hand and flicked his forehead, causing Xue Meng to experience pain.

"It's over."

"…"

Xue Meng froze for a while before he finally regained his senses. He muttered to himself, almost exhausted, "I'm sorry…"

Mei Hanxue pursed his lips, "There is nothing to be sorry for. This type of confusion is very mysterious, and the more you worry about it, the more frightening it will become."

Xue Meng raised his eyes and looked at him with his slightly moist black eyes.

He actually didn't like talking to Mei Hanxue, but the person in front of him right now was like the only real and stable existence in the midst of an illusion. He couldn't help but ask in a hoarse voice, "What about you? What did you see?"

Mei Hanxue did not answer immediately. He paused for a moment and then revealed a smile, “Over ten years, there have been over a thousand girls who have harmed me. Sigh, what a nice scene, I’m really worried about this.”

“…”

At this moment, they suddenly heard an earth-shattering explosion from the rear hall.

Méi Hánxuě’s gaze froze as he drew his sword and said, “Let’s go.”

Xue Meng and Mei Hanxue followed him through the torrential rain of the courtyard. When they arrived at the back hall, they first saw a white-gold figure swimming up to the roof of the corridor. When the figure saw the three people who had barged in, he froze in his steps and lowered his eyes. A thunderclap illuminated her face.

Méi Hánxuě’s brows sank as he coldly asked, “Mu Yanli?”

A shout came from the front, “Sister Mu, don’t bother with them. Run!”

Although she was unwilling, she still quickly left. By the time Xue Meng and the others arrived, the rear hall was in ruins. There were broken pieces of wood and tiles everywhere, and flames were licking the broken beams of the house.

In the ruins, two flashing white shadows were slashing against each other, the strong winds were sent into the air, and sparks of fire were ignited! The two figures were as fast as lightning, colliding and separating in the air at a high speed.

A metallic sound was heard as the golden light flashed by in succession. With a boom, the tiles were lifted up. A thick wooden log lying in the middle of the crushed rocks and sand was pulled up high, as if it had awoken. On the other side, a blue wave formed from spirit energy gushed out of the broken golden bricks, surging violently.

Figures of people could be seen standing on the top of the giant tree and the top of the wave from the left and right.

Xue Meng's face suddenly paled. "Shizun!"

No matter what the truth was, it was Xue Meng's natural instinct to worry about Chu Wanning in the face of danger.

Méi Hánxuě narrowed his eyes as he faced the wisps of mist and muttered, "Shi Mingjing…"

The two people who had been fighting against each other were none other than Shizun and disciple of the previous timeline, Chu Wanning and Shi Mingjing.

However, the strangest thing was that a layer of powerful spiritual energy that clearly belonged to Taxian-Jun covered Shi Mingjing's entire body. Black incantations crawled all over his exposed skin, and his meridian channels were even more terrifying.

Xue Meng rushed forward: "What's going on?! Shi Mei, Shi —"

With a bang, Xue Meng was ejected out of the battle circle. He struggled to get up and saw that a golden Haitang Barrier had been placed in front of him.

Chu Wanning looked pale as he said, "Don't come near me."

Mei Hanxue walked forward a few steps and stood beside Xue Meng. He stared at Shi Mei's unusually strong spirit energy flow and frowned: "… Strange. He used his own water style techniques before, but the power the emanate is completely that of another person now."

It was just that after a short pause, Chu Wanning and Shi Mingjing started to fight again. At this moment, both of them had completely released their spirit energy. The powerful aura forced the other three to the point that they couldn't breathe.

The sword light flashed past, illuminating his eyes which were sharper than the tip of the sword. His body was as light as a swallow, and he suddenly swung his sword towards Shi Mei!

"Chu Wanning!"

Shi Mei's angry shout was almost warped.

"I have never killed you in my two lifetimes — and this is how you treat me?!"

With a loud bang, he raised his hand and formed a seal. A dark blue barrier suddenly appeared in front of Shi Mei, blocking Chu Wanning's attack.

However, upon closer inspection, one could see that the barrier was not formed out of thin air. Instead, it was formed by a sheathless saber — Bu'gui! All that flowed in Shi Mei's body were the ruthless spirit streams of Taxian-Jun. So much so that he even recognized the wrong master and listened to his summons to serve him.

Chu Wanning's eyes darkened, he said, "No, you've already killed me in both lives."

The golden sword was drawn back and a faint crack appeared on the barrier created by Shi Mei. He saw Chu Wanning somersault in the air, his long legs kicking towards the fissure, borrowing the force to leap backwards, and then throwing Huaisha in his hands towards him! He could only hear the sound of thunder erupting as rumbling black clouds rolled across the sky. In the midst of the storm and thunder and lightning of the Nine Prefectures, Huaisha suddenly broke through the barrier of Shi Mei!

Shi Mei raised his hands to block the attack, but he was not Mo Weiyu after all.

He could not bear the power of Huaisha, so he let go of the blade and stabbed it into the ground. Then, the Divine Martial Golden Sword pierced towards Shi Mei's chest!

"Ugh…" Shi Mei barely managed to avoid the fatal blow on his heart. With a 'swoosh' sound, blood splattered in all directions. Huaisha penetrated through Shi Mei's shoulder and returned to Chu Wanning's palm dripping with blood.

Shi Mei fell back to the ground, falling among the broken bricks. He was still trying his best to cover his wounds as he got up.

His eyes flashed with extreme anger and malevolence. "Why did you stop me!? What's the use of stopping me?! Those who died can come back to life? Do you think you'll stop me and your days will be fine again? Will you be able to return to the past?"

Chu Wanning jumped down from the mountain, landing on the ground with his toes, then he stood in the middle of the ruins.

His entire body was drenched in sweat. There were wounds and blood, and his expression was indifferent. He did not look like Chu Wanning at all.

What he had said was true.

The Eight-Sufferings-Long-Hatred Flower had devoured his lover, so he had died in Shi Mingjing's hands for two lifetimes. Two lifetimes.

"No matter what you do, it's too late! Do you know what you could have done to stop all this?!" The rain poured down beside the two of them, but it did not extinguish their hatred, "You should have opened the Gate of Life and Death in your previous life, gone back to the past, killed Mo Ran, and ripped his corpse into pieces and burned it into ashes! You should have killed him!"

"…" Chu Wanning's eyes were ice-cold.

"What do you mean, starting from the beginning, what redemption!? What a joke! It's because you want to save him, and you don't want to kill him, that's why I got his new and powerful spirit core! It is only because of this that I have been able to reforge Emperor Taxian-Jun that the situation has developed so far!" As Shi Mei spoke, he burst into laughter.

His eyes were like the eyes of a snake, like the pincers of a scorpion, like a beehive of venom.

Shi Mei gritted his teeth and said, "Because of you…… because you couldn't do it. Didn't you want to stop me? If you had killed them earlier, then everything would be over. What about me?!"

"You're the one who implicated these two worlds!"

“Don’t think that you are the immortal Yuheng, what did you do? You didn’t do anything! I used the crack in space and time that you left behind to master the mysteries of the First Forbidden Technique and reopen the Gate of Life and Death. Hahaha, hahaha…”

The laughter was as sticky as a spider’s web and as sinister as a vulture’s.

He rolled back and forth, blood trickling from the corners of his mouth. The magic lines on his body were slowly fading away, but he did not care. He did his best to use the most vicious words to insult and curse the people in front of him.

Whether infatuation or love…

They all disappeared in the torrential rain.

He must have underestimated Chu Wanning, or thought too highly of himself. He used to be full of himself, thinking that Chu Wanning could become his plaything. As long as the chain was tight, it would be fine to raise it for fun. His life was unnecessary. But at this moment —

“If I were to start over…” The eyes of the peach blossom flashed with anger and cold light. “I’d definitely kill you.”

The last of the magic prints disappeared.

The strong flow of spirit power in Shi Mei’s body suddenly disappeared.

The one that was lying on the ground had turned back into an ordinary Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast.

Shi Mei gasped for breath as he looked at Chu Wanning through the rain.

He had just used his final killing move – Borrowing the Divine. He had used this move before in front of Mo Ran after his rebirth, on the night of the Linling Yu Inn.

Although it was called a technique, it was actually more like swallowing a spiritual medicine. This pill was refined using the blood of Taxian-Jun. It allowed him to obtain Mo Ran's power within the time it takes to burn an incense stick.

The power was however not the true power of Mo Ran, it was still lacking. It was nevertheless sufficient for him to use in a lot of necessary situations.

This time, his failure to defeat Chu Wanning in a short period of time meant that he was at his wit's end.

He knew very well.

Watching from the side, Xue Meng's scalp went numb, and he was also at a loss as he said hoarsely, "Shizun?… Shizun?"

Although his voice was weak, the place where Shi Mei fell was not far away from Xue Meng. He heard his voice and turned his head. Their gazes met, and Xue Meng's mind grew increasingly blank.

Shi Mei looked at him for a while. Suddenly, his eyes flashed. Then, a trace of a sad smile appeared on his handsome face.

"Young Lord…"

Xue Meng trembled violently.

In a trance, Shi Mei's eyes were still the same as before, and his face was still the same as before. He was in such a sorry state, yet so weak. He didn't

say anything, and only extended his hand towards Xue Meng.

Xue Meng stood at the edge of the barrier. As long as he couldn't help but take a step forward — No, half a step would be enough, then…

However, right at this moment, an intense flash of light suddenly burst forth from Bu'gui, which was impaled on the side! Everyone was stunned. Their gazes all landed on the Hundred Fighting Fierce Blade. Without any warning, it started to shine with a fierce light. The light alternated between scarlet, green, and blue for more than ten times before it suddenly erupted into a strong current!

Mei Hanxue said, "Be careful!" He pulled Xue Meng, who had almost stepped out of the barrier, back.

Soon after, they saw an indomitable spirit rise up into the storm. It was like a bright shooting star, shooting straight towards the forbidden area at the back of the mountain!

This scene was witnessed by all of the cultivators who were attacking the mountain and fighting against the pawns that filled the mountain. Everyone was shocked, "What is that?"

"What's going on?"

Shi Mei narrowed his eyes and looked at the red light that suddenly suffused the mountain behind him. The red light penetrated into his pupils and he pinched the tip of his finger. He then closed his eyes to sense the light. After a while, Shi Mei suddenly understood what had happened. He opened his eyes with a look of ecstasy on his face.

"Taxian-Jun!"

Suddenly, Chu Wanning turned around, his face was pale.

Shi Mei laughed out loud, and then said with a fierce look in his eyes: “He’s not dead… Hahaha… He actually did not die!” With strength that came from nowhere, he crawled up from the ground, and before anyone could react, he pressed several acupuncture points on his body to stop the bleeding. With the spread of his bloody robe, he instantly landed on the roof tiles, jumped a few steps, and dove into the garden.

“Shizun…”

Chu Wanning could not stay. He turned and looked at Xue Meng, then said to Mei Hanxue, “Please take care of him.” He flew up to the ground and followed closely behind Shi Mei.

Shi Mei’s movement technique was light, and he was not inferior to his Shizun in terms of movement. The two of them stood in front of each other, but Shi Mei could not get rid of Chu Wanning, and Chu Wanning could not catch him for the time being. In the blink of an eye, the two of them had arrived at the back of the mountain.

Ch. 303 [Sisheng Peak] Xue Meng from His Previous Life

There was an unfathomable chasm in front of the Path of Martyrdom. This chasm was the result of Chu Wanning's previous use of the Corpse Splitting Technique. The rain poured down into the ravine like a waterfall.

Above the chasm, a man in a black gold robe stood with his back to them, a blade held in one hand, his aura soaring.

Hearing the commotion, the man's fingers moved slightly and he slowly turned his head around.

It was Mo Ran!

His heart felt like it had been cut by a stone in the wind, Chu Wanning stared at the person in front of him in disbelief. What was going on?

"Rumble ~ ~ ~ ~"

White-white lightning flashed, followed by thunderous roars.

The pale light illuminated the blood-stained face of Taxian-Jun. That face was truly terrifying, and Shi Mei couldn't help but take a step back.

However, Chu Wanning involuntarily took two steps forward.

Blood traces.

His face was covered in bloody wounds. Apart from his face, every inch of skin that was exposed was crisscrossed, flesh and blood turning upside down. He was like a dismembered corpse that had failed because the blade was not sharp enough. His entire body was covered with cracks.

He could still see the handsome face of the past.

“…”

Chu Wanning’s lips turned white as he stood in the heavy rain, staring at the dead body that had been slashed into a thousand pieces.

The living dead also stared at him, a pair of black and white pupils filled with blood and tears.

His mind was blurry as memories and memories fought. His spirit soul and spirit soul were fighting. Perhaps it was because it hurt too much, but he couldn’t help but use his free hand to hold onto the side of his face.

Dark red blood dripped from his fingers along with the rain.

His thick eyelashes trembled, there was the fury of Taxian-Jun, and there was also Mo-zongshi’s bewilderment, “… Why did you do this to me?”

Chu Wanning: “…”

“Why did you kill me?” The man was startled, his eyes reflecting Chu Wanning’s reflection. Slowly, his expression became helpless and gentle. He muttered, “Shizun, is there something I didn’t do well?”

“No…”

“Did I make you unhappy again?”

Hearing his voice, Chu Wanning’s mind was in a mess. He thought, was that Taxian-Jun in the rain? No… No, that’s Mo Ran.

Regardless of whether it was Taxian-Jun or Mo-zongshi, both were Mo Ran.

Mo Ran, bathed in blood, staggered toward him. Beneath the blood was a corpse's white face, its open eyes unfocused, filled with grief.

"What have I done to disappoint you? For you to do this to me."

The rain was so cold that it seeped into his bones. He just watched as Mo Ran walked step by step towards him. Mo Ran was crying, and his eyes were filled with blood.

"Stop hitting me with the whip… I'll hurt too… No matter how stupid, how slow… You hit me… I'm in pain too… Shizun…"

From a slight tremble to a violent one, Chu Wanning could not stand still anymore. He was on the verge of breaking down.

He fell to his knees, curled up in the rain, his stomach torn and crushed by claws. He looked more dead man than Mo Ran did in front of him.

"I'm sorry…" Chu Wanning lamented in a hoarse voice, "… I'm sorry…"

Your scar is as long as my pain.

All your blood and hate ended up in my body.

He knelt in front of Mo Ran, hunched and wincing. He used all the courage he had left to raise his head, but when he looked at the body that he had failed in, he sobbed, "I'm the one who let you down…"

He didn't know where he had made a mistake, but it was probably because the living dead people with souls still inside couldn't be considered as real corpses, so the Corpse Splitting Spell didn't fully take effect.

Mo Ran did not die, but he was getting crazy. The memories of his life, whether he was in pain or madness, or confusion or sadness, rushed up one after another.

He was Mo Weiyu, Mo-zongshi, Taxian-Jun, and Ran'er.

Countless fragments had formed into this utterly broken man in front of him.

"Mo Ran…"

Upon hearing his voice, Mo Ran's eyes slightly shifted. The rain was red at his feet and there was blood all over the place.

After pausing for a while, this man whose spiritual sense had been split suddenly became irritable, as if another consciousness had invaded him. He began to pace back and forth, his sinister expression appearing all the more terrifying on his distorted face.

"Chu Wanning! You hate this Venerable One so much that you want to take his life at all costs, don't you?"

"I hate you too! I wish I could tear your corpse into a thousand pieces and eat your intestines! I wish I could let you be sacrificed for thousands of generations! You can't blame me, you're the one who killed me —!"

His sleeves fluttered as his eyes widened in anger.

He was so furious that he seemed like he was about to burst forth and strangle Chu Wanning by the throat and shatter him into pieces.

However, it was like a bow breaking before it was full or a sword breaking before it was drawn.

With an explosive sound, a blue light shot into Taxian-Jun's chest. Taxian-Jun's eyes dimmed and then, suddenly, he fell silent. After a few short pauses, he slowly straightened up and stood very coldly by the side of the road.

Chu Wanning turned around to see Shi Mei holding onto the boulder, shaking it, still throwing the incantation. His pair of peach blossom eyes were fierce and fierce, gleaming with an intense light.

"I think I'm done reminiscing about the past." Shi Mei clenched his teeth and formed a seal with his two fingers. He stared at the bloody Taxian-Jun and said, "Do you know what's the most important thing for you? Since you aren't dead yet, hurry up and help me collect the last thirty pieces!"

"Be quick." He said, panting.

Under the flame of the talisman, the previously chaotic face of Taxian-Jun, which was intertwined with good and evil, became as calm as still water, as cold as snow.

The madness in his eyes, the resentment, all the emotion vanished.

Taxian-Jun gave a brief nod of his head, and the blade in his hand lit up. He answered almost numbly, "Yes. Master."

After he finished speaking, he raised his hand and cast a protection incantation to protect Shi Mei. Then, like an eagle, his black robe swept up ready to fly towards the front hall. However, as he rose into the air, a figure appeared in front of him.

Chu Wanning stopped him.

His entire body was drenched, and his heart was already crushed. He wished that he could just turn into mud and dust and die in the storm.

But he still had to stop it.

“If only there were more people comfortable and well off, that would be great…”

That was what Mo Ran had told him when he was awake, so no matter how painful or exhausted he was, he had to hold on until the very end.

Chu Wanning said hoarsely, “Huaisha, summon here.”

Taxian-Jun gazed at the familiar golden light that appeared on his palm. A frown could be seen on his forehead.

Huaisha.

Heavy rain.

The world collapsed. Boundless Blood Sea.

They had had a similar day many years ago. On that day, both of them had offered up all of their hot blood to each other. They had spent all of their strength and strength to fight, causing the sky and earth to change color, and the golden crows to sink into the earth.

Who would have thought that the battle between Shizun and disciple in his previous life would once again descend into the human world, despite the passage of time.

A person’s life was destined to come to an end. It was just like how Nangong Si was destined to die in his prime. Ye Wangxi was destined to

become a confident, and the Sisheng Peak's doom was impossible to escape from. Taxian-Jun and Chu Wanning were fated to fight face to face.

Whether it was hate or love.

They couldn't escape.

"Bu'gui. Summon here."

An incandescent voice slowly sounded out, and a ghostly green light shone into the eyes of Taxian-Jun. Now that he was under Shi Mei's full control, there were no emotions in his eyes. He was like a mirror from hell, reflecting the lonely figure of Chu Wanning in the rain.

Sword Qi Breaking Clouds, Horizontal Blade Reversing the Rain!

In the strong wind, a black and white figure were fighting each other, their spirits colliding!

They swiftly disassembled their attacks from the storm. In an instant, sand leveled off the ground, gales raged as water splashed in all directions around the two of them. They were like a snowy sea that was frothing, yet it also seemed like a cloud of dust had risen. None of them slacked. They fought with all their might, fighting from the back of the mountain all the way to the front of Heaven-Piercing Tower.

The momentum of this battle shook the clouds and shook the earth. At this moment, the people on the mountain top and bottom were all alarmed and raised their heads to look at each other —

"It's Chu Wanning?"

“H-how did he get into a fight with Mo Ran? Aren’t the two of them in the same group?”

The raindrops fell like thousands of horses trampling on the ground. On the peak of Sisheng Peak, the golden light in Chu Wanning’s hand pierced through the sun, aiming for the chest of Taxian-Jun. However, before the light could reach them, there was the sound of an explosion. The brilliant sun burst forth from the palm of Taxian-Jun with the force of lava, as if a volcano torrent had swallowed up all of the golden energy!

“Bam!”

In an instant, broken tiles and broken bricks flew everywhere, and the surrounding trees were uprooted.

At this moment, Jiang Xi was facing off against the chess pieces in front of the entrance. His reaction was very fast as he shouted, “Everyone be careful!” As soon as he finished speaking, he suddenly conjured a barrier to protect the people around him. The flying stones and flying rocks, the towering trees, all smashed into his barrier.

It was extremely difficult for Jiang Xi to hold on. He vomited a mouthful of blood as he fell to one knee, his lips red.

“Open the barrier! I can’t block it a second time!”

At this time, many cultivators panicked as they frantically took out their barrier umbrellas. They looked up towards the direction of Heaven-Piercing Tower and could not help but be stunned. Mo Weiyu and Chu Wanning, what kind of strength was this……

In front of the pagoda, the Shizun and disciple duo were engaged in an increasingly intense battle. In this world, other than him, there was probably no other person who could withstand so many attacks from Taxian-Jun.

Only Chu Wanning could.

The man in front of him, with his sharp blade and his feet moving around, looked exactly the same as before. Chu Wanning had personally taught him this.

It was at this Sisheng Peak, and there were even a few times when he was in front of Heaven-Piercing Tower, that he adjusted the movements of Mo Ran and repeatedly told him the mantra and the mental cultivation method. From the ignorant youngster to the moment when the weapons clashed.

This was the second time that Chu Wanning, the Beidou Immortal, had gone up against the Emperor Mo Weiyu, his disciple.

In that battle, Chu Wanning had come with a sword in his arms. There was still hope in his heart. He thought he could save a misguided disciple, and so he gave it his all.

However, this time, Chu Wanning knew that there was no turning back. Regardless of victory or defeat, the person he wanted to redeem the most was not going to come back.

“Those who stand in my way shall die.”

In front of his eyes, it was as if the scene of a teenager Mo Ran using his sword practice flashed past. The young child’s forehead was covered in

sweat, and under the rising morning light, he stepped on his bamboo leaves and soared into the air, dragging out three sword flowers before lightly landing on the ground.

He turned around and grinned at Chu Wanning, “Shizun, do you think I’ve learned well?”

Flames burst out from his palm as he struck his chest.

Chu Wanning dodged to the side, and Taxian-Jun’s bloody palm brushed against his clothes.

But when Mo Ran had sparred with him in the Red Lotus Pavilion, it was clearly this move as well. At that time, the young man’s palm was still perfectly trimmed and had no scars whatsoever.

The young man’s face was very gentle as he looked at him. Then he smiled and held his hand, saying, “I won’t beat you up anymore. If you keep hitting me, there’s no end to it.”

The saber howled and the sword cried.

Chu Wanning suddenly thought of the village, Yuliang. Mo Ran had dragged him with him to watch the social scene by the lake, and now, the sound of the drums rang out.

The performer by his ear sang loudly, “Overbearing! Fully spirited!”

The colorful oil paint on the stage was painted all over his face as Mo Ran watched attentively from below. Chu Wanning raised his head, and Mo Ran immediately pulled himself away from the eternal sorrow and raised his eyes from his childhood wish.

He smiled and asked, “Does it look good?”

His eyes were dark and very warm.

Chu Wanning had once thought that the scenes were very long and melodious. A single word could be broken down into three words to sing. He did not know what was so nice about it… But at this moment, he really wanted to return to the stage in front of the theater in the village.

Pine oil blew up a raging fire, and Wu Sheng’s encouragement was directed towards the river. The martial arts world was brilliant. If only he could sing that scene for the rest of his life.

“Clang!”

All of a sudden, Huaisha was shot down.

It was the same back then as well. When the divine sword fell behind, he immediately retreated and summoned Tianwen as a temporary shield. However, this time, Taxian-Jun was a level stronger. Thus, before Chu Wanning could retreat, the sheathless black blade was already pointed at his chest.

Taxian-Jun narrowed his eyes.

His vision turned gray, and he could not tell who he was pointing at. He only knew that the opponent’s spirit had run out. He was like a man who had run on the night of Mount Liang, listening to the reeds all night long and singing from all directions.

All that remained was the stubborn resistance on the road.

“It’s a nuisance.”

The thin lips parted and a saber slashed down!

In this moment of life or death, a profound gold fan flew in from the side, straight towards Taxian-Jun! The incoming fan attack was extremely fierce and powerful. Taxian-Jun immediately retreated but he was unable to parry his blade. However, he was still forced to take a step back by the golden fan attack.

Soon after, three interweaving red and blue light formations descended from the sky with the might of thunder, trapping Taxian-Jun within!

“Who?!” Taxian-Jun, In that moment, was unable to move. He could not help but grind his teeth and angrily shouted, “Get out here!”

Three blurry figures stood at the top of the Heaven-Piercing Tower. They jumped down from the torrential downpour and landed steadily in front of the long stairs. At this time, they could finally see their faces clearly. The three of them…

A fox fur hat was on his forehead, and his eyes were flighty.

One of them had blond hair tied up and a cold look in his eyes.

The person standing at the front looked to be in his thirties or forties, dressed in a suit of blue armor, with a pair of sharp eyes and a calm expression, a knife scar running diagonally across his left forehead. There was not a single trace of arrogance on his face, only calmness and a thickness of something similar to Xue Zhengyong.

The man raised his hand and caught the profound gold fan that had come spinning back. He raised his eyes that could no longer hold his youth.

It was the Mei brothers from his previous life… And…

A clap of thunder split the air.

Chu Wanning looked at that man.

The other mortal world’s Xue Meng!

Ch. 304 [Sisheng Peak] Their Previous Life

Xue Meng of the previous life stood there amidst the strong wind and rain, his voice hoarse and fierce. He opened his mouth, closed it again and again, and his Adam's apple rolled several times. When he opened his mouth, he said, "Disciple Xue Meng greets Shizun."

Simple words, no one could complain for more than ten years.

After saying this sentence, Xue Meng felt all sorts of emotions surge through his throat. It was so painful that he could not speak, and he could no longer say a second sentence.

Behind him, Mei Hanxue said, "Ziming, focus."

The appearances of the two brothers from the Mei Family from the previous life didn't change. However, each of them had a trace of steadiness in their brows and their Spiritual Energy had far surpassed that of the previous time.

"I know that your emotions are in turmoil, but you can't let your spiritual flow be in turmoil with you. I just saw the youth you who has come into this world. If you lose this fight again, you will lose all your face in front of yourself. Hurry and come back to reality."

"…"

Xue Meng was no longer that reckless and ignorant youth from before. He knew Mei Hanxue was right, so even though he was reluctant to part with him, he took a deep breath and shifted his gaze away from Chu Wanning and back to Taxian-Jun.

“Who are you people?” Taxian-Jun, who was standing in the middle of the nexus, narrowed his eyes dangerously. “You want to court death?”

Mei Hanxue was startled. “What’s going on? He doesn’t seem to recognize us.”

Chu Wanning took a deep breath and said, “He has completely lost consciousness. He will recognize no one now.”

Xue Meng, “…”

If it was said that he had just seen Chu Wanning, he was already agitated. Then, at this moment, he heard that familiar voice again, the voice that could only be heard in his dreams later on. Xue Meng could no longer hold back his tears, and they slowly filled his eyes.

How many years had passed?

He didn’t dare look back at those years. He was afraid that if he tried to remember, tears would fall down his face.

In fact, time passed by very quickly for him. He still remembered the first year of Chu Wanning’s captivity, when he was at the pinnacle of his lifespan. At that time, he was running all over the place by himself to beg for help. However, perhaps it was because he was too arrogant in the past, but no one paid any attention to him.

Later on, he had finally gathered his troops. He wanted to rescue the people in the Devil’s Lair as soon as possible, but they felt that he was too impulsive and selfish, so they mocked and ridiculed him. At that time, Mei Hanxue was deployed and was not at the front line. He was on his own and could only go up the mountain on his own.

But what was waiting for him on the mountain? It was the place where things changed when they died. It was the dying Emperor Taxian-Jun. And there was also the corpse of Chu Wanning, who had been gradually annihilated along with the death of Taxian-Jun, by the side of the cold pond in the Red Lotus Pavilion.

Almost ten years.

The man he had waited ten years for became a corpse. The body crumbled to ashes in front of him.

The pillar supporting him had disappeared, and all he could do was cry like a helpless child on his knees amidst the swirling ashes.

He was too late, he didn't even touch the corner of his Shizun's sleeve.

He could no longer hear Chu Wanning call out to him, "Xue Meng."

After that, things became even more frightening.

Taxian-Jun had returned from the dead, and Shi Mingjing had revealed his green fangs. They had started a massacre, and the human world had been reduced to a ghost realm. To Xue Meng, the deaths of his old friends had transformed him. When he was young, he had buried a jug of Du Kang wine under the laurel tree, but when he dug it up again, who would drink with him?

Therefore, Xue Meng didn't know how much effort he had put in to take away the first glance from Chu Wanning ten years later.

"This time, I didn't come too late. Shizun, I'll come help you."

At this time, Xue Meng from the mortal world also arrived together with the other two Mei brothers. Although they knew that they might meet some unimaginable people after the Life and Death Door was torn apart, they were still more or less surprised when they saw themselves more than ten years later.

Young Xue Meng said, “You… You…?!”

The previous life Xue Meng had only glanced at him, his eyes containing both envy and sadness. Then he gave a low laugh and said, “I almost forgot. So, it turns out that I was like this more than ten years ago.”

“…”

“So stupid.”

The young Xue Meng had no idea that he had been covered with a fool’s poke. Before he couldn’t even react, Taxian-Jun’s fireball had already shot down on his back —

Xue Meng moved to the side. He originally did not want to use Xuehuang, but at this moment, he reflexively pulled out this godly weapon, barely blocked the attack, and then staggered a few steps back. He finally managed to stabilize himself after a long time, and angrily shouted as he rushed towards Taxian-Jun. However, he was stopped by a sword flowing with a blue light.

Méi Hánxuě from the previous life stood in front of him with narrowed eyes. “Since we’re here, there’s no need for you to do anything.”

Mei Hanxue also smiled and said to himself from ten years ago, “This mortal world is naturally the one to make up for the troubles caused by

this mortal world. There's no need for you to ride on. Mei-xianjun is in his prime, so it would be bad if he were to be surrounded by bitter enemies and spend the rest of his life in the same boring position as me."

Young Mei Hanxue: "……"

At this time, the formation that the three of them used to lock onto Taxian-Jun began to tremble violently. Mei Hanxue stopped playing with his former self and immediately turned around with a stern expression and said, "Not good! His strength is much stronger than before!"

"There's a new core in his body," Chu Wanning said.

"AHHH!"

Xue Meng used all his strength to cast the spell. The meridians in his hand were protruding. He gritted his teeth and said, "I'm afraid we can't hold on for much longer than we expected. Shizun, you have to go back as soon as possible and kill Hua Binan!"

Before Chu Wanning could reply, the young man Xue Meng asked, "Kill Hua Binan? Why kill Hua Binan, not this… This…"

For a moment, he didn't know if he should call Taxian-Jun Mo Ran or something else.

Xue Meng glanced at himself. "He is a puppet made from the body of a corpse. He can't be killed. But if the man manipulating him died, he too would soon be destroyed. Also —" He paused for a moment, reluctantly raising his hands. A fire-red formation immediately lit up beneath Xue Meng's feet.

“It’s dangerous here. You are too young to suffer. Go, return to the attacking army.”

“No! I don’t want to! Why are you — hey!”

Even though the young man, Xue Meng, was struggling with all his might, he, like the Mei brothers, was quickly enveloped by the butterfly tide of spiritual energy released by the light array.

Just as he sent the three kids away, he heard a crisp “crack!”. Mei Hanxue’s expression changed, “The formation is about to break, Ziming!”

Xue Meng suddenly released all the spiritual energy in his body in the direction of Taxian-Jun. His entire body was trembling as if he was doing his best to hold back a ferocious beast that was eager to break through the sky.

“Shizun, let’s go!”

Without needing Xue Meng to say anything, Chu Wanning jumped into the air. His sword-like eyebrows knitted together as he looked at Xue Meng, “I will be back very soon. Don’t get hurt.”

“I should be the one saying this to Shizun.” Xue Meng gritted his teeth and said, “Don’t worry. Your disciple is no longer the same as before. I can endure it.”

He could withstand it.

He had lived in this world for so many years that it had become a habit to support himself, a habit to keep him going. He had endured so much without seeing the light of day, and now that he saw his master, there was no reason for him to not be able to hold on.

Chu Wanning sighed, “I’m sorry for leaving you alone all these years…”

His voice was still ringing in his ears as he left.

However, Xue Meng’s tears had finally begun to flow.

The man who was near to death in years did not look good when he cried. Even though the torrential rain covered him, it could not cover up the slight trembling of his shoulders and the redness in his eyes.

Taxian-Jun was going berserk in the formation. The light was like a crack in the ice of a heavenly lake, revealing its fragmented traces of danger! Just as he was about to break out of the encirclement, a red light shot towards him, locking him in place. Taxian-Jun became even more furious, he raised his blood-red eyes and stared in the direction of the red light.

Xue Meng looked into Taxian-Jun’s eyes. “Give up. I won’t let him disappear in front of me a second time.”

As he spoke, he used up all of his spirit energy. The veins on his neck throbbed and his eyes were as hard as steel.

“Shidi, in the past, you always surpassed me. Today, Shizun is by my side. I don’t want to disappoint him, so… Don’t even think about winning against me!”

Méi Hánxuě reacted quickly and was shocked. He frowned and shouted, “Ziming! What are you doing!?”

With a bang, red light from the raging flames lit up behind Xue Meng. With a loud shout, he pushed out his palms, and the flames followed the spell formation as they flew towards Taxian-Jun. In an instant, it was as if ten

thousand arrows had pierced through his heart, and the shackles were all over Taxian-Jun!

“Urghhh!”

Taxian-Jun’s eyes were bloodshot. He raised his head and gave a muffled groan as the surrounding spiritual energy instantly weakened by more than half. His black eyes slowly turned over and stared at Xue Meng like a resentful ghost. Black blood dripped from the corner of his mouth.

On the left side of his chest, near his heart, there was a scar.

It was a place that had once been pierced by Xue Meng’s Longcheng sword.

Now, over a hundred of the forbidden spells that Xue Meng had condensed had pierced into his body. The sharpest one had once again pierced through his chest.

Empty bloody holes…

Mei Hanxue was both shocked and anxious. “Stop, this is already the power of your Spirit Core. If this goes on, your Spirit Core…”

“You talk too much!” Xue Meng sternly interrupted him.

He stared at Taxian-Jun. The shixiong stared at his shidi, while the assassin stared at a tyrant.

This pair of brothers from the past stared at each other. Many years of life and death had been written off in one stroke. Although Xue Meng’s expression was terrible, his eyes lit up with the blazing brilliance of the phoenix from back then.

“Everything I, Xue Meng, have learned in my life, I will fight with today.”

Mei Hanxue: “…”

As these words fell, in an instant, all that could be seen was the blazing flames that shot into the sky!

In the raging flames, it was as if he had seen a young man with silver and blue light armor and blond ponytail. He yelled noisily and grimaced in pain:

“I want to take first place in the Spiritual Mountain Competition!”

“Humph! I will have a godly weapon sooner or later! What’s so rare about that!”

“Fifty years from now, no! As long as it is thirty years, I will definitely be able to make Sisheng Peak shine in my hands, with power that can shake all of the Nine Prefectures!”

That young man had no scruples, did not fear the heavens nor did he fear fate, and declared his ambition.

The firelight almost illuminated half the sky above Sisheng Peak. Many had been burnt to ashes yesterday, turning into ashes…

Everything had settled down, leaving only the current Xue Ziming.

His eyes were steady and steady as he said, “I don’t seek success or fame, but I want others as they were before.”

Ch. 305 [Sisheng Peak] Sacrifice of the Body of God

At the same time…

Sisheng Peak had already begun the battle on all four sides. The allied army who had charged up the mountain, the vanguard who had fought against the chess pieces, the guards responsible for opening the border, the medics who were in the midst of a chaotic battle… Thousands of magic spells interweaved, lighting up this mountain range that resembled a gigantic black beast.

But even so, Xue Meng's attack still triggered a strong flood of energy. That flame was like a hot knife through butter, piercing through the heavens! Chu Wanning turned around to look at the wind, his heart was filled with grief. He knew that Xue Meng had already started to burn his Spiritual Core.

Xue Meng would most likely follow in the footsteps of Nangong Si.

"Ascending Dragon — Summon!"

His two fingers were holding the Ascending Dragon Talisman, and blood was dripping from it. But when he heard the dragon's cry, the paper dragon's roar pierced through the rain and soared into the sky, its voice as loud as a bell.

"Chu Wanning, what do you want from me?"

Chu Wanning lowered his sharp eyebrows and said sharply, "To the end of the Path of Martyrdom, you have to be fast."

The candle paper dragon swept its eyes over the chaos all over the war-ravaged land. It didn't ask any further questions and only said, "Come up." A man and a dragon pierced through the wind and rain in an instant. It was as if they were riding the wind and breaking the waves…

They flew straight toward the Path of Martyrdom laid out by the dead. Chu Wanning looked down from the nine heavens above. The road that connected the two worlds was flowing with a scarlet radiance, like blood gushing out of arteries, rushing towards an unknown domain.

Because the back of the mountain was extremely close to the door to the Demon World and under the influence of the demon aura, the sky was covered with scarlet and pale purple flaming clouds, which were not affected by the torrential rain.

The Candle Dragon swooped down, instantly transforming into a golden light as it returned to the incantation. Chu Wanning stood firmly on the Path of Martyrdom, he heaved a sigh of relief and raised his eyes.

"You're here?"

An empty voice came from behind him. Shi Mei was standing at the end of the road, and behind him was the Devil Sect's raging flames. Since Xue Meng and the Mei brothers had temporarily taken control of Taxian-Jun, the protective barrier around him had already disappeared. Upon hearing the commotion, Shi Mei turned his head to the side, looking at Chu Wanning with his beautiful eyes.

"You sure are capable."

The wind blew his hair, and Shi Mei's gaze once again fell upon the distorted shadows of the Devil Realm's Gate.

“The Gates of Life and Death are wide open. You don’t want to make up for it in time, but you want to stop my clan from returning…”

Chu Wanning did not fall for the trap, “The three forbidden arts were created by Gouchen, and the devil aura will expand his cultivation by a hundred percent. It’s not that I don’t want the Butterfly Boned Clan to return to its homeland, but that once the Demon Area is opened and the demon aura enters, the Gate of Life and Death will be torn apart even more.”

“…” Shi Mei was silent for a moment, and then sneered, “I can’t fool you after all.”

Chu Wanning didn’t want to waste any more time with him. A golden light appeared in his palm. Just as Tianwen was about to hit Shi Mei, a shadow flashed past. It was actually Mu Yanli, who was holding a sword, blocking the attack!

“I won’t let you touch him.” Mu Yanli raised her sword to illuminate her eyes and growled, “He has suffered enough.”

Shi Mei: “… Elder sister Mu…”

He didn’t know how Mu Yanli had managed to do it, but behind her was actually expanse of Zhenlong chess pieces used to pave the Path of Martyrdom. Chu Wanning saw the danger and wanted to stop the pawn army. However, Mu Yanli was fast and quickly blocked his path.

“Get out of the way!”

Mu Yanli sneered: “On what basis should I get out of the way? The cultivation world has never cared about the life and death of beauties, so

why should the return of beauties care about your life?” As she spoke, she raised the tip of her sword and slashed forward.

At the same time, a terrifyingly bright golden sun burst out from her surroundings — it was a desperate gamble. Mu Yanli, in order to obtain the strongest power, had also lost her own spirit core!

She originally had the Divine Blood Body, so no matter how thin the bloodline was, after self-detonating, she would still be able to move mountains and fill the seas.

“What Zongshi realm expert, what illustrious righteous path… For the past few thousand years, you guys have been drinking human blood and eating human flesh. You guys could do anything for the ascension of your Dao!”

Her sword qi was so sharp that Chu Wanning had no choice but to fight with everything he had. Although the woman in front of him didn’t have a single drop of the blood of a beauty, and could even be considered a distant heir of a god, she was willing to risk her life to help the demons return to their homeland.

For a moment, Chu Wanning’s white robe fluttered in the wind, and Mu Yanli’s golden sleeves fluttered in the air. The two of them were as light as kites in the air, yet their killing intent was so strong that it split the air.

Clang! Their weapons clashed and they looked at each other in the midst of the sparks.

“People got in our way!”

Chu Wanning gritted his teeth and said, “In this world… Not everyone is as you say.”

Even though he was covered in frost after walking through the long night, he could still remember Madam Rong's kindness, sharing a meal with him. He could also remember that before Luo Xianxian had gone crazy, she had also thought of never harming anyone. He could also remember that the disciples of Sisheng Peak did not ask for money to help them, or that Chu Xun's heart guided the people on their journey home.

He could still remember the bright smiles of the villagers in the Yuliang village. He remembered the righteousness of the Flying Flower Island's mistress, remembered the sacrifice of Nangong Si in Dragon Lake Demon pool, and remembered how Li Wuxin wielded his sword to carry the universe.

He could still remember Nangong Changying smiling as he faded into specks of golden light. With a gentle expression, he said, "The human world is so good. It's enough as long as there are flowers. Why do you need blood?"

Almost all of these figures were either sick or dead, displaced or in the midst of this calamity…

There was even Ye Wangxi.

That year in Xuanyuan Pavilion, it was she who had spared no expense to save a lone Butterfly-Boned Beauty, giving her a lifetime worth of freedom and a future.

"So what? Do I have to forgive this mortal sin because of some people?!"

The more she recounted her grievances, the more her sword attacks became fiercer.

“My mother was so kind, but just because she was a Butterfly Boned Beauty, she was actually eaten alive by my animal father… Is her life not hers?”

“…”

“Ever since she was young, she was the only one who doted on me and treated me like her own daughter. Other than her, from my father to the elders of the sect, and also all of you cultivators, who would treat me like a living person? I have the blood of the God in me, so everyone will treat me as a scale of fairness, allowing me to extinguish the desires of others, letting me cultivate my ultimate mental cultivation method… On what basis?”

The power of her spirit core had been expanded to the extreme, and Mu Yanli’s entire body was covered in the god-like platinum brilliance. Her spirit core self-detonation was different from an ordinary cultivator’s; her pupils and hair had even started to turn a pale gold color.

“As long as you are a descendant of demons, you deserve to be eaten. It has been like this for thousands of years…” As the sword’s body passed by, the sharp humming sound produced by the clash of godly weapons almost tore one’s eardrums.

However, there is nothing more sharp than Mu Yanli’s gaze. Mu Yanli enunciated each word slowly, “Chu-zongshi. You haven’t turned over the case history of the Butterfly-Boned Beauties’ family, have you?”

“…”

“It’s a man-eating book… In the past, cultivators used to fly up using Butterfly-Boned Beauties to refine medicine for cultivation, but today, the

Butterfly-Boned Beauties is using all of you to pave the way for us to return home!”

With a loud bang, Mu Yanli used up all of her life’s energy and swung her sword towards Chu Wanning.

Suddenly, Chu Wanning shouted, “Jiuge!”

The sound of the zither clanged, and a blinding golden light pierced through the heavens, illuminating the entire Sisheng Peak! In front of Chu Wanning was a large barrier that was filled with haitang petals. He was floating in the air, his wide sleeves fluttering. In front of him was Mu Yanli’s face, which was full of hatred.

She didn’t hate him. She hated the injustice of the world. She hated her mother’s miserable death. She hated that she couldn’t live a life without freedom. She hated that she was never imprisoned.

“Let them go back.”

Even though her attack was unbreakable, her spiritual power had been pushed to its limits, yet she still could not destroy the barrier. Instead, blood dripped from the corner of her mouth.

Her voice was hoarse, and the hand holding the sword was trembling.

Her spirit core was about to shatter…

Suddenly, Mu Yanli looked up at Chu Wanning and said softly, “Please…”

Chu Wanning saw his reflection in her golden pupils.

Whose shadow was that?

The face was confused, hollow, twisted, and lost.

Cruelty. Benevolence.

“Let them go home Chu Xianzun……”

The reflection in the golden light suddenly disappeared.

Because his mind was in such a mess, it took him a while to realize that her spirit core had been shattered and she was back to her normal appearance, with only a pair of black eyes. Looking at him.

The armor had been removed, leaving no path for her ahead.

She could no longer be the descendant of that cold and arrogant God, and her eyes were like those of an ordinary woman.

She begged for her younger brother and for the descendants of the devil race that were incompatible with her own race.

“Let them go…”

As she spoke, the sword ray in her hand suddenly disappeared. Because it could not withstand the intense battle from before, it shattered into dust the moment the spiritual energy was extinguished.

“Please.”

Mu Yanli fell from the sky, and the golden-white robe fluttered like a lotus behind her.

Her waist was still embroidered with the magic scale totem of the Tianyin Pavilion, the emblem of justice and light shining in the dark night.

The heavenly music was mighty, it could not be hidden.

The heir of the Tianyin Pavilion must not be sentimental.

The heavenly music was weak and could not be disrespectful to the gods.

The heaven's voice had pity on it, as a form of respect towards all living beings.

She had been reciting this chant ever since she was young. Even when she closed her eyes and opened them, they were still imprisoning her like shackles.

Ever since she was born, the first sentence she had learned was neither from her father nor from her mother but these verses.

Recitation a thousand times a day, kneeling in front of the icons of the gods repeatedly praying.

Not private… Don't be sentimental… Do not disrespect the gods… Respect all beings.

On her first memorable birthday, her unfeeling father had given her a box of delicate clay figures, painted and covered with gold sand, and when the box was opened, he smiled at her.

"Wow — what a sight!"

"Do you like it?"

"I like it!" Mu Yanli raised her head in joy. It was as if tens of thousands of fireworks were blossoming in her heart. "Thank you, Abba!"

The man she called Abba simply raised his hand and caressed her head before taking the embroidered box from her.

Then, it smashed into the ground right in front of her.

“Clang!” The sound of clay falling to the ground.

The clay figurine could not speak, but its eyebrows were curved as it looked at her with a smile. However, its smile was cracked and its face was shattered. Mu Yanli was dazed for a moment before crying out in fear, wanting to pounce on it and steal her clay doll.

A white shoe with a scale totem embroidered on it fell.

Creak creak.

It was like the top of a doll’s head had been shattered.

The father removed his foot, and the girl was greeted by a mess of dust.

They had clearly lined up neatly and were smiling sincerely at her before… Why? Why was this happening? Isn’t that the birthday present for her? Where did she not do the right thing? How did she make his father angry? So the little creatures that brought these clay statues to their deaths innocently.

“Daughter of Tianyin, do not be sentimental.” The man was extremely cold and detached in front of the crying girl, “If you like it, you will lose your composure. If you like it, you will be disgraced. You are the descendant of the God of Heaven, the ruler of all righteousness… Your father’s real gift to you is to teach you that you should never say the word ‘like’ to anything.”

Not private… Don’t be sentimental…

No, no, no… As the incense burner produced, a solemn eulogy arose — Tianyin – Mighty –

For many long nights she clutched his head in a sort of frenzy, and screamed soundlessly in the tent.

No way out was found.

No answer could be found…

What was a father? What was a mother?

She had wanted to hug her mother, Madam Lin, but Madam Lin was a madwoman, and she had stabbed her with scissors, so that her hands were full of holes, and she had even stuck the scissors in her own throat.

Not private.

No privacy!

In the dead of night, she knelt in front of the statue and recited a spell that could not be used to defy the gods. However, she cursed in her heart that she could not shatter the statue into powder!

Just like that, she transformed from a girl into a young girl, and from a young girl into a young woman.

Behind her, over a thousand people knelt as they recited the familiar chant that was carved into her heart and bone. “The heavenly music is vast and mighty, it cannot be hidden from others…”

Sometimes, she would act like a crazed demon, her back trembling and almost standing up. With a wave of her sword, she would chop everyone

from the Tianyin Pavilion into mincemeat before dying.

However, at this time, a gentle and beautiful voice sounded next to her ear. It was very sweet, and very young. The voice sang softly to her, “Reeds are tall, reeds are long, and they look at each other across the mountains and across the water. One side of the reeds is home, and the other side of the reeds is the ocean.”

She opened his eyes. The sunlight shone down from behind the statue, shining mottled light on the ground.

At that time, she was already the pavilion master of the Tianyin Pavilion. She stared at the mottled shadows on the ground, as if she could see the Reed Wormwood in the midst of the song, its flowers fluttering in the wind.

A woman stood in the middle of the reeds and held out her hand with a slight smile.

“This side of the reeds is our homeland… On the other side of the reeds is a vast ocean…”

“Mama…” she murmured.

He addressed Madam Lin as her mother and paid he respects. But only to one person did she call Mama.

She was her stepmother, and also the mama who had brought her up. Perhaps other people wouldn’t understand why she didn’t hate this woman for occupying the lair. But those people would never understand…

In her life, black and white as a grid, there had only been those few short years when Lady Hua Gui was there. She had laughed, she had been

gentle, she had been warm, she had been sweet.

No one would believe her.

The reed song that Hua Gui had coaxed her to sleep was the only song she had ever heard in her life besides the mighty heavenly music.

Only this one song suppressed the demons in her heart throughout her entire life, and also became the demons in her heart throughout her life.

“Sister Mu!”

She seemed to hear her brother Hua Binan screaming. She had never heard him lose his composure like this before.

However, she couldn’t care less. She used the last of his spiritual qi to reduce the momentum of her landing. However, this was not for the sake of survival.

Gritting her teeth, she followed the Path of Martyrdom, moving one step at a time until she reached the very edge like a maggot.

And then —

Before anyone could react, she used what little strength she had left to suddenly throw herself at the edge of the bridge!

“Mu Yanli has voluntarily sacrificed her life for the Path. I hope that you can fulfill your long-cherished wish and return to your homeland.”

When Shi Mei saw this, he was on the verge of going crazy. He rushed over, but it was already too late.

This woman had always been cold and indifferent, her expressions were not many. Even her skin emitted a frosty, cold air.

However, at this moment, she turned towards her younger brother, and her smile was sweet.

She fell on his back, her face curved into a scowl.

“Sister!”

Mu Yanli smiled and looked up at the sky. This woman, who had not moved at all, faced the vast sky where she had kowtowed countless times and said, “Don't be sentimental, don’t let it hold you back.”

Another red light appeared on the bridge, and the scarlet flames of the Path of Martyrdom engulfed her entire body. Before she was engulfed by the flames, she looked in the direction of the Infernal domain’s gate with all her might.

She seemed to hear a voice coming from behind the huge door. It was gentle, and it was Mama waving a small fan for her by the cool summer bed. She was singing lazily.

“The reeds are tall and long, looking at each other across the mountain.”

On this side of the reeds is home,

On the other side of the reeds was a vast ocean.

“Pavilion master Mu!”

“Miss Mu!”

All of a sudden, the “pawns” on the Path of Martyrdom all went out of control. One by one, they rushed over and knelt down in front of the woman who had used the divine blood to pave the path for the demons. However, that woman had already turned into the thirtieth step of the path of sacrifice.

Chu Wanning landed back on the ground, his fingertips were icy cold, and a human figure was swaying in front of him.

He had originally thought that these people were chess pieces brought by Mu Yanli, but now he realized that they weren’t.

Most of these people wore the robes of a personal disciple from the Tianyin Pavilion. Their faces were very pretty, and the tears they shed were all golden…

They were the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Clan!

Under Mu Yanli’s command, the Tianyin Pavilion gathered so many survivors of the Butterfly-Boned Clan in the name of taking in disciples. At this moment, these people were crying and crying as they staggered and knelt on the ground.

She had just brought them out of the group of cultivators and prepared to pave the Path of Martyrdom so that they could return home anytime they wanted…

“Murderer!” Suddenly, someone turned around and shouted at Chu Wanning, “You murderer!” His face was twisted by hatred.

“Why do you have to be our enemy? Why did you force pavilion master Mu onto this path?!”

They were all extremely beautiful, and their gazes were filled with deep hatred.

Many of the Butterfly-Boned Beauties rushed towards him, as if they had lost all sense of reason or knew what was important, and pounced on him like moths to a flame.

Chu Wanning stood still. His eyes were dim, it was too easy for him to block these low-level Butterfly-Boned Beauties. He didn't even need to lift his hand, just the force from his fingertips was enough to keep them from going through.

The murderer…

Sinner.

Grandmaster.

Savior.

Chu Wanning closed his eyes. What was he doing? What else could he do?

Mo Ran was dead, time and space were falling apart, and punishment was approaching. Mu Yanli would use her divine body to offer up her demonic path, and Xue Meng would use his Spiritual Core to suppress Taxian-Jun.

He suddenly felt as if he was standing before a wall made from sharp knives. The hilt was facing the cold light, and he had to pass through it.

Just as not everyone in the world is evil, not all of the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast Clan are guilty.

But he wanted to block their way home.

Even if there were only twenty-nine steps left, twenty-nine corpses.

He could not let them go and let the Devil's Gate open. As long as the devil gate was opened, Heaven's punishment would quickly descend and the two worlds would be destroyed. The people of the Nine Regions would not even have the chance to catch their breath and resist. What kind of ruthlessness did he have to be able to sit back and watch this happen?

He couldn't.

He could no longer hesitate.

At this moment, Xue Meng was still using his life to buy time for him, not to mention the people who had once died in vain, this bloody road in front of him.

"Murderer!"

"You killed us! You caused our deaths!"

"Heartless Cold Blood! You will have your retribution!"

His soul was like fire, but his heart was as hard as iron.

Chu Wanning suddenly opened his eyes — he had to become the murderer.

He had no choice.

"Shi Mingjing."

"…" Shi Mei looked at him through the crowd of people. That beautiful face that could topple cities still had traces of tears on it, and his eyes seemed to be filled with madness, yet also emptiness.

The wind was blowing, and his clothes were fluttering in the wind. He seemed to have resigned himself to the fact that Chu Wanning would come kill him. Chu Wanning's palm also started to glow with a golden light, and Huaisha appeared once again. With a bang, he sent his sword aura flying in front of the beauties, attempting to block them.

With a tap of his feet, his gaze became as sharp as a night blade as his sword pierced towards Shi Mei!

It was at this moment that the Path of Martyrdom beneath their feet began to shake violently. A red pillar of light shot out from the ground, and several of the pillars of light suddenly blocked Chu Wanning's path.

Someone shouted, "Look! Look ahead!"

"It's the Demon Gate! What's going on?"

"The bridge is growing, the bridge is going to be built!"

In the end, it was almost a scream: "The door's about to open!"

Shi Mei was shocked. He turned his head to look and saw a white golden radiance scattering from the location of Mu Yanli's death. It extended from the last step and headed towards the Devil Realm's Gate with astonishing momentum!

Chu Wanning's expression suddenly changed, and after the initial shock, Shi Mei's face was filled with ecstasy.

The Path of Martyrdom was about to be traversed — the bridge to the world of humans and devils was finally about to be traversed!

A tired and old voice came from behind the devil gate and echoed between heaven and earth. That voice seemed to have praise in it as he lazily said, “There is a sacrifice from the god race on the Path of Martyrdom.”

The sound was too loud, and everyone within a hundred miles of the summit of the mountain could clearly hear it. All the people who were battling raised their heads and looked towards the back of the mountain.

Jiang Xi’s face turned pale white. Of course, it wasn’t just him. Everyone knew that the door of the Infernal domain was about to open…

Sure enough, the old voice continued:

“Heaven’s punishment is coming soon. When His Majesty the Demon Lord saw that you had done a great service in killing one of the descendant of gods, he was merciful and lenient and spared the last twenty-nine steps of the bridge. The demon gate immediately opened and has allowed you to return home!”

“What?!”

The mountain path on the mountain peak instantly turned into a mess.

The Palace Master Ma of the Peach Blossom Villa even sat down on the ground and started crying, “Oh my god! What should we do!?”

There were even some whose faces were ashen as they fought with each other, “Is Heaven’s punishment coming soon? What punishment… What’s Heaven’s punishment!?”

The three, Xue Meng and the brothers who were fighting with Taxian-Jun were also shocked. Xue Meng’s mind shook as Taxian-Jun took the opportunity to break out of the trap and fly up into the air. However, Xue

Meng was reprimanded by the force and felt a stifling sensation in his chest as he suddenly spat out a large mouthful of blood!

When Taxian-Jun heard the commotion, he glanced sideways with his scarlet eyes and stared at Xue Meng for a moment. His expression was very chaotic, as if the memories in his mind were messing up again, and the soul in his body was also starting to torture and kill each other. “Xue Meng…?”

Méi Hánxuě immediately brandished his sword Shuofeng, protecting his brother and Xue Meng behind him as he warned in a low voice, “Be careful!”

However, Taxian-Jun didn’t have any intention of continuing to attack. Instead, he suddenly frowned, and his heart surged with pain.

“No… What was going on… What’s going on!?”

He was at a loss, but he was also extremely angry. He let out a roar, lost control, and quickly charged into the dense forest behind the mountain. Only then did Méi Hánxuě heave a sigh of relief. Turning around, he returned to the other two and asked Xue Meng, “How are you?”

“Don’t worry about me, go to Shizun’s side! Tell him all the preparations we made!”

Mei Hanxue put his hand on his wrist and shook his head, “Your spirit core is on the verge of breaking. You need to heal first.”

Xue Meng said angrily, “Quickly go!”

“How about I go over first, none of you move.” Mei Hanxue knew that the situation was urgent, so he pointed at Xue Meng and said to his brother,

“Brother, help him recuperate. I’ll go find Chu-zongshi.”

In front of the Path of Martyrdom, as the final step was completed, the path between the demonic world and the human world was finally finished. A dreamy look appeared on the faces of the beauties. Almost all of them were trembling, and no one dared to take a step forward. Even Shi Mei didn’t move an inch.

After a while, it was unknown how much time had passed. Perhaps it was just an instant, or perhaps it was so long that it was suffocating.

The door to the Infernal domain suddenly rumbled and shook. In an instant, clouds flew everywhere, the winds in all directions blew, and the organs in the world seemed to be gasping for breath as they produced muffled booms.

The extravagant carvings of devils parted to the left and right, and a crimson radiance shot out from the gaps!

Chu Wanning only felt a terrifying aura of war and evil gushing out from the gap. It was the aura of the Demon race that boosted the strength of the three forbidden arts.

The Infernal domain had opened!

Ch. 306 [Sisheng Peak] Have Pity on My Different Race

The heaven and earth instantly changed color. The devil's breath was like a sharp arrow piercing through the clouds, directly shooting towards the distant Space-Time Life and Death Gate.

The continuous torrential rain that lasted for more than ten days suddenly stopped.

Just a moment ago, it was overflowing, but in the blink of an eye, not a single drop was left.

Some people's lips trembled, and they were hoping to get lucky as they shakily asked, "This is… What's going on?"

No one answered him. Everyone's eyes were fixed on the direction of the Portal, but the black hole that had occupied most of the space remained undisturbed for a while.

The people waited nervously.

Their hearts were pounding…

There were no abnormalities.

Nothing unusual happened.

"The rain has stopped… Did nothing happen?"

"It should be a false alarm. Everything should be fine now…"

One by one, people let out a sigh of relief, and their tight cheeks relaxed. However, just at this moment, the ground under their feet began to shake

all of a sudden.

“What’s wrong?!”

Looking up, they saw the black hole of the Gate of Life and Death started to expand at an alarming speed, engulfing the remaining cumulus clouds in the sky. Following that, a sharp whistle broke through the sky, causing them all to be dumbstruck!

After cutting across the dome, the Phoenix Bird flapped its wings, blocking out the sun. It was as large as a heavenly lake, and its claws were as large as mountains. Just a single feather was over a hundred meters long. With a flap of its wings, godly winds billowed, and countless plants were uprooted.

As for Mount Kunlun, which was the closest to it, the snow had melted and the icicles had shattered.

Chirp chirp —!

In the blink of an eye, the divine bird had settled down on top of Mount Kun. It began to cry, and the sound it produced was exactly the kind of whistle that would appear whenever the Gate of Life and Death opened and closed.

“This is…”

One of the cultivators cried out miserably, “It’s the First Phoenix!”

“It’s the Ancestral Phoenix!”

This was an ancient mythical beast that did not even have a painting scroll. Later on, it went to Gouchen Palace. The First Phoenix could move

mountains and fill the sea. When it flapped its huge wings in the nine heavens, its speed was faster than lightning, far faster than the light of dawn.

Chu Wanning mumbled, “So… Was the guardian of the Gate of Life and Death always him?”

Of the Three Forbidden Techniques created by Gouchen, the Gate of Life and Death in Time and Space actually opened the void cage which imprisoned the First Phoenix. The instant somebody stepped into the rift, the First Phoenix crowed and asked questions. It rushed through time, carrying those who entered, returning to the past or running into the future. Its body was too large, its speed was too fast, so the people who opened the Gate of Life and Death were often unable to see it at all and only had time to hear its cries before they were taken to the time they wanted to go to.

The phoenix stood on Mount Kunlun, looking down at the earth with its red and gold eyes. It suddenly spoke in human language, sounding out a warning bell, “The heavens shall punish anyone who goes against the order of the mortal world.”

After speaking, it rose into the air and opened its nine golden wings one by one, dragging them along the ground. With a flap of its wings, the human world shook, and the hills crumbled! If it wasn’t the apocalypse, the scene would have been magnificent.

Chu Wanning snapped, “Retreat!”

At the same time, almost every sect’s Elder and Sect Leader reacted in the same way.

Retreat.

To survive was their instinct, so they did not need to remind them anymore. The cultivators who were like ants and mustard seeds in front of Shi Huang immediately flew up on their swords, fleeing in the opposite direction of Shi Huang.

Mei Hanxue rushed to Chu Wanning's side, brushing away the messy hair on his forehead and said, "Grandmaster, please ask them to retreat to the boundary of the Portal."

Before Chu Wanning could say anything, he added, "This mortal world has long passed on. For the past eight years, Xue Meng and I have been thinking of a way to minimize disaster when this day arrives. So, on the day that the two worlds were cleared, we used the Black Tortoise Armor to set up a formation around the Gate of Life and Death."

The Heavy Black Tortoise Armor was a slough left behind from the Black Tortoise that was at the same time as the first Phoenix. With it as its foundation, the protective barrier cast down by the armor would be thousands of times stronger.

However, according to the rumors, this kind of slough was in the Eastern Sea, a place where there was a nine out of ten chance of death.

Just what kind of difficulties and dangers had the Mei brothers and Xue Meng gone through in the mortal world to be able to bring it back…

Mei Hanxue said, "Grandmaster, please have everyone retreat over there and return to their own world."

"…"

“This is the calamity that is born from the world. It should end here.”

The Phoenix in the distance had flapped it's wings and soared high. Then, it transformed into a streak of red light between heaven and earth. Its speed was so fast that no one could see it, but in the blink of an eye, the Yellow River had been emptied, the Yangtze River ran in reverse, and the vast waters of the ocean were stirred up to hundreds of thousands of feet high, as if a vast ocean was being lifted up from the seabed, rushing towards the mainland!

The waters of the Great Sea came from the heavens, and the Nine Prefectures became desolate in the blink of an eye.

Chu Wanning wanted to retreat, but he discovered that the power of the flood was even faster than the speed of people escaping on their flying swords. In a blink of an eye, they were already closing in on where they were. He was afraid that in a flash it would catch up with the majority of the retreating people.

He made a prompt decision and said to Mei Hanxue, “You and Xue Meng lead them away first. I will stay here and delay some time.”

As he spoke, he summoned the Ascending Dragon Talisman again and soared into the sky.

Chu Wanning said sternly, “Tianwen! Ten thousand people’s coffins!”

The willow vine rose up from the ground. He bit his finger and dripped some blood on it. He shouted, “Build a wall!”

The vines pressed down on the rattan, and the willow branches coiled around the willow branches. They overlapped and overlapped, forming

layers upon layers of lush green. In an instant, it became a towering wall that stretched out to the horizon.

“Jiuge, come here!”

Jiuge was lying on his knees, radiating light from his palms. Chu Wanning strummed the zither, and amidst the flowing sound, golden rays of light wrapped around the wicker-like array wall, making it even more impenetrable. By the time he finished doing all of this, the surging torrent had already reached him.

“Hua —!”

A splash hit the wall and turned the sky upside down.

Chu Wanning turned his face to the side and said to Mei Hanxue, “Go!”

Mei Hanxue had not expected such a situation. Although his heart ached, he had no other choice but to bow to Chu Wanning and disappear into the hazel forest.

For a moment, the cultivator army retreated. Chu Wanning tried his best to defend.

The torrential flood roared, trying to tear down the dam made by Tianwen and Jiuge.

On the Path of Martyrdom, the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast slowly opened the door to the Demon World. The demonic world’s crimson and dark purple clouds blended with the world’s despair.

The door was completely opened.

Standing at the very front was Shi Mei, the first person to be enveloped by the pure devil aura. That kind of aura made his whole body tremble. His whole body felt comfortable, and he couldn't help but inhale the demonic aura greedily. The withered spirit core in his chest had finally recovered after coming into contact with the magical aura.

A surge of power belonging to the demons finally surged through his body.

So this was the feeling of having a strong spiritual energy?

He finally felt it… He finally felt it!

The ecstasy caused his eyes to light up, and a beast-like glint appeared on his handsome face. Just like him, there were also all the people of the Butterfly-Boned Clan behind him.

Those beauties who had lost their spirit cores due to the lack of demon auras and were powerless finally obtained great strength that belonged to them at this moment.

An old man with a stooped body and a spotless beard slowly appeared at the entrance of the Infernal domain. His crimson eyes swept across the crowd, and then, his chicken skin puckered up as he grinned: "Aiyo, I've been waiting here for over four thousand years. Even the gatekeepers above have been annihilated, but I haven't seen any beauties capable of doing this."

He leaned on his walking stick and said with satisfaction, "Alright, alright, you have done a lot to oppose the God Realm. Not bad, not bad."

As he finished speaking, he glanced at the collapsing world and smiled, revealing his black and yellow teeth.

The old demon turned around and made way for the Butterfly-Boned Beauties. With a trembling voice, he said, “This old one greets you all on your return to your homeland.”

Behind them, the waters surged, but that was already a mortal matter. What did that have to do with the devil?

Shi Mei turned around and looked at Chu Wanning, who was trying his best to fight against Sky Disaster.

Was this bravery or foolishness?

However, it was probably only because of Chu Wanning’s stupidity that caused him to be unable to calm down. As he was about to leave, Shi Mei couldn’t help but recall that year when Elder Yuheng had brought him home under an umbrella. At that time, they saw an earthworm crawling on the side of the Bridge of Helplessness.

Chu Wanning gave it a casual glance and waved his sleeve. The earthworm was wrapped in a golden light and returned back into the vegetation.

“Elder, what are you doing?”

Chu Wanning was expressionless, “He’s blocking the way.”

This reason was naturally lousy. Shi Mei laughed: “Elder, you truly are kind. But when it rains, the ground is stuffy, so even if you put it back in the ground, after a while, it will come out again and crawl outside, and then it will be blocking the elder’s way again.”

Chu Wanning paused for a moment. There seemed to be a slight crease between his eyebrows.

“… I never knew that.” He then lowered his eyes and looked at Shi Mei, “You know quite a lot.”

Shi Mei smiled shyly and said, “Earthworms are Earth Dragons, they are usually used for medicine. I know a little about their habits. I only know these things that aren’t very useful.”

The two continued to walk forward, and as a result, Shi Mei discovered that even though Chu Wanning understood, he still “cleaned up” the little things that were in his way. In the end, he didn’t know whether to laugh or cry, so he decided to help.

Chu Wanning looked at him with a stack of books in his arms, but still managed to bend down and said, “Why?”

“They’re blocking the elder’s way.” In the clear rain, Shi Mei looked back at him and said gently, “Disciple will teach them to be a little more obedient.”

Chu Wanning shook his head and walked over. Once again, he put the azure bone paper umbrella over Shi Mei, “Don’t run around, it’s all wet.”

The way back was neither long nor short. As the two walked side by side, it was always awkward not to talk about anything.

Shi Mei asked gently, “Elder, are you always so good?”

“…”

His brown eyes rolled down and his phoenix-like eyes became majestic.

Chu Wanning’s face was expressionless, “What are you saying?”

At this moment, he could see that Elder Yuheng wasn't as heartless as the rumors had said. He laughed: "Elder clearly knows that some things are useless, but you still want to do it…"

Chu Wanning did not answer and just walked on silently.

Just when Shi Mei thought that he wouldn't pay any more attention to him, Chu Wanning said, "When I meet a beggar on the road, I know that a little money doesn't necessarily mean that they will be able to get out of their predicament, so I shouldn't give them alms?"

"…"

"When encountering a spirit beast on the way, knowing that it will be rescued and then released into the forest, it may enter the snare or not, so I just leave it alone?"

Shi Mei gently said, "I understand what you mean now, elder. Thank you for your teachings."

"…" He was so gentle, yet Chu Wanning was actually a little embarrassed. He coughed lightly and said, "However, it's about earthworms. They are really just blocking the way."

Shi Mei was stunned and raised his head to look at the side of his face. It was obviously cold, but his ears were red.

Suddenly, he felt it was so cute.

Thus, Shi Mei pursed his lips, and spoke with a voice as calm as water: "Great Elder you are very kind. I must have pity for the other living beings."

"…"

He paused for a moment before suddenly asking, “Oh right, I’ve read something in the book today that I don’t understand, but I have no Shizun to ask. Can the elders clear up this disciple’s confusion?”

At least they no longer had to embarrassingly talk about saving lives. Chu Wanning seemed relieved of a great burden and nodded, “Go ahead.”

“Guyue’ye’s Medicine Sutra encompasses everything, and there are many cultivation methods that cause disciples to be flabbergasted. Among them, the most puzzling is a type of sacred medicine that rapidly injects the essence into the spirit core. After ingesting it, it can cause —”

Chu Wanning’s face darkened for some reason, he interrupted, “You want this medicine?”

“Elder, do you know which kind it is?”

“In the early days of the cultivation world, this medicine was highly respected. All large and small sects would go to the Medical Sect to ask for it to be sold.” Chu Wanning narrowed his eyes, “How could I not know?”

Observing his expression, Shi Mei then said: “This disciple is not interested in that medicine, but seeing the ingredients needed for the pill, as well as the Flesh and Blood of the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast, I am somewhat puzzled. I wonder if this Butterfly-Boned Beauty… Is counted as human or as beast?”

Chu Wanning didn’t hesitate at all. He frowned and answered his disciple’s question with a solemn expression.

“It’s a human.”

He did not even say “count as a person”, but said “It’s a human” without a doubt.

“…”

Before Shi Mei could reply, Chu Wanning glanced at the book about Guyue’ye’s Medical Sect written on his chest, before putting it on his palm.

“Elder?”

“Guyue’ye’s Medical Sect’s contents are hard to distinguish between right and wrong, it is unsuitable for you to take part in the first part of the study. Tomorrow, you can go to the Compendium Pavilion and borrow Elder Tanlang’s writings, maybe it’s more appropriate.”

Shi Mei lowered his head and said, “As for the books in the Compendium Pavilion, I can only borrow them from the other districts. All of them require the permission of their direct Shizuns…”

Chu Wanning was stunned for a moment. He thought about how this child had been in the school for quite some time, but because of his low talent, he didn’t even want to taken in by the most tolerant Xuanji.

In the gentle breeze and drizzling rain, he untied the lily-white jade on his waist. “Take it.”

“…!”

“If the people from the Compendium Pavilion ask, just show them my token.” Chu Wanning warned again, “You should choose your reading method. Don’t go down the wrong path just because you read the wrong book.”

Shi Mei wanted to receive the jade pendant with both hands, but there were too many scriptures in his hands. A single hand was tantamount to treading on the wrong path. He was at a loss of what to do and flushed red to his ears. Chu Wanning half-knelt down, and in an instant, was only slightly taller than an immature child. He lowered his long eyelashes and tied the jade pendant around Shi Mei's waist.

Chu Wanning was expressionless as he was doing all of this, as if he was trying to take care of an earthworm blocking the way with his hand.

If it were any other elder, they would definitely not lend their library token to any disciple they were unfamiliar with. This was the rule.

However, Chu Wanning was not a person who lived by the rules.

"Alright." After attaching the jade pendant to Shi Mei, he stood up once more and lowered his hand that had been callused as a result of his year-round mecha repair. "Let's go."

"…" The young child took a deep breath.

He didn't know why he had to take that deep breath, but if he didn't, there was something in his chest that might make him cry.

In truth, he felt wronged.

Whether it was as a Butterfly-Boned Beauty or as a disciple lacking in spiritual energy, he had never been treated fairly. In the past, he didn't think much of it. In any case, he was already used to it. In his eyes, these people were nothing more than extremely ugly butchers.

However, there was really someone who stopped and told him "They are humans". Someone really did stop and just gave him the command tablet

that even direct disciples might not be able to obtain. For some reason, that heart of his that had been tempered with countless thousands of thousands of times suddenly felt an excruciating pain.

Only then did he finally feel wronged. All along, he had endured too much.

Shi Mei knew that although he looked gentle and polite, that was just a mask he made for himself after seeing through the danger.

He hid behind this mask, defending himself with gentleness, avoiding it with gentleness. He seemed kind to everyone, but in reality, no one was able to immerse themselves in his heart. His heart was already filled with hatred for the sake of the clan of the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast, so he would no longer feel any warmth.

However, when he went back that day to write a disciple invitation, he sketched it out with some rare sincerity.

When the letter was finished, he put down the broken bamboo pen and looked at the lamp that had turned into a pool.

He felt that in his life, besides revenge and return, there was also an unexpected pleasant surprise. This surprise might be dangerous for him. However, at that time, he felt that a little tenderness might be harmless, and it wouldn't change the biggest repayment in his heart.

At this moment, Shi Mei turned his head back to look at his former "tenderness". He didn't know what to feel in his heart.

Anger? Sadness?

It was not as simple as that.

The path was different. In the end, one could not scheme against others.

Shi Mei paused for a moment, but still said with a hint of ridicule: “Shizun, look. No matter who it was, in front of Heaven’s Mandate, they couldn’t help themselves from competing. You, me, man, and demon, are all the same.”

These words were spoken very softly. Chu Wanning stood high up in the air, so it was impossible for him to hear them. However, as soon as Shi Mei said it, he felt relieved in his heart.

Afterwards, he led the thousand over Butterfly-Boned Beauties to the majestic and vast Demon Area’s Gate.

Home.

The old devil guarding the gate was naturally the leader of this group. He was very polite and respectful to Shi Mei as he greeted him after he entered the gate.

“Young Master, please wait.”

“Why?”

“The devil world is divided into different grades according to the bloodline of the family. Since Young Master is returning to his hometown, first, he has to test his origin and return to the sect to reunite with his ancestors.”

Shi Mei said expressionlessly: “Aren’t the Butterfly-Boned Beauties the descendants of Gouchen's mother race? What else is there to test?”

The old demon gatekeeper said, “Gouchen's mother clan has long been taken off the demon registry. After Young Master and the rest of you return

to the demon realm, you will have to arrange registrations according to the mixed blood of the remaining families in their lineage."

Shi Mei frowned. Even though he found this troublesome, he did not know how long he could last until he saw that Chu Wanning was on the thin side. And behind him, there were still thousands of people waiting to enter the Infernal domain. They nodded, "Then let's hurry up."

The Old Demon gatekeeper waved his hand, and a scepter with the head of a beast appeared in his hand. He chanted an incantation, and a hundred red ribbons of light floated out of the beast's mouth, like a brocade, wrapping around Shi Mei.

"Bai, Cheng, Xie, Zhou…"

Each light band shimmered with a single word.

"What is this?"

The old demon said, "Clan tree, which family has the most powerful bloodline, and which family's belt of light will be linked to the young lord's wrist?"

Shi Mei stopped talking and looked down at the colorful ribbons.

"Qin, Fei, Ouyang, Shangguan, Zhong Li, Luo, Ye, Duan, Chu…"

The old demon chanted nonstop, but after a long time, there was still no ribbon falling. His forehead couldn't help but wrinkle, and he lifted his eyes to look at Shi Mei's face.

Shi Mei also calmly looked at him.

Looking at him, the Old Demon smiled in embarrassment and continued to speed up his incantation. As he chanted, a red ribbon wrapped around his arm, and he raised it thoughtfully to examine it: “Is it this one? What’s your surname?”

He looked left and right, but before he could take a good look at the words on the ribbon, the ribbon rapidly withered and turned black, turning into fine powder in an instant.

Shi Mei: “…”

The old gatekeeper was also silent for a moment, frozen in place, looking at him in disbelief.

Shi Mei slowly raised his gaze a few inches. In his heart, he already had an answer, but he still asked with a smile: “What’s wrong?”

The old demon’s face changed, his nose wrinkled, and he shouted: “Divine descendant!?!”

“…” Shi Mei Ning paused for a moment, sneered, and carelessly brushed away the black dust on his wrist, then said indifferently, “My father is indeed a descendant of the gods, but so what? I have never done half an inch of the god race’s business in my life, and I have always taken the home of the demons as my responsibility. It’s not like I have that much dirty blood on me. You’ll have to put on a god-like hat for me. That’s too…”

Before he could say anything, he saw the Old Devil, who was guarding the door, wrapped himself in a black gust of wind, forcing Shi Mei to take a step back.

The wind dispersed, and the hunchbacked old demon disappeared.

What appeared at the entrance of the demon realm was a skeleton monster with intersecting fangs holding a giant axe. The monster suddenly hacked the axe in its hand onto the ground, blocking the path of the people from the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast Clan, and shouted angrily towards the sky with a hoarse voice.

“Since ancient times, gods and devils have never been allowed to collude with each other. The Path of Martyrdom cannot be completed, so quickly get the evil beings like you out of the demon territory — Close the devil doors!”

With its shout, the devil gates on the left and right were alarmed and closed towards the center. The originally built bridge of martyrdom also collapsed with the terrifying sound of an avalanche from the distant Sisheng Peak.

Ch. 307 [Sisheng Peak] The Dusk of Bats

“What’s going on?”

The Butterfly-Boned Beauties in the back couldn’t see the changes in front, and they even stretched out their necks to look around anxiously.

Although Chu Wanning’s tall walls were sturdy, they were nothing more than a mound in front of the vast ocean of the Nine Prefectures. Seeing that the Jiuge Formation had begun to shatter and water was flowing out of the vines, the beauties’ hands and feet couldn’t help but fall into disorder.

Forward shouted: “What happened? Why don’t you let us in?”

Some people looked back and their expressions changed drastically: “The Path of Martyrdom has collapsed!”

“What?!”

As a result, the Butterfly-Boned clan was trapped internally, the demonic gate in front was closed, and the demonic bridge behind them collapsed. And beneath their feet was an endless abyss. Where could they flee to?

In that instant, the entire scene turned into a mess. Shi Mei shouted in a stern voice, “Everyone, come to the front, don’t panic!”

“Grandmaster Hua…”

The loudspeaker brought his voice to the end, “I said that. I will bring you home.”

This was something that he had been seeking for two lifetimes, and it was also his mother's long-cherished wish before she died. At this point, he would no longer have the slightest intention of backing down.

"But Grandmaster, how can we possibly have the ability to fight against the Demon Envoys?"

Shi Mei turned his eyes, his hazel pupils reflecting the doomsday scene.

"Not before. But now?"

As he said that, the panicking beauties suddenly remembered something. Because of the aura flowing out from the opening of the Infernal domain, they had more or less recovered some of their demon spiritual energy.

Shi Mei said: "All of you retreat behind me and gather together to slow down the annihilation of the Path of Martyrdom."

"What about you, Grandmaster?"

Shi Mei looked at the skeleton waving the axe and said: "I'll go defeat him."

With that, the demonic skeleton roared and pounced forward.

"Be careful, Grandmaster!"

Shi Mei didn't mind at all. He had never received such a violent flow of spirit energy before. This demonic aura roamed about within his body, making him unable to advance forward.

In fact, the Butterfly-Boned Clan should be such a powerful clan. Because of a single person's betrayal, they would have to suffer such injustice for thousands of years…

With hatred in his eyes, he set his palm on fire and threw it towards the skeleton without a word.

The skeleton flashed, and the fireball crashed into the magic door, leaving a charred mark.

“How dare you, traitor!”

Shi Mei said angrily: “What blood is flowing in my body, is it my fault?! Because the blood of the Chen Mother race was exiled from the world, making it difficult for them to form their spirit cores. Because the blood of a descendant of the gods was rejected and could not be returned to the family — What did I do? What did the Butterfly-Boned Beauty do? Why is it a treason?”

The skeleton only repeated in a solemn and stubborn manner, “A traitor, you dare to act rashly…”

It was like a Buddhist prayer from a monk.

It looked like a golden body made of yellow clay.

It was obviously such an ethereal thing, but it was so natural.

In the sky, Chu Wanning was doing his best to resist the torrential currents. In the distance, the cultivators had mostly retreated to the intersection of the two mortal worlds, where they set up the Black Tortoise Formation.

In front of him, Shi Mei was in a life or death battle with the demonic skeleton.

Everyone had their own missions and choices. Perhaps they had crossed swords before, but at this moment, none of them had the strength to fight

to the death with the other.

When the Heaven's punishment finally arrived, people’s faces were all similar -

Humble but unwilling to surrender.

“Grandmaster! The Path of Martyrdom is about to collapse!”

“We can’t hold on any longer…”

Some of the young beauties couldn’t help but cry in despair.

They were crying, their wails filling the strong winds and squeezing into the ears of their teachers…

It was as though that year, his small and frail body had slammed savagely into the ice-cold stone door of the Tianyin Pavilion.

When the door opened, he saw his father with blood dripping from the corner of his mouth and his mother with his bones and flesh separated. He heard his mother screaming as his bloody body rubbed against the ground.

“Run! — run!”

Run, get out of here.

Run, to a place where we can eventually live.

Together with all the bullied clansmen. That was his mother’s lifelong wish to sell his soul, his body, and finally his life.

Run.

“So, in the end, what part of me has let the demons down?”

This was his last question, and he did not intend to wait for an answer.

Shi Mei jumped up, dodging the Demon Skull's axe attack, following that, he moved agilely like a kite, with his knees sinking down, he knelt on the skeleton's shoulder, and grabbed onto the skull that was moving left and right.

The road shook more and more under their feet, and the bridge that was built from the pieces of Jinlong quickly collapsed, and the corpses fell into the endless abyss. They couldn't even hear the echo of the falling pieces.

Shi Mei looked up and saw his clansmen huddled together, trying to force out the demonic energy they had just gathered, trying their best to slow down the progress of Shang's demise.

They were pure blooded beauties, birds that returned to their nests together — and what about him?

There was the sound of bats flapping their wings in the abyss.

A cold light flashed on Shi Mei's palm, a thorny thorn suddenly appeared, quenching the demon aura. He raised it high up and aimed at the skull –

It suddenly stabbed down!

……

What exactly is a bat?

A bird soaring in the sky? Or a beast crouching in the darkness?

Maybe neither side would recognize him. His blood was dirty. No matter where he went, he would only be a traitor.

A few moments of deathly silence. The skull crashed to the ground! In an instant, it transformed into ten thousand black dots, disappearing without a trace. But at this time, the closing of the Devil Sect had reached a dangerous point. Shi Mei jumped up and flew high into the air, using his flesh and blood to support the closing of the embossed stone door.

He turned his head and looked down in bewilderment at the beautiful people who were still in tears. He snapped, “What are you waiting for? Run!”

Run…

“Run!” Hua Gui’s last scream was like a ray of light piercing through the clouds. Even after twenty years, his heart had still been torn to shreds. “A-Nan, run!”

When he closed his eyes, he could clearly see that her arms had been torn open, the bones of her legs broken, and she was writhing in a pool of blood, fighting a battle to the death. She threw herself forward and grabbed her husband’s legs, just to give her child a chance to live.

“Run! Run! Don’t look back! Don’t come back!”

The man stomped down and her face was smashed.

At the last moment, she did her best to say, “Run…”

Kacha.

Her throat was broken…

Shi Mei clenched his teeth and poured his demonic aura into his body. His bones creaked, but he still tried his best to support himself between the

door and the Infernal domain, preventing it from closing.

He looked down. Sweat was seeping out of his forehead, and his lips were bitten and bleeding. His entire body was trembling, his muscles and bones were about to be crushed — although the closing of the Demon Gate had slowed down, its strength had not relaxed in the slightest.

One inch, two inches… One chi… Two feet…

Veins popped out and his face turned red.

However, he still looked at the flustered crowd and said hoarsely, “Run…”

Faster, faster.

I said we’d go home. Even though his hands were covered in blood, tens of thousands of people still cursed me for betraying their masters and exterminating their loved ones. I have done all the wrong things, and I have done everything for this cause.

But I’m not a traitor.

It was as if his bones were about to be dislocated and grind to pieces, yet he was still holding onto that enormous door – truly laughable. Ants could support the heavens, mayflies could shake trees.

At this moment, he suddenly heard a loud bang not too far away!

Shi Mei lifted his sweaty face and peered through the tears in his eyelashes. He saw Chu Wanning being hit by the Heaven-Devouring Waves. The wall built by Tianwen and Jiuge was broken into pieces. After his Shizun fell from the sky, the dam he was struggling to maintain collapsed.

He saw Chu Wanning being thrown into the water by a huge wave with his own eyes.

“Shizun…”

The wall collapsed and the flood was no longer stopped. With the force of a bamboo breaking, it swept towards the intersection of the two worlds, leveling the mountains and buildings as it filled the ravines and empty valleys. In the blink of an eye, everything had sunk into chaos.

The human world was not the same as yesterday.

The blue sea had already turned into mulberry fields.

Just at this moment, the pressure of the Devil Sect increased by several times. Shi Mei felt that his bones had been broken and tendons had separated from his body. His spirit power was overdrawn and he suddenly coughed out a mouthful of blood.

He lowered his head and looked down. There were still a dozen or so people who had yet to arrive.

He did not know where he got the strength from, but he let out an angry shout. His eyes were about to crack, and the meridians in his neck were popping out. He used all his strength to block the door that was about to close.

“Grandmaster Hua!”

The beauties who had passed the world were all gathered below, watching him. However, at this time, Shi Mei couldn’t see their faces clearly. His vision was blurry, and everything was blurry.

The last eight… Five… Three…

His face twisted with pain, a smile of revenge blossomed with joy and love, blood trickled from his mouth, and his teeth were bright red.

“What is the destiny of the world, the people, the devil, the gods and ghosts, what hinders my return journey, and the previous efforts are useless—”

Isn’t it… He couldn’t win…

His heart was as hard as iron.

This was an unshakable stubbornness.

In the end… One…

“Run…”

Not to mention mayflies can’t shake trees, as long as the heart is firm, ants can also break the dike.

Hadn’t he managed to do it in the end?

‘Bang!’ a loud sound was heard.

The Infernal domain’s gate suddenly closed. Instantly, darkness and red intertwined before his eyes. What was red was blood, while what was dark was the sky. The last sound the bat in the crevice heard was a crisp “kacha”.

His hair stood on end.

Was it the shattering of the top of his head?

It was the echo of his mother's broken neck when he was still a child…

"Grandmaster Hua! Grandmaster!" Along with the loud closing of the devil gate, the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast Clan's mournful wails were cut off from the rest of the world.

The Demon Area's gate was dripping with blood. Between the cracks, Hua Binan's broken limbs were falling down… However, right after that, a huge wave came and washed away the hundreds of millions of corpses on the Path of Martyrdom.

After the wave passed, the devil gate disappeared.

Only Sisheng Peak remained, sinking into the waves of the vast sea. The Heaven-Piercing Tower collapsed, the Red Lotus Pavilion was annihilated, and the tiles and tiles of Loyalty Hall were instantly swallowed up.

Chu Wanning coughed a few times. Several times he wanted to call out to Huaisha, but his spiritual power had already cleared up, making him unable to do so.

Another sky-turning wave came by. The water pressure hit Chu Wanning's chest, bringing with it a piece of broken driftwood. He sank deep into the sea, wincing in pain and unable to breathe… He wouldn't be able to hold on to anything to save his own life…

His white robe fluttered in the water and his hair was scattered. He was sinking in the water. The halo before his eyes slowly faded and he was unable to breathe. Gradually, he felt his soul leaving his body.

Xue Meng and the others… they should have already retreated to the Black Tortoise Spirit Formation.

Would they make a mistake in the future?

And Mo Ran…

Mo Ran…

He slowly opened his eyes. In the cold water, the light of the sky was far away, and a few wisps of air bubbles appeared on his lips. He was lying on his back in a daze, probably choking to death, when he began to hallucinate.

He saw a dark figure coming at him like a mermaid, so close that he could see the familiar features, the dark purple pupils, and even the small, disjointed scars on his face.

It was a trace left behind after his corpse had been dismembered.

Chu Wanning suddenly closed his eyes. He must have been being too ruthless. So in the end, even the illusion before his death tormented him.

He said in a hoarse voice, “I’m sorry…”

He opened and closed his lips, but there were only tiny bubbles.

Suddenly, a hand tugged at him. Before he could even react, he fell into a firm and wide embrace. His chest was extremely cold and didn’t have the slightest bit of warmth, but even the sea water seemed to be evaporated by the wild aura on his body.

“Chu Wanning.”

He heard someone calling to him.

“Wanning!”

In his scattered consciousness, there was a person holding his lips. His lips were slightly cold, and a strand of spirit energy flowed into them.

“Bu’gui, come!”

In a split-second, a ghostly jade-green brilliance rushed out from the seawater. The man grabbed it and brought it with him towards the surface of the water. In the blink of an eye, they broke out of the water with a “Hua La” sound. Chu Wanning was drenched from head to toe. He was naturally cold and shivering in the cold water. His lips were green and white without a single trace of blood.

After panting for a while, he suddenly realized what had happened just now.

He suddenly raised his head and met the pair of deep, moist eyes. They were no longer confused and lost, but rather cold and clear.

Mo Ran was also panting slightly. His sexy lips were slightly opened, and were somewhat moist. His black clothes were also soaked through, sticking close to his tightly muscled chest. He just stared at Chu Wanning, not saying a word.

Who is this?

Was it a puppet or a living person?

Taxian-Jun, or Mo-zongshi?

Chu Wanning’s Adam’s apple bobbed up and down. He was about to speak when a drop of salty water slid down his forehead and into his eye socket.

He closed his eyes. They were red.

The moment he closed his eyes, the man embraced him in the water, his slightly cold lips touching his forehead.

“I am late.”

“…”

“Now that the shackles of Hua Bian have been removed, no one can control me anymore.” He kissed his forehead and his eyelashes. Because he had just swam too fast to save him, he was still panting.

Taxian-Jun looked at the eyes that slowly opened. He raised his hand and ruffled Chu Wanning’s hair, then looked at the world that was flooded with a torrential flood.

His voice was low and deep.

“Let’s go. I’ll send you back to your world.”

Ch. 308 [Sisheng Peak] Cooperation with the Flood

In front of the life and death gate, the Black Tortoise Spirit Formation had been opened. This was the last line of defense. Once the ocean broke through here, another world would follow.

“The order of the mortal world, if the order were to collapse, Heaven’s punishment would arrive, and all of it would belong to Hongmeng.”

— According to the ancient records, once the Gate of Life and Death was torn to an irrevocable state, the flood would submerge these two worlds and make everything fall into place.

All of this was too sudden for the cultivators present. They were completely caught off guard and many of them, other than crying, didn’t know what else to do.

It was no wonder. In such a sudden situation, how many people were able to remain calm?

However, for the Mei brothers who had already experienced the era of Taxian-Jun, and for Xue Meng who was no longer young, they were already prepared.

Mei Hanxue said, “Those who focus on attacking and healing, return to the other side of the Gate of Life and Death. All of the cultivators experienced in guarding, come out and follow me to the Black Tortoise Spirit Formation.”

Someone asked, “What for?”

“Defend of course.”

Everyone looked at the Black Tortoise Spirit Formation that connected the sky and the ground. Then, they looked at the surging torrent of destructive energy in the distance. They couldn't help but feel scared.

A female cultivator trembled as she asked, "This… Can you stop it?"

Mei Hanxue turned his head and saw the beauty of the girl. He narrowed his eyes and smiled. He really did see through life and death in the game, even though his life was hanging by a thread, he was still in the mood to tease, "Oh, I can't say I can stop it.

"But if you don't stop it, you'll definitely die. Is this young lady afraid?"

"…"

With a cold face, Méi Hánxuě walked over. "Why are you still chatting at this time?"

"We're only going to chat because of this. Otherwise, if I become a ghost, I'll go to the Underworld to find the Ghost Lady?"

This was the first time the Mei brothers appeared in front of a crowd – but seeing the two, the elder brother was as cold as frost, the younger brother was gentle and bright, the female cultivator could not help but be shocked, and was unable to recover her senses. "You are?"

Mei Hanxue smiled and winked at her. "How is it? Am I better looking?"

The female cultivator could not even close her mouth and could only stand there in a daze, "You guys…"

Just as she was about to observe the two of them again, the man who looked like a cold cave had already turned his back to them.

“Attack, retreat, defend, advance! Please hurry.”

Someone asked, “Even if we are to temporarily stop the flood with the Black Tortoise World Spirit Formation, that is still a plan to slow down our fighting. We can’t possibly continue to block the flood like this, right?”

“Yeah, what if the flood never retreated?”

Méi Hánxuě shook his head and said, “Half of you come and block the flood while the other half close the Gate of Life and Death.”

“…” There were thousands of people gathered here, but they were all instantly silenced.

Close the Gate of Life and Death?

Right now, the entire dome had almost been torn open. The space within looked like a vast ocean with no end in sight. The two spacetime had completely fused into one. How could they be separated?

Seemingly seeing through everyone’s doubts, Méi Hánxuě said, “Ten Thousand Waves Reversal.”

Xue Meng, who was standing in the middle of the crowd, was stunned for a moment. He thought that this incantation sounded familiar, but as he was thinking about it, he suddenly heard Elder Xun Ji say: “was this not created by Yuheng… Reverse the curse?”

With this mention, the people from the Bitan Manor also reacted.

In the past when Butterfly Town’s Suppressing Heavenly Rift, Li Wuxin brought a group of disciples to Sisheng Peak to demand an explanation. After a series of misunderstandings, Chu Wanning told everyone with a

cold face that the creator of the “Ten Thousand Waves Reversal” was himself.

Méi Hánxuě said, “The Wave Reversal Technique can reverse the spell that has already been cast.”

Someone said in surprise, “Such a big one is fine too?”

“Of course it won’t work with only one person power.” Méi Hánxuě said, “That’s why we have to work hard together.”

Everyone looked at each other. After exchanging glances, many people hesitated before retreating behind the Gate of Life and Death.

“My Spiritual Energy is insufficient, I am unable to withstand the flood.”

“Me too. I am most unskilled in defensive formations.”

No one was an idiot. They all knew the Wave Reversal spell and closing the Gate wasn't easy. Even though there were people from the Taxue Palace and a few youths from other sects who volunteered themselves, there were still quite a few cultivators who cowered and squeezed their way to the back of the cracks.

Méi Hánxuě stared at the cowering turtles as his originally unfriendly face turned even gloomier. “They all want to hide behind us and be safe. Who is in front to block them?”

This was often the case. For example, in a battle between two armies, a battle to the death was often the case. Even though one knew that they could not survive the fall of the striker, they still desired to be assigned to the back.

While they were in a stalemate, Jiang Xi suddenly said, “Let me do it.”

Seeing the Sect Leader walk over, a large group of people followed after Guyue’ye. The Medical Sect was the weakest with regards to the spiritual energy. When they went out, it was like giving a slap to those afraid of death experts.

“… I know a bit about guarding, too.”

After Zhen Congming from Bitan Manor said this, he walked to the front and silently stood by the side with his sword crossed.

The number of people increased by quite a bit one after another. Although it was still far from enough, they had no time to wait as the first wave of people approached.

“Faster! Ziming, go to the back, Shi Wanlang, and cast the Wave Reversal Curse. The others, follow me to the Black Tortoise Spirit Formation and prepare to defend.” After Mei Hanxue finished speaking, he leapt up and arrived in front of Pang Shuo’s transparent barrier. Then, he placed his palm onto it.

“Open the formation!”

He was not the only one who did so. Soon, palms came to the final barrier of the mortal world. The blue flow of spiritual energy, the jade flow of spiritual energy, the red flow of spiritual energy… Countless rays of light converged towards the barrier that separated the heaven and earth.

Slowly, a snake-body tortoise shell totem lit up in the night sky. It had its tail in the ground and its head in the nine heavens. That was the Black

Tortoise Curse Seal that was ignited by the combined forces of everyone present.

It was at this moment that the great waves that were stirred up by the first phoenix rushed over from the front. Its momentum was much greater than ten thousand horses galloping, and the Yellow River sank into the sea.

Everyone tensed to the limit, staring at the approaching muddy yellow water line.

“Get ready, it’s coming —”

As soon as his voice fell, a thousand feet tall wave that seemed like it could swallow the heavens came crashing down towards them! Instantly, water splashed in all directions!

“Hold on!”

This torrent of anger was like a Taotie beast. Even though it had the Black Tortoise Barrier as a defense, there were still streams of water that could shatter the weak spots of the spirit energy, fiercely spraying in like an arrowhead. There were also many cultivators with weaker strengths that could not withstand this wave of force. With just the first wave of their heads, dozens of people fell to their knees, coughing up blood.

Jiang Xi turned back and shouted, “Come on, more people!”

However, seeing this situation, there were less and less people who dared to step forward.

At this time, Xue Meng had already finished drawing the runes of the Ten Thousand Waves Reversal. He launched an attack into the air, and tens of

thousands of lightning bolts shined behind the runes, scattering in all directions towards the Gate of Life and Death.

Just like how the vanguard blocked the flood, the cultivators behind also began casting their spells, trying their best to close the rift that had split the two spaces. However, these cracks were truly too large. For a moment, it was impossible to tell whether or not the edges of the cracks were shrinking back. Many people were actually extremely nervous.

The rear progress was slow, but the front was already stretched out.

Another wave came. More cultivators fell to the ground, unable to hold on. The crack on the Black Tortoise Spirit Formation also became bigger and bigger. Water rapidly gushed out and splashed everywhere. Jiang Xi and the others' clothes were quickly drenched.

"We can't continue like this." Méi Hánxuě said, "Before the Gate of Life and Death closes, the Black Tortoise Spirit Formation should be broken."

"…"

At that moment, they suddenly heard the sound of horses' hooves coming from behind them. He turned his head and saw a group of wandering cultivators and civilians walking toward him. Cultivators rode on their swords, while commoners rode their horses. The two people leading the pack were both dressed in black robes and looked extremely pretty. They were none other than Ye Wangxi.

There was also a middle-aged lady named Lady Xu. Her sword was crooked and her body was covered with red silk. Her hairpin was decorated with dazzling golden ornaments. She was the Island Owner of Flying Flower Island, Third Madam Sun.

Smoke and dust billowed behind the two of them. Who knew how many people they had brought with them? Perhaps they had even brought along women and children who had taken refuge.

Ye Wangxi jumped down from her sword and said with a frown, “I heard all about it on the way here.”

Her gaze moved past the crowd and landed on the threatened Black Tortoise Spirit Formation. Then, she swept a glance at those cultivators who clearly had high spiritual energy but were unwilling to take the risk.

In this world, if there was a weak warrior, there would be a strong coward. The human body and the heart were not necessarily compatible.

Ye Wangxi was disappointed, “… If you have the ability, then your heart is no better than a commoner’s!” She threw down those words and with a flick of her fingers, arrived beside Jiang Xi, covering his hand with her own.

Other than her, regardless of whether they were rogue cultivators or commoners, regardless of how weak their abilities were, they all rushed forward. Seeing this situation, no matter how thick-skinned they were, they could not help but blush.

“I… I’ll go too.”

“Forget it, isn’t it death anyway? I’ll go too!”

“Me too! Me too!”

More and more people gathered in front of the Black Tortoise Spirit Formation. The Turtle Snake Formation, which had been dimmed down earlier, once again became transparent and bright.

The third wave… The fourth wave……

Man fights against the heavens, man fights against life.

Suddenly a girl shouted crisply, “Look! Is that the edge of the Gate of Life and Death?!”

The sound was like a thunderclap. Everyone quivered as they looked in the direction he pointed – sure enough, at the far edge of the sky, they could faintly see a black line shrinking back. Although it was extremely slow, it was definitely shrinking.

Immediately, someone was so moved that they started crying. “Quick! Faster! It was really possible! It really can close!”

Seeing this vivid life force, almost every pair of eyes blazed with the light of survival. All of them clasped their hands together and continuously gathered their power into the center of the Ten Thousand Waves Reversal, in exchange for the Space-Time Door’s inch-by-inch seal being slowly restored.

However, the power of the world was still vast. Even though there were tens of thousands of people who were facing the same enemy and had poured all of their spirit energy into the barrier, they were still unable to contend against the divine force.

A human was like a tiny ant, too insignificant…

Following another wave of snowstorm crashing down, a crisp “kacha” sound rang out and a lightning-like crack appeared in the center of the Black Tortoise World Spirit Formation. The tear ran from the top of the sky

all the way down to the ground, with drops of water seeping in from behind.

All the human faces turned pale. They all knew that if this scar was split open, it would be…

“Boom!”

Before he could finish his thought, the earth split and the sky collapsed!

A hole had been opened, and the rivers were pouring in from behind. The angry sound of the waves drowned out the screams of the people. Quite a few people were knocked down by the waves.

“AHHHHHHHHHH!”

“Help!”

The water that flooded in was like a torrential downpour. Xue Meng stood in front of the Gate of Life and Death. He turned his head to look at the scene in front of the Black Tortoise Spirit Formation, clenched his teeth, and said to everyone, “Faster!”

As he was speaking, he saw a person rushing towards him, holding a silver sword in his hand. It was none other than the him of his youth.

He grabbed the young man’s shoulder, and his long brows stood up in anger. “Go back! You don’t even know how to use a defensive array.”

The young man, Xue Meng, gritted his teeth and said, “I want to return the sword to that person.”

“Who?”

The young man, Xue Meng, raised his hand and pointed at Jiang Xi, who was still doing his best despite lacking the assistance of his godly weapon.

“… Jiang Yechen? Why do you have his sword?”

The young man, Xue Meng, was stunned. “You don’t know?”

Xue Meng shook his head. “I don’t understand him. He died a long time ago in our time.”

When he said this, his eyes were somewhat hazy. He had been wandering for so long. He could not remember clearly the time when everyone was still alive and the war had started.

However, after thinking for a moment, Xue Meng continued to look at Jiang Xi’s back and said, “Back then, Taxian-Jun asked him to hand over the secret scroll of Guyue’ye. It’s indeed powerful, but very evil. For example, how to use the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Feast to refine medicine, or the Yin and Yang Dual Cultivation Techniques.”

“…” Noticing that young man Xue Meng’s expression had become extremely unsightly when he heard the two techniques, he couldn’t help but ask, “What happened to you?”

The young man replied: “Nothing. And then?”

“Jiang Xi not willing. He said that the Medical Sect’s secret scripture was a demon's work. Since the day he took over the Sect Leader, he has already burned it.”

“…”

“Taxian-Jun was infuriated and ordered him to copy a book. Naturally, he did not agree to it. In the end, he was still killed.” Xue Meng closed his eyes, “Jiang Yechen is a hero. I am glad to see that he is still alive in another world.”

Seeing that he didn’t say anything, Xue Meng lowered his eyes and said, “You still haven’t answered me. How did you get his sword?”

The young man’s lips trembled, and he didn’t know what to say for a moment. After a long time, he opened his mouth and said, “I…” Another loud noise came from behind, making his bones tingle and his hair stand on end.

They turned around abruptly, only to see that the lightning crack had reached its peak. Ye Wangxi and Mei Hanxue were still kneeling on the ground. Jiang Xi was still struggling with his strength, but suddenly coughed out a mouthful of blood.

The young man, Xue Meng, cried out involuntarily, “Jiang Xi…”

What?

Still calling him Jiang Xi?

Or was it Sect Leader Jiang?

He then ran over and handed Xuehuang to Jiang Xi.

“… Get lost!” Jiang Xi lifted his eyes and saw that it was him. With a pale complexion, he frowned and pushed his martial spirit along with Xue Meng. “Go back to the rift, don’t cause any more trouble!”

After saying that, he coughed up another mouthful of blood.

“Jiang Yechen!”

Hearing him calling his own courtesy name, Jiang Xi coughed a few times, gasping for breath as he looked back, his eyes full of fierceness and complexity. “Who allowed you to call me that?”

“…”

“My given name, my courtesy name, they are not what you should call me.” Jiang Xi’s lips turned red as his meridians bulged. In the pouring rain, he did his best to maintain the spirit formation.

But he didn’t forget to scold him as he had initially seen him.

“How unruly!”

A loud sound pierced the ears, followed by a terrifying crackling sound. Xue Meng did not even have the time to speak, nor did he have the time to react when he was suddenly dragged toward the back by Xuehuang — immediately following that, he saw the lightning like crack instantly crack. This time, it was no longer a small crack, but the entire area had crumbled.

The river was instantly flooded!

The people standing behind the gate of life and death instantly felt their scalps go numb.

It’s over.

Apocalypse… Apocalypse… They all belonged to the prehistoric era…

Some of them even stopped contributing to the Ten Thousand Waves Reversal. They knelt down, kowtowing and wailing like the most primitive

slaves in front of the Heaven's punishment, then knelt on the ground and begged the God for mercy.

Some people raised their heads to the sky and yelled out that this was unfair. Their tears and sobs flowed all over the ground.

It was over.

However, at this time! Suddenly, a jade-green ray of light chopped down amidst the gushing torrent!

"What's going on?"

"What the hell!"

Even the slightest movement of the wind and grass could cause the hearts of those in dire straits to shudder, let alone such a shocking movement. They looked up and saw a man in black gold armor flying over. As he got closer, they could see that he was covered with wounds. It seemed that he had been cut by thousands of sharp knives. But even so, people could still see the shadow of his former handsome appearance.

"… It was… Mo… Mo Ran?"

"It's the devil!"

"Motherfucker, what devil is this? It's obviously Mo-zongshi!" Ma Yun of the Peach Blossom Villa immediately became excited, because even a fool could tell that Mo Ran was here to save them and not to add fuel to the fire.

And the person who came with him was the long-disappeared Immortal Beidou, Chu Wanning.

“Chu-zongshi!”

The creator of the Ten Thousand Waves Reversal, a Grandmaster of the number one enchantment in the world.

Just like their sect Shizun, the cultivators of the Peach Blossom Villa were most afraid of death, and upon seeing this, they became extremely excited. They took the initiative to be ecstatic, and started dancing in joy: “There’s hope! We can be saved!”

Mo Ran was controlled by the wind. His robes fluttered in the wind and he was covered in a set of cultivation leather armor. He flew straight to the front of the Black Tortoise Spirit Formation and jumped down, firmly landing in the waves.

“Jiangui, ten thousand people’s coffins!”

Following his shout, countless vines shot up from the ground, covering Ye Wangxi, Third Madam Sun, Jiang Xi, and the others who had been knocked down and immersed in the waves. He wrapped all of these heavily injured people in vines and leaves and sent them to the back. Then, he turned around and commanded sternly:

“Someone else, get up here! Where are the uninjured guards?!” He glanced at Jiang Xi, even more enraged than before. “Why did even a healing Grandmaster come here to do such a thing?! Do you want to die?!”

The guards behind who were still alive had their faces covered with dirt and dirt from the scolding, and their faces were drenched in blood.

He gritted his teeth and said: “Who the hell wants to hide anymore? After I finish taking care of this drizzle, I will crush all of your heads one by one!”

“…” Everyone looked at each other.

“Get out here!”

It was unknown how terrifying this person’s deterrence was. Perhaps he had already experienced a moment of near death despair. Many people who were afraid of life and death had thought of leaving before the end of the world. Even the once most wretched remnants of the Jiangdong Hall had crossed the boundary of the Gate of Life and Death. The group of cultivators came up to the back of Taxian-Jun and placed their hands on the barrier.

The barrier that was teetering on the verge of collapse instantly recovered its spirit. Because of everyone’s concerted efforts and the infusion of the number one combat strength in Mortal Realm, it became indestructible and emitted an extremely vigorous aura.

“Whooosh.”

Seeing a tide that was ten thousand meters tall rushing over like a tsunami, some people were naturally timid. Seeing this situation, they couldn’t help but gulp and stand.

Taxian-Jun said in a gloomy voice:

“Don’t leave a single one. If you dare to retreat, you can give it a try.”

“…”

“Whoever escapes from this battle… This Venerable One will make it so that you will not see the sun after tonight.”

Ch. 309 [Sisheng Peak] Mo Ran Is Not Far Away

He was not joking around, nor was he threatening. He was stating a fact, a condition that he had thrown away.

For a time, no one dared to retreat. They could only bite the bullet and close their eyes in fear.

A thousand meters… a hundred meters…

Closer…

BOOOOOOM!

Waves crashed down, eardrums vibrated, and the heavens and earth shook. It was like hundreds of millions of people were throwing hammers, and even the sun and moon were shattered by these waves. The veins on Taxian-Jun's arm bulged and his teeth snapped.

Behind him, Chu Wanning came to the intersection of the Space-Time Door of Life and Death. He patted Xue Meng who was struggling to survive.

Xue Meng turned his head, revealing a very calm face.

Although there were some wrinkles at the corner of his eyes, his expression was the same as when he was young.

"Shizun."

Chu Wanning looked at him, "I'm here."

A bright green light shone, and the Jiuge appeared in this world. Chu Wanning stood like the wind, the zither strings twanging. The edges of the

Gate of Life and Death began to close at a speed visible to the naked eye.

“Retreat.” While playing the zither, he said to the crowd, “All of you, come behind me.”

Of course, he didn’t need to repeat escaping a second time. However, this time, most of the people, including some who were afraid of death, were no longer scrambling.

None of them competed for the upper hand. Some supported their wounded companions, while others carried some wounded soldiers whom they had never seen before, and slowly walked towards the back.

The edge of the spatial gate of life and death was near Mount Kunlun. When they reached the Kunlun road, many people stopped retreating.

They stood there, looking at the figure of Chu Wanning standing in front of the snowy plains. Their wide sleeves fluttered as the zither music rang out…

Who said that cultivation meant one needed to have an immortal body that would last for ten thousand years, possessing the power to destroy the heavens and the earth?

Some people could live for 10,000 years, but they were nothing more than a rock. Some people even hurriedly walk through the human world, but leave a trail of bright flowers.

For example, at this moment in time, in front of the Door of Life and Death, there was an Immortal who was using his flesh and blood, ten fingers of chanting, to transcend the mortal world, proving his own Immortal Dao.

Snow began to fall from the sky, falling onto his shoulders.

Someone noticed something and was surprised, “Eh? This is not snow…”

It was the Flame Emperor Divine Wood of the Extreme East Sea that was being perceived. The ancient Chinese flower that prided itself on the primordial era blossomed, and it was different from the other flowers as it emitted an extremely fragrant aroma. The snow-like crystalline petals floated from the ends of the sky and floated all over the world.

The petals rose up, the clouds cleared up. The bright hair was like a stream of stars, rushing to the edge of the Gate of Life and Death, helping to heal the mortal world…

Within the dancing petals, many cultivators were reminded of a legend: Last time, when the heavens and earth were about to fall, Shennong had planted the Flame Emperor’s Divine Wood, saving the world from falling into the ground. Time flowed on. Fuxi had passed away, Nuwa had fallen into a deep slumber, and the Flame Emperor had disappeared. However, Shennong was still there.

His body was like a dying tree, covering the sky of the Nine Prefectures.

Seeing that the crack in space was getting smaller and smaller, Taxian-Jun turned around to look at the person beside him and said: “Retreat. Take advantage of the fact that the gates of life and death have yet to close, and get lost.”

Surprisingly, not everyone immediately retreated as quickly as they could. Some expressed that they could still support him, while others indicated that they wanted to fight until the very last moment.

Who doesn’t have a little bit of the Blood of the Hero in their bones?

Even if one was buried deep within the heart by time and life, there would still come a day when one would feel the heat and the excitement.

On the other hand, Taxian-Jun laughed angrily: “Are you guys leaving or not? If you can’t leave, you’re just trying to make this Venerable One feel angry, aren’t you? Get lost!”

Those people started to leave one after another.

Suddenly, he heard a trembling voice as he said, “Emperor… What about you…”

Taxian-Jun was stunned for a moment before he slowly turned his head. He saw an old man stooping far away in the rain, looking at him.

“… Liu-gong?”

Perhaps he was seeing things, but he actually felt that the old man was looking at him with a gaze of indescribable pity and pain. It was like a father looking at his child.

Ridiculous.

Borrowing the old servant’s ten thousand guts, this old man shouldn’t have dared to treat the savage and fiendish Taxian-Jun as his own child. However, right at this moment, Taxian-Jun vaguely remembered that the old fellow had just lost his son in the war when he entered the imperial palace to serve him.

If the kid was still alive, he should be about his age.

Taxian-Jun closed his eyes and said, “With my abilities, this Venerable One will naturally be the last to leave. You needn't worry.”

“Emperor…”

“Go.” Taxian-Jun turned his gaze away from the old man. “To another world.”

“…”

“Maybe your son is still alive in that world.” He suddenly grinned, showing his sharp canine teeth and deep dimples, “Scram, Old Liu. Accompany him well.”

The Gate of Time and Space and Life and Death was shrinking, and the people in front of the Black Tortoise Barrier were retreating. Every time a guard was removed, the force that Taxian-Jun exerted on the Black Tortoise Barrier would increase, until finally, there were only a hundred people left.

Taxian-Jun narrowed his eyes, after considering the situation, he said with a stern voice, “Everyone, stop. We have passed through the Gate of Life and Death.”

At this time, the Heavenly Rift had already shrunk to the height and width of an ordinary gate. Seeing that a new wave was approaching, the remaining cultivators finally stopped and passed through the rift one by one, returning to another world and to the snowy plains of Mount Kunlun.

However, the speed of the huge wave was too fast. Most people didn’t even get the chance to cross the boundary before the wave fiercely slammed into the Black Tortoise Spirit Formation.

Right now, the barrier was only supported by Taxian-Jun. No matter how talented he was, he was under a lot of pressure. He couldn’t help but let out a groan as pain showed on his face.

The great waves were like a gale, and the whales broke the waves. In the depths of the vast ocean, there seemed to be a dragon-girl dance, causing the earth to shake and the mountains to shake.

Someone was hesitating at the intersection of the Gate of Life and Death. “Mo-zongshi…”

When Taxian-Jun heard this, he suddenly got angry and cursed, “Mo-zongshi your ass! Will you scram? Scram!”

He didn’t know where he had touched his sore spot, but he didn’t dare to make another sound. He lowered his head and stepped over the threshold of life and death. The remaining cultivators also followed one by one as they crossed the boundary. The Gate of Life and Death also became smaller and smaller. However, the Xuanwu enchantment was already on the verge of breaking. When Taxian-Jun looked back, he saw that there were more than ten cultivators who had yet to enter. He couldn’t help but curse in his heart. His scarred hands continued to cover the barrier as the veins and muscles on the back of his hands became visible.

But he couldn’t hold on.

Although he was the number one powerhouse of the Mortal Realm, in the end he was still only a tiny existence. How could he fight against the Hongmeng world?

The crisp sound of the clanging could be heard.

“The barrier is about to break!”

Taxian-Jun In front of the monstrous flood, he didn’t even turn his head back as he shouted out to the people behind him who had yet to leave.

“Get lost!”

Black blood seeped out from his lips, and his long eyelashes drooped down. Taxian-Jun looked at his left foot — it was slowly being corroded, turning into dust…

He sneered, but he was not afraid.

He was the living corpse that had been revived by Shi Mei. As long as he died, his body wouldn’t be able to hold on for long and would turn into ashes very soon.

He felt that it was enough to have a fight with fate before he turned into ashes.

However…

Turning around, he saw Chu Wanning’s blurry figure behind the Gate of Life and Death. The crack was still shrinking, leaving only four or five people inside. In addition, there was also the current era’s Xue Meng and the Mei brothers who had yet to cross the border.

The people at the peak of the mountain could not help but step forward, and anxiously said, “Young Master!”

Xue Meng coughed and pointed at himself. “Your Young Master is that person, not me.”

Young Xue Meng: “…”

“One mountain does not allow two tigers. How could there be two Xue Meng in a world? Wouldn’t that be a mess?” Xue Meng laughed, and a frown appeared at the corner of his eyes. “I don’t belong to this mortal

world of yours. Now that I was able to do my last bit for these two lives, my wish was fulfilled. Furthermore, I've been tired for too long, I've been wanting to rest for a long time now."

He turned around and walked in the direction of the Black Tortoise Spirit Formation. At this time, the enchantment had already cracked to the point of being mostly broken, and there were chapped holes everywhere.

He walked to the side of Taxian-Jun and gave a complicated look to that man. Then, he opened his mouth as if he wanted to say something.

But in the end, he still couldn't say it out loud.

"Young Lord!"

"Young Master Xue!"

Behind him was Sisheng Peak, calling out to him, but so what? Even in this era, his father and mother were no longer present.

Furthermore, his life had nothing to do with the mortal world. If he were to forcefully stay, he would not know where to start.

Xue Meng let out a sigh. He raised his hand and rubbed the back of his neck, which was pulsing with blood vessels. Suddenly, he grinned.

This was what it was like when you were old. Sometimes, you would suddenly feel dizzy and absent-minded. For example, when he was in a daze, the sky and earth were not dark. Many times, he would be able to see Xue Zhengyong's figure and Madam Wang's smile.

Many times, he would see three little fellows from his youth shouting around a white-robed cultivator, "Esteemed Shizun, esteemed Shizun!"

These were all things that belonged to him, and no one could take them away.

Visiting old friends but most are ghosts, can enjoy each other's company only in a glass of wine. Before anyone could even react, he had already passed through the Black Tortoise Formation and was thrown into the surging tides.

He belonged to this world of mortals. Even if he was torn to pieces and the world drifted away, he still felt that he should return to this place.

He didn’t feel much pain, but it was like falling asleep in a drunken stupor.

I am willing to give my remaining years just to remain blissfully dreaming.

If only return to share wine with you.

Delightful. He, Xue Ziming, had endured for more than ten years.

Everyone fell into a deathly silence. A moment later, all the disciples at the Sisheng Peak knelt down and did not utter a single word. The people of the Taxue Palace seemed to have suddenly realized something. Many of their expressions changed as they looked towards the Mei brothers.

“Eldest Brother! Come here, don’t stay there…”

“Come back quickly… Come back here…”

“Aiyo, I’m not coming back, I’m not coming back.” Mei Hanxue smiled and waved at them from behind the barrier. “A single Mei Hanxue can bring disaster upon half of the beautiful women in the cultivation world. If there were two of me in this world, wouldn’t it be a mess? In order to pity the

girls who were half-way up the mountain, I'm leaving, brothers. Farewell to the martial arts world."

Méi Hánxuě stood beside his younger brother and gazed at the snow-capped Mount Kunlun, the lofty and sacred mountain. He gave a proper bow to the Sect master who had long passed away in his generation, "Disciple Méi Hánxuě greets the Sect Leader today."

The two of them seemed to be speaking very easily, but everyone knew that their thoughts were unshakable.

Mingyue Lou closed its eyes and sighed into the wind.

The younger brother smiled brightly, and his older brother nodded. The heavy responsibility that the two of them shouldered had been accomplished, and he would live up to his kindness, his best friend, and his world. Facing the torrential torrent of water, they actually felt as if a heavy burden had been lifted from their shoulders. Their eyes were closed as they plunged into the vast ocean — their figures disappeared without a trace like the petals of a falling plum in water after a single wave had passed.

At this point, everyone had either retreated behind the Time of Life and Death or returned to the vast and boundless Great Sea.

At this moment, the sound of the zither disappeared.

Chu Wanning raised his eyes, and Jiuge turned into a ray of golden light, returning to his blood and bones. In the snowy plains of Kunlun, his white robes fluttered as he stood with his back facing the crowd.

For a moment no one knew what he was going to do.

“There’s still one last crack.” He turned his head to the side, and the wind began to blow. It gently caressed his clothes and his tattered pitch-black hair.

“After I leave, all the cultivators close them. They can ensure the peace of this world.”

“…”

After a few moments of silence, someone suddenly reacted and shouted, “Grandmaster!”

“Chu-zongshi!”

Xue Meng’s hair stood on end as he staggered and rushed over from the snow at Kunlun, “Shizun! Shizun!” But the snowy road was too slippery, and he was running fast. Suddenly, he fell to the ground, his pair of black beast-like eyes looking at Chu Wanning in despair.

“Shizun…”

Hearing his voice, Chu Wanning turned around.

His dark eyes gazed at him from afar, and finally, Chu Wanning said, “…I’m sorry.”

Sorry for what?

Xue Meng’s pupils shrank in fear. It was as if the top of his head had been drilled open. Someone was pouring a thick layer of snow and ice into his skull.

Sorry for what?! Sorry about his relationship with Mo Ran? Sorry for the deception? Or was it because…

He gulped and swallowed.

Or was it because…

“No! Don’t go!” Xue Meng finally collapsed. He knelt on the snowy plains and wailed, “Don’t leave! Why are you all like this. Why do you have to leave me all alone… Why am I the only one left?!”

Tears kept streaming down his bloodied face, leaving streaks of white marks.

The heart-wrenching wail seemed to have been dug out from his throat along with the fresh blood. It was as if his liver and gall were shattered, and his flesh was a mess of blood and gore.

“Don’t leave me… Come back! Come back!”

He howled like a beast, kneeling on his knees in the snow, the snow falling silently around him, as if he were a man crushed by the falling snow.

He couldn’t get up again.

“Please… Come back…”

What do I have?

Father. Mother. Brother. Friend.

Even the Longcheng was destroyed.

Come back.

Don’t take my last spine.

Shizun… Please…

However, Xue Meng did not know that Chu Wanning was already dead.

A person was placed on a altar. Because he was too powerful, he had to carry a heavy burden that made it hard for him to breathe.

He watched his lover close his eyes in his arms.

He personally dismembered his lover.

He had to confront an old friend with a sword.

Just one thing was enough to empty his heart, not to mention that he had experienced all of these. He could never look back.

— I did my best to keep you alive.

So now, can you let me be selfish and die with him?

Chu Wanning finally set foot into the Time of Life and Death sect. He returned to the turbulent Broken World, leaving the Snow Region of Kunlun behind.

Over there, the sky and the earth lost their color, and mountains, rivers, lakes, and seas all turned into a vast ocean.

The sun and moon were unknown, and only one person remained in the land of the Nine Prefectures.

Chu Wanning came up to the man and embraced him from behind. Then, he raised his slender fingers to cover the wound on Taxian-Jun’s palm.

Taxian-Jun was shocked. He suddenly turned his head and asked, “What did you —?!”

Chu Wanning smiled. Under his long eyelashes was a pair of soft black phoenix eyes.

“I did.”

“…”

“Hell is too cold. I’m here to die with you.”

His warm body embraced his cold body. The body of Taxian-Jun had been destroyed to such an extent that his left leg had almost completely disintegrated, becoming nothing but ashes.

The expression on his face was extremely complex. He pursed his lips and finally turned his face away.

“… The most annoying person is you, there’s no need for you to accompany me.”

However, it was as if his heart had exploded, and all that flowed out of it was gentleness. He knew that he was only a corpse, but at this moment, he suddenly felt that it was extremely hot.

After a moment of silence, Taxian-Jun turned around and said, “That’s right. Actually, there was one thing. I should tell you.”

“What is it?”

He raised his head and suppressed the stifling sensation in his heart. Then, he looked at Chu Wanning resolutely, “Before I tell you the truth, can you

tell me the truth first?”

“…”

“Do you really hate me like this? The one you are unwilling to part with is the Mo-zongshi that died in your arms.”

After he said these words, his eyes actually turned red from humiliation.

If it were not for the collapse of heaven and earth and the separation between life and death, he probably would never have used such a despicable tone to seek the answer to this question. He asked, feeling humiliated. His fingers could not help but clench into a fist – but he suddenly realized that even the fingertips of his left hand had started to turn into sand. Slowly, they had turned into ashes…

He waited for a long time, but there was no reply. His burning heart gradually cooled down.

It was as if the beating organs in his chest had been crushed, turning into plaster.

“Forget it.” Taxian-Jun turned his head, “This Venerable one knows the answer. It doesn’t matter, since this reputed one has…”

Before he could finish, a pair of warm hands held his face.

Chu Wanning looked at his handsome face that had been cut into pieces, but his eyes were more sincere and full of passion than ever before.

“Are you stupid?”

“…”

“It’s all you.” Chu Wanning hugged him. The Black Tortoise Spirit Formation flashed and darkened, and it was finally extinguished.

There was only darkness left in the world. The last wave of the river came crashing in with pride and victory. The sounds of running footsteps seemed to mock the weak and insignificant strength of humans. How could they dare to fight with their lives?

“I’ve told him that too.”

Chu Wanning embraced his disappearing lover. Before the torrential flood, when the end of the world was approaching, his expression was calm but his gaze was solemn.

“It doesn’t matter if it’s Mo-zongshi or Taxian-Jun. It's all you.”

The sand had already spread to his arms, gradually spreading to his chest.

The black eyes stared at him.

“I’ve always been yours,” Chu Wanning said.

“No regrets.”

Taxian-Jun stiffened for a moment, then abruptly closed his eyes. Tears could be seen beneath his long and slender eyelashes.

He finally took off his cold mask, and his expression slowly relaxed. He used his remaining hand to hug his back tightly, pressing his lover against his chest. He lowered his head to kiss his hair, his cheek gently rubbing against his forehead.

“You’re right.” He sighed. “I was too stupid…”

Taxian-Jun Whisperer, “Wanning, I’m sorry.”

How many years of love and hatred entangled, most of the life grudges, in this sigh dust settled.

After a while, Chu Wanning heard him press his head against his ear. His voice was low and deep. It was the peace which was a rare moment in the life of an Taxian-Jun, “Well, there’s not much time left… It’s time I told you the secret.”

“What secret?”

Taxian-Jun lowered his eyes. “It has something to do with Mo-zongshi.”

“Actually, ever since I merged with his heart, I could feel it.” He paused, “Mo-zongshi merged his soul into my body.”

“…” Chu Wanning was stunned. Then, he suddenly raised his head and looked at the smiling face of Taxian-Jun in disbelief.

“The fragments of the soul. Always inside me. However, my heart is like a rock. I feel that even if I am crippled, a wisp of my soul will have its own determination. That is why I am unwilling to merge with the three spirits and the five spirits.”

“However, when it comes down to it, if I am the only one capable of confessing to you, then it would be too unfair.”

“…”

“Wanning…”

Taxian-Jun closed his eyes, and the faint smile on his face gradually faded.

“Don’t be sad, he’s always here.”

Under Chu Wanning’s astonished gaze, Taxian-Jun instantly opened his eyes. They were clearly the same eyes, yet they didn’t have the same shade of black to the point of turning purple. Instead, they were pure and gentle.

“… Mo Ran?!”

With a bang, the huge wave crashed down, and the Black Tortoise Spirit Formation was finally completely destroyed. In the torrential waves of the whale, Mo Ran didn’t say anything first and just hugged him tightly. They sank into the vast ocean with him, disappearing deep into the ocean.

Water and crystal bubbles swirled around him, and in the blue sea, Mo Ran opened his eyes.

The water was deep, like love in those dark eyes.

Amidst the waves, Mo Ran’s lips moved as he silently said something to Chu Wanning.

—

Shizun, don’t worry, it’s me.

I was there all the time.

I will be in the future.

Thus… Go back. Don’t stay here.

Believe me, I’ll be fine. I’ll try my best to see you, to be with you.

I’ll wait for you in another world.

He closed his mouth, and finally called Jiangui out of him. Jiangui covered Chu Wanning’s entire body, sending him to the final inch of the Gate of Life and Death.

“Mo Ran… Mo Ran! What do you mean? You bastard! What do you mean!”

Mo Ran floated smilingly in the water. His broken body had already turned into sand and dust, and that crazy, sweet, innocent, evil face had turned into mottled dust at this moment.

They gradually distanced themselves from each other.

Go back. Wanning.

You have to believe me.

I’ll be fine. I’ll always be by your side.

Forever.

Ch. 310 [Sisheng Peak] The Last Card

There was light.

When Mo Ran opened his eyes, he found himself lying in a purplish-red sky. He blinked his eyes slowly and turned his neck slowly. Then, he stood up – he realized that this was not the sky. Instead, it was a palace made of amethyst.

Because the palace was so large, a single brick was comparable to a carriage, so he mistook it for a cloud.

A tall man stood in the distance, leaning against the window as he looked out.

The man was wearing a robe of indistinct texture and was barefoot. He held a luminous glass in his hand and absent-mindedly rotated the amber liquid within. Outside the window, there was a tree of bright red flowers, with bits of silver falling from their hearts.

There is no such dress, no such flower.

Mo Ran was certain that there was no such palace in the human world.

“Where am I?” he asked.

The man’s fingertip stopped moving and turned his face slightly to the side. However, because it was reflected by the light, Mo Ran could not see his face clearly.

“You are quite calm, Hero.”

“…”

The man drank all the wine in his cup in one gulp. He casually placed the cup on the windowsill and walked towards him.

Soon, Mo Ran could see it clearly. This man had a face slightly similar to Gouchen the Exalted, the first blood-red spider mole under the corner of his eye. His lips were very thin, and he didn't seem to have a very good temper.

"I am the second generation Sect Leader of the Demon World." The man spoke slowly, his eyes fixed on Mo Ran's reaction. "You're in the Devil's Palace now."

Mo Ran was silent for a moment, then said, "… If you don't say anything, I will treat you as the Emperor Yanluo."

The man chuckled. "Do you really believe that you're dead?"

"No." Mo Ran looked into his eyes. "I don't think so. But I don't think I'm still alive."

The Demon Lord's smile became even more obvious. "You're right."

He stretched out his hand and the black dragon scale gloves easily pierced through Mo Ran's chest. However, Mo Ran did not feel any pain.

"You are not a living person. You are just a soul that has been gathered."

Mo Ran did not make a sound.

The Demon Lord said lazily, "My ancestor set a rule that unless one is hostile to the God of Heaven and can destroy Fuxi's forbidden technique, one cannot return to the Infernal Realm… You did it for them, my hero."

Mo Ran said gloomily, “That’s not what I wanted to do. That’s Hua Binan…”

“He is a bastard of gods and demons. He once swore that he would never harm his own kind. But he did not.”

“… Are you saying that he harmed Song Qiutong?”

“No.” He raised his hand and caressed the face of Mo Ran Soul. “You know who I’m talking about.”

“…”

“You have already sensed it from the moment the Infernal domain’s gate opened.” The Demon Lord’s gaze was as sharp as a knife. “Otherwise, you wouldn't have promised that little immortal that way in the end, you actually know it all in your heart.”

Mo Ran did not utter a word, his two eyelashes drooping.

The Demon Lord slowly straightened his body, his tall stature casting a dark shadow on the ground. He said, “Mo Weiyu, you should know that in this world there is an extremely special kind of Butterfly-Boned Beauty. They would not shed golden tears, nor would they have any demonic aura. If they did not recognize their ancestors, then even the Mount Huang Evil Spirit who was with the beauty would not be able to detect them. As a result, even in death, some people would not discover their true identities…”

Mo Ran said dryly, “So what?”

The Demon Lord laughed, “So what? You should be well aware that the overbearing spirit energy that this kind of person can inherit from the

ancient demon is the same as the lord of Huabi, Song Xingyi, many years ago."

As he said that, his fingertip suddenly lit up with a purple black brilliance. He pointed his finger towards Mo Ran and the light immediately floated into Mo Ran's soul. At the same time, Mo Ran felt a vigorous energy surging through his three souls and six souls, which was then completely absorbed by itself.

The Demon Lord looked at the scene before him and said with a smile, "Look, you really can absorb my race's energy."

"…"

"I'm talking about you." Demon Lord said, "You are another special Butterfly-Boned Beauties after Song Xingyi. It's just that you never noticed it yourself. Hua Binan didn't notice at all."

Mo Ran lifted his eyes.

The Demon Elder held his hands behind his back and looked outside the window at the floating flowers once again. "Pitiful, he once promised that he would never hurt his tribe and said that he would protect every Butterfly-Boned Beauty that could be guarded. But he hurt you for a lifetime."

Mo Ran stood up from the ground. He was not in the mood to listen to such nonsense. Whether it was being killed or being used, it was all in the past.

Right now, he was only concerned about one thing: "Can I still go back?"

“Go where?” The Demon Lord turned his head to glance at him. “The human world?”

“The human world.”

“What’s so good about humans? A bunch of ants? You have power and courage, and you are from my race.” The Demon Lord said indifferently, “It is precisely because you are a demon. I am able to summon your soul and summon you back to the Demon Palace. If you stay here, you will have a lifespan of ten thousand years.”

Mo Ran smiled. “I’m sorry, I am only allowed to be served by others. I have never served anyone.”

The Demon Lord stared at him with his red eyes. He did not say a word, but only scrutinized him and criticized him a little.

“… Fine.” Mo Ran said, “There is only one exception. I am willing to serve him.”

“You serve a piece of wood?”

“He’s not a piece of wood.”

The Demon Lord rolled his eyes. “I’m being polite when I call him that, Little Immortal. He’s not even a god, he’s just a rotten seedling planted by an old man in Shennong.” Seeing that Mo Ran was getting more and more angry, the Demon Lord stopped talking. He turned his body and leaned against the window with his slim waist. “Are you stupid?”

“You have to know something. If you really plan on going back, you will still not get the supplies from the demon race. You can only live for a few decades, or a hundred years at the most.”

Mo Ran had been tense the entire time, but when he heard this, he actually smiled. “That long?”

“…”

“In the human world, it’s truly a long life.”

The demons seemed to be somewhat perplexed, but also a bit annoyed. “Humans are but ants, what can they do in a few decades? What could they do for hundreds of years? You have torn apart the Time and Life Gates and have grasped a Zhenlong chess match, and I am afraid that even Fuxi’s elder would be angered half to death by you in the sky. You possess such talent, yet you are willing to be a stalled bastard.” The more he said, the more unhappy he became. In the end, he bluntly said, “Idiot.”

At first, the demons thought that he was angry, but after a while, upon closer inspection, they realized that he was trying to hold back his laughter.

Demon Lord, “……”

Mo Ran looked up and smiled brightly. “How do you know?”

“…”

“In the mortal world, many people call me stupid.”

The Demon Lord rubbed his brow. He looked as if he had a headache. He almost moaned, “How can there be such a humiliating demon…”

“I never felt like a demon. I only vaguely sensed it the moment the Devil’s Gate opened.”

The Venerable One glared at him.

Mo Ran laughed for a while and stopped laughing. He looked at the Demon Lord and said, “No matter what, I still have to thank you for protecting my soul.”

“I appreciate your talent.”

Mo Ran shook his head. He did not plan on continuing this conversation with the Demon Lord.

He only used those eyes that had once moved the hearts of countless people to sincerely and earnestly look at the man in front of him, and then said, “But I’m sorry. I want to return to the human world.”

“…”

No one said anything.

“The reason.” Finally, the Demon Lord said stiffly, “Give me a reason.”

“Because I promised someone.”

Mo Ran said.

“I promised. I will return to him.”

—

The Taxue Palace.

At this moment, the snowfall on the Tianshan Mountains had stopped, and the Heavenly Rifts had finally closed. The torrent of events from his past life was like an absurd dream.

The first multicolored light gradually penetrated, filling the heaven and earth with a vast and tranquil scene.

“Chu-zongshi!”

“Grandmaster! Grandmaster!”

Someone was calling to him in his ear, and his consciousness slowly returned to the cage.

Chu Wanning opened his eyes, his gaze was devoid of emotion. It was as if two lifetimes worth of dust had settled in his eyes. For a moment he thought he was on Sisheng Peak, awakened one winter afternoon by the noise of his apprentices. It was similar to the dark and cold Wushan Palace, where Liu-gonggong sighed beside the couch and called him back to the human world.

After a long time, his eyes gradually became clear. His brown eyes turned as he looked at the cultivators that surrounded him. It was snowing, and the night was already dark, with faint red clouds appearing in the depths of the clouds.

He slowly closed his eyes and said hoarsely, “Mo Ran…”

It was as if a dead youth was responding to his yearning, or was it because his obsession was too deep, causing him to hallucinate — He suddenly saw several streaks of gold-red flowing out from the cracks of the life and death gate, sliding past the rouge colored sky, and flying into the distance…

What was that?!

Chu Wanning suddenly opened his eyes, but it was not because of the shouts from the crowd. It was because of the streaks of golden red.

…… What was that?

His extinguished hope was ignited by those wonderful lights. He struggled to his feet, but no one held him, and he said nothing more. Chu Wanning staggered along with the golden light, followed by the anxious voices of the crowd.

“Chu-zongshi…”

At this moment, the sand had finally been completely washed away. Everyone knew that Mo Weiyu was not a sinner, but the price was too great. It was unknown just how much meaning this sort of innocence had behind it.

But just as Mo Ran did not care about the opinions of others, he knew himself, he was muddle-headed, he was arrogant, he was addicted to himself. Chu Wanning was the same. Both of them were asking for the same thing, but they had no regrets.

“Shizun!”

Xue Meng wanted to chase after him, but before he had even taken a few steps, he heard a commotion from within the crowd.

A disciple from Guyue’ye’s side shouted in panic, “Sect Leader! Sect Leader, what happened to you?!”

Xue Meng was stunned. He suddenly turned his head to push away the crowd, but Jiang Xi had already collapsed into the snow. Beneath his were large puddles of blood.

“What’s going on?!” Guyue’ye’s elder shouted in anger, “Wasn’t it fine just now?! How could this be?!”

Some disciples pointed at the scar on Jiang Xi's waist timidly.

"Yes… Did he get hit by a sharp weapon in the torrent earlier? The Sect Leader was afraid that the situation would get more chaotic, so he didn't say anything…"

The air was filled with the smell of blood. Before dawn, Jiang Xi lay in the settled world with his eyes closed.

"Hurry up and treat your injuries!"

"What are you waiting for! Save him!"

Xue Meng's state of mind was greatly shaken. His mind was in a mess. In his hands, he was still holding Xuehuang that Jiang Xi had given him. He turned his head, wanting to chase after him, but he only moved half an inch before he knelt on the ground and started crying loudly.

He did not know how remote the mountains and rivers were. Where was the place where love and hate no longer existed? Lifting his head, the mortal world no longer had the company of the old. Those arrogant and proud youngsters who fought on the path of the sword had already ridden on the mortal world and would never return.

On the boundless Qiushan Snow Road, Chu Wanning looked at the golden red light flying towards the horizon towards the distant mountains…

"Believe me, I will do my best to see you."

"I'll wait for you in another world."

A shiver ran down his spine, but Chu Wanning didn't dare to think too much about it. Before he saw the truth with his own eyes, he didn't dare to

dream too much.

At this time, the rising sun had already pierced through the darkness of the great abyss, pulling itself up from the ground from the cold and dreary night before. The golden light shined on the mountain road that had suddenly turned completely upside down. The first rays of the sun rose, illuminating the vast sea of people, celebrating the survival of the world with golden splendor.

Chu Wanning stared at the rising sun, his fingertips twirling talismans as a golden light flashed.

“Ascending Dragon — Summon!”

A long howl. His candlestick dragon broke through the wind in the snow, its huge body coiling in a sound like a great bell.

The little dragon raised his eyes and saw that the world of mortals was still alright. Joy filled his heart, and he couldn’t help but joke with his Master again, “Is everything calm now?”

“Yes.”

“Finished?”

“Yes.”

The paper dragon was even happier now. It flew a full circle in the air before landing again. Then, just like every time it saw him before, it teased, “Oh right, Chu Wanning, why are you always alone?”

Chu Wanning stood quietly in the wind, the snow seeds rustling against his long eyelashes. He could not help but think back to what Mo Ran had told

him before he left, and he felt his heart beating like a drum. After a long silence, he raised his head and said to the paper dragon, “Take me to a place.”

“Where?”

Chu Wanning got on the dragon’s back as it stood up, facing the wind and snow, looking down at the silver dress on the ground. The sun shone brightly and became brighter and brighter. Finally, in the morning light, he said to the colossal dragon, “Let’s go to the Nanping Mountains. I’m going to see him.”

The Azure Dragon at the moment wanted to make up some nonsense, but in the end, the horned beard raised, and no longer said anything.

Actually, it also knew where its master wanted to go and who he wanted to find. It let out a deep, sonorous roar, and before it could reach the ninth heaven, Chu Wanning glanced back at the magnificent sight of the mountains and rivers.

The sky was clear, the clouds were floating. He traveled through the snowy and misty Kunlun Road, chasing after the golden light. Finally, he sped towards the distant river lake where the light rain had just fallen.

Mo Ran had promised him that he would come back.

Thus, he believed in him. He wanted to go to the place where they had last parted and meet up with him.

“Say… Is that golden light coming from his soul?”

Candle Dragon was churning in the sea of clouds, “If you ask me, who should I ask?”

“Do you think the souls will return to his body?”

Candle Dragon barely managed to say: “Probably…”

Soon, they arrived at Nanping Mountain. Without any hesitation or doubt, Chu Wanning seemed to be certain where those streaks of golden red light would go. He rode the Wind Carnage Dragon and landed outside of the bamboo forest in the depths of Nanping Mountain.

“The person you’re looking for is here?”

Chu Wanning did not reply. He got off the dragon’s body and felt as if there was a heavy weight on his chest, making him unable to breathe.

“I saved Mo Ran’s body here earlier.” His fingers were trembling uncontrollably. “So if his soul can return, then…”

He originally wanted to say that it would definitely be here, but the words were already on the tip of his tongue, so he didn’t continue speaking.

What if it wasn’t here?

He still wanted to give himself a chance. He didn’t want to die from his words.

Candle Dragon, surrounded by plants and vegetation, shook his head: “Then what if he doesn’t return?”

“…”

“What if those golden lights scatter before they reach this point?”

“…”

“What if —”

Chu Wanning suddenly turned around, his eyes fierce and bloodshot. “Then I’ll burn you and bury you with him.”

“Aiya, I’m so scared.”

Candle Dragon turned into a ray of golden light, his huge body turned into a small snake, resting on Chu Wanning’s shoulder. It hit its owner on the cheek with its head.

It knew Chu Wanning’s personality, so it didn’t take it seriously. It sighed, “Looking at your expression, why do I feel like you want to get buried with him more?”

As he spoke, he scratched the back of Chu Wanning’s head with the tip of his tail.

“For what?”

“I’m afraid if I don’t scratch you, you’ll faint.” The little dragon sighed and slapped his tail, “Your face is so ugly.”

“…”

“It’s just like those gamblers who have a lifetime worth of savings and walk into the casino for their final bet.”

Chu Wanning, for once, did not refute it. Instead, he closed his eyes.

The little Candle Dragon said it was his life savings, but it was wrong.

That was his disciple from two lifetimes, his lover from two lifetimes, and the kind of fool who would use his flesh and blood to fall into a quagmire

even if he had to live two lifetimes.

The rest of his life.

The mountain path was long and snowy.

In the distance, there was a thatched cottage that was in a state of disrepair. Chu Wanning stood in front of the thatched cottage, his fingertips trembling. In front of his was an old and dilapidated wooden door, but it seemed even heavier than the door to the Infernal domain. His Adam's apple moved, and his blood flowed.

He was as stiff as a block of wood. He raised his hand several times, but it always fell off the moment he touched the door.

The little candle dragon: "Aiya, if you don't push the door, then I'll do it, I-"

The door opened.

It was not Chu Wanning who pushed it away, nor was it the candle dragon who knocked it away.

The door was originally ajar. Most likely, the breeze had pity on him, and could not bear to see his sad state. The wind then blew open the thin door of wood with a creak.

Chu Wanning stood outside the house.

He could see the open space in the hut. The trees had not budded yet, but the branches were covered with a thin layer of snow. When the wind blew, the snow scattered into the golden dawn.

Then, it covered a man's shoulders.

Hearing the commotion, that person's figure paused for a moment before slowly turning around.

The light and shadows moved, and in an instant, it was as if the earth had been rejuvenated and the summer sun had risen.

All the sounds of the wind, snow, and leaves that Chu Wanning could not hear before had returned to his ears at this moment. Everything in the world surged back into his heart.

He stood on the spot and wanted to run forward, but his limbs and bones seemed as if they were filled with lead. He couldn't move a single step. At this time, it was as if Chu Wanning heard the cicadas chirping at the foot of Heaven-Piercing Tower many years ago.

That was the best time of his life.

The handsome youth walked towards Elder Yuheng, who was leaning against a tree. He walked towards the beginning of everything, the beginning of the two's tangled fates.

"Chu Wanning…"

The dragon poked him in the waist.

Only then did Chu Wanning manage to regain his composure. However, his throat was still tied up and he was unable to say a single word.

He walked slowly to the man standing under the dead wood, to the end of everything, to the end of the pain of two lifetimes, to the end of the world.

The wind blew through the leaves of the forest, causing them to shiver. Chu Wanning seemed to have stepped over countless times, finally arriving

in front of that man.

It was just like how, many years ago, a young Mo Weiyu had stood firmly in front of Chu Wanning.

He looked up and grinned.

“Xianjun Xianjun.”

The voice of the past is still in the ears, and when they met again, two lifetimes have passed.

“I’ve been looking at you for a long time, but you’ve ignored me.”

The empty valley was quiet and serene, and the multicolored light was pure and clear. It was as if only the two of them were left between the heaven and earth, and there was nothing else. Mo Ran was wearing a robe. His face was still pale from the initial recovery.

He watched as Chu Wanning walked out of the morning glow and came before him. His pitch-black eyes gradually revealed an expression of extreme gentleness.

“Shizun…”

The wind had stopped. Between the clouds, the morning light of a tree scattered across the bloodstained world.

“I saw a devil. And then I had an interesting experience, and I wanted to tell you…”

The turmoil of the apocalypse had passed.

After many years, at the place where the blood was falling…

Maybe some new plum blossoms would bloom.

Ch. 311 The Big End

One month later.

Wuchang Town.

“Let’s take a look.”

The loud ramblings of the peddler flowed in the sunlight. He shook the flower drum in his hand and walked through the streets carrying a bamboo pole.

“Holy Night Guardian, Holy Night Guardian – only thirty coins per piece. Back then, Elder Yuheng had personally created a mechanical armor to ward off evil and suppress disasters. No lies. You are not deceived. Come, come, come, don’t miss the passing by.”

Broken straw sandals trampled across the flagstones, and the shadow of the peddler was dragged long. Children ran past, laughing and holding either candied fruits or kites.

Suddenly, a girl with a ponytail tugged at the corner of the hawker’s clothes. “Uncle, I want to buy a Holy Night Guardian.”

The peddler put down his burden and picked one that was painted with peach red wood. “Hey, is this one good to look at?”

The girl nodded her head, “Yes! This is it!” Fearing that someone else might snatch it away, she hurriedly grabbed the mechanical armour that was as tall as her and fished out a copper coin from her pocket with great difficulty.

She was missing three copper coins.

The girl became a little anxious, “Aiya, I ran too fast, did it fall out on the way?”

She turned it over again, her patched bottom turned up. Still only twenty-seven cents. The little girl panicked, her eyes red, “Big brother, I’ve lost it. There are only so many of them. Can you just sell them to me like this?”

He rubbed his dirty hands together, “Girl, I already spent twenty-five coins on this Holy Night Guardian. If I were to give it to you, wouldn’t I only earn two coins? After a day of walking, it’s not even enough to pay for a meal.”

“Then what should we do?” The girl began to wipe away her tears, “When I go home, dad is going to scold me again, wuuuuuu…”

Just as she was crying loudly, someone suddenly walked over and blocked the sunlight behind the girl.

“Young man, keep these silver pieces well.”

A gentle and refined voice rang out, causing the girl to blankly raise her head. First, she saw a hand wearing a snow silk bracelet, then her eyes moved up and met the pair of jade-like eyes.

Mei Hanxue gently smiled and said, “This little girl is so beautiful. How can she shed tears for three pieces of money?”

“Ahh…” The girl was stunned.

Mei Hanxue crouched down and tried his best to be on the same level as her. Then, he handed over the peach red Night Guardian that had just been taken away by the hawker into her arms, his eyebrows furrowed as he said,

“It’s hard to buy a beauty’s tears with a thousand gold coins. Girls’ tears are the most valuable thing in the world. Next time, don’t cry over such a small matter, hmm?”

Next to him walked another man with a similar face and a straw hat. His eyes were very pretty, emerald in color, but they were as cold as jade. At first glance, they didn’t seem warm at all.

The man frowned and said, “You’re almost done. She looks five or six years old.”

Mei Hanxue laughed and stood up, “Brother, you are so boring. Beautiful women don’t care about their age. Old women up to the age of eighty, children up to the age of five, fat and thin, each have their own good looks, you have to learn to praise them. Only this way would… Hey, why did you run away?”

His elder brother, Méi Hánxuě, did not even want to bother with him and turned to leave.

This time, the Mei brothers went to the capital under the orders of the Palace master of the Taxue Palace, Mingyue Lou, to congratulate the people of Shu on the restoration of Sisheng Peak. It was fortunate that Madam Wang had protected the people of the sect back then. Now that the calamity had subsided, the elders and disciples were all fine, their strength was still preserved.

As a result, in the cultivation world that had been reshuffled, Sisheng Peak was actually ranked in the top three, and did no longer have the reputation of being poor ad ridiculed by others.

“Young Master Mei, the Sect Leader is waiting for you at the Sword Dance Platform.”

At this time of morning cultivation, the majority of disciples were practicing in the drill grounds. The sword dance floor was empty and quiet, and only a man dressed in luxurious clothing stood in front of a white jade fence with his hands clasped behind his back, looking down at the misty red clouds that surrounded the mountain peak.

Mei Hanxue and his brother walked over. Their feet made a rustling sound as they stepped on the newly built grass.

Hearing the commotion, the man did not turn around but sighed, “You’re here?”

“Here I am.”

“I’ve been waiting a long time for you.”

Mei Hanxue couldn’t help but laugh out loud. “Ziming, why are you saying such things?”

He was still handsome to the point where he had an almost extravagant appearance, and his face still had the immaturity of youth. As he looked at the Mei brothers, the tension between his brows collapsed slightly, and his eyes revealed a trace of the blankness and naivety of the past.

“Ai, you guys don’t know, I’ve been really tired these past few days.”

When Xue Meng saw that there was no one around and the Mei brothers did not bring anyone with them, they immediately relaxed and let out a long sigh.

“Elder Xuanji has reminded me of the rules and etiquette seventeen or eighteen times a day. I’ve never learned this before. At this time, I don’t even know how to speak. I can only open my mouth and say two words. Elder Xun Ji told me that this is called being concise…”

Mei Hanxue could not help but cover his mouth with his hand. “Pfft… Cough, cough.”

Xue Meng glanced at him and said somewhat impatiently, “If you want to laugh, then laugh. Stop pretending to cough.”

The elegant Young Master, Mei Hanxue, replied, “No, no. How can you make fun of Sect Leader Xue?”

“Don’t you dare call me that. I’ve had enough.”

Still as calm as ever, Méi Hánxuě said, “Bear with it. From today onward, you’ll have to endure for the rest of your life.”

“…” Xue Meng simply turned his head to look at the clouds at the peak of the mountain. “You’ve really succeeded. These are the most dejected words I’ve heard since the succession.”

Méi Hánxuě: “…”

Xue Meng added, “There is no one.”

“Hahaha.” This time, Mei Hanxue really did clap his hands and laugh. After a moment of laughter, he said to Xue Meng, “Actually, there aren’t that many rules for one to need to be the Sect Leader, right? Look at Guyue’ye’s Jiang Xi — he lives a lot more comfortably.”

It was a good thing that this was not mentioned. As soon as it was mentioned, Xue Meng's originally relaxed back tensed up again.

In a place that others couldn't see, under the luxurious sleeves embroidered with golden threads, his ten fingers couldn't help but tighten, and his heart was extremely unsatisfied.

Actually, he had just gone to Guyue'ye a few days ago.

Jiang Xi had been severely injured in the war, but it was fortunate that there were many miraculous pills and medicines in his sect. Furthermore, his disciples were all people who were well versed in medicine, so it wasn't that easy for his to retrieve his life. However, although his life was saved, his health was no longer the same as before. What was even more worrisome was that Jiang Xi's body had undergone some changes after being affected by the demonic energy.

"What will happen?" At that time, Xue Meng was standing outside of Jiang Xi's room and asking Guyue'ye's medicine serving elder.

The medicine elder replied, "I don't know. The demon gate has not been opened for thousands of years, so there are no records of cultivators infected with demon energy. For now, it seems like the Sect Leader is fine, but I'm not sure what kind of effect it will have on him in the future…"

Xue Meng's gaze was gloomy as he glanced inside the room once more.

The jade colored curtains were layered over and over again, covering the entrance. Not to mention Jiang Xi's current appearance, even the layout of the bedroom of Sect Leader Guyue'ye was unclear from the outside.

"Can you cure it?"

The elder shook his head: “I’m afraid it will be very difficult.”

“…”

The anxiety in his heart grew more distinct. Closing his eyes, he said, “If you need anything, you can come find me at the Sisheng Peak’s door at any time.”

Although the Elder didn’t know why Xue Meng and Jiang Xi were having such a thing, he vaguely felt that the relationship between the two was quite close. Thus, he politely bowed and said, “If that’s the case, then I will thank Sect Leader Xue first.”

Xue Meng waved his hand and once again cast his gaze towards that deep curtain.

Actually, he really wanted to go in and take a look at Jiang Xi, but the place where a sect leader would sleep in was even more mysterious than a woman's boudoir. What’s more, Jiang Xi was still unconscious, so the rest of Guyue’ye’s men could not allow him in. Xue Meng did not know what else to say, and said with a frown: “Sect Leader Jiang’s Xue Feng, I have already sent it back to your sect’s Elder Feng Jian. Remember to tell him.”

“Yes.” After a pause, he saw that Xue Meng was hesitating to speak, so he asked, “May I ask if Sect Leader Xue has any other orders?”

“… Forget it, it’s fine. I’m leaving.”

The elder was very polite. “Many thanks to Sect Leader Xue for coming here personally.”

Although Xue Meng had been at loggerheads with Jiang Xi, that was when he was the Young Lord. Now that he was the Sect Leader, Guyue’ye’s

people naturally wouldn't neglect him.

Several elders and doctors accompanied him as he walked down the large hall. Guyue'ye had spiritual energy circulating all year round, so there were a hundred flowers blooming. Xue Meng looked over and saw that although there was a light snow falling on Rinling Island, there was still a field of luscious embroidery and flowers blooming in the clear and cold air. He didn't know what he was feeling in his heart.

He walked slowly down the porch, the boards creaking beneath his feet.

Suddenly, the beast's head at the corner of the roof rang a bell. Xue Meng raised his head and saw a young man around the corner, who looked similar to his age, walking towards him with two rows of sabers in hand. The youth had a handsome face and broad shoulders. In the morning light, his face exuded an indescribable sense of gentleness.

Even though Xue Meng's eyes were high at the top, he still couldn't help but look at him more than a few times.

"Sect Leader Xue."

Meeting on a narrow path, the young man stopped first and bowed. He was upright and not humble.

"…" Xue Meng stopped his footsteps. "This is…"

"Oh, this is a close attendant of the Lord Sect Leader. All these years, he has been assisting the Sect Leader in managing the internal affairs of Guyue'ye, and although he hasn't been showing his face very often, the Sect Leader still places a lot of importance on him." The elder smiled. It was obvious that he was afraid of this young man.

Xue Meng indifferently answered with an “En.”

The youth saluted. Seeing that the other person was still staring at him, he raised his head and smiled.

At this distance, the moment he raised his head, Xue Meng could clearly see him. Although Xue Meng never paid too much attention to the appearances of others, he still noticed the youth’s outstanding appearance. Especially his pair of eyes, which were bright and gentle, as if they were lit up by countless stars.

What a memorable face.

Xue Meng narrowed his eyes and began to size up the other party’s appearance even more harshly. He even tried to find some flaws to compare him to. However, after looking back and forth a few times, he was still unable to find anything.

He was astonishingly handsome. He was young, reserved, gentle in appearance, tall in stature, and his skin was very delicate. He even seemed to be emitting a faint glow.

Such a young man should be listed on the cultivation world’s young elites list, instead of being squeezed, working as a laborer in the depths of Guyue’ye’s heart.

Xue Meng thought dryly.

A bright pearl covered in dust, Jiang Yechen was truly not a good person.

Being stared at by Xue Meng without blinking, the young man felt somewhat uncomfortable. However, he still asked politely and gently, “Sect Leader Xue, is something the matter?”

Xue Meng came back to his senses, "… "No, it's nothing."

But he continued to stare at him unabashedly.

Being close to the first tier, although highly regarded, it didn't have any status.

If Xue Meng didn't ask, the other party wouldn't tell him his name and would humiliate the ears.

The medicine elder was rather nimble, seeing that Xue Meng was curious about this young man, he introduced him with a smile: "Don't look at Sect Leader Xue's age, he is actually very young. In fact, Linling Island is extremely small, and his management is very outstanding, sometimes it makes us elders very ashamed."

The youth bit his lips as his face slightly blushed. He was a bit embarrassed as he replied: "Elder is too kind."

Xue Meng sized him up and became increasingly curious about this person. Suddenly, he caught a glimpse of his follower carrying a lacquered wooden tray. After a moment of thought, he asked, "Are you going to Jiang Xi's place?"

"Yes." The youth was slightly startled as he did not expect Xue Meng to address his Sect Master directly by his name, but he quickly nodded his head with a smile.

This was a good opportunity. If he expressed his desire to accompany them, the other party should not reject it. This way, he could openly enter Jiang Xi's bedroom and take a look at how that idiot was sick.

Xue Meng cleared his throat and was about to say something when he heard the young man's gentle voice.

"I'm going to deliver the medicine to my foster father."

Xue Meng was stunned at first, then his face darkened slightly. "… What?"

The medicine concocting elder hurriedly said, "I'm sorry, I almost forgot to mention that he is the adopted son of Sect Leader Jiang."

Xue Meng, "……"

Several tens of times later, they saw several elders following behind the ashen-faced Xue Meng on the flying corridor of the Alkaid Hall. Unsure of what had happened, they nervously said,

"Eh? Sect Leader Xue?"

"Sect Leader Xue, what happened to you?"

"Is there something wrong?"

The newly appointed Sect Leader at the Sisheng Peak had a gloomy and infernal expression on his face. His soles embedded in the soles of his iron boots began to pace up and down the stairs with a loud clanging sound. He gritted his teeth with a face as ashen as mud – Of course, he didn't care whether Jiang Xi raised any little kittens or not. What did that have to do with him? He was just annoyed that Jiang Xi, who clearly had a capable son in the sect, still had the hypocrisy of a loner in front of outsiders, which made people feel sorry for him.

Shameless! How disgusting!

Mei Hanxue saw the abnormality in his face and asked: “What happened to you?”

“Nothing. I just suddenly thought of a completely unrelated person.”

He didn’t want to talk about Jiang Xi any longer, so he changed the topic and chatted for a while. Then, together with the Mei brothers, he went to the ancestral hall at the summit of the grave, giving a sweet fragrance to the heroes of the sect who had passed away.

As they entered the ancestral hall, Mei Hanxue discovered that there was a unique spirit tablet at the side of the altar. It was covered by a red handkerchief, and the words could not be seen.

“This is Mo Ran’s place.”

“…”

Xue Meng’s expression was indifferent, making it difficult to guess his thoughts. “Other people say that he is dead, but I don’t think so. After the big battle that day, I saw Shizun descending Mount Kunlun… It’s clear that he went somewhere, but he doesn’t want to bring anyone else with him.”

As he spoke, he pursed his lips, his eyelashes drooping. “In short, I don’t believe that he just turned into ashes like that.”

“Xue Meng…”

Xue Meng turned his head away and looked at the daylight outside the door. “That dog Mo Ran has always been doing things his own way since he was young. He doesn’t follow common sense.”

“…”

“I know it’s the same this time.”

Mei Hanxue couldn’t help but sigh when he heard his words, but he didn’t intend to refute him.

The Mei brothers kowtowed to the benefactor and his wife, while Xue Meng stood to the side with his eyes closed. He did not say anything.

When the ceremony was over, Mei Hanxue stood up and patted his shoulder.

“Ziming, you will be a good Sect Leader.”

Xue Meng opened his eyes and glanced at the black and white words on the spirit tablet. The incense burned and the dust drifted in the air. In the light green smoke, Xue Meng looked at his father’s memorial tablet and calmly said, “It won’t be any better than him.”

“…”

“Let’s go.”

Xue Meng waved his hand, turned around, and left.

In the solemn ancestral hall, the small piece of lacquer wood did not have the name of a dead person written on it according to the rules. The Mei brothers looked at each other, sighed, and followed Xue Meng’s footsteps.

A pinch of incense ash fell.

The youngsters had already gone far away, but the dark altar still burned the three incense sticks they had left behind. Behind the faint light, the wooden tablet cut down Xue Meng’s handwriting:

The grace of the father is irreplaceable,

Loyalty is beyond reach.

And at the bottom of the tablet, there was another inscription carved with four words that made it hard to laugh. However, the Mei brothers knew and Xue Meng also knew that if Xue Zhengyong's spirit in heaven saw these four words, he would laugh heartily.

The lamp flickered, illuminating the elegant cursive script, which was formed by Xue Zhengyong's calligraphy. Each stroke was an unintentional flow.

—

Xue Lang was very beautiful.

That night, Sisheng Peak was hosting a banquet to entertain the Taxue Palace's envoys.

Due to the close friendship between the two sects, this was considered a private banquet and was not something that could be viewed by outsiders. But even so, there were still rumors circulating around.

It was rumored that the newly appointed Sect Leader Xue had gotten a bit drunk after drinking three cups and two cups of light wine. Sect Leader Xue liked to mutter to himself when he was drunk. That day, he had mumbled a bit too much. Sometimes he would cry for his parents, sometimes he would hate his brother, sometimes he would moan and mumble about his Shizun. Sometimes he would call some attendant 'Shi Mei'.

That day, his mouth was full of their names.

But none of them came, except for Mei Hanxue.

Deep in drunkenness, in the lanterns, he rested his head on his arm and looked out from the crook of his arm at Mengpo Hall.

For a time, he saw a lively and joyous clamor.

Xue Zhengyong and Madam Wang were toasting each other, while Shi Mei and Mo Ran were wrapping dumplings around them. When the crowd quieted down and everyone turned around, they saw Elder Yuheng wearing a bright red cloak. He was shaking off the snow on his oil-paper umbrella as he walked towards them.

“Sect Leader, you’re drunk.”

In his ears, there was a vague sound of someone calling him, but Xue Meng did not answer.

Afterwards, someone sighed and covered him with a layer of cold clothing. He didn’t know who that person was, whether it was Elder Xun Ji, Elder Tanlang, or someone else.

Afterwards, that person touched his head and said, “Young Lord, you’re drunk.”

He made a vague sound, but the tears began to flow, and he curled his head into his arms. It was already late in the night, the cups and plates were in a mess, and his spirits were in disarray. Xue Meng did not speak anymore, nor did he pull anyone else to cry and make noise — he was trying his best to quickly grow into a leader.

Perhaps in another year he would not be so easily drunk. After a few more years, even if he was drunk, he wouldn’t speak nonsense again. In the end,

no one would be able to easily see the tears of Xue Ziming, Sisheng Peak.

Gradually, he would become a tree that supported the entire cultivation world. The years when he cried and drank to his heart's content would become the memories of the future when Sect Leader Xue and his juniors chatted and laughed.

Every generation passed like this, and when Xue Meng passed away, the past of his generation would be brought up again, but no one would be familiar with it anymore.

Those young and beautiful years might eventually casually disappear into the distance, eventually turning into a sentence on Xue Meng's folding fan, "Xue Lang is very beautiful."

After the Mei brothers returned to the Taxue Palace, a few days later, the cultivation world announced an important matter.

"After New Year's Eve, the Taxue Palace of Kunlun will form an alliance with Sisheng Peak. The two sects are of the same mind, and there is no distinction between the upper and the lower cultivation world, but please a new dawn in a peaceful world. Sect Leader Mingyue Lou and Sect Leader Xue Ziming have come together to see the world and prove their sincerity."

The moment the announcement was made, waves rolled across the thousand layers.

Some praised, some did not understand, and some were silent — they could see that this new contract might shake the world in the next ten, twenty, or even faster years. The so-called upper cultivation world and lower cultivation world would slowly begin to blur their boundaries.

“Is this a good thing?” someone asked curiously after the tea break.

His companion took a sip of the cold snow fragrance in the bowl and shook his head. He said: “Who will know about the future? In the past, Nangong Changying had gathered the nine great sects to form the upper echelons of the cultivation world, and he wanted to make the places controlled by these sects become a paradise. Everyone is not paying tribute, but the result is not satisfactory. It seems that a decision is wise and correct, but it still has to be given time to prove…”

“Sigh, that’s true.”

“However, at least for the time being, there won’t be another incident involving Guyue’ye. He shouldn’t be able to beat the combined forces of Taxue Palace and Sisheng Peak.”

“I can’t say for sure. Judging from Jiang Xi’s personality, he doesn’t want to be subservient to others…”

“Forget it, forget it. Why do you care so much? Let’s take it one step at a time, we have to live our own lives.”

“Hmm, this snake gall is pretty good at stir-frying melon seeds.” The customer raised his voice and shouted towards the outside, “Lady Boss, give me another jin!”

During the winter and spring months, most of the wounds in the prefecture slowly healed. The villages and towns that had been destroyed in the war were rebuilt with the help of the various large sects.

There had been people who had lost faith in the darkness, but fortunately, the human heart was not immutable.

Perhaps one day, the silence would erupt into a roar, and the abyss would burst into sparks. Those who applaud blindly will stop, those who cringe will open their mouths, those who are gentle will be tough when the threat comes, and those who contradict will stand out in front of lies.

Everything was changing. A new city was being built on the ruins. However, right and wrong could not be distinguished so clearly.

However, this was nothing. A person might never be able to truly understand anything, even themselves.

One of the simplest examples —

You have eyes, but have you really seen your own face?

“Good! Let’s do another part!”

Linyi’s old land, under the old locust tree, a review was completed.

“Chu Xianzun is truly a good person…” The old woman wiped away her tears as he listened. “I wonder where he has gone to now…”

“Mo Xianzun is the one who is truly wronged… Sigh…”

Another half a year old little girl smashed the candied fruits in her hands. Her eyes were sparkling black, and her face was full of tears when she heard this. As she was sobbing, she suddenly turned her head towards her companion beside her and said, “Wuu wuu, I don’t like the story of Big Brother Nangong and Big Sister Ye.”

His companion was stunned. “Why?”

The girl said while wiping away his tears, “They’re all dead.”

The boy muttered, “It’s not like Ye Wangxi is dead…”

The girl cried even more miserably. “You don’t understand. All of you boys are stupid. She must be feeling worse than death. Wuuuuuuu…”

The boy was at a loss for what to do as she continued crying. He scratched his head for a long time before saying, “Ai, don’t cry anymore. How about this, have we come here to play? I’ll be Nangong Si, you can be Ye Wangxi, and we’ll make up our own stories… Aiya, don’t cry, don’t cry.”

In order to please his friends, the boy picked a palm-sized leaf to cover half of the little girl’s face.

“Then, take your head. We’re here to get married ~”

The little girl blinked her eyes and then burst out laughing.

It turned out that pain and suffering could be rewritten in the eyes of a child. Everything would gradually become relaxed. Their love and hate would slowly become a legend of the Jianghu. Under the locust tree, they would be slowly told stories by storytellers one after another.

With you and I a lifetime of ups and downs, life and death, honor and disgrace, the guests two or three tears, the whole hall cheers.

The little girl and the little child were shading their leaves as they paid respects to each other. They were childhood friends, and they were looking at each other with sweet expressions on their faces as they shouted:

“First bow to the heavens and earth…”

“Second bow —”

Under the old locust tree walked a black-clothed Taoist priest with a pretty face. At her waist was an old faded quiver with no arrows in it.

After the war ended, the world was peaceful.

Inside the quiver embroidered with flowers, there was a little milk dog curled up with the tip of its golden claws, looking at the outside world with a wuuuu sound.

The black-clothed Taoist stood under the tree and watched the two kids playing house with a lazy smile. Suddenly, she thought of something and walked over, handing the little girl a red handkerchief.

“Huh?” The girl was stunned, “What is this? Who are you?”

The black-clothed Taoist did not answer, but only smiled and said: “Why is the wife with a leaf on her head? Come here, this is for you.”

The handkerchief was old, soft, and of good texture.

On the corner of the wall was embroidered the word “Si”. How many years ago was it? It was slightly damaged, and this was when she was crying in fear in the illusion world. Nangong Si had taken it out to wipe her tears.

The little girl took the handkerchief and looked at it. Suddenly, a smile blossomed on her face.

She raised her head and said, “Thank you elder sister.”

“…”

The black-clothed Daoist was startled, and then her eyes began to shine with stars and light.

After so many years, there weren't many people who could recognize that she was a girl. Furthermore, there was the Sound Changing Spell that she would never be able to dispel.

This little fellow's eyes were truly bright.

She smiled and shook her head. She straightened her body and patted Naobaijin plush head in the quiver. "Let's go. What are you looking at?"

Naobaijin: "Awoo woo woo!"

The wind began to blow and the leaves of the locust tree rustled.

The storyteller was talking about the battle at Mount Jiao. At that moment, all of them were crying.

She did not cry anymore. She straightened her back and walked alone towards the distant mountains. The sweet voices of a little girl and a little boy sounded behind her.

"Husband and wife bow to each other!"

She just so happened to walk out of the shade of the locust tree at this time. The piercing sunlight brushed against her face, and for some reason, she smiled until her eyes curved. Her heart was filled with joy and sweetness.

It had been such a wonderful time as a child, she thought. It had been so easy for the Alliances to kneel down and kowtow nine times.

After walking a distance, she suddenly heard loud footsteps. "Big sister! Your handkerchief!"

She didn’t look back, but gave a relieved wave of her hand, looking like a hero.

Naobaijin eyes were open, and she looked at her blankly, as if to ask her: “It is something left by A-Si, do you not want it?”

She laughed, her eyes gentle. “No.”

As she said this, he looked towards the hazel and unruly grassland, where a myriad of things were born in the spring. Unsurprisingly, she saw the figure of Nangong Si standing beside her, still with his wild and unruly expression.

He was a bit arrogant, but also a bit calm.

He said, “I know you’re here.”

Nangong Si’s phantom frowned, as if to reprimand her.

She said gently, “Don’t be angry. They are here to pay respects, and lack a cover.”

“…”

“So I gave them your handkerchief.”

Nangong Si still did not seem happy.

“A handkerchief in exchange for a good marriage, just smile.”

The sun was shining brightly. Nangong Si forced a smile, but it was even uglier than a grimace.

He laughed along with her, his eyelashes drooping. When she raised his eyes again, the shadow of Nangong Si had already disappeared. But she

knew he would come back.

It wasn't a ghost or an illusion.

He was in her heart, so she could always see him.

— He was always the most handsome when he was in high spirits.

In the blink of an eye, it was New Year's Eve of the year. According to the rules of the cultivation world, the mourning of parents could be removed. Thus, on the eve of New Year's Eve, Xue Meng was finally crowned as the Sect Leader of Sisheng Peak.

On that silver night sky, Xue Meng was talking about ceremonies. He was wearing a jade crown, a Sect Leader's ring, silk and silk yarn. He was wearing nine layers of clothes on both the inside and the outside.

He stood in the majestic Regal Pill Heart Palace with a jade-like face and a handsome yet mature appearance.

If one were to look closely, he would more or less be able to discern the shadow of Jiang Xi in that pair of eyes. However, his surname would never be Jiang, and he would never want to be like Jiang Xi.

"Congratulations, Sect Leader Immortal."

The Xuanji Elder led his disciples to bow first.

The disciples who were at the peak of the mountain knelt down in succession, and the guests who had come to congratulate them also lowered their heads in salute.

His voice rumbled like thunder, resounding through the mountain peak that was shrouded in clouds of smoke.

“Congratulations, Sect Leader Immortal.”

The flowers bloomed brightly in the night sky, as if announcing the beginning of the golden age that belonged to Sisheng Peak, and the darkness of last night, warm and warm, would never come back.

Xue Meng smiled. His black eyes were very deep and very calm, but they were not very bright.

He raised his glass and drank with the others.

He would never act the way he used to. He would never make those ridiculous and ridiculous mistakes again.

Mei Hanxue sighed from his seat and closed his eyes, “This kid… he is finally going to become Nangong Liu.”

“Be careful.”

Mei Hanxue glanced at his brother. “I’m not saying that there’s something wrong with him. I’m talking about his position today.”

“That’s not something you should talk about.” The elder brother said coldly, “Also, since the beginning of the banquet, twenty-six girls have come looking for me. Take off your mask, I’ve had enough.”

Mei Hanxue immediately scrunched his face into a frown.

After the banquet had ended, because there were too many guests, it was difficult for the people at Sisheng Peak to take care of them. Thus, they

could only arrange for disciples to be divided into groups to receive the corresponding Sect Leader, Elders, and disciples.

Everyone went back drunk, each having their own thoughts.

Xue Meng returned to his room.

He was not drunk today, Elder Tanlang's Awakened Wine Soup was more effective than anything else.

He sat down and somewhat tiredly rubbed his brow, wanting to take off the heavy ornaments on his body. However, after looking at himself in the bronze mirror for a while, he felt that his entire body was covered with pendant and did not know where to pick it.

Xun Ji knocked on the door and came in.

"Sect Leader."

Xue Meng looked dispirited. "Hm?"

"This is a gift form from each sect. I forgot to bring it to you." Xuanji passed a thick stack of golden red booklets to him, "Remember to read it carefully. Think carefully about the compensation."

Xue Meng felt more and more tired. "Got it."

"Also, Sect Leader Jiang said that he wants to meet you alone."

"… I won't see him."

He had always been at the Sisheng Peak and was the last one to observe the expressions of all the Elders. He sighed and said, "Then I'll reject him in a while."

“Anything else?”

Xuanji said, “No more.”

Xue Meng actually hoped that he would say that he had something else to say, so it would be best for him to tell him directly, ‘Two mysterious guests have suddenly come from outside and want to see you.’ However, he did not do so.

Xun Ji left, closing the door to the Sect Leader’s bedroom.

In that huge room, Xue Ziming stood alone. He stood there for a long time, then he finally walked to the table, lit up the lamp, and looked at those thick gift slips.

The list of gifts was arranged according to the order of gifts. The wealthy Guyue’ye was naturally in first place, and the list was filled with extravagant treasures such as “Flamedoor” or “Spirit Whale Bead”.

However, Xue Meng was not in the mood to read too many of these treasures. He quickly flipped through the booklet in an attempt to find the names of Chu Wanning and Mo Ran — many rogue cultivators would send gifts even if they didn’t come. This was an extremely important day in Xue Meng’s life. If Mo Ran did not die, if Chu Wanning was still in the martial arts world, then they would have received news of his ascension to the throne.

Taxue Palace, Fire Phoenix Pavilion, Wubei Temple…

Page after page.

The itinerant cultivator turned the pages of his personal gift several times over.

But no.

In the end, Xue Meng leaned back against the cushioned mahogany carved chair, wearily rubbing his brow.

No.

His Shizun, his… It was as if his cousin had completely disappeared from the martial world after the great battle that day.

Outside was a jubilant jubilation, the sound of fireworks, and the Sect Leader at the summit of death locking himself up in his room, his eyelashes slowly becoming moist.

He really could not accept the deceit that Chu Wanning and Mo Ran had placed on him. He could not get along with them without any grudges, but no matter what, he still cared about them from the bottom of his heart.

When they were building the sacrificial temple, everyone told him that Mo Ran was already dead, but he was stubborn. He said that if he wanted to see someone who died, he wanted to see their corpse.

He tried his best to understand them, but he still couldn't get over it. When he thought of the things they had hidden from him, he felt so stifled that he couldn't even breathe.

He also knew that because of this reason, Chu Wanning and Mo Ran might never return to the Sisheng Peak – there was no taboo between Shizun and disciple that could truly be accepted.

But at least send him a letter…

At least tell him he was safe.

Xue Meng took a deep breath and raised his hand to cover his trembling eyelids.

Suddenly, a faint sigh came from outside the window. Xue Meng froze for a moment, then abruptly stood up and rushed over.

Dazzling fireworks rose and fell on his face. He looked left and right, but no one was there. However, there was a long and narrow brocade box hanging from a peach tree outside the window.

Xue Meng trembled as he reached out his hand. His entire body tensed up as he opened the embroidered box.

At this moment, a firework rose into the air, shattering thousands of stars in the middle of the night.

In the sparkling and translucent flowing brilliance, Xue Meng saw a narrow curved blade, which was newly forged. It had a long body and a silver handle. The crystal looked at and sparkled brilliantly…

It was a reforged Longcheng!

Xue Meng seemed to be in a daze as he held the embroidered box in his arms. He then directly jumped out of the window and rushed to the back garden while shouting, “Shizun!”

In the empty and lonely backyard of the Sect Leader, what responded was the whistling of the wind.

He called out frantically, “Shizun! Mo Ran!”

“Come out!”

The night breeze was cool and damp and cold on his cheeks, and he ran blindly among the flowers, his robes and arms scratched by the branches of the trees.

“Come out!”

In the end, his voice started to whimper.

No one could be found anywhere. Xue Meng stopped his footsteps, slowly lowered his body, and curled up on the ground as he muttered, “Come back…”

The faint sound of leaves blowing could be heard. Xue Meng shivered as he looked in the direction of the melody —

Then he saw them, but those two people had already gone too far and had stopped at the eaves of the Heaven-Piercing Tower. Behind the solemn corner of the flying beast, two figures that could not have been more familiar in the past leaned against each other. The sleeves of his robe fluttered as he sat on his knees with the godly weapon Jiuge. He was cultivating while leaning against the night clothes. At his fingertips, he held a bamboo leaf and played a song.

“Under the bright moon I visit my old friends, both our faces reflecting red in the lanterns.

Once the phoenix sings, the spring dawns, endless rivers and mountains are peaceful.

Burying the brewed drink having no one to drink with

After years separation, returning to meet brother again.

Why do people need to accompany one another so often in life, when the east wind can carry love?”

The melodious zither whistle echoed in the moonlight, drifting towards the vast sky.

After the celebratory ending of the song, there was a flash of golden light and Chu Wanning’s Candle Dragon was summoned. The two of them jumped onto the back of the dragon and flew away on the wind.

Later on, Xue Meng found two letters with similar characters in the brocade box. One was from Chu Wanning, and the other belonged to Mo Weiyu.

Mo Weiyu’s letter was very long, telling the various stories that followed, telling him many of his previous secrets, and also explaining that because they still did not know what the people thought of them, they were not willing to rashly appear and drag down Sisheng Peak. As for this new Longcheng scimitar, it was something that he and Chu Wanning had managed to obtain in the past few months. Perhaps they could use it.

On the other hand, Chu Wanning’s letter was much shorter, and there were a few lines of script on it.

Sect Leader, Yuheng felt guilt in his heart, thus he had no face to meet his disciple. The road ahead will be long so cherish it. The saber hilt of Longcheng was embedded with a Night Flower, it could accompany a Sect Leader for a lifetime. In the future, if Sect Leader wanted to take the thin and weak power of Yuheng, they could write to him as they pleased.

That night, Xue Meng stared at the two words “Sect Leader” for a very long time.

He did not come back to his senses until late at night, when the wine was all over the place and the silence was complete. Thinking that from now on, he might never hear his Shizun call out his name again, and he could only hear the Sect Leader being called, he felt that he had never been so tired of the many rules and regulations of this world.

But at least Chu Wanning was still there, as was Mo Ran. Perhaps they would be separated by a thousand li in the future, or perhaps they might not even see each other for several years. However, in the end, they were still able to share a portion of the world's moonlight.

At the foot of the mountain, the town of Wuchang.

Two men in hooded cloaks came out of the night and walked to the bustling night market. They found a lantern stand and sat down.

One of them, a tall and slender man, said, "Boss, I want a clear soup, thin slices of beef, thin slices of mutton, tripe shutters, crispy meat, fried meat, crystal fish slices, hibiscus prawns…"

The other person said flatly, "That's more or less enough. We can't afford to eat it."

"Then, how about another pine nut mandarin fish and two jars of soy milk?"

"…" That person pursed his lips, "Don't order anymore."

These two fellows were no other than the two who had just given gifts to Xue Meng, Chu Wanning and Mo Weiyu.

"Then, let's have another serving of the sweet root of the osmanthus flower." After Mo Ran finished speaking, he smiled, "Do you know how to

do it?”

The waiter was very eager: “It would never have happened, this is a dish from the Jianghuai region. However, Mengpo Hall at Sisheng Peak often does it, so we at the foot of the mountain also learned a little. Oh yeah, we have a great hero menu here. Would the two of you like to take a look?”

Chu Wanning frowned, “… What menu?”

“Great Hero recipe! Don’t you two know?” The waiter proudly introduced, “A few days ago, there was a huge disaster. The two cultivators that took care of this disaster were at the Sisheng Peak. Heh, everyone in the restaurant right now can cook special dishes, which is exactly based on the taste of those two cultivators!”

As he said this, he took out two bamboo chops from his waist and enthusiastically handed them over to Chu Wanning and Mo Ran.

“What about this? It’s the menu for Chu Xianzun.” Afraid that they wouldn’t understand, the waiter continued to explain with excitement, “It’s rumored that Chu Xianzun likes to cook slightly burnt things, so we have some scorched pills, fried potions, and boiled vegetables with burnt tofu. Oh, right, this squirrel fish would also cook quite a bit of it.”

Chu Wanning: “…”

To suppress his laughter, Mo Ran poured himself a cup of tea and drank it.

However, as he flipped through another ‘Mo Ran-Xianzun Cuisine’, the tea in his mouth nearly burst out.

“Cough, cough, cough!”

The waiter was a little panicked, “Aiya, esteemed guest, what happened to you? Are you alright?”

“I’m fine, I’m fine. Cough cough…” Mo Ran pointed at the bamboo sign and asked, “What are you guys doing? Why would Mo Xianzun have something like the haitang sweets on his menu? I’ve never even heard of it.”

“According to legend, Mo Xianzun likes sweet things.”

Mo Ran: “…”

“He also likes haitang blossoms.” The waiter was like the All Knowing Scholar of the Jianghu as he explained, “So our Lady Boss created this Haitang Sweetheart Soup by herself. The sugar on the table here is 30% more than what you would normally get for dessert, so it’s bound to be so sweet that your tongue will go numb!”

“… Can you still eat that?”

The waiter smiled and said, “Why can’t I eat? I sold it very well.” Would it be better for the two guests to have a serving of Mo Xianzun and Chu Xianzun? The two cultivators both liked to eat. Let’s taste if you don’t lose out, and let’s taste if you don’t fall for the trap.”

Chu Wanning felt a headache coming on, “No. I don’t like it, thank you.”

Mo Ran smiled and said, “Actually, I don’t like eating sweet foods that much.”

“Sigh, what a pity.” The waiter scratched his head regretfully. He seemed to really admire the new dishes in the restaurant. He could even hear the mutterings from afar, “They are the favorite dishes of the world’s heroes… It’s not good for me to have a taste…”

Chu Wanning: “…”

Mo Ran: “Pfft.”

“What are you laughing for?” Chu Wanning glanced at him, “Is it that funny?”

“No. I’m just happy. If I’m happy, I can smile even for a small matter.”

He turned his head to look at the bustling crowd on the street. After the storm had subsided, the world seemed to be alive again, the women picking up pinkie jewelry and buying New Year’s Eve red paper wares, the men drinking and chatting in front of the bright night stands, the lantern light shining on their leisurely faces, the atmosphere warm, even the grease on their cheeks not so irritating.

A group of children ran over, screaming and laughing. No one knew what kind of game they were playing, one child wearing a mask, the other group running like rabbits in front of them, constantly shouting, “Don’t let him catch you! Hahaha, don’t let him catch you!”

Mo Ran held his chin in his hand, a gesture he had always been very handsome with even a hint of loveliness in it.

He suddenly sighed with satisfaction. “That’s great.”

As he spoke, he raised his head to look at the bright lights on Sisheng Peak, and then he repeated, “This is great.”

Chu Wanning said, “… Not too good. What you just heard, Xue Meng was calling us.”

“…” As expected, Mo Ran was silent for a moment, but he still smiled, “But if we really do stay, he will be troubled again.”

“I know,” Chu Wanning replied.

As the dishes were served, Mo Ran continued to eat while muttering, “In the end, Xue Meng is still somewhat childish. Actually, it’s for the best right now. If we go back to Sisheng Peak, trouble will follow. Furthermore, he might tolerate me for one or two days. In another month or two months, why don’t we try?”

Chu Wanning bit off a piece of peanut, making Mo Ran feel wronged.

“He’ll throw me out.”

Chu Wanning suppressed his laughter as he knocked on his head with the chopsticks on his back, “You are the one who is childish.”

“Really. When the time comes for him to chase me away, I wouldn’t be able to avoid him. The sect leader’s order, ah… I’m scared to death.”

Chu Wanning couldn’t hold it in anymore, he laughed lightly, “Don’t mess around. Why would he chase you away? It’s clear that we don’t want to stay, so don’t leave this to him.”

“Fine.” Mo Ran scratched his head and grinned, dimples flashing. He then deeply said, “Shenmu-Jun, whatever you say is correct.”

Chu Wanning said, “Let’s eat. We’ll go home after dinner.”

They were now hiding in the depths of the Nanping Mountains. The two had lived there ever since Mo Ran had returned to their bodies. He was not deliberately hiding from the world. He merely felt that the world had

walked halfway through, and that it just so happened that he would pass by this place. Thus, he decided to rest in that paradise.

Everything was just right.

After picking up a piece of meat, Mo Ran's eyes curved into a smile as he said, "Actually, I was in the wrong."

"Hmm?"

"I really don't want to go back."

"You're afraid he'll blame you?"

"No." Mo Ran smiled and rubbed his nose. "I'm afraid that he will call me Mistress."

Chu Wanning: "…"

Mo Ran's eyes were very gentle, pitch-black and slightly purple as their luster flowed, but the purple seemed very good-natured now. He sighed and said, "A generation has passed."

"Eat!"

Mo Ran obediently lowered his head to eat. He behaved as if two fluffy dog ears had emerged from his head and hung down in a soft and tame manner.

However, Chu Wanning was clear that it was not that he did not want to return to the Sisheng Peak. Actually, he, himself, Xue Meng, and the others all wanted to reunite, but time was killing everyone. Sometimes, those

ignorant, frivolous years would pass, but no one could force themselves to come back.

All of them understood this logic. It was only because Mo Ran feared that he would suffer, that he would take full responsibility and make him laugh.

“Speaking of which, I’ve never asked you about it properly. On the day of the war… How did you know you’ll be back?”

After thinking for a while, he said, “… Would you blame me if I told you the truth?”

Chu Wanning looked at him with his bright eyes, “What do you think?”

Mo Ran rubbed the back of his neck and laughed with his head lowered, “Actually, after the Devil Realm’s Gate opened, I also felt a kind of spiritual energy flowing through my body… However, back then, I was still the will of Taxian-Jun. I felt dizzy and I didn’t think too much about it.”

“Yes.”

“At the last moment, when it was about to disappear, I suddenly remembered something.”

“…”

“At that time, I was betting on something. Maybe I’m the same as Song Xingyi, who’s from the Butterfly-Boned Beauty Clan.” Mo Ran said, “According to the history books, as long as the demon’s body isn’t broken, their soul is complete. Is it that easy to be reborn? So I thought. If I am, then as long as I insist on returning to my body, I should be able to come back to life.”

Chu Wanning slightly frowned, “Before this, I had always felt that the Demon’s soul being able to return to its own body was a legend.” He paused and then asked, “Then why didn’t Song Qiutong come back to life in the past?”

Mo Ran said helplessly, “Even if a demon wants to revive, the desire to survive must be very strong.”

“…”

“That feeling… Well, it’s like falling off a cliff and giving me a lifeline. The rope was covered with oil, and if he wasn’t careful, he would fall into the abyss. I have to hold on tight to the rope and climb up, not letting go for a moment, before I can return to my body.”

“Wanning, I’ve been thinking about coming to find you.” Mo Ran raised his eyes and looked at him, “That’s why I came back.”

The lantern above his head swayed, Chu Wanning looked into his pitch-black eyes, and felt as if his chest was extremely soft. He still wasn’t used to this feeling of weakness, so he quickly turned his face away.

“Actually, there is another very important reason.”

“Hmm?”

“The Butterfly-Boned Beauty is a half demon. This method of rebirth will not work on us before the devil gate is opened.” Mo Ran said, “It is because we have absorbed the demonic energy and gained the strength — or else we would still be human beings. Furthermore, the heart of my body has already been destroyed. After obtaining the devil aura, I felt that the

power contained in it was much stronger than that of a Spirit Core. That's why I thought that I might be able to use it to reverse the situation."

"That's why when you let me go, you were not sure if you could be reborn…"

Mo Ran looked at the other party's slightly narrowed eyes and realized that he had said the wrong thing. He could not help but panic as he lightly coughed to change the topic. "Ai, this fish is not bad."

Chu Wanning would never fall for his trick and stared at him, "If you don't come back in the end. When I got to the Nanping Mountain, what would have seen would have been an ice-cold corpse."

"…" Mo Ran couldn't take it anymore. He lowered his head, bit his lips, and was silent for a moment. Then, he raised his head and said, "That's right."

"…"

"I can't bear to see you die. Whether I am alive or not."

Seeing that Chu Wanning's eyes were slightly red, it seemed as if he was in pain but also wanted to get angry, Mo Ran stretched out his five fingers and held his hand on the table, rubbing it in his palm.

In the limelight, he said in a slightly hoarse voice, "I know that I might have lied to you, but even if you hate me and blame me for it, I can't just sit by and watch you die."

As he spoke, he suddenly closed his eyes, his eyelashes trembling.

"I've seen it for two lifetimes."

Chu Wanning's tensed back gradually eased, and his clenched knuckles gradually lost their strength. However, his eyes were still red and moist.

Steam rose from the pot, and tiny bubbles of soup bubbled in the oven. In this hard-to-come-by world of fireworks, Mo Ran was holding Chu Wanning's hand, interlacing his fingers.

He said, "I thought, if I really guessed wrong, I can wait for you. Ten years, or even tens of years. If you become immortal, then even hundreds, or even thousands, of years would suffice."

"…"

"The world if the livings is still very good, Wanning, I don't want you to die with me."

Suddenly, a boiling bubble burst within the pot. Some boiling water splashed onto Chu Wanning's wrist. Of course, these sparks of hot water didn't hurt, but he reflexively retracted his hand and lowered his head.

After bowing his head, he felt that he should be more at ease. Thus, he mustered up the courage to raise his head and glared at that renegade disciple who did not know what was good for him.

Mo Ran was amused by his actions. "What's wrong? Sometimes staring at me, sometimes staring at the table."

Chu Wanning wanted to say something, but at this time, Heaven-Piercing Tower's clock chimed. It floated down from the mountain peak and echoed throughout the bustling night market.

"Crap."

After counting the hour, Chu Wanning's face changed slightly. The time for change had arrived…

He suddenly stared at the man sitting in front of him. Seeing that the man who had been smiling earlier had suddenly closed his eyes, he became anxious —

Ever since Mo Ran had been revived, it would only appear once every three days. It was only until the night of the next day that Taxian-Jun's consciousness would be able to take over his body.

The reason for this was probably because the soul of Taxian-Jun had been separated from the other souls for a long time. It was difficult for the consciousness to merge with the soul, so even if the soul had already fused, it could still change its personality.

Sure enough, a moment later, when Mo Ran opened his eyes again, the radiance in those eyes had already changed.

The Emperor Taxian-Jun slowly raised his handsome face. It was obvious that he was the same person, the same body, but there was still a bit less righteousness in his expression.

Taxian-Jun's mouth opened and closed. He laughed arrogantly: "Um… After not seeing me for three days, did you miss me?"

"…"

He lowered his head and looked at the dishes in front of him, as well as the pot that was half-eaten. Finally, the picky gaze of the previous Emperor of the world fell upon the dilapidated wooden chairs on the street and the oily dining table, which was obviously very cramped.

— Those items that were common to Mo-zongshi.

To him…

“Waiter! Get the hell over here!”

“Mo Ran, take a seat!”

All of a sudden, it alarmed the surrounding customers. They all turned around, and someone exclaimed, “Ah! Is that Chu-zongshi?”

“Eh? It seemed as though Mo Xianzun and Chu Xianzun were here as well? Wasn’t he dead? Who can rub my eyes? I’m not blind, right?…”

“You’re not blind, I saw it too.”

A little girl screamed, “Ah! It’s really Mo Xianzun!”

The commotion attracted the attention of passers-by. More and more gazes fell on them. Some of them even recognized them. Chu Wanning pulled over the table with a dark face, still shouting, “The table is so shabby, how can we eat? Are you sure you’re not mistaken!” While there were still no more people rushing over, Taxian-Jun called out his Imperial Sword and fled in panic.

Only when he was high up in the sky did he finally heave a sigh of relief.

The moon was bright and clear, and he had survived a disaster.

Everything was going well – if it weren’t for the fact that Taxian-Jun was still behind him grumbling angrily, he would have asked unhappily, “What’s so good about Mo Xianzun?”

“…”

“A bunch of troublesome commoners! Why do they only remember Mo Xianzun?”

“…”

“The one repairing the Black Tortoise Spirit Formation was me!”

“…”

“I’m the one who saved their lives!”

“…”

“I was the one who stopped the flood!”

Chu Wanning glanced at the man who was gritting his teeth in anger. Suddenly, he felt that he was really petty, even to the point of being jealous of himself.

“What are you looking at?” When he suddenly saw Chu Wanning’s smiling gaze, he was stunned for a moment. Then, he narrowed his eyes in annoyance and pretended not to care, “Even you? You are also mine!”

Chu Wanning was caught off guard and he shouted angrily, “Don’t move!” Indeed, the sword beneath his feet swayed slightly, but he was quickly stabilized by Taxian-Jun’s Devil Aura with just a casual wave of his finger.

Taxian-Jun covered him up in his black gold cloak and snorted unhappily, “What are you afraid of? If I am here, how could you fall to your death?”

As he spoke, he activated the Imperial Sword Technique. In the moonlight, the sword shadow was like a black whirlwind, flying towards the Nanping Mountain…

Deep in the night, they were just like an ordinary couple.

They went home.

Later on, people would occasionally see the figures of Mo-zongshi and Chu-zongshi in the cultivation world, on the rivers and lakes, but they came and went without traces, like a glimpse.

Later on, there was another rumor spreading through the cultivation world. Legend has it that there was a blind doctor that traveled through the northern part of the Jiangnan Desert. He always wore a bamboo hat and a veil. No one had ever seen his true appearance. The only thing he knew was that the blind man had extraordinary medical skills. He had trekked to the ends of the earth, helping to rule over tens of thousands of people without taking a single cent from them.

The most famous story about the doctor was this: There was once a group of teenagers in the town who were kidnapped by cultivators when they were young. They were scalded to the point that they turned into human-shaped bears, which are still difficult to cure. The doctor who was practicing medicine came to this place and heard about this. He actually used the skin on his wrist as a medicinal guide to cut off the flesh in exchange for the healthy young men. The people in the town were filled with gratitude as they asked for his name.

The doctor had said that he was only a sinner.

After many years, the great battle that year had become a series of old and yellowed books and rumors, to the point where the children of the past had all been drawn. The young people of the past were mostly married, and the heroes of the past had already grown white hair.

Another year passed.

At Sisheng Peak, the Sect Leader, Xue Ziming, took in a rogue child as his direct disciple and treated him as his own. This little fellow was naturally familiar with everyone, and he was completely unafraid in front of the infamous Sect Leader Xue. He kept pestering Xue Meng with questions all day. One day, the little guy came over and asked him out of curiosity, “Shizun, I heard a lot about the past when everyone was talking about Shizu[177] and Shishu.[178] Are they still in contact with Shizun?”

At that time, the Holy Man, Xue Ziming, stood by the window and looked out at the blossoming peach blossoms. He said calmly, “Occasionally.”

The little guy was quite eager. “Then why didn’t you invite them back?”

“…”

“The rooms of the Red Lotus Pavilion and Shishu’s are both empty. No one else has ever stayed there.” The young disciple pulled on Xue Ziming’s wide sleeve. “Honored Shizun, call them back. I’ve heard the evaluation a few times already. It’s said that Shizu and Shishu are great heroes that are hard to come by…”

Xue Meng turned his light brown eyes and looked at the little guy in the spring sunshine with a little smile. “Do you also want to be a hero in the future?”

“Of course!” The little disciple puffed up his cheeks, looking full of ambition. “Shizun, how can you have a useless disciple? I want to do a big job!”

“A promising future doesn’t necessarily mean you have to accomplish great things.” Xue Meng said, “If you can live a proper life, you won’t bully the weak, won’t bow to the strong, won’t honor yourself in circumstances, and won’t be discouraged in adversity… Also, be careful and reserved to judge a person or a matter, and be compassionate. When you reach the age of eighteen, you will be a great hero who will stand at the top of the world if you say that you have a clear conscience.”

“…”

“What’s wrong?”

The little guy was still young, after all. When Xue Meng turned around, he found that the little guy was already yawning.

Seeing his Shizun staring at him, he forced himself to stop yawning. The corner of his eyes were wet with tears, but he still tried to straighten his back, as if deep in thought, and nodded his head.

He looked just like a young phoenix when he was young.

Xue Meng held back his laughter and pretended to be serious as he asked, “Did you remember?”

He quickly said, “I’ll remember.”

Xue Meng asked again, “Do you understand?”

“Listen… I don’t understand…”

After a while, he said in an aggrieved tone, “Shizun, you’re talking too much…”

Xue Meng did not reprimand him. After thinking for a while, he lifted his hand and patted Gouchen's head. "Forget it. It's really too much."

"Heh heh."

"If you want to be a hero, then remember one thing."

The little disciple hurriedly straightened his back and listened attentively. He probably thought that Xue Meng wanted to tell him some particularly powerful technique or meaning. His clearly defined black and white eyes were wide open.

The sunlight flowed onto Xue Meng's face. As the shadows of the flowers flowed, Xue Meng smiled.

—

"Don't make wild guesses at others. This is the highest dignity a man can bestow upon himself."

Then he bent down and picked up the confused little fellow and led him out of the house and to the end of the garden. From here, The peak of the mountain towered, and the Red Lotus Pavilion was hidden in the clouds. Through the floating clouds on the ground, one could see from afar the flourishing towns and rivers at the foot of the mountain.

With the wind blowing, the young disciple's fatigue completely disappeared, and he stopped yawning.

After all, he was still so young and childish. A flower and a bird could easily win him over.

Xue Meng stood next to him by the carving fence. They gazed at the scenery for a while before asking, “What do you see?”

The little guy did not understand. “The house. Water… And fog…”

Xue Meng smiled as he listened. His personality was getting more and more amiable, easily angering him seemed to be a distant matter.

What the children saw were houses, and what he saw was the rise and fall of the Wuchang town. From the once shabby town to the now crowded town, it was much more lively than in the former cultivation world.

What the child saw was water, he saw rolling Forgotten Stream. Sometimes, he even thought that a monk was standing by the river with a Soul Lamp in his hand. He solemnly said, “Benefactor Xue, let’s go to the Underworld…”

What the child saw was mist, and what he saw was the scattered souls of life, floating around on Sisheng Peak all year round.

His father and mother were among them, and later he would always see them, on the Sword Discourse, in the back garden, in Mengpo Hall, on the Bridge of Helplessness, even when he closed his eyes. In fact, other than the three souls and seven souls, there was probably another kind of soul. That kind of soul was only born in the hearts of loved ones — when you thought about them, they would come to your side.

Xue Meng held his little disciple in his arms, staring at the distant Frosty Heaven Palace in the mountain. Many of his family and friends had once stayed in this place.

Speaking of which, last year, the Discipline Elder had grown older and died in a snowstorm in early spring. Elder Xuanji had also left two years ago. Everyone said that he had done too many good deeds. If Yanluo had called him out earlier, then he might have been able to decompose his corpse and become an immortal. Xue Meng, one after the other, saw the deaths of these elders from their initial hysteria to their later peace — or perhaps helplessness.

When Xue Meng was able to leisurely sort out Elder Xun Ji's funeral, he would also reminisce about his past self. But this was only a memory of his past; he would no longer be addicted to the past and would never be able to extricate himself.

He was the leader of a faction and also a disciple of Yuheng. He had to keep a close eye on the situation.

"Shizun?" A small tender hand was shaking in front of him, bringing Xue Meng's consciousness back. "What is Shizun thinking?"

Xue Meng smiled and said, "I was just thinking about the past."

At the mention of the past, the little fellow became a little excited and tried to continue on with the previous topic, "Shizu and Shishu…"

"Actually, they come back every New Year's Eve. This year, you will be able to see them."

The little guy curled his lips, a little unsatisfied. "But why is it New Year's Eve? Why didn't they stay? I heard that Shishu is extremely formidable, so when he slashed out —"

Xue Meng lifted his hand and poked his head. "Your head would fall off."

The little disciple stuck out his tongue, but he wasn't afraid.

Xue Meng seemed very serious. "Really. Your Shishu is a bit… After all… split."

"Eh? Split?"

Xue Meng nodded. "I'll bring you to see him this New Year's Eve. However, you will only be able to stay until the time is right. After the time is over, you must leave."

"Why?" The child's eyes widened in curiosity.

Xue Meng said, "… Unless you want to call him His Majesty."

"Ah…" Even more confused, the little disciple who had just been introduced blinked his eyes. He wanted to ask again. Xue Meng was like thinking about something that he couldn't recall. He simply put him down and rubbed his eyebrows empty-handed. He had a terrible headache.

I haven't seen shizun's distress since the beginning of my training. The little fellow can't help but be more interested in the legendary Shishu who was "split" and pursued Xue Meng to ask directly:

"Shizun, Shizun, Shishu, He-"

"Don't ask."

"Shizu, he…"

"Don't ask."

"Shizu and Shishu…"

“Go back and copy books!”

“Wow, Shizun, you are so fierce…”

In the clear sky of Shu, the pure sunshine falls on the two shizun and apprentice through the branches. The wind blows through Xue Meng’s clothes, over the young apprentice’s young cheeks, over the magnificent Sisheng Peak, over the green grass in front of the hero’s grave.

The wind blows across the Wanli River and Mountains one day and one night. It brushes the blind who can help the world by hanging pots, the brothers who appreciate plums on the snow plains, the girls who drink by the dragon soul pool of Mount Jiao, and the relatives who return to seclusion in Nanping Valley. Wherever we go, the rivers and mountains are still there, and the Haiyan River is clear.

The fate of countless people is intertwined with each other. Although we can’t stop at a dinner party where we have a good dream and never wake up, there will always be fragments left by relatives, close friends and loved ones in a person, whether they are alive or dead, whether they have left or not, and these fragments will always follow us like a shadow. Come home with you.

With a clear wind, the haitang trees in front of Heaven-Piercing Tower are blooming brilliantly, which is no different from yesterday. The long night has passed, the horizon has its own destiny, and now everything is peaceful.

Xue Meng looked up at the same majestic floating Tu, the pagoda is solemn.

He seemed to recall something, laughed and took his apprentice's hand and went to the Loyalty Hall, the largest school in the world.

At this moment, it seemed as if he had heard the melody of both master and apprentice singing leisurely on the Heaven-Piercing Tower when they took office many years ago. The melody went through the long river of years, and now it blows away like snow behind the door of Sect Leader Xue.——

Under the bright moon I visit my old friends, both our faces reflecting red in the lanterns.

Once the phoenix sings, the spring dawns, endless rivers and mountains are peaceful.

Burying the brewed drink having no one to drink with

After years separation, returning to meet brother again.

Why do people need to accompany one another so often in life, when the east wind can carry love?

Extras

Ch. 312 Tranquil Life

— The story line took place two years after the End of the war –

The small room was filled with the fragrance of rice porridge.

A little boy with pointy ears and pumpkin leaves on his head gathered in front of the stove and added new wood to the fire. Beside him sat a red-haired girl, eating honey and watching the fire.

"I think we can make it bigger."

"I don't think so. If it was any bigger, I would die."

"I don't think so."

"Pfft, what do you know? You only know how to eat sugar."

Chu Wanning pushed open the door with the hare he had hunted. Behind him were a group of chattering grass spirits, flower demons, and even mosses the size of a fingernail.

The brothers and sisters who were sitting next to the stove immediately stood up. They hurriedly bowed towards him. "Shenmu Xianjun."

Shenmu Xianjun was what these wood spirits called Chu Wanning.

Actually, when looking back, one would have already known many things. In his previous life, he never knew why he was born with the Nine Song Divine Martial Arts, nor did he know why he had such powerful control over plants and vegetation.

Previously, he didn't even understand why the wine gourds that came out of the Golden Drum Tower would be so respectful to him.

Now he understood.

He was the Yandi Shenmu, and the Yandi Shenmu was the source of all the vegetation in the world.

After the battle at the Gate of Life and Death, Chu Wanning and Mo Ran hid in the southern mountain valley. Although they could not use their tyrannical techniques, their days passed by in a dull and uneventful manner.

Chu Wanning had already figured out a method to summon the wood spirits and gathered all the little demons in the valley under his command.

"It being the king of the mountain had its meaning." Mo Ran laughed and commented. "Just a tiger skin blanket on the floor."

However, Chu Wanning, who ruled over the mountain, was very anxious these days because a few days ago, Xue Meng had sent a message to them, awkwardly indicating that he would come to the South Mountain during the Mid-Autumn Festival and meet up with them.

After two years, the relationship between Shizun and disciple was no longer as awkward as it had been in the past. Naturally, Chu Wanning was willing to see his former beloved disciple again. Thus, a month before the Mid-Autumn Festival, he began to seriously think about which dishes he should prepare to entertain Xue Ziming.

"What is Shizun writing?"

The candles flickered in the night as Mo Ran approached and hugged Chu Wanning from behind. He rested his chin on Chu Wanning's shoulder and looked at the ink and paper spread out on the table with inky black eyes

His main intention was to coax his EnGong gege into bed. He was not really interested in what Chu Wanning was writing.

What else could this fellow be doing? He would then send the blueprints to the master of the Ma family in the Peach Blossom Villa, so that he could create them and sell them for a cheap price. At the end, he would even sincerely write, "The surplus does not need to be mine, it will all be at the peak of my life".

As a result, the building price was much higher than the selling price, so Villa Owner Ma made a profit and chased after Xue Ziming with the bill.

"Hmm? You're not drawing any blueprints today? "

Chu Wanning answered absentmindedly, "How can there be inspiration every day?"

Mo Ran rubbed his face and kissed his ear. "Shizun …"

"What's wrong?"

"..."

Mo Ran straightened up and touched his nose.

He couldn't help but suspect that Chu Wanning was sick of seclusion. Otherwise, why would he be so intimate with him and only get a "What's wrong?" that was as hard as steel without any fluctuations in his tone?

He felt like he saw a ghost.

It was only at this time that Mo Ran finally started to read what Chu Wanning had written on the table. It was good that he didn't read it, but with this look, he was so shocked that he took a big step back.

"What are you writing?!"

It was just a question, but this time, it was a sigh filled with fear.

Chu Wanning was displeased by his tone. He finally put down his brush and raised his invasive phoenix eyes. Even if his eyelashes were as soft as cotton, it wouldn't be enough to hide the sharpness in his eyes.

However, no matter how fierce his eyes were, they were no match for the fearsome words that Chu Wanning had just said.

"Mid-Autumn's menu."

Mo Ran: "..."

That's right, for the sake of the first reunion dinner after the great battle, the Northern Dipper Immortal decided to do it himself.

Mo Ran stared at the stern and stubborn face of Chu Wanning in the candlestick and the light, and could not help but tremble in his heart.

Is he serious...?

However, it was a pity that Chu Wanning was an upright person and never made unnecessary jokes.

He spent the next few days frowning and studying the menu, deleting a few dishes from time to time — and whenever that happened, Mo Ran

would let out a sigh of relief. Or add a few more dishes – each time Mo Ran looked, he would feel a faint spasm in his stomach.

Finally, when Chu Wanning finally showed him the prepared list, Mo Ran pretended to be calm as he glanced at the ten cold dishes and the twenty hot dishes, then he closed the bamboo block.

"... What's wrong? Are there fewer varieties? "

"No." Mo Ran felt that unless he wanted to see the new Sect Leader die suddenly on Mid-Autumn Night, he would have to do something to stop him.

He thought for a moment, raised his eyes, and smiled at Chu Wanning, "I just feel that if the reunion banquet was prepared by only my Shizun, it wouldn't be sincere enough."

Chu Wanning frowned, "Is that so?"

"We already said that we would meet him." Mo Ran patiently and softly continued, "Then of course, it will be more lively if we prepare it together."

Seeing that the other party was silent and seemed to be hesitating, a thought flashed through his mind. He then continued, "Honored Shizun, why don't we prepare five cold dishes and five hot dishes each? But we won't tell the other what it is. When Xue Meng comes, we would take these twenty dishes and serve them together. Finally, we will ask him what was good about the cooking and what he didn't like. How is it?"

Chu Wanning did not immediately say anything, but his eyes lit up.

These small thoughts and emotions were all captured in the observant Mo Ran's Eyes. Mo Ran restrained himself from laughing and locked his hands

together. In a gentle voice, he asked, "How is it?"

Chu Wanning looked up at him, "Is this a cooking contest?"

Mo Ran touched his nose and laughed. "Just let it be."

After a few moments of silence, Chu Wanning suddenly stood up and pulled away the bamboo block that Mo Ran was holding with his other hand. Mo Ran was a little puzzled. "What's wrong?"

"I won't let you know what I'm doing." Chu Wanning looked very serious, "What's written on it doesn't count. I'll rewrite it."

Mo Ran: "…"

Chu Wanning narrowed his eyes, "Actually, my cooking isn't much worse than yours."

"Yes, yes, yes." Mo Ran couldn't hold back his laughter any longer. "Shizun, whatever you say is correct. Then I will wait for the Mid-Autumn Festival to be a feast for all of my life." As he spoke, he took Chu Wanning's hand, stroking his finger, which was callused from years of mecha work, and lowered his head to kiss it.

In the candlelight, he looked at Chu Wanning's slightly widened eyes that were unaffected by the mockery, at his slowly relaxing body under the kiss.

His eyes curved gently.

"Whatever EnGong gege does, it's the best."

He was becoming increasingly intelligent and quick-witted to be able to solve the crisis so easily. Mo Ran drank the wine in his heart and then

stood up with a smile under the gaze of Chu Wanning. He went to clean up the dishes that had not been washed.

It was night. When Mo Ran finished washing up and returned to his room, Chu Wanning was sitting by the window, looking at the menu that he had studied countless times.

Hearing the sound of the door opening, he subconsciously closed the book, and it seemed that he really did view Mo Ran as a competitor. But Mo Ran only thought that this guy was quite funny. There were only a few casual books on his bookshelf, and only two were related to food. One was Bashu Food Book, and the other was Lin An Diet Note.

However, Chu Wanning felt that it was necessary to hide his abilities, so he turned off the lamp by the window and looked up at the young man, "Are you done washing?"

Mo Ran smiled and nodded.

Chu Wanning briefly nodded his head in agreement, and casually put the book back on the shelf, then said, "Okay, I'll go wash then."

Mo Ran's smile became even more obvious. "Shizun."

"Hmm?" Chu Wanning turned around.

Mo Ran was uncertain if he should say this, but he scratched his head in the end. He reminded him with some embarrassment, "You had already washed them before me … Have you forgotten? "

"..."

When people tried to cover up something, they would always be absent-minded. Even the famous Immortal Elder Beidou was no exception.

Amidst this awkwardness, Mo Ran looked at him with both amusement and indulgence, and then leaned over. The window was very narrow, with a chair and a row of bamboo bookshelves. There was no extra space. With one hand on the window frame, Chu Wanning had no way out.

Chu Wanning did not plan to retreat either. He was much better than he was a few years ago, but he was still not used to being intimate in a place like this – especially when he had interacted with that unreasonable paranoid character a few days ago.

When he thought of those scenes, his cheeks began to burn, and he became even more determined.

Chu Wanning said, "No. Go to bed."

The response from Mo Ran was to move closer and cover his slightly cold lips.

It had to be said that the things that Taxian-Jun and Grandmaster Mo liked were actually very similar. It was just that Taxian-Jun was tactful with his words and Grandmaster Mo was tactful with his actions.

But the results were all the same.

Before he had the chance to resist, Mo Ran had already seduced him and pushed him onto the chair, just like Taxian-Jun. Grandmaster Mo moved his finger and used a demonic aura to activate Godly Martial Arts! JianGui, he tied Chu Wanning's hands and legs to the chair.

"Can't you just choose a more normal place?" Chu Wanning gritted his teeth.

Mo Ran's long eyelashes rustled innocently. He lowered his body and touched Chu Wanning's face with a gentle voice, "I'm afraid you'll get tired of it."

"..."

He was clearly doing something that was worse than an animal, but it sounded like he had become a girl who was afraid of being abandoned.

Mo Ran's eyes were very serious. "Shizun, we've only lived together for two years. We still have a long life ahead of us. If we behave ourselves every night, you might eventually find me boring."

"You're very interesting." Chu Wanning glared at him, "Now, let me go."

Mo Ran was also half-kneeling before him, staring at him.

"Let go." Chu Wanning insisted.

It was probably because his eyes were too firm that he hurt the young man's weak heart that had already suffered so many cuts and cuts. Mo Ran suddenly lowered his long eyelashes and didn't say anything. He looked a little sad, but obediently muttered, "JianGui, come back."

The willow vine obediently withdrew.

Mo Ran lowered his head and added, "I'm sorry."

"..."

When the young man was half kneeling in front of him, he was much shorter than him. When the tall and straight body was in front of him, he couldn't recognize that he was a junior who was ten years younger than him.

He rubbed his wrist, which was tied up so painfully by the willow vine, and suddenly felt that his tone just now had been too harsh.

Chu Wanning coughed lightly, and just as he was about to say something, Mo Ran lowered his head and muttered to himself, "Although I don't really remember what I did when I became Taxian-Jun, I … I still have a bit of an impression of him."

Chu Wanning stopped rubbing the red marks on his wrist.

Looking down from the top of his head, Mo Ran's eyelashes appeared thicker and more slender than other angles, similar to some loyal animal. Chu Wanning even felt that at some point, this young man's hair would have two fluffy ears, which would then droop in frustration.

It was accompanied by a non-existent fluffy tail.

"I thought you'd like that. But I seem to have made a mistake."

"..." You did make a mistake.

Chu Wanning thought in his heart.

However, he still reached out his hand and stroked the young man's head.

This comforting caress caused Mo Ran to raise his face. His handsome face was filled with the pale yellow light of a candle. The light of the lamp was reflected in his dark eyes, and the flickering light looked like two twinkling

stars. These eyes were very beautiful, but because of the grievance, there was a little bit of red at the end of the eyes.

"I'm sorry, Shizun. I wanted to make you happy. "

"..."

"It's not like I did the right thing. I made you angry."

Suddenly, Chu Wanning could not bear it anymore.

He sighed as the strength in his hands slightly increased. However, the youth was not at ease with his emotions. He straightened his neck and stood rooted to the spot like a rock.

Chu Wanning tried to break him up a few more times, but nothing happened and he could not help but say, "Come here."

The young man was stunned for a moment before he knelt down and obediently leaned over. Chu Wanning wrapped his arms around the back of his head and pulled him close to his waist. He stroked his soft black hair and sighed, "Idiot."

The lanterns were still in the quiet room. Chu Wanning removed the silk ribbon from his hair. His long hair was scattered, but he didn't mind. Instead, he used the white ribbon to cover his eyes. There were some things that might not be as shameful if they were not seen.

Sometimes, Mo Ran was really stupid. He was stunned for a moment before he asked, "Shizun, what are you doing?"

"..."

Even though the candle flame was dim and yellow, one could clearly see the color of blood under Chu Wanning's snow-white skin. He bit his lower lip and realized there was always a way to make him soften and harden his heart in an instant.

Smoke was rising from the top of Chu Wanning's head. If it were not for the silk that covered his eyes, he would have been humiliated. Otherwise, he would have been able to push Mo Ran out of the house.

He was silent for a moment: "If you want to do it then do it! If you don't then scram!"

Grandmaster Mo is an honest man.

He was surprised by the passing of time.

For the rest of the good times, he devoutly used the Twisting Tempest technique.

His clothes were quickly taken off and his skin was exposed to the cool night air. Chu Wanning covered his eyes and subconsciously raised his chin as he could not see what was happening.

Under the white silk of the lotus root, there was a straight bridge of the nose. The soft lines extended downwards, drawing people's gazes to his lips.

Normally, because Chu Wanning's eyes were too bright and too cold, everyone who was looking at him would pay attention to those two pools of snow and ice.

But now his eyes were obscured, and he had lost his sense of majesty. Thus, Mo Ran naturally discovered that the lower half of his face was

actually very soft. It had a fine line to it, and very soft and pale pink lips.

Because he had lost his sight, his lips were parted unconsciously. This posture was like he was asking for a kiss. Although Mo Ran was absolutely sure that his Shizun did not intend to do this, he still gave him a gentle kiss.

His lips intertwined wet, his hands did not stop moving. He stroked Chu Wanning with his calloused hands, and after the kiss ended, both of their breathing hastened.

Mo Ran was placed against his forehead, and his voice was slightly hoarse. "Can I?"

The blindfolded man panted heavily, the color of his lips becoming more and more alluring, like a budding crabapple, extremely tender and light red.

Chu Wanning asked, "What?"

"Right here, okay?"

"..."

Sometimes, Chu Wanning felt that even though Grandmaster Mo was a man of honor, always acting for his sake and never forcing him to do anything he didn't like, in some cases, this kind of 'asking' was even more humiliating than the absurd things that Taxian-Jun did.

"Can you ask such a thing after taking off my clothes?"

"Ugh …" At a place where Chu Wanning could not see it, Mo Ran's face turned red.

He probably knew that he had asked a superfluous question, so he pursed his lips in embarrassment. He leaned over to kiss the side of his Shizun's face and said in a low voice, "Sorry."

In response to his cold harrumph.

Mo Ran no longer embarrassed him. His eyelashes fluttered like a butterfly, and that kiss continued on all the way down, from cheek to neck, to clavicle, to chest...

He could feel Chu Wanning's tight muscles and his arms were still holding the edge of his chair unconsciously. He knew that Chu Wanning did not like to be excessively played with on his chest. Although the scar would not hurt, it was always his fragile wound.

So he just kissed at the nipples, bent down and buried himself between Chu Wanning's legs.

He looked up at Chu Wanning's tense and stiff appearance, and leaned over, breathing fiercely in his already raised tip.

Chu Wanning's throat swayed, even under the cover of his eyes, and he turned his face in embarrassment.

"Ah..."

Suddenly his cock was engulfed by Mo Ran, and the warm and moist mouth wrapped him. In the darkness, the stimulation of the touch of the other person was particularly strong. It seemed that all his senses were pouring into his lower body, and his spine seemed to be ran up with sparks and electricity, numb all the way to the tip of his toes.

Chu Wanning leaned back slightly, biting his sudden breath.

But even if he tried to repress it, his erection honestly reflected in the young man bent between his eyes. Mo Ran took him deeper and deeper, sucking him. The tip of his tongue circled flexibly around his bell mouth and stem. When he pulled it away, the moist saliva of his mouth wetted the angry pillar.

"En Gong Gege..."

Chu Wanning's face suddenly turned red. His voice was low and angry when he said, "Don't call me that."

Mo Ran smiled gently. His lips were very close to Chu Wanning’s cock. He could feel the air flow clearly when he spoke.

"Good. I will listen to Shizun," said Mo Ran.

"..."

He didn’t know whether it was better to be ashamed of the title of Shizun, or to be embarrassed by the title of Engong Gege.

But Chu Wanning did not have much time to think. Mo Ran’s wet kisses and licking came again. He could not see anything in front of him. He could only breathe with his mouth slightly open under the silk belt. However, he could almost imagine Mo Ran’s posture and how the tip of his tongue licked him.

Eventually, in a deep throat, he could not help reaching out, fingertips deep into Mo Ran’s hair, he slightly warmed up and said, "Enough, enough."

Mo Ran did not intend to listen to him this time.

Chu Wanning was a very strong person, even in bed. So if he said "Enough", in fact, it is far from enough.

When they returned to seclusion for the first few times, Mo Ran believed in his evil. As a result, Chu Wanning tore himself apart badly. Afterwards, Mo Ran stared at the bloodstained sheets for a long time.

Since then, he has learned to regard Chu Wanning's "enough" as a byword.

Instead of paying attention to him, Mo Ran reached out and clasped Chu Wanning's other hand, trying to stop him, held it with him, and then ran his tongue all the way up, licking in the place of his desire, and then went down.

He paused, his black eyes moistened with lust: "Shizun, you have to sit forward a little more... It's hard for me to take care of you…”

He said it very euphemistically, but Chu Wanning still felt that his head was fuming.

Seeing that he was not moving, but there was no resistance, Mo Ran loosened his hand, held him to the edge of the chair, and knelt down to further open Chu Wanning's legs.

"... Ah!"

He licked past his hole. This stimulation was actually larger than the front, Chu Wanning could not help crying out, spine arching, neck thrown back, head resting on the back of the chair.

He could clearly feel Mo Ran on him licking, moistening and intruding.

It was not something that he could take comfortably, but there was a warm gush in his chest. The warmth of being accepted, loved and pitied through every inch made him feel as if he were soaked in the warmest spring in the world.

When embraced by Mo Ran, Chu Wanning felt his legs were sore and numb because of excessive stimulation. They swapped places and Mo Ran sat in his chair. His cock was now fully erect and his angry stem was big in size.

Mo Ran held Chu Wanning's waist in one hand while his other hand kept opening his entrance. When Chu Wanning frowned and said "enough" for the ninth time that night, he could not help laughing and kissing WanNing’s temple.

"Good..."

Even if the lubrication was more than abundant, it still hurt to be pushed into by such a large and hard sex organ.

Chu Wanning frowned and his back trembled slightly. He could clearly feel the burning desire buried in his body inch by inch.

"... Ah..."

When they fit perfectly, they both murmured.

"Shizun, does it hurt?"

"... Would you like to try it instead?

Mo Ran did not speak anymore, and he began to move gently. No matter how uncontrollable his excitement may be, this young man was totally

different from Taxian-Jun at the beginning of his love. He was very patient, but his handsome face was more and more affected by the restraint of his desire.

His cock pulsated slightly in the soft and hot body of Chu Wanning as he was sucked and wrapped in the tight walls. This feeling made him crazy. He had to exert his utmost efforts to restrain himself from immediately pushing the person in his arms up to the top and making merry wild.

His chest was waving, his black eyes were like rubbed gemstones with brilliant luster, his lust and enthusiasm burned him, sweat flowed down his naked skin, and the room was full of lust.

He gasped, breathing more and more quickly.

That little scratch was almost a scratch across his boots, although every time he entered it, he reached the sensitive point of his familiar Chu Wanning, and the head of his cock was constantly crowding.

"Ah... Ah..."

Chu Wanning tried hard to suppress his sounds, but the gasps overflowed low, with a very slight voice, but hoarse and sexy.

Mo Ran was fascinated to find his lips, the wet lips were in touch with the hunger and thirst to invade and suck, while the frequency of thrusting under the side was becoming more and more urgent.

Chu Wanning sat on his lap and was almost crushed by his shallow thrusts. Mo Ran was very gentle, but this gentleness was like a cruel torment to him. Mo Ran knew him too well. He was constantly pushing against the most crisp position. It was turbulent but not violent. It seemed that there

was an itchy place where his fingers kept skimming around and making circles like feathers, but it just kept the itchy climbing up without pleasure.

He suffered terribly. In such a tormenting situation, he gave a vague low sound and moan in his throat, almost like a kind of begging.

He could feel the heat behind him and the humidity of the junction, which made him blush more and more. He wrapped him wetly and sucked him in the back.

Chu Wanning preferred not to think further.

Fortunately, Mo Ran did not want to be like Taxian-Jun. He always liked to listen to his moans but didn’t lose control in bed, or he did, but not so subtly.

Mo Ran apparently also felt Chu Wanning's gradual adaptation. His pulling strength slowly became fierce. His hot cock was poking from bottom to top. His hands were coiled and wiped around Chu's buttocks. He gazed at his lover in his chair and his eyes looked wet and moist.

"Shizun, does it feel good?

"..."

Naturally, the answer didn’t come, but Mo Ran could feel Chu Wanning's state from his reaction, his small groans and gasps.

As he became more and more excited and vigorous, their love gradually became out of control and delirious, from the initial tender and lingering, gradually evolved into sweaty and intense sexual intercourse.

The chair creaked unsteadily beneath him, and the wet and sticky sound of the water when it collided at the junction. In the increasingly fierce manipulation, Chu Wanning could not bear it. His waist and limbs were soft, his body was close to Mo Ran’s chest, his head shook slightly, his hair hung over his ribbon, and he gasped: "Slow, slow..."

But at this time, the young man was addicted to it, and could no longer be as obedient.

This fierce thrusting lasted for a long time, until Chu Wanning was so directly manipulated by his fanatical and infatuated actions that he released spasmodically, and the semen was all in his burning stomach.

At that time, Mo Ran looked up at the man sitting on his legs. The silk ribbon had skewed in the fierce intercourse, revealing a moist Phoenix with a tiny closed eye.

Mo Ran seemed to be turned on by this, and suddenly, although he was still immersed in the afterglow of the orgasm, he held him to stand up. Because of the change of posture, his cock suddenly poked into the depths of the hole, which overly stimulated Chu Wanning, to moan out: "Ah..."

"Shizun, WanNing... Baobei..." He hugged him, kissed him, and they fell down together on the bed. In the process, Mo Ran’s dick slipped out of Chu Wanning's moist and lustful entrance.

Chu Wanning's eyes were almost empty. The man's perception of stimulation was greater when he release. He could feel himself shrinking and longing shamelessly behind him. Because of the sudden slip of the sexual organ, he gasped heavily, raised his trembling hand and pulled away the half-loose silk belt.

Those slightly picky and red eyes, were too wet to see Mo Ran’s look.

Mo Ran cursed lowly. He raised the man's legs on the bed to press his hot and hard sex against Chu Wanning’s entrance, just pushed forward, entered a front end, and heard the pain and pleasure of the person under him moaning.

As he could no longer bear it, he whispered "I'm sorry" and supported Chu Wanning waist. The whole length was fiercely and enthusiastically thrusted inside.

The next mating was almost wild.

In the depth of infatuation, there was no difference between Taxian-Jun and Grandmaster Mo. They were not very sensible. They were addicted to the twitching of the hot tightness. They were eager to hear more of Chu Wanning’s vague and broken groans and gasps. Two solid and symmetrical bodies on the bed were entangled in the blazing heat. Mo Ran separated Chu Wanning’s legs very wide, his ass was still, and his cock went deep instantly. The ground turned upside down.

"Ah... Ah..."

Everything wa chaotic, the dense thrust, the storm-like intercourse. It made Chu Wanning feel like a soul floating in the river, which can not be grasped, and could not be controlled.

The only real thing was the face of the young man in front of him who was obsessed with love.

Before Mo Ran came, he was extraordinarily fierce and almost crazy pumping inside, and the last few ruthless and hot thrusts, almost to

squeeze the hole to its limits, followed by a large powerful stream of semen in Chu Wanning's body without ending.

His toes trembled and his eyes almost lost focus.

"How are you?"

It was a long time before Mo Ran recovered from his excitement. He kissed Chu Wanning's sweaty face, lips, and nose.

"Did it hurt?"

"..."

"Did you like it?"

He looked at the sincere and gentle face of the young man, the man he had once lost, the man who had fallen into hell for him, the man who had been so cold at his side.

Now he was so vividly entwined in his pillow.

In front of his eyes.

Beside him.

Within his body.

He abruptly closed his eyes, and for some reason, a sour taste appeared in his throat, but the sweetness in his heart instead broke through the soil. The sweetness and the sour taste merged together, causing his throat to sound somewhat hoarse.

Chu Wanning was not a good talker, but he was also a very thin-skinned person.

Don't expect him to answer any questions honestly on the bed, so Mo Ran obviously won't get an answer to his stupid questions this time either.

But he would get something else.

Better.

Chu Wanning raised his head slightly. There was still a strand of sweaty black hair scattered on his forehead, and his beautiful eyes were fixed on the young man's face. Then he leaned over and kissed the young man's well-shaped lips.

He placed his hand on Mo Ran's chest, where there was still a scar.

They both had a scar on their hearts.

But it was all over.

The scar was still there, but it would no longer hurt.

"... I love you."

Chu Wanning said in a low voice. Then, as if to prevent Mo Ran from seeing his embarrassment and blush, he pulled him down and kissed him again.

This night, as before, they did it more than once. Mo Ran’s strength that had been impregnated by the power of the devil seemed better than before, although he was already somewhat unreasonably good in the past.

The bed creaked as they entangled passionately in the Valley of NanPing. Chu Wanning turned over and knelt on the bed. Mo Ran sat behind him

and covered his mouth. Then pushed him back like a beast matting. In their fierce rhythm, the semen left in Chu Wanning's body was foamed and slipped slightly between his legs.

"WanNing..." During the feverish sexual intercourse, the almost absent minded Chu Wanning laid on the bed. He had strands of black hair in front of his eyes, and he could vaguely hear Mo Ran behind him calling out to him, full of love, desire, infatuation, and dependence.

He wanted to reply, but his voice was a little hoarse from the many times he had cried out during the night. He could not make too many sounds.

Just like that, Chu Wanning was pressed down on the bed. After a while, he saw Mo Ran's hand reach over and cover the back of his own hand.

He could Mo Ran’s breathes, and the most sexy and beautiful voice in the world, right next to his ear. He frowned, and clearly perceived that his lover was groaning and gasping, and that the semen was once again shot into his body, like an electric fire.

He heard Mo Ran press himself to his ear, solemnly, as the young man had so often said in the past two years, as if he were about to say it for the rest of his life.

No, not as if.

It's for sure.

Mo Ran said, "WanNing, I love you."

I love you.

From dawn to dusk.

Every day.

All his life.

For a Lifetime.

As for the Mid-Autumn Festival...

Although Chu Wanning's culinary skills were not good, his taste sense was not bad.

After studying for a long time and not being able to cook for a long time and seeing how Mo Ran was already used to marinate the fish meat without any problems, three days before the Mid-Autumn Festival, Chu Wanning finally gave up on the idea.

Thus, the first scene appeared.

Tens of monsters cultivated from plants and vegetation surrounded Chu Wanning. Some of them were in charge of chopping firewood, lighting fires, chopping vegetables, and scooping up food from the wok.

Chu Wanning looked at the bubbling broth in the pot. Its color, luster and fragrance were both very alluring. He could not help but say to the two little demons who were cooking, "Thank you for your help."

"No need to thank me. We volunteered. Immortal Deity, Deity Wood, has summoned us to help out. We can't be happier yet."

Chu Wanning looked outside and saw Mo Ran sitting quietly at the end of the yard, chopping a pile of firewood. He did not have anyone to help him, sweat was dripping down his face, his clothes could not cover his tight chest and slim waist.

Very good, a beauty.

It was a pity that Chu Wanning did not care for the fairer sex.

Although it was indeed unfair for him to secretly ask the demons to help him cook the dishes, he had no choice but for Mo Ran every night to torment them endlessly …

As he thought of this, he closed the kitchen door tightly and cast a barrier to prevent Mo Ran from burning in. After doing all of this, he turned around and returned to the place where he had once been absorbed by the plants. He then picked up the recipe that he had written down on the counter —

"Next, we need a squirrel mandarin fish."

The voice of the Immortal Elder of the Beitang Clan came out from the kitchen. Occasionally, one could hear the strange mumbling of some lesser demons.

"Who catches fish?"

The smoke from the smoke rose in the air. It was sunset and dusk. The fragrance of tea, rice, oil and salt filled the air.

In this sort of serenity and warmth, that year's cold rain and snow in the deep winter of South Peak Mountain would eventually fade from his memories. Perhaps one day, the pain he had experienced would become a faint shadow, just like the ink stains on his clothes. Once or twice, it might not be clean, but as time passed, the shadow would eventually become a gentle and shallow mark.

Every year in the future, regardless of whether it was spring, summer, autumn or winter, they would be in the best world.

Ch. 313 Only Possibility 1

— — This was a modern eg.

I thought I was playing a love game with multiple characters to play, but this game can only play one ending.

— — From One Failed Task Report by Xue Meng

Xue Meng was eating the penultimate coconut milk red bean cake on his plate.

He had to be careful. He used a plastic spoon to cut along the edge of the red bean cake. He wanted to preserve the integrity of the cake as much as possible,

Unfortunately, half of it had been tainted by Mango Mousse, who was sitting in the same plate.

He hated Mango as much as he hated his job with the Cultivation Protection Department.

Unfortunately, he had no choice but to do it. This was the twenty-first century, and the Taoist father's foolish son had to come out to work to support himself.

"Mission report, Mr. Xue." A dry, mechanical female voice came from the headset.

Xue Meng rolled his eyes. Ever since the Bureau of Temporal Protection called in a new bureau chief with the surname 'Jiang', reporting on the mission had become something that he had to do every day.

"Cough, I arrived at the office at 8: 20 today. I was not late, so I packed a plate of raw fried meat for Shizun Li this morning.

I suggest that you all have a taste when you're free. The key is that the old grandpa who is selling fried food looks kind and praises people, and the aunt who is 60 years old should not call him a coquettish little girl. After eating the raw fried food, I started to seal the -- "

This was the reason why Xue Meng hated his job.

Yes, seal.

This was a long story, and the blame lay with his father. Xue Meng's father, Xue Zhengyong, was the Director of the International Cultivation Bureau. As the Director's only son, Xue Meng had lived his entire life and no one dared to offend him.

The food they ate was specially prepared by the Cultivation Bureau. Even the urine was made from the deep-sea mackerel, ensuring that it would be slippery and not give rise to a prickly heat. Those Bong Baoshi and Hua King's diapers were nothing to the eyes of their parents.

For such a Young Master of the cultivation world, his days were naturally smooth sailing. After graduation, he directly entered the Cultivation World's Protection Bureau to work. On the first day of work, he was personally received by the Director.

At that time, the bureau chief's name was Nangong Liu. He was a chubby middle-aged man who could sweat cold sweat when climbing two floors up.

Nangong Liu cordially held Comrade Little Xue's hand and shook his pork cheeks as he greeted, "Aiya, Xue Meng, right? "He really looks like your father. It's clear from one look that she's a real son. She's pretty!"

Xue Meng said, "Uncle, thank you for your praise."

Nangong Liu chuckled. "Your father and I are old acquaintances, so let's not talk about other things. Come, let Uncle explain the work that you need to do first."

Student Xue Meng, who had just graduated, was still full of ambition. He was determined to help build a harmonious new cultivation world by contributing his own strength. Thus, he straightforwardly said, "Just say it, I will complete the task you gave me."

Look, he didn't even have a second generation cultivation. What a good child!

Bureau Chief Nan Gong looked at him deeply before retracting his smile and said solemnly, "Little Xue, the organization has considered that you are from a cultivator family and have outstanding conditions. So, even though you're Director Xue's favorite, we've decided to give you the most difficult and difficult job. "

Hearing this, Xue Meng immediately became spirited. "Ever since I was young, I have liked all sorts of adventurous things. "In the past, everyone had always obstructed my dad's face, but I was not allowed to do this, nor was I allowed to touch that." His eyes were shining. "I'm finally out of it."

Bureau Chief Nangong patted his shoulder and gave him a thumbs up, "Ambitious."

Xue Meng asked, "Then what do I want to do?"

"Cough, cough." Nangong Liu cleared his throat, "Overall, this is a high difficulty job that no one on the board is qualified to do. It requires superior patience, accurate judgment, and decisiveness on the part of the person in charge. Because every decision you make will control hundreds of thousands of lives — there will be a large number of lives that will be saved because of you, but there will also be many lives that will bleed because of you. "

His expression was solemn and his eyes were blazing, as if a holy light was slowly rising behind him.

"It's a hard job on the front lines. When you first came to work in the Bureau of Space and Time, your father urged me to find you a comfortable and safe position, but after looking at your resume, I felt that you were a good and ambitious kid. I couldn't let down the hot-blooded young people, so after careful consideration, I gave you this job. "

As he spoke, the bureau chief extended a hand and poked Xue Meng's chest.

"You have to live up to those ten million lives."

Xue Meng's eyes filled with tears, filled with reverence. "Bureau Chief, thank you for ignoring my father's hindrance and giving me such a heavy responsibility! I will work hard and not disappoint you! "

Bureau chief Nangong Liu gave him a look of praise and encouraged, "Do your job well!" After he left, he hid his skills and reputation.

That day, when Little Xue returned home, he was unable to control his excitement. He hid it from his parents and secretly ordered a batch of goods from the Peach Blossom Network's Night Cat Cultivator Merchant Shop. They were as follows:

Violent DPS Broken Skin Fried Chicken (manufactured by Frigid Scale Pharmacy): Eating it will give you ten times the mana required for an hour. You cannot use it in battle.

Ergou Life Continuing Pill (manufactured by Yuheng Pharmaceutical Factory): If you die, it will be useless to eat more.

Liao Tou Wan (No Sorrowful Monastery): Can let your head shine, in the dark to guide your companions.

Infinite Baiyuan Pill (produced by Taxian-Jun Pharmaceutical Factory): To remove the chaotic state.

Ancestral thousand year jujube pill (Greed Pharmaceutical Factory): Only for enemy use.

Just like that, little friend Xue Meng made perfect preparations. He even dreamt of teleporting into the Second World Cultivation War, bravely sacrificing his life in order to resist the black magic that came sweeping in from the European battlefield. With a sharp "Avadaso's life!", he fell into a streak of mysterious green light...

But the next day, when Xue Meng hesitantly arrived at the office, he was stupefied.

"This is … My job?! "

The sweet long-legged big-chested secretary's sister poured him a cup of fragrant tea and said gently, "Yes, Mr. Xue. This is your job."

Xue Meng went to his desk in disbelief. Looking at the mountain of reports on the cultivation world's projects, his mouth gradually formed an "O" shape.

Trembling, he reached for the uppermost stack of papers and roughly looked at it. A row of bright red headlines entered his eyes, the title was very convoluted and ordinary people could not understand it: "The method to deal with the illegal use of the Lanyi Mortal Pig Farm's Ling-Yi Pig Feed: Lonely Moon Night Pig Feed".

What could he do?

Xue Meng couldn't help but feel dizzy.

But he gritted his teeth and continued to look.

Recently, the medical supervision team received a report that a cultivator had illegally sold Gu Yue Ye's expired pig feed through an illegal channel to a mortal merchant, resulting in more than 8000 bags of expired feed to the market. Currently, there are already three pig farms with pigs that have consumed this feed.

Xue Meng, "..."

He turned another page.

The Livestock and Drug Administration Committee of the Cultivation World dealt with the matter by sending people to buy back all the contaminated pork and destroy it.

The Mortal Board of Cultivators handled the matter by supporting the decision and conducting an arrest and interrogation of the cultivators involved.

The Cultivators' Advocacy Committee's Disposition: I second the opinion and invite the program team of "News Simulcast" to carry out the follow-up public relations work.

Chairman's opinion on the Comprehensive Case Committee of the Cultivation Community Protection Bureau: (empty)

Confused, Xue Meng raised his head. He poked at the "empty" character with one hand and asked the smiling little sister beside him, "Why is there no one writing an opinion on this?"

The little sister smiled and patiently explained, "I was waiting for you to seal it."

"But I'm not …" He looked down at the report and read, "Chairman of the Comprehensive Case Committee of the Cultivation Protection Bureau.

But when he raised his head again and looked at the affectionate eyes of the big sister secretary, he could not help but hesitate and become confused. Am I? "

Little Sister magically took out a small brooch card from behind her. On it was impressively printed "Chairman of the Comprehensive Case Committee, Xue Meng." There was even a photo with a head that Xue Meng was most dissatisfied with.

He put it on for Xue Meng and smiled. "Now you are the honorable Chairman. Congratulations!"

He even handed over two seals. One of the seals was imprinted with a circle, while the other was imprinted with a cross.

"Agreed to close the case and deny it." The little sister smiled and said, "Please start working."

Xue Meng's mouth opened and closed again and again. He had a lot of things he wanted to say and a lot of curses he wanted to spit out, but in the end he swallowed his saliva and with difficulty asked, "Can I not choose?"

The elder sister smiled and said, "Of course you can. Then both of you cover them up."

"..." Xue Meng felt his anger dissipating. "If I don't choose either one of them, how will I deal with them in the end?"

"I'll leave it to the secretary of the bureau chief."

Xue Meng became even weaker. "Then what do I have to do?"

Little Sis kindly said, "Therefore, I personally recommend that you only seal it once."

Xue Meng, "… … … …"

And just like that, as the days went by, Xue Meng truly comprehended the art of speaking back then. This damned, damned job had made him live like a pile driver, looping or forking on different reports. This inded requires inhuman patience.

Of course, this patience is not just about facing boring work without having a reverse mentality. His greater patience was that he had to restrain

himself every day in order to convince himself not to rush into Nangong Liu's office and strangle the Director's reproductive organs!

Although Bureau Chief Nangong had not lied to him, he had decided to leave thousands of lives behind.

Just look at these reports —

"Report on the Construction of the Exclusive Chicken Farm for Violent Dps Crispy Chicken"

"Report on the Formation of Huluwa Essence after the Establishment of the Republic of China". (http ://www.wuxiaworld.com/pwang.com/pwang.com/pwang.com/pwangwuxiang.com/pwangwuxiang.com/pwangwuxiang.com/pwangwuxiangwu)

"Report on the Acceptance of the Black Cat Chief Officer after the Establishment of the Country"

"Gu Yue Ye, Retired Sect Leader's application: I really want to live another 500 years"

"The Sphenoid Maid Research Group: An Advocate to Call Cultivators Carrying the Genes of the Maid to Donate Genetically Modified Human Beings"

Isn't it a matter of hundreds of millions of lives.

With a face full of anger, Xue Meng raised his small fork and slapped it over the《 Donation of Essences》. He felt a sense of righteousness that had saved countless lives, and he noted coldly: "No one wants to be shot in a cup and frozen. "Denied."

He admitted that he was venting his resentment, but he hoped that the Director would not tolerate such nonsense. It would be best if he could get him to go to the mortal world to kill demons and exorcise devils.

It was a pity that the director was as steady as a rock and didn't scold Chairman Xue. On the contrary, during a gathering, Xue Meng heard that Miss Ye Wangxi, the secretary of the bureau chief, had to work hard until the early hours of the morning because of these pranks.

"If you let your daughter-in-law work overtime, I'll resign tomorrow!"

Half a corridor away, the director's son, Nangong, could be heard thumping the table and stomping his feet.

With a guilty conscience, Xue Meng shrunk his neck back. After he sent himself into a daze, he decided that he would still have to seriously face these reports.

Just like this, several months passed. As his seal was being sealed faster and faster, he almost forgot about his original ambitions when he graduated. Nangong Liu had been suspended from his position and had lost his iron bowl of rice because he had accepted a bribe from a demon.

The new director was here.

Director Jiang Xi was swift and decisive as he took over any stand very quickly. Only for Xue Meng, it took him an hour to understand what it was used for.

Bureau Chief Jiang could not be blamed for this. It was because the package Nangong Liu had given Xue Meng was too frightening. He had

taken apart the wrapping paper for a long time, layer after layer, before he finally realized what was inside.

In short, Xue Meng's position was practically useless. Even Little Li, who had been slacking off in the cafeteria while washing vegetables, had done more meaningful work than him.

Director Jiang could not tolerate such a position, so he decided to abolish the position of "Integrated Commissioner" and find some other work for Xue Meng.

He spent a week or so observing his ideas, and finally made a decision. The first scene appeared — —

"Mission report, Mr. Xue."

"Cough, I arrived at the office today at 8: 20, I wasn't late, so I packed a serving of raw fried food for Shizun Li in the morning." Cough, I arrived at the office today at 8: 20, I wasn't late, and I packed a serving of raw fried food for Shizun Li in the morning. After eating the raw fried food, I started to seal the seal... "

There was a sudden hiss of electricity from the headset.

Following that, Jiang Xi's channel was switched on and the cold voice disappeared. In its place was Director Jiang's voice, which was even more heartless than the voice.

"From today onwards, you do not need to seal it. "Rest early today and come to my office tomorrow. I have an important job for you." Jiang Xi paused for a moment before replying without any emotion, "Remember to bring me a serving of Shizun Li's fried meat and add vinegar."

Xue Meng, "… … … … …"

Ch. 314 Only Possibility 2

The next day, Xue Meng went to Bureau Chief Jiang's office. After listening to the details of the task, he came to realize something — he had been assigned a job similar to that of a pimp!

Xue Meng was very angry. "Why am I not sealing the report on the donation, but looking for a way out for the birth of a new life? You should either hand this over to Jiayuan or the Lilium Net, what are you looking for me for?! "

Director Jiang was eating raw fried buns one by one at an astonishing speed and with a beautiful appearance.

"I told you this for the third time, you are not trying to play a pimp, you are trying to light up the genetic engineering research team."

He finished the last bun, slowly wiped his lips with a handkerchief, and then raised his eyes. "Listen carefully, the abnormal movements of the demons in the past few hundred years have become more and more obvious. It hasn't been two centuries."

There would probably be another fierce battle between Humans and Devils. We need the most powerful combat power. "

"... To put it bluntly, you all are descendants that need special beauties to reproduce. " Xue Meng rolled his eyes.

Jiang Xi didn't mind. "Yes, that's right."

"But it's been a long time since the Unique Beauty Seat appeared. The only person with any leads was a guy called Mo Ran."

"That's right."

"You need that guy to give you a baby."

"Exactly."

The disdain on Xue Meng's face could be clearly seen. "But that guy is a gay."

Jiang Xi lightly added, "A purebred gay."

Xue Meng gnashed his teeth and said, "That's why you guys spent more than ten years developing a virtual game called Fate Jump — —"

"Jumper." Jiang Xi corrected him expressionlessly, "And strictly speaking, it cannot be called a game."

"I don't care if it's a jumping machine or a jumping machine!" Xue Meng finally couldn't help but roar. "In short, you want me to use that machine to simulate fate and find an opportunity to correct a gay man's sexual orientation in the life of Mo Ran.

Just like those characters who can file and read files, introduce him to girls who have long breasts and long thighs and let them have children — "

Jiang Xi interrupted him again. Mr. Director waved his finger and said, "It doesn't need to be as long as one's chest and thighs. It only needs to be the size of one's buttocks."

"..."

Xue Meng's earth-shattering roar came from the bureau chief's office, "Isn't this f * cking Grandma Wang's job?!"

"Calm down. The Destiny Jumper is only a simulation of various possibilities. To put it bluntly, it's a test version. " Jiang Xi took a sip of his tea. "The bureau will collect your test results and formulate a real practical plan."

"I refuse."

"Relax, young man." Bureau Chief Jiang ignored his rejection, "Just treat yourself as a test taker to develop a game."

"I said I refuse! Do you need to go to the otolaryngology department and test your hearing, sir? "

Unfortunately, Director was very stubborn, so in the end, Xue Meng still had to accept this task. Of course, Bureau Chief Jiang was not so unreasonable. He kindly arranged a game assistant for Xue Meng, a talking little paper dragon.

"Assistants, staff officers, guides, toys, summoned beasts, Kobolds." Jiang Xi leisurely said as he held the tea cup, "Call me whatever you want." It's yours now. We'll enter the simulation game together and give you advice. "

With that, he waved his hand, ignoring Xue Meng's ruckus, "Let's begin, new graduates."

"What did you call me?"

Bureau chief Jiang no longer planned to care about him.

With a wave of the director's hand, the new graduates were forced into the operation room to put on a series of equipment and begin his mission.

After a moment of spinning, Xue Meng arrived at the first world.

… …. He had seen people who didn't allow young people to play games, but he had never seen anyone who forced young people to play games.

However, since Jiang Xi had said that this was a mission, he might as well finish it as soon as possible.

Xue Meng turned his head around with a darkened face. He discovered that the little paper dragon was lying on his shoulder, its short dragon claws clutching a quest guide. As it read, it exclaimed, "Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh ~"

"Shut up." "Are you a goose?"

"Of course I'm not! I'm the dragon of the candle that split the world and knows everything!" As the little paper dragon said this, it swung its tail at Xue Meng's face. "This way."

Xue Meng looked in the direction it was pointing. It was a small, dilapidated, dark alley with all kinds of advertisements of psoriasis pasted on the outside. On the ground, there was an unknown fluid, like a mixture of leaking garbage bags and spilled spittoons.

Xue Meng firmly lifted his foot and walked in the opposite direction.

"Hey hey, where are you going?"

"Let's go on a cleaner path."

The little paper dragon was angry. "Do you think I want to choose this path?" As it spoke, it smacked the mission book against Xue Meng's nose, "Look for yourself! It says, "Walk two hundred meters into this alley and find a noodle shop. Then you will see Mo Ran, who is currently in primary school!"

Xue Meng took the mission guide and looked at it doubtfully. It seemed to be true.

With an ashen face, he returned the guide to Xiao Long, gritted his teeth, and stepped into the darkness.

Although he felt like he was going crazy, he followed the directions and walked out of the alley. He turned left, and the road gradually became spacious and clean.

"Yes!" Right in front! That 'again at the noodle shop'. " Xiao Long was excitedly dancing and waving his hands. Xue Meng could not help but feel glad that due to the magic, the people in this virtual world could not see them. Otherwise, it would be very embarrassing.

Soon they found Mo Ran among the diners. He had a tattered school bag on his back, and he was wearing a pair of shoddy sneakers. His dark, greasy hair looked unwashed for days, and his head hung limply in front of his eyes.

Although Xue Meng was still quite far away from him, he was almost certain that Mo Ran had a very rancid smell. This was because there were no customers willing to sit in the seats around him.

"What a well-nourished little dirty dog." Xue Meng stroked his chin as he commented.

"He'll be very handsome when he grows up." The dragon reminded him.

"Then why are we looking for Mo Ran, who is currently in primary school?" Xue Meng said, "Just find the adult handsome him and stuff a 'Yin-Yang

Fusion Powder' into his mouth. Then catch a girl and throw it into the dark room, wouldn't that be enough?"

The small paper dragon looked at him with disdain, "Big brother, we are from the Cultivation Bureau, not the Yi-Hong Courtyard."

"..."

"Besides, the Cultivation Bureau has ordered to prohibit this kind of illegal drug use. You must make Mo Ran willingly fall in love with a girl and marry his and have children. "Then cultivating relationships since young must be the best."

While saying this, Xiaolong tried to look for supporting evidence in the quest guide, but what was even worse was that he actually found it.

"Haha, I told you that I, myself, am the dragon of candles who can do anything in the world! Look, there really is a recommended target! "

"... Is the one that Jiang Xi stuffed in front of you really not a cheating machine? "

Even though he said this, Xue Meng still drew the guide back with a look of disgust. He smoothed the crumpled paper out of the little dragon's hand and squinted under the dim light of the street lamp.

Hell, it really did list a dozen female targets for the current Mo Ran.

"Target 1: Wang Xiaomi. How to make friends: Please cast a spell to let the noodle restaurant in the sudden rabies, to bite the noodle burning. Wang Xiaomi is the daughter of the owner of the car. He is one year younger than Mo Fen, and will be in the third grade of primary school. They will meet on the car and become childhood friends. "

Xue Meng had a face full of anger, "This is f * cking okay?" He continued to look at the next guide.

"Target 2: Li Da Mi.

"This won't do." Xue Meng, who had been sealing the chicken farm for a long time, actually had some pity for animals. His conscience made him use the veto, but his curiosity still drove him to read on, "After Wangcai dies, the shop owner's daughter will come out to caress his corpse and cry. His crying will attract his little friend, Li Daimi, and Mo Ran will meet the two girls tonight."

"Then why can't you directly take over the daughter of the noodle store's owner?"

Hearing Xue Meng's mutterings, the little paper dragon shook his face with its tail, then pointed it forward with the tip of its tail. He saw the daughter of the noodle store owner was at least three times as big as Mo Ran, and his eyes were narrowed into slits.

Xue Meng, "... "I understand."

If it was the daughter of the noodle store owner, he would probably push Mo Ran into the abyss of a dead gay man even more thoroughly.

Alright, although work is not pleasing to the eye, but since I have taken on this job, I have to settle the matter properly. This is the good leader of the people, the good cultivator of the country.

Therefore, Little Xue constantly complained, but still earnestly looked through the ten female targets that could be triggered.

The book editor was probably an idiot who was bored to death. He wrote down the hobbies and interests of the ladies on the book, and even included a two-inch headshot of each of them.

With his straight male aesthetic, Xue Meng fell in love with a little girl called "Zhao Wu Mi".

"... "Oh, this name sounds like it has a slim chance of winning." The little paper dragon sighed.

"What do you know? She's cute, she'll definitely be a beauty in the future." "If I choose her, I definitely won't be able to bend the knee."

"That's what you said."

As a result, a person and a dragon began to carefully follow the guide.

"In order to trigger the 'Zhao Wumi's Meeting Event', you have to wait until Mo Ran finished his noodles, and then walk two blocks forward before starting the rain." "This way, Mo Ran will run under the nearest roof to shelter from the rain without an umbrella. At this time, he will hear the cries of a little girl coming from the back street."

"It sounds like a ghost story."

"Nonsense, this is clearly a story of a hero saving a beauty." "Look, the book said that Mo Fen would go over to check on the situation after hearing the crying sound. He found out that little friend Zhao Wuyi was being bullied by a group of domineering girls. Mo Fen helped out on the way, and they got to know each other."

Xue Meng went to make sure that Zhao Wumian's little friend was surrounded by a group of hooligans, and everything went smoothly. The

senior girl who looked the most boisterous in the female group of "Beauty Milk" picked up a brick and smashed it into Mo Ran's head.

The heroic youth lit up the ink and threw himself onto the street.

Xue Meng, "..."

Little Candle Dragon: "..."

Xue Meng said, "What about the special beauties' seats? Just this combat strength? tease me?! "

Little Candle Dragon: "Probably too young to be activated..."

Amidst the sounds of thunder and lightning, the ink was burning as it fell into the rain, and blood was flowing out of his forehead. When the female overlord of the campus saw this, aiya, my mother, it caused someone's death! He hurriedly led his lackeys to scatter, but the most extreme one was still Student Zhao Wuxi. He trembled as he got up from the ground, and upon seeing the torrential rain of ink-burnt corpses, he was scared out of his wits. He actually left his savior with a scream and left in the dust.

Its running speed was so fast that it left people stupefied. Xue Meng couldn't figure out how the "big" girl group had caught up to her. Even a rabbit wouldn't be able to reach this speed.

Xue Meng and Xiao Long squatted beside the unconscious Mo Ran and looked at each other.

"What do we do now? Save him? "

"But we can't do it directly to the people in this world …"

Xue Meng said in shock, "Then won't he bleed to death like this?"

"Aiya, it's a game simulator anyways. It's not like it's a real space-time travel. If I die, I die." Xiao Long spoke in a muffled voice, "Victory and defeat are commonplace in war. Young Hero, please start over again."

Although what he said was correct, Xue Meng was still very angry. He raised the manual, and his anger was evident on every single one of his eyelashes, along with the light blue veins. "This book is a swindler, right? We all did it according to the book, how could there be any mistakes? "

Xiao Long hesitated for a moment, but still pointed his sharp dragon claw at a small line of words behind the cover of the guide:

The guidance provided in this book is derived from the Big Stick Fate Calculating Algorithm, which is unstable and responsible in the event of an accident.

Xue Meng paused for a few seconds before roaring at the sky, "Jiang Xi, f * ck you!"

Master Jiang Xi was one of the agents. Since the Fate Jumper was a full simulation of reality, they also needed to collect data on all sorts of unexpected situations.

The most important thing at the moment was to protect the Mo Ran, bleeding little brain.

Xue Meng and Xiaolong thought of many ways to get the kind-hearted people to notice that in this dark corner, there was a little friend who needed warm care.

They overturned garbage cans to block the pedestrians' path, and cast spells for the wildcats to hold the pedestrians' pants in their jaws. But the only things that came to mind were the curses of passers-by about garbage cans and mental cats. It was late at night, and people were hurrying home, and no one would pay attention to the unremarkable trails.

"Ning, wait here."

Suddenly, a mother and son came around the corner. The mother was young and beautiful, wrapped in a long coat of camel-colored cashmere, and the son had come only to his knees, carrying a white umbrella with a picture of a big-headed cat on it. The wind had picked up, and the child seemed to be a bit scared. He shrunk his fair and delicate face into his cashmere scarf, revealing only a small half of his face.

"Mom is going to take care of some work on the other side. You just stand here and don't run around. I'll be right back. "

The child nodded quietly and obediently, and the fur cap that covered his head slid down over half his eyes.

"Good, good, good! This little brat! Then, cast another spell to get the wild cat to go out and peck at his pants leg! " The little dragon was extremely excited.

Xue Meng did not need to say it a second time. This time, it went even more smoothly than before. The child quickly noticed this place and was led over by the wild cat.

When he looked down in shock at Mo Ran on the ground, he walked forward and called out: "... "Hey, are you okay?" At the same time, the

nearby Xue Meng and Xiao Long (of course, no one else could see them) couldn't help but let out a long sigh.

"Thank God for salvation."

"There is true love in this world."

The two of them wiped the sweat off their foreheads. While Xue Meng watched the boy anxiously run across the street to find his mother, he took out his shitty little guidebook and said, "I'd like to see how the follow-up to Zhao Wu Mi's incident goes."

The guide automatically flipped through several pages, as if it understood his words. Finally, it stopped at one of the pages at the back.

The pages glowed with a golden light, and the scene around them twisted and changed. By the time it was all over, twenty years had passed.

Beside him, little Candle Dragon was yelling at him, "Aoooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo What are you doing? "

"... I was just saying it casually. " Xue Meng was also somewhat stupefied. "I didn't expect that this book would directly send us to twenty years later to read the results."

Little Candle Dragon: "…"

Xue Meng was stupefied. "But if that's the case, it means that the incident that we just managed to create with Zhao Wuji had an impact on the future of Mo Ran. Otherwise, the guidebook wouldn't have brought us here."

The little Candle Dragon furiously puffed up his cheeks for a long time, and finally sighed: "You're right, this should be the change we made in this simulation. "Let's go and see the outcome."

As they walked forward, they discovered that the old road from twenty years ago was still the same. Apart from the surrounding buildings being even more dilapidated, there were no major changes.

However, along the way, every store was painted with a large "Remove" character in red. There was not many people along the way, making the place seem very desolate.

"We're going to flatten it out here next month." Suddenly, Xue Meng heard a slow and gentle male voice coming from the narrow alley to his left. With a smile, he said, "I'm a bit reluctant."

"Me too." The other man's voice was clear and light. "After all, this is a place that we used to come from."

"Haha, more importantly, I met you here."

That light voice laughed. "At that time, your entire body was covered with mud, and you still have the nerve to say it."

The following sounds gradually died down, and in the end, only the wet, lingering sound of kissing and the heavy breathing of the men could be heard from the corner of the room.

"..." Xue Meng and Little Candle Dragon stared dumbfoundedly at the two handsome and tall men that were embracing and kissing on the small path. Even after twenty years, their childish faces could still be vaguely seen.

"So …" The dragon trembled.

"Mo Ran Or..." Xue Meng swallowed his saliva and answered with difficulty.

"Becoming a damn gay!" A man and a dragon said at the same time. They then turned their heads to look at each other and cried out miserably.

"It was all thanks to us!"

The little Candle Dragon was unwilling, and shouted: "The main blame is on you! Who told you to cast a spell for a wild cat to guide the way for this' Wan Ning '! "

Xue Meng did not expect it to shirk its responsibilities and immediately became angry, "Blame me?! It was you who created the torrential rain, causing Inky Flames' eyes to be glued to his head while he was fighting, and only his head was hit by a brick! "

"Blame you! It was you who picked Zhao Wumeng's guide line. Look, what a wise choice you made! "

"Blame you! It was you who did not point out the small words on the back of this guide to me. You are just a selfish, selfish little dragon! "

"Blame you! You are blind! "

"Blame you! "You're too annoying!"

"Blame you! Blame you! Blame you! "

The two staff members of the Bureau of Space and Time were quarreling. Mo Ran and Chu Wanning had walked out from the shadows, their fingers interlocked as they recalled the past twenty years they had known each other and walked through this old street that was about to be demolished …

Looking at their backs, Xue Meng pressed down on Xiao Long's head and hysterically roared, "It's all your fault!"

However, no matter how noisy it was, the mission had to continue.

Since one guide wasn't enough, then he would think of another. There were many girls in the world, and there was always a girl who could introduce Mo Ran to marriage and give birth to a child.

Come on! How could there be only one ending to raising a game!?

The two staff members were filled with rage and ambition. After encouraging themselves, they changed the route of the Destiny Jumper and arrived at another branch of the game.

"It's not that damnable path this time …"

After Xue Meng steadied himself in this world, he looked around.

"We seem to have been sent to the gymnasium of a school …"

Ch. 315 Only Possibility 3

The setting sun spread a caramel glow on the brightly lit windows of the stadium, and the red light outside was like a brocade.

Xue Meng and Xiao Long walked in a circle around the huge building. At this time, there were not many people in the stadium. The training had already ended. Only the incandescent light in the equipment room was still lit.

The man and the dragon looked at each other and walked towards the equipment room.

They saw Mo Ran from junior high school. It was probably because of the fact that he was in the first year of high school, and the poor family didn't provide him with enough nutrition. So naturally, the child was still not as tall as he was. He didn't differ much from the image he saw in the noodle shop,

Inky's small body was wrapped in a sack of school uniform, his dirty black hair hanging down to his cheeks, and his ghostly, unremarkable little head.

The little ghost head, Mo Ran, had his back to them as he sat cross-legged on the ground, tidying up the badminton balls that his classmates had used up.

"Why is he alone?" "The others won't help?"

Xiao Long flipped through the guide, and frowned: "Well, they just played a badminton match with the class this afternoon, and they lost miserably …" The other team members all felt that Inkfire had dragged them down.

"That's why we left him here to organize everyone …"

After he finished reciting, he couldn't help but be speechless. "Wow, this is too tragic, isn't it?"

As a favored son of heaven, Xue Meng had never experienced this kind of feeling as a backer, so he was first at a loss. After a long time, he slowly opened his eyes and finally reacted.

"Holy sh * t!" He said angrily, "What nonsense! You lost the match and you're looking for trouble with a single person? Are these people's heads caught by the door?! "

"I admire your grandeur, Little Xue Meng." "But our current task seems to be to open the main line of the female lead's encounter with the Wookiee Mo Ran?"

"I admire your ruthlessness, quadrupeds." Xue Meng rolled his eyes. He still went closer to Xiaolong to study the strategy for this battle.

On this game node, there were a total of three female characters who could choose to be activated.

"One is Yao Lan, a female senior who is two years older than Mo Ran."

"Then it's almost graduation." The little Candle Dragon shook his head, "No, there's too much instability."

"You're right." Xue Meng narrowed his eyes and looked at the next person, "The second is called Rong Yan, this … F * ck? This is the head of the Education Bureau? "

The little Candle Dragon was stunned. "Mo Ran can actually attack the head of the Education Bureau?"

"She's 36! He was only 13 years old! This isn't f * * king sister-in-law relationship, this is aunt's nephew love! "

Amidst their shouts, a large red cross suddenly appeared on the guide, followed by a row of small, awkward, and shy words:

"Sorry, I made a mistake. This can't be used as a guide."

Little Candle Dragon: "…"

Xue Meng: "So this guide really isn't artificial intelligence, but artificial intelligence?"

The guide shyly and hurriedly wiped away all the words related to Rong Yan. Because he wiped them too quickly, he even accidentally wiped off half of Yao Lan's photo.

"There's only one left." Xue Meng turned the page. "This, Luo Jian."

According to the guide, Luo Jian was the flower that ignited their class. He was favored by the boys, and he had a gentle personality and high moral character. He was never beautiful, but he had a kind heart.

"Alright, alright, alright. Then this is it." "If you keep praising me, I'll be tempted. Perfect wife."

"That's for you." "There are some men with unique tastes who like perverted and hot ladies. They can't even reach 10 cm tall and 1 cm short. Fiery Flames, red lips, small leather whips, sunglasses, and military cap,

they don't even slap each other when they're angry, they only slap each other on the left or right."

Xue Meng evaluated, "You're probably talking about the S (ke) M Club's advanced VIP member."

They didn't know if Mo Ran was such a VIP.

But they happily reached a consensus on the idea that Luo was more likely to win than Yao Lan.

The guide began.

"Try to keep Mo Ran in the equipment room until six o'clock in the evening, when the self-study begins." "And ensure that Mo Ran's image at that time was very miserable."

"What else?"

Xue Meng carefully read the guide three or four times. "No more."

"That's it?" Xiao Long asked in surprise.

"That's it." Xue Meng closed the book.

The dragon looked at the clock on the wall. "It's almost five o'clock. We'll only drag him out for an hour."

The two of them rolled up their sleeves and did as they were told. Stopping them would not be easy. They watched Mo Ran, cast a spell as it finally settled the racquet on the rack, which began to shake and then toppled with an irrational anti-human movement.

The noise was mixed and the ping-pong volleyball fell to the floor.

Mo Ran: "..."

Looking at the little fellow's black eyes that involuntarily widened, the look in them when the dogs were injured. Xue Meng and Little Candle Dragon couldn't help but feel a strong sense of guilt.

However, they still firmly believed that what they did wasn't wrong.

Mo Ran began to hastily rearrange the sports equipment on the floor — his hands and feet were very agile, and it didn't take long for him to almost put all of those items back into their original positions, even though he was tired to the point of perspiration, his moist lips were slightly opened and closed, and he was even panting a little.

But he had to admit that he truly had talent in organizing things.

Xue Meng was stupefied as he watched Liu Ming use his speed to return the last ball back into the ball cup and stuffed it into the corner. The cleaning process only took fifteen minutes.

"..." Xue Meng swallowed his saliva and nudged Xiao Long with his arm. "Come again."

As a result, Mo Ran helplessly watched as the frame seemed to have been hit by evil and fell down a second time.

"..."

Next was the third time, the fourth time …

They watched as Ink Flare's tired, weak figure chased the ball across the field, sweating, his eyes blank and helpless, but still carefully arranged the

ball again and again, checking to see if the four feet of the rack were secure, and carefully putting the equipment back in place.

However, the ball rack still collapsed at the last moment.

In the end, Mo Ran stood blankly in front of the shelf. His eyes were a bit wet and wronged — he probably thought of this as a high class joke set up for him by some classmate to tease him.

He was carrying a basketball, and his small, lonely figure looked miserable and helpless.

Xue Meng's conscience had already been destroyed to the extreme. He could not take it anymore. "We look like villains."

The little Candle Dragon covered his green eyes with his fat dragon claws and shouted, "No! "Only you are a bad guy, I am just a bad dragon." "… …

Five minutes to six.

Mo Ran was panting again. He was four times taller than he was before, so he descended the ladder.

This time he stood hesitantly in front of the rack and waited a dozen seconds.

There was no movement.

He didn't fall.

After about ten seconds, he was finally relieved. With heavy steps, he turned around and was about to leave the equipment room.

However, at a place where he couldn't see, Xue Meng and Xiaolong were already quarreling.

"You do it!"

"NO!" "It was me just now!"

"I've pushed my limits far more than you have!"

"I don't want it! My conscience can't bear it! I feel like I'm bullying my little classmate! "

"Then can I make it?!"

Three minutes to six. Seeing that Mo Ran was about to leave and the mission was about to fail, and that Xue Meng was still able to get out, he clenched his teeth and hardened his heart. He raised his hand and hit the apparatus shelf.

"Rumble ~ ~ ~ ~"

The shelves were full of things, and even the shelves themselves crashed to the ground, raising a cloud of dust under the lights. It was more thorough than ever before.

Whether it was the transparent Xue Meng and Xiao Long, or Little Mo Ran, who shrank back in fear at the entrance, it was good as well.

Everyone was dumbfounded.

"... But it's finally over six o'clock, isn't it? "

Afterwards, Xiaolong spent a long time comforting Xue Meng's broken heart as the shelf collapsed.

"Aiya, that wasn't your intention. Look, the heavens are about to descend upon us …"

Xue Meng was still covering his face with his hands as he squatted beside Mo Ran, who was chewing on his lips and silently adjusting his tools. "Shut up."

The dragon shut up.

However, not long after, Xue Meng heard its noisy voice. "Hey! "Hey, look __"

Xue Meng, "Shut up!"

Xiao Long: "Luo Jiexi is here!"

Xue Meng suddenly raised his head, only to see that under the yellow light of the stadium, Luo Feng's plump and graceful figure appeared in front of the slightly open door. He pushed open the door, revealing a pair of slender white legs beneath the pleated skirt of his school uniform.

Holy. Light. Descend. Rumble!

These were the only four words that came to Xue Meng's mind.

His eyes filled with tears. Great! He no longer had to cover his conscience and push the equipment rack around! Even for this reason, he still wanted to give Luo Jian ten points!

"Mo Ran?" When he spoke, his voice was sweet and gentle, like a summer orange flower.

Xue Meng and Little Candle Dragon looked at each other and wept. They both felt that Mo Ran's gay career was finally saved.

Class Blossom Luo quickly followed the lights to the equipment room. He leaned his head in carefully, and when he saw that Mo Ran was still busy, he couldn't help but open his beautiful eyes.

"Sigh... Why is it so chaotic? "

Mo Ran turned his head and saw that it was her. He sighed and said, "It's all over."

"Teacher told me to call you back for your evening self-study." Luo Lian walked into the equipment room and looked around, "..." Let me help you. We should hurry up and go back together after we're done. "

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment before beads of sweat dripped from his eyelashes into his eyes.

"Thank you," he muttered gratefully.

"What a start." Little Candle Dragon was very touched.

"It's gratifying." Xue Meng sighed with emotion.

The two teenage boys and girls busied themselves helping each other in the dimly lit small room. The pleated skirts fluttered with their footsteps as the boys carried volleyball after volleyball, handing it to the beautiful girl who was standing on the scaffolding and tidying up his equipment.

"Wuwuwu." The little Candle Dragon's eyes filled with tears. "Human love is so cute."

Xue Meng rarely agreed, probably because he had single-handedly facilitated it. "Indeed, you are pure and naive, causing me to be moved."

The two classmates climbed up and down, but Xue Meng was too ruthless in the end. He cleaned up the messy room slower than ever before. Qian Jin had cleaned up the whole room for over an hour, but he still wasn't done.

Thus, it was time for the gymnasium to close.

When the footsteps of the patrolling student on duty, Inspector Zhou, came through the door, Xue Meng and Little Candle Dragon were still immersed in their joy, unable to extricate themselves.

It was only when they turned around that they saw a handsome senior with Zhou Zhang on his back walking in. He was holding a recording board.

Xue Meng, "..."

Little Candle Dragon: "…"

They found their smiles frozen like sunburned dog droppings, and their mouths opened in an O of their own accord.

"This is that …" Xue Meng's throat was dry.

Little Candle Dragon shouted, "It's that Chu Wanning!"

Chu Wanning walked into the workshop that was filled with smoke and miasma. Luckily, he was already so calm at such a young age. When he saw

the house after the tsunami, he could only frown, "What happened?"

Mo Ran turned his head. His eyes were bright and moist from excessive exercise.

Tidying things up with Luo Jian made him feel relaxed and happy, so naturally he smiled brightly at the senior he had never met before, the dimples on his cheeks melting.

"Things have been dumped all over the floor and are being taken care of. Senior, if you want to close the door, you'll have to wait a bit longer. "

Chu Wanning let out a sigh. Xue Meng and Little Candle Dragon shook their heads in unison as they put down the recording board and walked into the small room that originally had only one man and one woman.

Although the senior had a poker face, he was very kind. "Let me help you."

Luo Jian smiled and said, "That would be great. "Thank you senior."

Xiao Long and Xue Meng roared in unison, "Thanks to his head!"

Because Xue Meng's last elbow hit the shelf too hard, the butterfly flapped its wings and its fate was once again changed.

When they had followed the Destiny Jumper to twenty years later and looked at the results, they had tragically discovered that Mo Ran, who had become the president of the university's investment department, was chatting with the current dean of teaching (which was why the guidebook had miscalculated; it had confused Director Rong with Director Chu) in the stadium grandstand.

It was still around six o'clock. The clouds were like the evening in the sea of red maples.

There was no one in the empty gymnasium. They sat in the stands, with only two students of the week mopping the floor. The stadium had long since been expanded and renovated, several times the size of when they were in school. They were on one side and the cleaning student on the other, too far away to be anything but two faceless shadows.

"Where's Luo Jian?" Little Candle Dragon didn't give up and asked while holding onto a strand of hope.

Xue Meng chose to remain silent.

This was because he saw Mr. Mo holding Shizun Chu's hand in an unremarkable manner

Later on, when no one was looking, Mo Ran went over and kissed Chu Wanning's cheek.

Damn.

… …. Again!

This father doesn't believe that there's no hope!

Once again, they used the Jumper to reach a turning point in the game.

"Where is it this time?"

the little Candle Dragon asked impatiently, still unable to stand.

Xue Meng was just as angry and unwilling as it was. He quickly looked around and made an accurate judgement, "It seems to be a bit early, I

think this node has just entered kindergarten. I'm afraid that even the gender awareness hasn't been clearly divided. This is a good opportunity to change the outcome of the game."

"... So where are we? "

Xue Meng raised his hand and pointed to the left three o'clock direction. He accurately read the young, round words on the entrance door. "I'm teasing you to play in the children's theme park."

Little Candle Dragon rubbed his hands together, his entire body seemed to be enveloped in a golden light, his eyes blazing with fire: "Good! The amusement park is where the sweet little girls gather. This time, we must give Mo Ran a perfect guide, and definitely cannot fail! "

However, Xue Meng was not as impulsive as before. In the first two failures, he had managed to gain some experience, so before the construction began, he narrowed his eyes and pondered for a long time before raising his head.

"I'm thinking, should we switch to a different strategy this time?"

"Huh?" The little Candle Dragon's beard rose, "What do you mean?"

Xue Meng said, "Previously, we had all failed on Chu Wanning's appearance. I have a bad feeling. Even though we still triggered the female lead line this time, the branch line of Chu Wanning will still be triggered at some point in time. He seems to have a special affinity with Mo Ran, just like the bug in this game. "

Xiao Long waved his tail unhappily. "How is this fate? It's just like buying a one-off shampoo in a supermarket."

"That's right." Xue Meng said, "Imagine, if we were to painstakingly follow the strategy and attract a pretty girl, but because of certain reasons, Chu Wanning 'coincidentally' passed by once again..."

Xiao Long only thought about it for a second before letting out a heart-wrenching shriek, "Then it's all f * cking over!"

Xue Meng slapped his thigh. "That's right! It's all fuckin 'over! "

"So what do we do?"

As a bookworm who had the courage to discard books and create new games, Xue Meng spoke hesitantly, "So I think, this time we must not only trigger the female lead, but also prevent the descent of this NPC, Chu Wanning!"

The little dragon immediately began to clap his hands in a very polite manner. After a while, it discovered that it was still somewhat confused, so it stretched out its little claws and tried to scratch its head. It was a pity that its claws were too short to scratch its head.

Xue Meng glanced at it and extended his hand in a benevolent manner to help scratch its head.

The soothed little Candle Dragon snorted happily and asked, "Your plan is not bad, but there's a problem. We're not programmers, so we don't know if or when Chu Wanning will appear."

"I've thought about that for a long time." Xue Meng grinned, "This time, we will do nothing and let Mo Ran move freely. We will see under what circumstances he will meet Chu Wanning, if not, it's best if we can't meet

him. If there's any possibility of them meeting each other, we will have to be extremely careful, and try our best to avoid this kind of situation."

The little dragon was probably very comfortable under Xue Meng's massage, or perhaps it was really enjoying this idea, or perhaps it was both.

In the end, it smacked its lips and sincerely praised, "You're right, you're too outstanding."

Thus, the two young friends happily came to a consensus.

They decided to wait and see how they met in the amusement park.

Ch. 316 Only Possibility 4

"Selling ice cream, chocolate ice cream, vanilla flavored ice cream, and various flavors of sand ice, come and take a look ~ ~"

The slightly plump young girl wore the ears of a rabbit in the theme park. He held up the signboard written on the small wooden board, smiling as he went about his business.

He was supposed to be a student who worked during the summer vacation, with a lively aura of green onions dancing between his eyebrows, his face flushed from the sun, and his lips moist and full like the syrupy cherries on a cheesecake, even though there were one or two acne spots on his forehead.

He was still very pretty and cute.

A group of primary school students wearing yellow kindergarten hats surrounded her, chirping like little sparrows.

"Auntie!" A strawberry-flavored ice cream! "

"I came first! I want three! "

"Sister, can I touch your rabbit ears?"

The rabbit girl maintained a bright smile on everyone, but Xue Meng noticed that he gave each of his older sister's children a spoonful of creamy ice cream and gave it to them first. And those who called his Auntie waited for a long time,

The ice cream ball was obviously smaller.

Xue Meng and Little Candle Dragon watched from not far away. Little Candle Dragon subconsciously licked his noble dragon lips, "I also want some ice cream. I want two balls, a cup of tea, and a chocolate bar."

"Don't even think about it, I won't buy it for you." "And this is a game. They can't see us, and we can't eat the ice cream here, understand?"

Xiao Long rolled his eyes, trying his best to maintain the dragon's might in front of the ice cream. "I was just saying it."

Xue Meng ignored it. While searching and observing in the crowd, he said, "Looks like it's a spring vacation organized by a kindergarten. Find out where the ink is burning. "

They found it quickly.

Mo Ran's family was not in a good situation, and he didn't care about his looks when he was young, so he didn't have any good companions. Of course he wouldn't be crowding around the ice cream truck like the other children in the kindergarten, spending enough money for a week's worth of cheap breakfast to buy the clump of frozen cream that would soon melt.

Sitting alone in the shade of a tree, he stared unblinkingly at his classmates. He subconsciously licked his lips in anticipation and bit down on them.

His movements were exactly the same as the little Candle Dragon who wanted to eat ice cream.

"... "Pfft." Xue Meng couldn't help but laugh.

The little Candle Dragon felt his face turn red, and he said angrily: "What are you laughing at? You are not allowed to laugh! "

Mo Ran had no ice cream, no friends, and very few snacks in his bag.

He sat alone under the big tree, and at noon he ate a piece of dry bread, and then he dumped the crumbs on the ground by the roots and watched the ants line up and share his pitiful food.

"Don't be hasty, don't be hasty. Everyone has a share." He murmured under his breath and held his knees as he looked intently at the ants. He must have been so bored that he even gave them names.

"Liang Zhaowei, if you move this piece too far, you won't be able to move it. Would you like a smaller one? "

"Guo Degang, you should be modest. That piece of bread was obviously chosen by Lin Zhiying first. You can't bully the weak with your strength …"
"Oh, that's not right. Actually, the two of you are the same age …"

The excitement around him didn't have much to do with him. Xue Meng and Xiao Long, the two transparent fellows, were sitting on his left and right sides. However, they gave off the feeling that there were not just two invisible creatures under the tree, but three.

Whether it was the other children, or the teachers, it was as if he did not exist. But what was rare was that Mo Ran did not feel depressed or gloomy because of this. Instead, he and his ant friend had a good time together.

When Mo Ran went to kindergarten, he was obviously addicted to the "Still Pig Geiger", a melodramatic love court drama about how you're crazy and stupid. He muttered:

"Little Swallow, you don't have to fight with your sisters for food. I have bread. "

"Sigh, Ziwei, you've taken the wrong path … The Ant Hole is here... "

It was probably because his attentive look had aroused the curiosity of others that the fattiest little fatty in the kindergarten walked towards him aggressively while shaking the two lumps of soft flesh on his cheek.

Hearing that Mo Ran was instructing the "Purple Wei" on how to walk, the little fatty widened his eyes. "What are you doing?" Who are you talking to? "

Mo Ran hurriedly stopped him. "Don't go any further. You're about to step onto my Forbidden City."

Little Fatso: "?"

Mo Ran pointed at the ants and introduced them to the little fatty with a smile, "Look, this is Liang Zhaowei, this is Guo Degang, this is Lin Zhiying, this is Su You Bo, and that one with the bulging nostrils, that's Er Kang …"

Little Fatso said worriedly, "... Have you got a fever? Ants have no nostrils. "

"No, I'm fine." Mo Ran said patiently, "The ants have nostrils, you can see them just by looking at them. Also, look at that red one, it's only Lin Xingru. "

Little Fatso said in a trembling voice, "... "Then who are you?"

Mo Ran seriously thought for a moment, then firmly said, "I am Huang Ama."

Xue Meng and Little Candle Dragon were laughing hard at the side. Xue Meng hooked his transparent arm around the little guy, so happy that tears were almost flowing out of his eyes, "I'm really going to fall in love with this

treasure. After I finish my work, I will definitely go to the real world to find Mo Ran and kowtow to him! Hahahaha!"

Little Candle Dragon was also laughing so hard that he started to stutter. "Then you're the prince! You're the emperor's sworn brother! Hahahaha!"

Unfortunately, the little fatty could not feel the interest in Ink Flames at all. He treated Ink Flames like a lunatic, and after glancing at him in horror, he turned around and ran away, like a beefy tank that weighed less than one meter but weighed almost eighty pounds. As he ran, he tripped over a stone.

After a while, Mo Ran suddenly had the idea of building a park for the ants.

Xue Meng sat to the side and watched the little guy use the branches as a bridge and the leaves as a parasol. He even used the rocks to build a small defensive fence. However, he still felt that he was lacking in beauty. He dug a small hole that was neither too deep nor too shallow, then patted his gray hands together before turning around and walking towards the stream in the depths of the forest.

"What's he going to do?" the little Candle Dragon asked as he studied the Ant Park that was being built by Mo Ran.

Xue Meng stared at the hole. "I think he might be trying to create an artificial lake for the ants."

"... Didn't he know that water would seep into the ground?

This time, it was Xue Meng's turn to roll his eyes. "Big Brother, he's only in kindergarten. He can't have more than six years old."

As the dragon and the human muttered, Xue Meng suddenly caught a glimpse of a child walking on a small stone path nearby. He was startled at first, but then his face turned pale with fright. He used his elbow and hit the little Candle Dragon frantically: "Quick! Look at the time! "What time and how many seconds is it now?"

The little Candle Dragon was knocked down, baring his teeth in anger: "What are you doing?! If you have something to say, then say it, don't touch them! "

"Quick, quick, quick!" But Xue Meng's expression was the same as if he had run into a ghost, "Hurry and time it!" The boss is here! "

"Bo …" "What do you mean 'bo' …" Before the little Candle Dragon could say "ss", he suddenly choked when he followed Xue Meng's line of sight, "Ah!" "Oh my god!"

They frantically began to search themselves for watches or other timekeeping tools.

The little Candle Dragon cried out, "Chu Wanning is really in this park?!"

"Didn't you say they were buying one-one-one-one shampoo? What's so strange about that! " Unable to find his watch or cell phone, Xue Meng was in a frenzy.

"I take it back!" Little Candle Dragon shouted: "They are not buying a one-to-one shampoo. That thing can still be taken apart when we get home! They are Oreo's sandwich and biscuit slices!"

No matter what they were, when Chu Wanning passed by the trees, he was attracted by the tree branches, rocks, dead leaves, and the unfinished pit.

He stared blankly for a moment, then slowly walked to the empty tree. The shadow of the tree gently fell on his fair skin. He lowered his head and silently looked at the "Ant Park", then raised his head and looked left and right.

There was no one around. It seemed like a deserted project.

Chu Wanning hesitated for a moment, then in a delicate white shirt and light blue suspenders, he stepped into the dirty pit with soft Italian leather shoes, under the silent protest of Xue Meng and the little Candle Dragon, he started to play with the "architectural ruins" left behind by Mo Ran.

"... "We're finished." Xue Meng said.

"It's all f * cking over." said the little Candle Dragon.

"Chu Wanning's main line is about to be triggered again." The two of them spoke in unison.

Sure enough, when Mo Ran returned with a bottle of stream water in a plastic bottle, he was surprised to find that an unexpected guest had appeared next to his "park."

"Don't move!"

Chu Wanning was startled when he was a child. He stood up and stared with his feline eyes at the dirty child running towards her.

"... "I'm not..." Chu Wanning was holding onto a branch with one hand. He felt a little awkward. He looked down at the park, then looked up at the child, "I just..."

The dirty child anxiously and nervously stood in front of his Ant Park. "This is not a violation of the rules …"

Chu Wanning: "..."

The dirty child then said, "I can't tear it apart."

Chu Wanning: "... I don't intend to tear it apart either. "

"?"

"I think it's pretty good." Chu Wanning asked tentatively, "Can I play with you?"

Thus, the two children somehow ended up playing together.

Both of them thought it was a good idea to rebuild the wall made of stone by Mo Ran. Thus, they looked for suitable branches in the pile of fallen leaves, and Mo Ran was responsible for cutting them into the soft soil at the same distance.

Together they rebuilt the walls, placed plastic bags in the dug holes, and poured water into the streams to create artificial lakes.

Chu Wanning picked up a few pieces of Begonia petals from somewhere and sprinkled them on the surface of the "lake". They even placed two ants on the petals to let them experience the faint fragrance of the boat.

When Mo Ran was being used, it was quite powerful. The mud that was brought out splashed on Chu Wanning's expensive clothes. Chu Wanning did not mind at all. He shared a common interest and beauty with this dirty child they had just met. They were having fun, ignoring the clothes, the mud on his hands and the sweat on his face.

There were only two pairs of eyes as bright as stars. There were also two pairs of small hands making a dreamlike Ant Paradise.

The sun was setting.

The children in the kindergarten had to return to their own teams, but Chu Wanning and his father had come together, so there was still plenty of time.

"Help me finish the tower." Mo Ran reluctantly told his little friend before he got on the bus.

Chu Wanning's expressionless face broke into a smile, "Okay." When I finish, I'll ask my dad to come over and take pictures. "

"Next time, show it to me when you have the chance."

"Hmm, I'll show it to you next time I get a chance."

Mo Ran was stunned for a moment. Then, as if he had suddenly thought of something, he turned pale and said, "Ah! We've been playing for so long, but I still haven't asked you for your name! "

Chu Wanning was also stunned for a moment, and then his face brightened up, his expression became even brighter, "It's really … "I forgot about it too..."

Mo Ran laughed heartily. "I keep having the feeling that we've known each other for a long time."

Chu Wanning pursed his lips but did not say anything. However, his eyes were full of smiles.

"My name is Inkfish. I work in the Drunken Fish kindergarten." Mo Ran thought for a moment and imitated the TV show. He stretched out his muddy hands like a small adult, but quickly retracted them and wiped them on his clothes. Then, he passed his hands to Chu Wanning, "It's a pleasure to meet you."

Chu Wanning didn't turn his back or hesitate. He held onto his partner's muddy paws, which could not be wiped clean even if he used them. His black hair fluttered in the wind, "It's a pleasure to meet you. "My name is Chu Wanning."

"... "I suddenly felt it." At the side, little Candle Dragon silently ridiculed, "... They're doing fine. "

"... "Don't say it." Xue Meng's head was aching. "I think I've been moved …"

The little Candle Dragon anxiously shouted, "We can't be moved, we can't be brainwashed! We have to contribute to genetic engineering! "

"You're right!" Xue Meng looked like he just woke up from a dream and said sternly, "I've recorded the approximate time and route of Chu Wanning's appearance. Please reopen this round's strategy. If we are prepared, we will definitely be able to prevent him from triggering his main line!"

Ch. 317 Only Possibility 5

The plan this time was a success.

Xue Meng used facts to prove that there was no such thing as an indestructible Cp. There were only players who didn't try hard to break it. In this game called "Mo Ran Is Not gay," which he had secretly dubbed himself,

Player Xue Meng fully displayed his intelligence and successfully separated the two men.

He and Xiaolong looked through the guide, chose the female lead, made plans, and split up. One man and one dragon moved separately, one person kept a close eye on Little Mo Ran in the northern part of the park, and one dragon kept a close eye on Little Chu in the southern part of the park.

When Mo Ran got on the school bus and left, he did not even see Chu Wanning's sleeves.

It was exciting.

"We did it!"

"We let Mo Ran establish a friendship with a girl!"

"They will soon be best friends!"

"When puberty comes, they will secretly be together behind their parents' backs!"

"After school, I'm wearing my school uniform and secretly dating!"

"They would hide a box of sweet and greasy chocolates in each other's school bag!"

"He would carry his on his back in the torrential downpour so that his pink leather shoes wouldn't get wet!"

Xue Meng raised his head and laughed loudly. "Pink leather shoes are a bit exaggerated." He paused for a moment, then continued with sparkling eyes, "But it's a good idea to carry your girlfriend home in the torrential rain …" Mo Ran from high school was around a meter or so long? "

The little Candle Dragon flipped through the guide, "From 1.86 to 1.89, look at his luck. In short, he'll be at this range."

"Tsk, that really is …" Xue Meng revealed a subtle expression, as if he was somewhat envious, but at the same time trying his best to keep it taut. This caused his expression to become as painful as if he was suffering from a toothache. He pursed his lips, not intending to continue this unpleasant topic.

He did not want the little Candle Dragon to notice that he was still wearing the inner garment.

"Anyway, their love affair will go smoothly." Xue Meng concluded, even somewhat paranoid, "It must go smoothly. "Otherwise, I won't be able to compare myself to Jiang Xi."

In order to ensure that Mo Ran and the girl's emotions were stable and undisturbed, Xue Meng and the others prepared to continue observing for a while — of course, in this game, the speed of time could be adjusted. They only needed to state the date in the guide.

"We want to see the first date between Mo Ran and the girl." Little Candle Dragon said.

Xue Meng also added, "Alone, there aren't any third parties. Although their age can't be called dating, with your intelligence, you should be able to understand what we mean."

It was as if he had forgotten who had called this guide an "artificial mental retardation."

"Just playing together, doing homework together, doing other things together, playing house, etc." He thought about it, then added, "Anything like that."

For the sake of what was known as the shame of artificial mental retardation, the guide accurately set aside the time for a week and three days.

It was one night, they were downstairs in a neighborhood, and from the warm yellow light coming from the windows of many homes, the housewives in the kitchens, the shouts of small children and the faint voice of the anchorman in the newsreel, they could tell it was about seven o'clock.

Xue Meng and Little Candle Dragon waited for a while, but Mo Ran appeared.

Just as he had expected, he was carrying a small bag on his back and carrying a lunch box with the words' pirated cartoon of Vi Nibear 'on it. Vi Nii's nose was frayed, which made the originally unsightly pirated bear look even more hideous and ridiculous.

However, all the malevolence and ridicule could be covered by the girl beside him who was happily chattering away.

"My family lives on the second floor. My father went on a business trip, but my mother is home. Don't be afraid, she's a good person." "Yesterday I told his that you were coming to play, and he told me that tonight he will have fried egg yolks and chicken wings, as well as the cheesecake cake with cheese that is sold in the pastry shop at the entrance. Do you like cheesecake? "

"I …" As Mo Ran mumbled, Xue Meng noticed that his old tennis shoes had already taken off their glue. "I've never eaten this kind of thing before."

The girl didn't laugh at him. He was just stunned for a moment before he laughed heartily, "You will like it. If you don't like it, then give it all to me. But don't tell my mom. She's worried that I'll become a fatty if I eat it like this."

Under the street lamp, Mo Ran lowered his head and kicked at the small stones and dirt by the roadside with his degummed sneakers. He was truly courting death by doing so. His originally pitiful looking sneakers became even more unsightly.

"You can't eat fat." After a while, Little Ink finally let out a muffled grunt.

"What did you say?" The girl didn't hear clearly.

"... I said you can't eat fat. " Even though the light was dim, Xue Meng still noticed that the little guy's face seemed to be a little red. "If you like it, I'll give you the cake in secret."

He bit his lip and turned his face away awkwardly, so that even the dull little candlestick noticed that his ears were red. "I won't tell your mother."

The little Candle Dragon jumped up and down around the two of them, screaming, "Ah! I love this little girl so much! "

"I love his too." Xue Meng laughed, "Like I said, there are so many sweet and good girls in this world, how can there be a gay man made of steel. "Look, at this rate, we should be able to complete the mission very soon."

"I can't wait to go to their wedding — no, to see their children." The little Candle Dragon looked like his blood was boiling. Sometimes, it was as if he would fly into the sky and sometimes sink into the earth.

"What does it matter if I'm single or not?" "As long as my CPS can get married, what does it matter if I'm single for a hundred years?"

They followed Mo Ran and the little girl upstairs.

They watched the two kids eat dinner together, share a piece of after-dinner cream cake, watch TV together, and do their homework together.

Ah, what a pleasant Bamboo Horse friendship.

I can't f * cking fall in love, my girlfriend has to be nurtured from the era of the red scarf, otherwise when I graduate from university and don't even have a girl to chat with in my contact list, will I have to go to gay?

At eight-thirty, a man and a dragon bid farewell to the girl and the girl's mother with satisfaction, and Little Inky walked briskly to catch the last bus. The two of them followed, beaming with joy.

After that, he came to the girl's house a few more times, but too often, for fear of leaving a bad impression on his parents, so on those occasions he went around to the back of the building and used a few of the less pointed pebbles to knock lightly on the window of the girl's bedroom.

"The restless youth has been brought forward." Xue Meng crossed his arms and commented, but his expression was very excited.

"I feel like this guide is foolproof."

However, a little Candle Dragon shouldn't be called a little Candle Dragon. The Black Crow's beak was probably a more suitable name for it.

Just as it said the word "absolutely", the force in Mo Ran's hand shifted. The stone did not hit the girl's window, but slammed the glass door of the neighboring room.

The two staff members of the Cultivation Bureau who had not realized that their fate was about to change were still feeling complacent. "Mo Ran is really an active and enthusiastic child."

"And romantic."

"In the future, they will become boyfriend and girlfriend. This is a very good memory."

Suddenly, the sound of a fan opening and closing came from the window next door. Then, a voice that clearly carried impatience and sleepiness rang out, as if nitrogen had instantly frozen the water, and with a splash, it splashed onto Xue Meng's little Candle Dragon.

"Don't you think it's too late for a prank?"

It was even a familiar formula … No, it was a familiar voice. It was still a familiar tone.

Xue Meng and Little Candle Dragon looked as if they had met a ghost. They swallowed their saliva and then shakily turned their heads to look …

"AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

"AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!"

Each scream sounded more tragic than the previous one, as though the death knell had rung for the end of the world.

They both looked at each other and wailed, "What the f * ck?! "Why is Chu Wanning living next door to that lady?"

He wasn't willing to accept this.

How could he be willing! How could he allow fate to fearlessly extend its Demon Claw to slap them! How can you let the motherland's trumpet flower become a gay, gay, angry dahlia!

"At least this time, they didn't meet happily." Xue Meng tried to point out the crux of the matter, even though he was not confident.

"Yes." The little Candle Dragon also tried to unearth various possibilities of the development of the situation. "This kind of unpleasant meeting for the first time should also lead to the fact that they wouldn't be able to get along amicably."

"I feel like we can save him this time."

"I think so too. Let's at least look at the situation for a year before deciding."

Once again, they came to a consensus. Using the guide, they arrived at a certain night a year later.

It was still this district, and it was still night time.

Even the position where Mo Ran was standing did not change. He was still standing under the street lamp, which was not very bright and was occasionally flickering due to the unstable voltage.

Even Mo Ran was using small pebbles to lightly smash against the window that had a glassy sheen in the moonlight.

… …. However, he did not smash the window of the girl, but the window of the bedroom next to Chu Wanning's.

"... Tell me it's a coincidence. " "Tell me that his hands were only trembling, and that he did not manage to land steadily, and that he missed again."

Xue Meng was still rather rational. He did not say anything, and his face was ashen.

One smash was an accident, ten smash errors was true love.

No one would make a mistake ten times in a row, so Mo Ran knocked on Chu Wanning's window. The person he wanted to meet was his little brother, Chu Wanning.

What a f * cking ghost!

The window opened and the summer night breeze carried the fragrance of the magnolia orchids into the room. Chu Wanning was wearing a white child's fur pajamas, but despite his impatience and sleepiness, he still moved a stool over and stood on tiptoe to look down.

"Why are you here again?" Chu Wanning leaned against the window and yawned. His voice was not soft, as he lazily said to Mo Ran, "Didn't we just finish playing together this afternoon?"

Ink Flames remained silent under the street lamp, smiling and waving at him. He folded up several paper planes and flew towards him. Finally, one of them flew into his room.

Chu Wanning opened the paper airplane. There was a crayon drawing on top of it, with a white cat and a little dog on top. There was also a line of words written in milky yellow color.

I forgot to say good night.

I wish you a good dream. We'll go to the swimming pool tomorrow and play.

Call our good friend Ling'er, if he means "you" (I haven't learned how to write that word).

ink combustion

"So." The little Candle Dragon almost twitched, "In the end, he and Chu Wanning became 'us', and that cute girl next door became 'us' friends."

Xue Meng was silent for a moment.

He actually wanted to find some polite and reserved sentences in the corners of his brain to express his disappointment. Even Tang Shi Song's lyrics and song, the opera from Europe, was enough to give him goosebumps.

But no.

He finally managed to squeeze out the curse that had been burning his blood.

"Damned motherf * cker, fuck you, second uncle."

"... "You should change your words one last time."

"Never mind my words! "I'm so angry right now!"

"No." "I just wanted to remind you that if you're going to fuck his two lords, then you're a gay too."

"..."

"Grandfather-grandson relationship."

Ch. 318 Only Possibility 6

After trying to change many different branches of fate, Xue Meng and Little Candle Dragon finally realized one thing:

Even though Mo Ran might not be gay, but in his long life, he would definitely meet a person called Chu Wanning and fall in love with him.

"So, rather than wasting our time to introduce his to Mo Fen, it would be better to just kill Chu Wanning." The little Candle Dragon gave a satisfactory summary of the mission.

"Or we could just change Chu Wanning's personality." Xue Meng added.

"Or Mo Ran."

"No matter how much this game is played or how many female characters you can choose, Mo Ran will still end up with Chu Wanning in the end."

Facing the chorus of these two cultivators, Chief Jiang Xi's face was somewhat gloomy. He had one hand on the side of his face,

He flipped through the thick stack of task reports in front of him. It listed all the female lead's strategy, and without exception, all of them ended up married to Chu Wanning.

"I used to think it was a romantic game." Xue Meng's expression was not any better than Jiang Xi's, "I didn't expect this to be an early and boring RPG single-outcome game. Bureau Chief Jiang, have you ever played the Immortal Sword Sect's Legend? Year 98 … or in the year 01, I don't remember,

In short, even that computer game of the last century will have Lin Yueru's hidden ending. "

As he spoke, he bit his lower lip in frustration, "I feel that the life of Mo Ran is inferior to the life of Immortal Sword 1 from 98 years ago. He didn't even have a hidden ending. "

The young man crossed his arms in front of Bureau Chief Jiang's desk, complaining nonstop. Bureau Chief Jiang, on the other hand, didn't say anything.

"Actually, it doesn't have to be limited to the life of Mo Ran." Finally, Jiang Xi raised his thin eyelids. "Have you tried his other reincarnation threads?"

"Why haven't I tried it?" "The line of the Republic. Future lines … He tried everything that he could. Turn a few pages back. "

As expected, the latter half of the report still had the main strategy attached to the other paths of Samsara.

"The Republic Line is the most despairing." "We imitated a time back in the Republic of China. Mo Ran was the Young Master of a big family, so when he was young, his father had arranged for him to marry a young lady from the same village. He was only waiting for his to marry him once he was old enough."

Jiang Xi said, "Oh?" Isn't that good? "

Little Candle Dragon didn't know whether to laugh or cry: "What's good? Before the girl could grow up, Mo Ran ran away from home to join the National People's Party and announced that he wanted to be free and not arrange a marriage. "

"... "And then?"

"And then there was the war, the war against the pirates and the civil war. During the Civil War he was sent as a spy against his family. " Xue Meng let out a sigh. After finishing his sentence, he helped Jiang Xi turn the thick task book to the front page of the Republic of China line. "Look here, look at this photo. This brat dressed in a sheepskin cloth, looking very decent. He did not even reveal a little bit of the warlord's tail. Right? So everything was fine. "

Jiang Xi had almost known what would happen in the future. He was not the least bit surprised and asked lightly, "So, how did Chu Wanning appear this time?"

"Don't mention it." Xue Meng waved his hand in annoyance, "He is the company commander of the company that Mo Ran is working undercover. Once, in an ambush, Mo Ran had been shot, and he was bleeding profusely. It was Company Leader Chu who carried this National Party spy back to the safety of the trenches from the mountains of corpses and the seas of blood. "

"..."

The little Candle Dragon continued, "In order to save this guy, Chu Wanning almost lost his life."

Jiang Xi sighed, "After Mo Ran woke up, he betrayed the National Committee and became a spy. He was now on Chu Wanning's side."

He did not even use any words of doubt. It was as if he had clearly seen the transformation of the burning ink through the years and the smoke, the skin and the brain.

"Right." Xue Meng rolled his eyes. "They fell in love again. They turned down the good women who had been so enthusiastic about the organization. They had fought side by side, lying in a trench and looking at the stars with guns. After liberation, they lived in a compound and became two 'bachelors' who had bewitched thousands of young girls. These two 'bachelors' would pack dumplings together, ride the Phoenix bike together on excursions, go to the Shadow Tower together to take colourful photos, and go to a department store together to say that a bag of malt candy was in a brown envelope for eating. "

One after another, the sweet and trivial old stories were narrated in rapid succession by Xue Meng. Even though he spoke so quickly and the past flashed past his eyes like a meteor, Jiang Xi was still easily able to imagine those scenes.

Pale green smoke, dirty and damaged military uniform.

In the trenches of blood and mud, two young men lay together for the night. Their black eyes were winged lashes, which shone with the starlight of the wilderness. Far away, soldiers were playing harmonica, which drifted around them and died in the mist of the twilight.

Tonight, there was no war, only a little smoke in the fog telling of the turmoil of time.

There were also two youths with dark green stubble on their jaws that had not been shaved off in time.

"Later on, they were seventy or eighty." Xue Meng said dryly. After the sour smell of their relationship, his speech slowed down, "Later on, even the

calamity that began in six or six years was unable to separate the two stubborn old fellows."

He finished.

The sour smell of love permeates to the dead, in fact, death can not turn it over.

Jiang Xi didn't speak for a long time. Finally, he stopped reading the report. He closed the report and felt a headache coming on. He raised his hand and pressed his sunspot.

It was said that couples were like birds in the forest, each flying in their own direction in the face of a great calamity.

Jiang Xi didn't know how much of a possibility it would be if he forced Mo Ran to give up the job as a girl.

Or maybe Inkburn wasn't a gay?

Perhaps it was only in his life and in his fate, he could never miss a person called Chu Wanning. That was all.

After work, the people from the Cultivation Bureau left the office building one after another on the background music of "Home", which was played by the former Chief of the Nangong family.

Some of them lived in the cultivation world for a long time, so they could ride their swords home without worry. Others were used to blending in with the mortal world and living together with the people who no longer

believed in ghosts and immortals. These people had to hide their extraordinary abilities.

"I don't think there's any end to this." Jiang Xi stood in front of the French windows with his back to Xue Meng and Little Candle Dragon, watching the traffic below.

Finally he said, "Never mind."

Xue Meng couldn't comprehend it for a while, so he asked, "Hm?" He made a sound.

Jiang Xi crossed his arms and turned his head to look at him. "I mean, your mission is over."

No matter how he looked at it, there was only one conclusion to the game.

Before the cultivation world had developed a new method, there was no need to test it again and again.

"Let's go home."

This was Xue Meng's first mission failure.

Although he knew that it wasn't his fault, he still felt somewhat uneasy upon hearing Jiang Xi's words.

He subconsciously ground the carpet with the toe of his shoe. After a moment's hesitation, he said, "I still have a problem."

At this moment, Jiang Xi had already turned around. He leaned against the spotless window and raised his eyelashes slightly. "Go ahead."

Xue Meng took a deep breath. "When I saw him in the simulator, I thought he should be around my age."

"So?"

"... So why don't we just find him and ask him if he's willing to cooperate? "

Jiang Xi went silent for a moment, and then sneered, "Gene experiments are very dangerous." In this world, do you think that it is the same as the world you studied in history, the still chaotic and ignorant world of cultivators? We're not going to do this sort of thing with any free man. "

"..."

"Even if that person is the Sphenoid Beauty Seat." Jiang Xi said, "Child, wake up. The era of cannibalism is long gone. "

Under the cold and white light of the bureau chief's office, Xue Meng's face seemed somewhat red.

He muttered, ". I didn't mean that... I just. "I just don't know …"

Jiang Xi started to pack up the documents. During the process, the new director looked up at him again, "I know you don't mean that. But I have to remind you, no matter who your dad is — kid, no matter how good you've been at school, no matter how many scholarships you've taken, no matter if you have a baby trophy that your mom wiped shiny in the bookcase for display. "

Xue Meng's face became redder and redder. Previously, he was embarrassed, but now he was angry.

"I don't care how well you did with Chief Nangong, how many seals you sealed, and how many works you reviewed."

Jiang Xi ignored his anger. He locked the file in a drawer, lifted his slender fingers, and adjusted his dark green silk tie. "You still have a lot to learn from me," he concluded.

After the domineering bureau chief finished speaking, he moved his long legs and lightly brushed past Xue Meng.

Xue Meng trembled with anger and finally couldn't hold back and exploded, "Jiang Xi!"

Jiang Xi only stopped in front of the office door for a moment before he turned around and pursed his lips at the young man. "Remember to turn off the lights."

"..."

It was now around 7 PM.

The last light in the Bureau of Cultivation building went out.

There was no war and no huge project to be worked on. No one would work overtime. People have their own place to go back to.

To meet a friend, to date a lover. His wife and husband were curled up on the sofa, eating popcorn and watching the flickering blue light on the TV screen. The tall young man wrapped his apron around himself and helped his parents prepare dinner.

They all had places to go.

Although Jiang Xi was a bastard, he was right. Although no world was perfect and no era was spotlessly clean, but they were living in a world where everything was much better than before. It had been far, far too long since the turbulent years of order being overturned and rebuilt.

Many stories and names had faded and disappeared in the long river. It was so long that countless souls emerged in the air, experiencing the cycle of life and death over and over again.

Long enough that you were no longer the you of the past, and I was no longer the me of the past.

But we were still together.

Fanghua will grow old, flesh and bone will rot, life will lose to time. However, those who entangle themselves with their souls will always be given new flesh and blood by time. Those persistence that have not been diluted by the cycle of reincarnation, will always in the endless floating life, get the hug of the lover again and again.

Life after life.

Xue Meng bid farewell to Little Candle Dragon and walked out of the building.

The sky was gray with thick leaden clouds. He saw tiny snowflakes drifting down from the night sky, scattering onto this golden and dazzling world

Without his umbrella, he turned up his collar and hurried to the nearest station, the white mist drifting with his breath by his nose and mouth.

Beside him, in this city shrouded in the sky, in this world, there were countless fates intertwined — —

The old man from Shizun Li's raw frying shop was calculating the income of the day, this old man was doing good business, and getting more and more attention. He smiled as he counted the money, intending to buy the book he had liked for a long time from the bookstore on the day of rest.

His daughter was only a few hours away from his twenty-sixth birthday, having just graduated from the University of Agricultural and Forestry, and was taking a taxi downtown to spend his twenty-sixth birthday in a nightclub — he didn't know that at the party his best friend was giving her, he would meet his big brother, whom he had known for so many years, and he didn't know that he was going to have the love he was meant to have.

The casino was brightly lit. Lady Sun, who wore bright colored fingernails, giggled as he watched the guests spend a fortune on her. It was really good to have money.

The girl surnamed Ye and his fiancé were sitting in the wedding shop. They had been seriously arguing for half an hour about the position of a pearl on the dress, as if the most deadly thing in the world was this pearl. As long as this pearl was completed, all the headache-inducing problems would be easily solved. What a wretched couple, the pearl on the wedding dress was their only worry.

Shouldn't they be looking at the other two people three blocks away?

They were not an illusion from the simulator, a game, or Xue Meng's quest.

But it was obvious, and without any suspense, that they would still be together for the rest of their lives.

But at this very moment, they were quarrelling over some trivial matter. The cause of the incident was that Mo Ran wanted to go to the cinema to see a romantic movie starring Xun Feng as a popular movie star, but Chu would rather choose an action movie starring Zhen Zhenming.

"Can't you watch some hot-blooded male movies?" At that time, Chu Wanning had narrowed his eyes and stared dangerously at his handsome boyfriend who was half a head taller than her, but his momentum hadn't lost out at all.

If it weren't for his long eyelashes that looked like the stamen of a flower under the street lamp, he would look even more ferocious.

"Every time you enter a movie, you either choose a funny movie or a love movie. Listen to this name." Chu Wanning gritted his teeth and said, "Erha and his Shizun White Cat — are you a retard? This is an animated cartoon right? Could the poster also have printed 'This film is suitable for preschoolers'? "

Mo Ran looked pitifully at his angry lover. He wanted to defend the similarly pitiful < Erha and his Shizun White Cat > several times, but he could only helplessly swallow his anger back down.

"I can't stand your theatrical aesthetic any longer."

"..."

"I told you the last time, 'Baby Tianyun's Battling Voldemort' and 'Captain America's Battling Parabala's Little Demoness' have already crossed my bottom line. I'll never, never, never accompany you to a movie theater to see that kind of crap again. " Chu Wanning seemed to have held it in for a long time, his thin lips opened and closed in anger, "I'm a police officer, I'm

burning ink." His words were illogical. I can't lose my IQ with you, even if I'm out of uniform and still a cop. What are you looking at me like that for? "

"..."

"Do you think that if you look at me like this, I will accompany you to watch < Erha and his Shizun White Cat >? Please, you're in your twenties, go to the counter and tell the waitress, "Please give me two tickets to < Erha and his Shizun White Cat >, don't you think it's embarrassing?"

Inky's black eyes looked at him and suddenly felt wronged.

"My colleague told me that this isn't an animated movie. Although I'm not sure if it's good or not, I can guarantee that this is really a serious love movie …"

Chu Wanning finally exploded in anger, "No proper movie would give such a silly name!"

"..."

After saying that, Chu Wanning walked forward angrily. After taking two steps, he saw that Mo Ran was not following him and was still glaring at him. He choked on his anger and repeated, "No!"

Mo Ran bit his lip, still staring at him without saying a word.

And so, the conflict between the two happened. If this scene was witnessed by the cultivation director, Jiang Xi, he would definitely sigh with emotion. How stupid and hopeless are these idiots trapped in love. Why do you have to watch a movie with two people? You'll each buy your own

tickets and go to a different screening hall. Are you girls who need to go to the toilet hand in hand during class break?

Jiang Xi would definitely think so. After all, he was a great, cold, witty and intelligent Commissioner.

At this moment, Chu Wanning was walking along the road in a cool manner, both his hands in the pockets of his black fur coat. No matter how many times his boyfriend tried to hold his hand, he just ignored him.

"Later in the night..."

"..."

"Alright, don't leave so quickly. Let's continue discussing …"

"..."

"I promise you, it won't be any worse than 'The Celestial Baby Battles Voldemort'." "And I don't think that 'The Telltale Baby Battles Voldemort' is as ugly as you make it out to be. "Next year, I'll still want to watch the same series of 'Beautiful Girl Haig'..."

Unfortunately, the last sentence was heard by Chu Wanning. He was shocked to the point of turning his head to look at him in panic, "What did you say? Say it again. "Forget it." He shook his head and tried to wave away the nightmarish title he had just heard, his Adam's apple bobbing in his throat. "Don't repeat it, I pretended not to hear it."

"... "Oh." Mo Ran continued to feel wronged.

Chu Wanning continued to walk forward with large strides, his trench coat swayed in the wind. He couldn't speak, really. Every time he thought he

had a deep understanding of Mo Ran's terrible opera aesthetics, Mo Ran would refresh his bottom line with an even worse piece.

Mo Ran had been following behind him the entire time, walking at a distance of one step.

They walked on for a while, and finally, Mo Ran mustered up his courage to try persuading Chu Wanning, "Why don't we... Why don't we decide what to look at? You can draw lots. Or shake the dice... "

His voice became softer and softer as he stopped in his tracks. He seemed to have noticed something from the corner of his eyes.

An idea came to him.

"..."

"Hey, Chu Wanning!"

Finally, Chu Wanning's tall and handsome boyfriend stopped by the side of the road. Under the dim light of the street lamp, he raised his hand and pointed to the right side where there was a stall selling sweet potatoes.

"Hello, Chu Wanning." he repeated.

"..." Chu Wanning ignored him.

"Officer Chu." He bit his lip, a smile in his eyes.

He understood Chu Wanning, and he knew what Chu Wanning liked to eat, and what he would like to hear from others.

They had known each other for too long.

Chu Wanning turned around, but he didn't turn around. Instead, he turned his face to the side and kept his hands in the pockets of his coat. He raised his chin slightly, his long, thick eyelashes narrowing as he stared at the man under the streetlight.

The man met his gaze. As expected, he lowered his head and laughed. Then, he was at a loss. He considered his words, and in the end, only managed to think of the simplest four words.

He took off his hat and scratched his head. "Do you want to eat?"

"..."

"Baked sweet potatoes in winter." He smiled. "Your true love."

"..."

"And I see this one has a white core, you like a white core, that's hard to find. So eat one. Don't be angry. "

Chu Wanning's expression was no longer as hard as a block of ice that had been frozen overnight in the winter in the north. He stood for a moment, then turned with his cheeks slightly puffed out. He walked towards Mo Ran and said calmly, "No, I want to eat four." It was as if he did not care at all, as if he was not tempted at all.

"Good, good, good." His handsome boyfriend looked at him with both helplessness and amusement. Really, he used to be like a wild and unruly leopard, but after all these years he had become more and more soft, and now and then he would even become like a little white cat baring its teeth. He truly had this illusion.

Mo Ran smiled, "Alright, so be it. But can you still eat dinner like this …"

"Don't underestimate my stomach. This is just an appetizer."

"Alright, then eat your snacks first. After that, we'll go eat and then go watch Zhen Ku Ming's movie …"

Chu Wanning took the steaming sweet potato and took a bite. Resisting the faint smile on his lips that was about to betray him, he shook his head indifferently, "It's fine if you watch Erha and his Shizun White Cat."

Mo Ran's eyes immediately lit up. "Really?!"

"Yes." I'll be dumb with you one more time. "

The voice of Mo Ran instantly became so bright and bright. Joy and sweetness were like a bubble drop that fell into water. Honey bubbled and bubbled, turning a pool of water sweet.

He was about to die of sweetness.

"How kind of you!"

"..."

"Then the next 'Beautiful Girl Hagrid' …"

"Don't even think about it …"

On the snow-covered street, two pairs of footprints slowly moved forward, next to each other, very close to each other.

At a crossroads, Xue Meng, who had already boarded the bus, was wearing earphones. He unconsciously looked out of the window at the passing crowd and the flashy lights.

He was relaxed, his forehead pressed against the slightly cool glass of the window, the colorful neon shattered in his dark eyes. He yawned and did not notice a pair of young men carrying roasted sweet potatoes walking by on the sidewalk, and the two young men were quarreling over "The Beautiful Girl Hagrid."

The green light came on and the car started.

As they passed each other, Xue Meng hummed the song in his earpiece. He was deaf, but who would stop him from humming happily because he was deaf?

He had just received word from his mother that his father had returned from a business trip, and that tonight he had his favorite fish and spicy chicken.

No one could stop him from singing anymore. The earth's destruction and flooding could not be stopped. He had to finish the Boiled Fish.

Just like this, their lives were filled with countless possibilities. Different jobs, different places of origin, different paths of growth, different kinds of love and hate. Perhaps even for such reasons, their appearances would be slightly different. However, reincarnation could not change Xue Meng's good impression of Boiled Fish. It was just like how it could not change the sweetness of Chu Wanning, it could not change the fact that Mo Ran loved that bowl of roasted red oil.

In the end, their story would only end up with one ending.

It was a compromise of the will of the heavens to the small life, to the mayfly that shook the tree, to the boasting of a day.

After all the suffering.

They will end up with the people they love.

They will eventually reunite with the people they love.

Ch. 319 Who Touched Xue Mengmeg's Desserts? 1

[First Forum of Cultivators] [Residential Area] [Water Tile]

Title: [Highlight]: Has anyone obtained a box of oddly shaped dessert recently?

Content: This is so infuriating! Someone took my dessert!

Author: Phoenix First Cry

… …. So? Isn't it just a box of snacks?

1: Zhongshan Lang is not greedy

Just a box of snacks and you want the light? How poor are you, OP?

2: Our Sect Leader is rich

Poverty limits my imagination.

3: Our manor lord has suddenly become rich

Haha, being so poor, you must be from the lower realms, right?

4: Very smart.

I am the OP. Can you all wait for me to finish before replying?

The fact is, I recently lost a box of strangely shaped desserts, dark brown, hard, bitter to eat, with a bit of wine coming out of it. It's not food from the Central Plains,

It's very rare in the upper and lower realms, and as far as I know no more than ten people have it.

I don't like sweet foods that much myself, so it doesn't matter if I lost them. But the problem is that eating them all up would be dangerous for ordinary people, so I hope my friends can tell me whether they stole them or not.

Still accidentally took the wrong, please do not eat, as soon as possible private message contact me, otherwise bear the consequences.

5th floor: Beginning cry of the phoenix

Black, very hard. There was even wine inside … It was truly unheard-of. You are an expert in this, what do you think?

6: Recruitment of disciples without discrimination

But why was the dessert bitter? Are you sure this is food?

7th floor: I don't know Mulan is a girl

Surprisingly, there was still food in the world that I had never eaten before.

8th floor: Accept only Brain Platinum

… …. My whole life? Ye Zichen felt like the expression was weird. Could it be that the person upstairs is a ghost …

9th: I'm afraid of ghosts

Don't be afraid upstairs, the ninth floor means he was born to this day. However, wasn't there anyone who was curious about the strange reaction that would occur after eating this box of dessert?

10: Cockhorse

… …. I know who LZ is. I've seen this box of pastries. How could you lose something so important? When was it lost? Was there any trace left around the place where the snacks were stored?

11: Zhongshan Lang is not greedy

Wow, it seems like the one upstairs is really strong

12: The Little Disciple at SiSheng Peak

The Middle Mountain Wolf Is Not Greed

It's you? You never told me that your vests in the First Forum were this …

I don't know exactly when it was lost, but at least ten days ago it was safely in the storage box in my room, and when I needed to take it yesterday it was gone. There were no obvious marks around the storage box, and the rest of my room probably hadn't been moved. But I was in a hurry to get out, and I didn't look at it. I'll go back tonight and look at it again.

13th floor: Beginning cry of the phoenix

It seems that it really isn't just a box of ordinary snacks. The matter seems to be a little serious … Apologize to Lz. You shouldn't say you're poor.

14th: Our Sect Leader is rich

Yes. He was not poor.

15th: Things that cannot be solved without money

Can Lz specify the reaction after taking a snack? It's been so long, and I'm afraid the person who got the box of pastries has already eaten it.

16: Don't know Mulan is a girl

I forgot to tell you about the suit. I didn't mean to hide it.

I've already asked someone to look into the matter at our door.

In addition, it was best not to place such an important item around in the future.

17th poster: Zhongshan Lang is not greedy

Wait, what did you know upstairs? Who's Lz?

18: Receive disciples without discrimination

The teaching of the religion, the acceptance of the disciples

Read the private message.

19th floor: Zhongshan Lang is not greedy

Eh, the 15th floor seemed to know the inside story as well, so how did the 15th floor know LZ wasn't poor?

20: The Little Disciple at SiSheng Peak

Previously, I wasn't sure if the effects of the box of snacks could be revealed to everyone, so I went to ask the person who gave me the snacks.

That box of dim sum was actually a transformed snack, not exactly considered food, but more like a type of medicine. After eating it, it would transform into a beast form, which would allow it to easily complete some missions.

However, the most frightening thing was that after transforming into a beast, the consumer would not be able to transform back into their original form. They would have to eat another type of white hard candy to recover.

The problem was that all the white hard candy in my room was still there. Not a single one was missing.

I'm afraid that some people will never be able to go back to their original forms once they become animals.

21st floor: Beginning cry of the phoenix

Damn it...

22nd floor: Our manor lord suddenly became rich

I'm not smart enough. IQ limits my imagination. Apologize to LZ.

23: Really smart

AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH! It felt like a very interesting dessert! Hurry up and take a look. Will you be able to develop it and sell it before the 21st?

24th floor: Cockroach, Cockroach, Cockroach, Cockroach, Cockroach, Cockroach, Cockroach, Cockroach, Cockroach, Cockroach, Cockroach, Cockroach, Cockroach, Cockroach

Received. Dad, we're going to work overtime right now.

25th floor: Night Cat Products Development Department

… …. So Lz was …

Alas, Lz never remembered to put his things away properly.

26: Receive disciples without discrimination

He came over here to surf the internet when he had nothing better to do, but he actually saw this kind of post. The first cry of the phoenix truly did not make one feel at ease.

27: No one is more handsome than me

Even though children had their own children, it was useless to worry about them. No one is more handsome than I am.

28th floor: Duroy flowers

Since the consequences are so serious, we should hurry up and let the Sect Leaders inform the cultivators and mortals under their jurisdiction. @ The First Forum's super manager, please take note.

29: Don't know Mulan is a girl

It was impossible for the Night Cat Merchant Shop to produce a formula, so he had better give up earlier.

30th: Things that cannot be solved without money

Please take note of this post and deal with it in a timely manner.

31: 1st forum super manager

Received.

31: Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye Chen

… …. I've already dealt with it, okay? No need to @ me anymore, I'm worried about the safety of my disciples, I'm very annoyed!

32: SiSheng Peak, Xue Ziming

Benefactor Xue need not be anxious. This old monk has a word for you: others are in a hurry, I am in a hurry to come out of illness, no one can do it for me, why think back on it, if I want to die in a hurry, who can do it.

If you calm down, everything will be fine.

33rd floor: Shizun Mirror of the Temple of No Sorrows

Oh? I seem to have a very similar thing, a green semi-liquid substance. Licking it a little would cause me to choke. It's not some sweet stuff, but the effect is the same. It was given to me by Gu Yue Ye. Hmm... But shouldn't they say so much?

34th floor: East River with Hua Ruowei

Don't be a Sect Leader if you're a fool.

35th floor: Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye sank

… …. I seem to have some kind of kind, but it's not the same. What I received was a box of stinky tofu with a rich smell. It was also a gift from Gu Yue Ye. At that time, the little disciple who delivered the goods told me if I wanted to eat it or not, I had to endure it for the sake of magic … So there was another taste?

36: Li Xuehe, Jidan Manor

… ….

37: Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye Chen

"AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH HHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!" Sorry, Sect Leader Jiang! I only saw your post on the 35th floor after I replied! Ah, I'm really sorry. I don't know if I can't say it, but is it still possible to withdraw now?

38th floor: Li Xuehe, Jidan Manor

Do you think that this is >

39: Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye Chen

Received, will deal with immediately.

40: Fire Phoenix Pavilion Wei Feiyan

Currently, no one from the Treading Snow Palace reported the loss, but they would strictly ask about it.

41: Snow Treading Palace Moon Restaurant

I know.

42nd floor: Upper Clear Pavilion Willowleaf Su

Wait a minute, did Villa Owner Li and Hall Shizun Hua receive this kind of deformed dessert? Could it be that every Sect Leader has one? Then why didn't I?

43: Peach Blossom Villa's Ma Yun

Uh, actually, not every Sect Leader has one, so Manor Lord Ma shouldn't think too much about it.

44: Snow Treading Palace, Bright Moon Tower

It felt like things had gotten serious.

45: I'm just a passerby

Yes, a little. For the past few days, everyone has to pay attention to the unknown food. Don't touch it, I have to tell my parents.

46th floor: I'm just a passerby.

phoenix first cry

Lz, could you please tell us what kind of animal it would be if you mistook that box of dessert? This would at least minimize accidental injuries. If someone was unlucky enough to turn into an animal … We can also think of a way to keep an eye on it.

47: Don't know Mulan is a girl

Upstairs, it was really kind.

48: Received only brain platinum

I am still extremely afraid of this expression of 'life'. Upstairs, are you a human or a ghost? Otherwise, I would have nightmares tonight!

49: I'm afraid of ghosts

If you don't do something shameful during the day, you don't have to worry about knocking on the door at night. What's so scary about it?

50: Receive the gift and only accept Brain Platinum

Hello everyone, I'm coming. Thank you. I didn't know Mulan was the girl who reminded me. The animals that would turn into peacocks after taking that box of snacks.

51st floor: Beginning cry of the phoenix

That's called the peacock. You can do that because you're a man. If a woman ate it, he would turn into a female peacock, and wouldn't open his mouth.

52: Zhongshan Lang is not greedy

Oh, oh, oh! Fortunately, it was this animal! He heaved a sigh of relief! If it was a peacock, it wouldn't be easy for it to be injured by accident. Fortunately, it didn't turn into a pig or a chicken or duck, so it wouldn't be able to cry even after being eaten.

Haha, suddenly I'm a bit curious about what it feels like to become a peacock.

54: The Little Disciple at SiSheng Peak

QAQ My Shizun is gone, in these two days … I just saw this post and I'm completely dumbfounded …

55: Ergou

F * ck!

56 - The Top Disciple of Death

The sky was shaking. Could it be that he had turned into a peacock and flew away?

57th: I'm just a passer-by

Could it be that your Shizun ate that box of dessert ...

58: Our manor lord has suddenly become rich

I don't know! I've searched the entire mountaintop, but I still haven't seen any sign of him! There was no note on the table, and the clothes in the closet were still there. It didn't seem like they were going to travel far! "AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!" What to do! And he really liked sweets! But I don't think he'll take anything from anyone else to eat. My God, my head's going to explode!

59: Ergou

Second Gou Zi, calm down. Things might not be as bad as you think. Is your Shizun's house close to the LZ's? If they weren't close, they wouldn't have been able to get that box of pastries.

60: Don't know Mulan is a girl

QAQ is right, where do you live?

61: Ergou

The Animal Research Society of the Cultivation World, please pay attention to the nearest peacock race. If there is a peacock showing human will, then it is very likely to be a human-transformed peacock.

62 poster: Received only brain platinum

One did not need to observe the peacock race; they could become a peacock. Others might not.

63: Things that cannot be solved without money

What do you mean …

64th floor: Cockhorse

On the 63rd floor, you're responsible for the speech. What do you know? Do you really know how to do it? Or do you know more than I do?

Also, Ergouzi lives in Shu.

65th floor: Beginning cry of the phoenix

It meant that even pigs, dogs, cows, sheep, cats, horses, rabbits, monkeys were possible. After eating, he would see what was changed.

Besides, the one upstairs, I do know more about this box of sweets than you do.

66th floor: Things that cannot be solved without money

Heh, what a big tone you have. Do you know who I am?

67th floor: Beginning cry of the phoenix

Smelling the smell of fire (cough) medicine, I came to remind you that it is prohibited to fight in our district for three days under the title of personal

attack.

68th floor: 1st forum living area manager # 3

Not only do I know who you are, I also know who your biological father is.

69: Things that cannot be solved without money

AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH! Then what should he do!? Can you stop playing guessing games! LZ lives in Sichuan! Although Shizun and I don't live in Sichuan anymore, we know a lot of people there. What if they were sent here as gifts and my Shizun eats them? QAQ, @ No money can't solve the problem …

Great deity, do you really know the inside story? QAQ, I want to check it out right away. Saving a life is better than building a seven-level pagoda. Please save me, TAT.

70th floor: Ergo

What a filial disciple, touched.

71: Selling candied fruits in the Underworld

Miaomiao ~

72: The vegetable bag

There is nothing silver can't solve. So it was you?

73rd floor: Beginning cry of the phoenix

Yes, it's me.

74: Things that cannot be solved without money

MLGB: Is it fun for you to wear a vest?!

75th floor: Beginning cry of the phoenix

Hey, can you please ignore me!? Can you not be so cold-blooded! There is nothing that can't be solved without money

Friend, what personal grudge do you have with LZ before you settle it? "I'm really worried to death right here. What should my Shizun do? QAQ!"

76: Ergou

Note the wording. No cultivation.

77: Something that can't be solved without money

I was wrong about QAQ

This immortal elder, please pay attention to my message. My Shizun is in danger right now, so I hope you can show me some mercy and give me some directions.

Thank you!

78th floor: Ergou

Pfft, it is such a tragic thing, but I don't know why I feel like laughing when I look at the top of the stairs.

79: Really smart

Hahahaha 1

80: The Little Disciple at SiSheng Peak

Don't laugh, it's really important. Second Gou Zi, I can understand your feelings, but unfortunately, I don't know anything about pharmacology. I'm really sorry that I can't help you.

81: Don't know Mulan is a girl

You've done well. Don't scold yourself.

82nd poster: Received only brain platinum

The friend upstairs, I've seen you a few times, you are …?

83: Don't know Mulan is a girl

You don't need to know who I am.

84th floor: Received only brain platinum

Wow... Was this a confession?

85th floor: East of the Yangtze River

Watching the confession from the front row …

86: I'm just a passer-by

Can you not confess!? QAQ, I'm dying of anxiety! I feel like I'm going to go crazy if this goes on, I'm going to go crazy, I don't know what I'm going to look like …

87: Ergou

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to offend you, but I already have someone I like.

And can we keep an eye on Ergou-tzu? I think his business is now the most important.

88: Don't know Mulan is a girl

Okay, okay, listen to the girl.

89: I'm just a passer-by

If I were to put in a word, I would say that Mr. Qian is not lacking. He's the one on the 77th floor. When he said "pay attention to your words, you're not cultured", it was not for Ergou. It was for Lz, the Little Phoenix.

90th floor: I'm just a passerby.

Ah? I looked back over my shoulder, too, and that seemed to be the case. Because Ergou was in a bit of a hurry and didn't say a single dirty word.

However, Mr. Qian had replied with a "mlgb" …

91 Floor: Jade Cold Village Flower

Hahahaha, he solved the case. Ergou is really dumb, he apologized for nothing.

92: I'm just a passerby

Don't know Mulan is a girl

I know you have someone you like. He likes you, too.

I've used up all my time online this month, so I'll come back to see you later.

Good morning.

93rd poster: Received only brain platinum

… …. For some reason, he felt that the little brother on the 93rd floor was a bit pitiful.

94th floor: Jade Cold Village Flower

Do you have no money to pay for the internet? Why don't I transfer you a little? This little money is nothing. Do something for the young.

95th floor: Cockhorse

It's not about the money, it's about the time we have to climb over the wall.

96th floor: Received only Brain Platinum

Climb over the wall... Is Big Brother Brain Platinum a foreigner? If it's a foreigner, @ Mehmet's official number

Can brother Mehane help him think of a way?

97: Jade Cold Village Flower

Can you guys stop talking about this nonsense? QAQ to look at me... I think. I can't help myself.

98: Ergou

He looked at Ergou and pleaded.

Help me out if you can. Chat can be done after you solve the problem.

99: Don't know Mulan is a girl

The matter regarding Ergou would have to wait until he had nothing that could not be solved with silver. Since his ID was so domineering, it must be very reliable. However, why did this Mr. Qian suddenly stop talking?

Because it was a bluff, if he couldn't continue bragging, he would run away.

101: Our Sect Leader is rich

Young Master Mei Hanxue is busy with some private matters, and I am his waiter.

If you want to meet Young Master Mei, please make sure your gender is "female" and reply in the background.

To resolve the pain of lovesick, please reply in the background 2.

If you want to ask a question about your relationship, please respond backstage 3.

If you would like to register for Young Master Mei's Kazakh Language Interests Class, please reply 4 (No male disciples) from backstage.

If you want to beat up this unscrupulous person, please go to Mei Hanxue's official number

102nd floor: Mei Hanxue official number

Get lost.

103rd floor: Mei Hanxue official account number

… …. This old man could probably guess that the little friend with the platinum brain probably didn't want to go over the wall because of something, and he shouldn't be overseas either.

@ Receive only Brain Platinum

Little brother, take a look at your private message. This old man has been busy with business lately and doesn't have much time to surf the internet. There is still quite a bit of time left this month, so I can give it to you.

104: Selling candied fruits in the Underworld

… ….

Thank you, Taoist Li!

And about my father … I'm really sorry.

105: Received Brain Platinum only

No need to thank me.

The past was just the past. There was nothing to be worried about.

Go play, good child. This old man will be logging off to do business.

106: Selling candied fruits in the Underworld

When I came across this post, I knew a little about this drug and had been involved in the development of this drug before. Second Gou Zi, don't worry. I'll organize the documents and send you a private message.

107th floor: Blind people rely on technology to access the Internet

The netizen on the 101st floor, I looked at your Eddie, you had better also pay attention to the wording. No one ran, no one boasted.

I went to drink some medicine, Ergou.

The box of pastries would be judged based on the user's personality, appearance, and preferences. You can try to imagine what your Shizun would have become if he had been an animal. If you know him well enough, you think of him as he will change after taking the medicine.

108: Something that cannot be solved without money

Oh, does the upper floor really know? He couldn't be making it up for the sake of face, right?

109: Our Sect Leader is rich

… ….

110: Things that cannot be solved without money

Our Sect Leader has the money … Hello, may I trouble you to go to Gu Yue Ye's punishment platform. The Sect Leader has invited you.

111th: Whatever godfather says is right

Oh, okay, three grams of oil.

112 - Our Sect Leader is rich

No need to thank me

113: Whatever godfather says is right

… …. I don't know why, but I feel like I won't be able to get back on the 112th floor.

114th floor: Prophet

Haha, perhaps the impression that Sect Shizun Gu Yue Ye gave was just too oppressive. But then again, it had been so long, why hadn't Ergou spoken up yet? What kind of animal does your Shizun look like? Tell us, we'll keep an eye out for you.

115: Jade Cold Village Flower

A mere village flower dares to circle around this reputed one. However, seeing that your heart and eyes aren't too bad, I'll let you off this time.

As for what kind of animal this person will become, I will take care not to meddle in other people's business.

116: Ergou

Eh?

117: I'm a passer-by.

What was going on?

118: I'm a Passerby B

Why did Ergou's mood change all of a sudden? Stolen account?

119: Cockhorse

This account was originally mine, a group of fools!

120 - Ergou

Wait! This familiar tone … This tone … This account name …

Could it be the person I was thinking of …

121st floor: Beginning cry of the phoenix

So what?

122nd floor: Ergou

Ergouzi

Sigh! You don't have to be so fierce. Then I want to help you too.

123: Jade Cold Village Flower

I think LZ recognized a lot of familiar vests on this floor, haha, the world is really small.

124th floor: Receive disciples without discrimination

Don't laugh, I know who Ergou is. This is going to be troublesome.

125th floor: Beginning cry of the phoenix

Urgent! Attention, cultivators! For some reason, SiSheng Peak will be filled with all kinds of white cats from today onwards. Cultivators, please bring all ownerless white cats to our sect. We will reward each one with 5000 gold!

126th floor: SiSheng Peak, Xue Ziming

One, a red riding Sect Leader laughs, no one knows it's a white cat?

127: I'm a passer-by.

Ah! So cute! My real name is Xue Meng X White Cat!

128th floor: Huayuwei, Jiangdong

Interesting. Jiang Dong Tang wants his clan to be exterminated?

129: Ergou

Who is that guy from the Jiangdong Hall? Don't f * cking speak nonsense! Is there something wrong with you!?

130th floor: SiSheng Peak, Xue Ziming

Why did he suddenly gather white cats? Our sect already has an orange cat, so we can't raise any more.

131th floor: SiSheng Peak: Elder xuanji

Please read the private message for me, Elder.

132nd floor: SiSheng Peak, Xue Ziming.

There was no private message.

133: SiSheng Peak, Elder Xun Ji

He sent you a trumpet.

134th floor: Elder Greed at SiSheng Peak

What? He's just kowtowing? That Ergou-zi, what is he doing? It's like he stole your husband, hmph! Disgusting!

135th floor: Huayuwei, Jiangdong

Miss Hua, I can't help but give you a word of advice.

136 poster: Cherish the Jade Snow Region Plum

Haha, what I'm more curious about is, a cat is 500 gold, and a white cat is such a common animal, won't SiSheng Peak go bankrupt?

137th floor: I'm a passerby.

Meow Meow QAQ

138th floor: Vegetable Packs

Look, even the vegetable buns are crying … How can you have a white cat that doesn't care about the feeling of the oranges? Was the tangerine no longer a group pet at SiSheng Peak?

139: Jade Cold Village Flower

We have a sponsor.

@ Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye

Give me money.

140th floor: SiSheng Peak, Xue Ziming

… ….

141: Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye Chen

What was this expansion? Why would Sect Leader Jiang sponsor SiSheng Peak to do such a foolish thing? Is there a business opportunity that I don't know about? Could the white cat be used to refine medicine?

142nd floor: Receiving horses

You can't use cats to refine medicine!

Myrtle Mountain wanted their sect to be exterminated?!

143rd poster: Ergou

… …. Ergou's style of painting had really changed a lot … It felt like it had been refined... Threatening to annihilate someone's sect at any time, as though he was a skilled exterminator...

144: Our manor lord has suddenly become rich

How much?

145: Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye Chen

F * ck! Really!?

146: Really smart

Did Gu Yue Ye have a lot of money? How could he invest in something like this that was obviously a loss? What sponsor? It was the father of the financial backer who gave away money without paying it for himself!

147 - I also want the father of the customer

Sect Leader Jiang! We have a setting sun industry here. Although it has no future, do you want to understand how to be a charity?

148th floor: Sunset Red Old Age Cyclists Club

Sect Leader Jiang! We have a building here. Although it has no future, do you want to consider investing in it?

149th floor: Jiufeng Gate Tomb Scenic Spot Room Sales Department

Sect Leader Jiang! We have a project here that will ensure that you will be able to make a fortune, which is against the law, but do you want to consider going into the sea with us?

150 - Cultivator: Exquisite male sex film producer

Wow! I'm not going to stand on the white cat!

I'm standing here, Xue Meng Si Jiang Xi!

151: Huayuwei, Jiangdong

Why wasn't it Jiang Xi and Xue Meng?

The super manager of the first forum sealed off all accounts from the 148th floor to the 151st floor, sealing them for life.

153 poster: Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye Chen

Sect Leader Jiang, on principle, we cannot give a member a lifetime title. Please forgive us.

154: Forum 1 super manager

Forbidden 148 to 151. One floor one hundred thousand gold.

155 - Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye Heavy

Sect Leader Jiang, on principle, we cannot accept money from our customers, and we are the super VIP users in Floor 151. On principle, we cannot ban the sect leader's account.

156: Forum 1 Super Administrator

Hello Administrator, my foster father is already old and his ability to express himself isn't very good, so his words aren't very clear. He means that if you ban 148-151, we will count the total floors of this post to the total floor before the problem is solved, at one hundred thousand gold per floor. For example, before the problem had been solved, this thread had been sent back to a total of 200 floors. Then, Gu Yue Ye would give your forum 200x10 = 2000 gold. If it was only at 2000 floors that the problem was solved, then it would be 2000 x10 = 20,000 gold.

But I have to say, @ Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye, my foster father, you are wasting money like this, and people will make mistakes sometimes. It is always necessary to give others a chance to start anew.

Think about it again?

157: Godfather is right in everything he says.

Yes, he had to think about it again.

@ First Forum Super Administrator

Also ban the account number on the 157th floor

158: Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye Chen

Ch. 320 Who Touched Xue Mengmeng’s Desserts? 2

[System Notice] Due to violation of the relevant version rules, the user "Jiangdong Huaruwei", the user "Sunset Red Old Age Car Riding Club", the user "Ru Feng Men's Tomb House", the user "Cultivator World's best man's small film producer",

The user 's' godfather is right 'has been banned for life. From now on, the above users can only visit the forum to read the post, never speak.

159: Forum 1 Super Administrator

….

160: I'm a passer-by.

….

161: Our manor lord has suddenly become rich

Haha, this is the legendary "hold on until you can't accept it".

162: Received Brain Platinum only

Unseal "whatever godfather says". He was just a child. It was fine as long as he was taught a lesson. No need for real punishment.

163: Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye Chen

Yes, immediately.

164 Floor: Forum 1 Super Administrator

… …. The father was different to his son. Other names were true lifetime restrictions, not even the woman would be merciful. However, 'godfather is right' was only banned for less than a minute.

165: Yuliang Village Auntie's local specialty store

Thank you, godfather. But even if you will be angry, I should still remind you that if you continue to do so, Gu Yue Ye's finances will one day be in deficit.

166: Whatever foster father says is right

… …. Reseal him for me.

167: Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye Chen

Okay, seal it immediately.

168: Forum 1 super manager

Pfft, I feel 166 floor should not be called "whatever father says is right", too face-smacking, should be called "whatever father says is wrong."

169: Our manor lord suddenly became rich

A super administrator should not be called a super administrator.

170: Very smart.

"AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH HHHHHHHHHH!" Poverty limits my imagination! Sect Leader Jiang, father of the Golden Lord!

163: I also want the father of the customer

The father of the financial backer! Do you still lack a son?

164: I also want the father of the gold mine.

Father Jiang! You're asking to take me in as your son!

165: I also want father 2.

Father! Look at me! I promise! Everything you do is right! How do you want to spend your money! I promise you, it's completely different from 'Godfather is right in everything'! Father! I am your long-lost son!

166 poster: I also want to buy 3

People these days really have no backbone! Shameful!

If you have money, then you're a father? Ridiculous!

Look at me! I'm completely different from all of you!

167: Jiang Xi is my dad

Hahahaha, too naughty! Then let me register a vest!

168 - My dad is Jiang Xi

Do you even have any shame?

169 post: Beginning Phoenix Cry

… …. Aiya, the tower lord has appeared. If not for that, I would have forgotten the purpose of this building … I even thought that it was Jiang Xi from the support committee...

170: I'm a Passerby A

I'm sorry, I think this is ridiculous,

The first forum was used by the various sects to communicate with each other. However, the administrator had sealed the account number of a Sect Leader without any explanation and even banned it for life. In the future, whoever provoked Jiang Xi would have their account sealed? You were talking about principles just now, what about now? Is principle a waste of paper?

In addition, your title was given as a "violation of the rules." I would like to ask what kind of rules they violated. I have also been the moderator of this forum, so the rules are not as clear as you. I hope you can give me a reasonable explanation.

171: Don't know Mulan is a girl

A new rule was added ten minutes ago, article 131: Please respect the largest investor in this forum. I want to know.

172: Forum 1 super manager

This was truly interesting. @ Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye Chen, do you want to do the same as Nangong Liu? It's not like you don't know the lesson of the Ju Feng Sect.

173: Don't know Mulan is a girl

Sigh... Why do you always have to be the first person to stand up …

174: Accepting the gift only requires Brain Platinum

Jiang Xi, please say something.

175: Don't know Mulan is a girl

Aiyo, is that girl sick? He has money, and he is the biggest investor. So what if you have to respect her?

176: I also want the father of the moneymaker.

The caretaker didn't 'say no' to them and just gave them their number. The caretaker gave them the money and gave them their number. My father spent so much money to buy it, how did he offend anyone?

177: My dad is Jiang Xi

… …. I'm getting more and more confused about the atmosphere of this building.

178: SiSheng Peak, Xue Ziming

There are a lot of things you don't understand.

In addition, many people have come to the sect to deliver the cat. Sect Leader, you should go and take it.

180th floor: SiSheng Peak — Elder xuanji

Needless to say, I spend money legally.

181: Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye Chen

In the past, the Confucian School of Wind used to bully people, but today, Gu Yue Ye relied on his wealth to be impudent.

Sect Leader Jiang, although your nature is not bad, if you continue like this, you will suffer sooner or later.

182: Don't know Mulan is a girl

Sect Leader Jiang, do you need to forbid Mu Lan from speaking like a lady?

182: Forum 1 super manager

I don't know if Mulan is a girl or not.

The super manager of the first forum, don't seal her.

SiSheng Peak, Xue Ziming, has sent the banknotes.

183 - Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye Heavy

It's my birthday! Who the f * * k sent an orange cat with a white stain to cheat!

184: The Little Disciple at SiSheng Peak

… …. You don't even recognize an orange cat? It never changed when you dyed it.

185: The Top Female Disciple in Death

What about the basic trust between QAQ people and people?

I've already put a basin of water in front of the door. All the cats need to take a bath before they can come in!

186 - Top Disciple in Death

Hmm... The moment I saw this building, I was about to ask... Didn't you find a problem?

187th floor: Cultivator Holmes

Hm? What is it?

Building 188: Jade Cold Village Flower

Haha! I found something, too, but I never said it! Sherlock Holmes, are you trying to say that Jiang Xi only sealed the one hundred forty-eighth to one hundred fifty-first floors and left the one hundred fifty-two floors alone? Jiang Fu granny probably thought that saying that he was attacking or praising him.

189: The trumpet is not afraid of offending Jiang Fuxian

… …. Jiang, Jiang Fuxian?

Ha ha-ha ha ha!

190: Smile and use a trumpet too

[System Notification] The user's "smiley face" has been deleted, the user's "smiley face" account has been deleted. The keyword "Jiang Fuxian" has cost forum level 1 sensitive words, all account names that contain the key words cannot be registered, all statements that contain the key words will be blocked.

This forum must register the real name in order to prevent the person from wearing the vest.

191 Floor: Forum 1 Supervisor

… …. Do you have to have dog legs like this? Jiang Xi herself didn't say anything...

No, even though I've noticed that the 152nd floor isn't sealed, that's not what I'm talking about.

Why would SiSheng Peak suddenly collect white cats? You guys probably didn't pay attention to it and only played it as if it was water. Otherwise, it would be very easy to notice.

Wait a minute for me to tidy up, then send it up.

193: Cultivator Holmes

Lalalalala ~ sit and wait 818 ~

194: The East River with Hua Ruwei

… …. Manager, didn't the 194 floor have a title? Am I blind or did you smoke it in the forum?

195: Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye Chen

It was my mistake! I just sealed his off! Maybe I didn't do it right, so I'll seal it again! I'm sorry!

196 Floor: Forum 1 Supervisor

Hehe, I can't believe it, right? I'm bubbling again!

197th floor: Huarouwei Hall, Jiangdong

He quickly sealed it and looked at the eyesore.

198: Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye sank

Alas, no matter how many years have passed, men who do not know how to take care of women still do not know how to take care of them. Actually,

there's no need to talk too much with this kind of girl. As long as you move his with your emotions and make some concessions, he will understand what you mean. There was no need to be so irritable.

199: Cherish the Jade Snow Region Plum

Sect Head Jiang seems to have a problem... The people who were just given the title, other than the person who invited you to do a movie in the ocean, have all been released and are unable to be sealed again …

I'm really sorry. I'll contact the technical department right away and ask for urgent action.

200: Forum 1 Supervisor

No, I know.

The godfather is right in everything

Did you do it?

201 post: Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye Chen

Un, it's me.

202: Whatever foster father says is right

This isn't the past; your wings are hard, and I am not in your eyes anymore.

Very well, you are capable.

203 - Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye Heavy

Plug in the front row of a building and eat a melon

204: I'm a passer-by

Crab, crab,

Little big brother ~ ~ The kindness of saving an account is unforgettable ~ ~ mua ~

205th floor: Huayuwei, Jiangdong

I don't look down on you. You are the most gentle, kindest, and sweetest person on the continent. But you've done something wrong, and I can't stand by and watch you do it.

Actually, I know who is right and who isn't, and foster father knows it clearly in his heart. Otherwise, you wouldn't have let go of 'I don't know Mulan is a girl'.

206: Whatever Godfather says is right

OMG, what did I see? The LS actually said that Jiang Xi was the gentlest, kindest, and sweetest person in the entire cultivation world? Am I blind, or did the forum get a beating, or did that 'godfather says whatever is right' get crazy?

207: I'm a passerby.

… …. The emergency doctor of the Eye, there is a patient who needs to be treated.

208: Really smart

Ridiculous, the 206th floor was simply wearing a 80,000 meters thick filter. The most gentle, sweetest, and kindest idiot in the entire cultivation world is clearly one of my people!

209: Ergou

Ergou's speech exuded a strong sense of disease.

210: I'm a passer-by.

I think, Jiang Xi... And sweet. are two nonsymbiotic words.

211: The Little Disciple at SiSheng Peak

Upstairs, add, I feel that Jiang Xi is not only incompatible with "sweetness", but also with the words "kindness", "gentleness", "holiness", "integrity", "softness", "deep love", "intimacy", "sadness", "compassion" and "love". Jiang Xi and these nice words are like two anti-virus software that will attack each other until the computer crashes.

212: Our manor lord has suddenly become rich

You don't understand him. Please don't say that about him.

213: Godfather is right in everything he says

This disease should not be in Aet's ophthalmology, it should be in Ate's mental health department.

But I think he's very sick. Give up the treatment.

214: Zhongshan Lang is not greedy

Ch. 321 Who Touched Xue Mengmeng’s Desserts? 3

Cold scale ophthalmology emergency service for you.

Glaucoma Reply 1

Cataract Please Reply 2

High myopia please return 3

Old Fantasy Please Reply 4

"If you're blind, please call the Cold Scale Sacred Hand Global Hotline 3838748."

The filter cannot be removed, please transfer to the mental health department

215 Floor: Cold Scale Ophthalmology Emergency

Haha, I told you to transfer to the mental health department.

216: Zhongshan Lang is not greedy

Godfather said everything to my little brother. Did you only speak like that because you were forced to do so by Jiang Xi? How pitiful … Seeing as you have unsealed my seal, this sect leader is willing to accept you to come to Jiangdong Tang, so you can be my protector.

If I think you're good-looking enough after the noodle, it's not impossible for you to become the Sect Leader's husband in the future ~ I'll give you a chance ~

217th floor: Huarouwei Hall, Jiangdong

At the wedding scene.

218: I'm a passer-by

Thank you for your concern. No one is forcing me, and I don't want to go to the Jiangdong Hall. Release you only because you are the Sect Leader, please don't @ me again, we are not familiar with each other.

219: Godfather is right in everything he says

I'm coming!

I just got home, it's not convenient to type on my cell phone.

Please pay attention to the speeches on the 125th and 126th floors.

Don't laugh, I know who Ergou is. This is going to be troublesome.

125th floor: Beginning cry of the phoenix

Urgent! Attention, cultivators! For some reason, SiSheng Peak will be filled with all kinds of white cats from today onwards. Cultivators, please bring all ownerless white cats to our sect. We will reward each one with 5000 gold!

126th floor: SiSheng Peak, Xue Ziming

The difference in recovery time between these two floors was not more than a minute. Combined with what had just happened, the "Phoenix's First Cry" discovered that it had lost its snack. This snack would turn into an animal after eating it. And then Ergou-tzu came to report it,

After saying that his Shizun had disappeared, Phoenix's initial reaction was neither too calm nor too polite. The others also did not have much of a

reaction. However, from this floor onwards, Phoenix's initial cry suddenly said, "Things have gotten complicated."

Everyone could guess that he said that things were troublesome because he had guessed Ergou's identity. In other words, once he found out Ergou's identity, he had also realized who Ergou's Shizun was — this proved that Ergou's Shizun had a very close relationship with "Phoenix's First Cry". Phoenix's First Cry was very likely to be worried for Ergou's Shizun's safety.

Let's look again. After the "Phoenix First Scream" panicked, in less than a minute, "SiSheng Peak, Xue Ziming" came online and for some reason began to collect all kinds of white cats at high prices. My friends, this is too much of a coincidence! Who would believe that it was a chance factor!

Therefore, I made a bold guess that the "Phoenix First Cry" was the nickname for "SiSheng Peak, Xue Ziming", and Xue Ziming had always been a little unconcerned towards others. To make him act this way and to transform into a beast into a cat, there was only one person that I could think of.

I don't know if what appeared before everyone's eyes was the same figure that I was thinking of.

220: Cultivator Holmes

"Ah!" So thoughtful... I've been splashing around hahahaha, I've never thought about it … …. …

221: I'm a passer-by.

Now that he said it, it was true!

I immediately thought of Grandmaster Chu!

222nd floor: I'm a passerby.

Chu Wanning + 1

223 - Jiang Xi is my dad

I also feel that there is no one else other than Chu Wanning, this is a gift subtopic.

224: Very smart.

However... However, Grandmaster Chu did not look like someone who would steal food from others?

225th floor: Jade Cold Village Flower

It might have been sent by mistake, or something.

226: He's really smart.

He was shocked! "Well, according to Holmes's theory." Phoenix's First Wail was Xue Ziming. If the missing person was Chu Wanning, then Ergou should be... Ta, ta …

227: Our manor lord has suddenly become rich

… …. Afraid, I logged off.

228: Huayuwei, Jiangdong

I, I remembered that I haven't paid my online bill this month, so I logged off as well.

229: Jiang Xi is my dad

My computer is running out of power. Goodbye everyone.

230: My dad is Jiang Xi

Do you know that you're afraid of me now? A bunch of fools.

Top of the Dead Xue Ziming

How is the search going?

231: Ergou

Your Majesty, we were wrong, please don't be angry, don't destroy the forum...

232nd floor: I'm a passer-by.

Wow! Had he really guessed correctly?

However, if Phoenix's first words were Xue Meng's, he would feel that it would be very easy to dig out the vests of the others after going down 8 years and analyzing their conversations.

233rd floor: I'm a passerby.

This forum strictly forbids the deliberate stripping of horses, please take note.

234: Forum 1 super manager

Ergouzi

Without any progress, those cats were really just ordinary cats. On the other hand, there was something wrong with the vegetable package from before. Many of its own kind had arrived, so it was likely that it felt that its territory had been occupied. It was always very anxious as it circled around me meowing, unable to chase me away no matter how hard it tried. However, an hour ago, I had already ordered some people to bring it with me to pacify it. I had also invited the animal experts of the Fire Phoenix Pavilion to decipher the language of the dishes and was now waiting for someone to come over.

235th floor: SiSheng Peak, Xue Ziming.

Excuse me, may I ask what the package is …?

236: Our manor lord has suddenly become rich

An orange cat kept by Wang's wife at the top of the mountain. Because it ate too much, it was suspected to be pregnant all year round.

237: He's really smart.

It was unknown if it still enjoyed eating the small silver fish in the stream at the back of the mountain. It was somewhat nostalgic.

238 Floor: Duroy Flowers

Haha, an orange cat has an orange cat, don't think too much about it.

Speaking of which, our fourth ranked brother is having a banquet at the mansion. There are a lot of delicious things here. Let's go offline and eat together ~

239: No one is more handsome than me

Mm, I'll listen to you.

240 Floor: Duroy Flowers

No need to send any more cats!

@ Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye

You don't need to send me any more banknotes, since I'll return the rest to you. I don't want to take advantage of you.

241: SiSheng Peak, Xue Ziming

What was going on! If you say so, then so be it? What about his life? You don't care?

242nd floor: Ergou

My foster father said he couldn't be bothered with us and had already logged off. However, I will tell him. Sect Leader Xue can rest assured.

243: Whatever foster father says is right

Xue Ziming, get the hell out of here! Explain yourself, why do you suddenly stop giving out cats?

244: Ergou

… …. I'm only going to the depths of the south to mine some ores. What are you replenishing in your head?

Ergouzi

I'll be home in an hour.

245: I have over a hundred sets of the same type of white clothes

You're back!?!?

246: Ergou

Watching from the front row, one could see Elder Yuheng's trumpet.

247: Top Disciple in Death

… …. He may not have read Holmes's post, and may have felt that he had not lost his horse. There was no need to remind him of this upstairs.

248th floor: I just want to see a show

I didn't make myself clear just now, so I was in a hurry to deal with some problems with the Fire Phoenix Pavilion's people. (TL: Chinese idiom = fire phoenix = fire phoenix = fire phoenix = fire phoenix = fire phoenix = fire phoenix = fire phoenix = fire phoenix = fire phoenix = fire phoenix = fire phoenix = fire phoenix = fire phoenix = fire phoenix = fire phoenix = fire phoenix = fire phoenix = fire phoenix = fire phoenix))

Hello everyone, the alarm has been lifted. There are no humans mistaking my snacks, but rather entering the belly of the vegetable bag … When my family's vegetable bag was strolling around at night, I was curious, so I ate it secretly. After eating this snack, the animal's IQ will be greatly improved. The vegetable bag always wanted to tell me that it ate the food, so it also became clever. Just now, the Fire Phoenix Pavilion member had deciphered its miaow, and only now did we understand what it had been talking about all along.

It was a false alarm, but thank you for your help.

Besides, it doesn't matter if I don't get rid of my horse. I've never done anything I shouldn't have done with a trumpet, but I'm afraid you'll all be able to speculate about a lot of irrelevant underlings after a thorough investigation. To prevent malice, I've already informed the administrator to delete the post in three minutes.

Thank you again for your cooperation.

249: SiSheng Peak, Xue Ziming

Taking advantage of the three-minute countdown, I can get Jiang Xi to pay a little more for the extra floor. I'm very happy to take advantage of this.

250: I'm a passer-by

Hahaha, water together ~

251st floor: I'm a passerby.

You guys can do whatever you want. Even if you manage to obtain three thousand layers in three minutes, to Sect Leader Jiang, it would be nothing more than a drop in the bucket. I think I should quickly save this page and take it back and slowly study it to be interesting.

252: He's really smart.

Uh... It's not that I want to beat the crap out of you, but the contents of this post can't be copied. The administrator seemed prepared.

253: Jade Cold Village Flower

Wuuuuuu, I don't care! I want to take advantage of the deleted thread to confess to Elder Yuheng!

254 Lou: Top Disciple in Death

Me too! I also want to confess to Elder Yuheng!

255th floor: A female disciple at SiSheng Peak

Add me!

256th post: Our manor lord has suddenly become rich

LS, are you a traitor to Peach Blossom House?

Add me!

By the way, I have over a hundred white shirts

Have you finished drawing the new blueprints? Can you authorize me to go into business? How about getting rich together?

257 Floor: Passenger Horse

… …. What happened?

258: I have over 100 pieces of the same type of white clothes.

Nothing much, Xue Meng's IQ just dropped off again.

Are you home yet?

259: Ergou

Heh heh, I'm not on the 258 floor.

260th floor: Passenger horses

Ergouzi

The door opened.

260: I have hundreds of similar white shirts

Who wants to get rich with me … I want to earn more money, build a Taobaojie Awkou rake division rudder, a person who believes my eyes ah QAQ ah.

261: Cockhorse

No one will believe you. The beaver rake doesn't sound like a moneymaker.

262: Really smart

Yes, I'd rather invest in my father's Jiangnan Pharmaceutical Industry.

@ Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye

At the edge of danger, Father, do you look at me?

263: My dad is Jiang Xi

Get lost.

264 Floor: Gu Yue Ye Jiang Ye Chen

… …. Strange, I remember that Sect Leader Jiang had just logged off to rest? Could the person who replied be …

265: Jade Cold Village Flower

I have entered into the countdown to delete the post, please do not reply, if there is anyone who needs to contact, please send your own private message backstage. Thank you for your active participation.

266th floor: Forum 1 super manager

Please wait, I want to @ Yuliang Village Flower

Young lady, you are so beautiful. Can I be honored to be your friend?

267: Cherish the Jade Snow Region Plum

A day's notice was given as a warning for any violation of the rules upstairs.

I said no one was allowed to return to this building.

Three, two.

268 - Forum 1 super manager

AHHHHHHHHHHH! Wait a minute! I still want to see Elder Yuheng!

269: The Little Disciple at SiSheng Peak

You won't have a chance, so give up.

No, I didn't return. Guess who I am.

270: I have over a hundred pieces of the same type of white clothes

… …. Was there even a need to guess...

271: The Little Disciple at SiSheng Peak

@ First Forum Super Administrator

You seal it, I've already prepared for this. I still have this kinship binding number.

Yu Liang Village Flower

Lady, it's still me. I sincerely hope that you can be my good friend. You can come to me any time you like, but please add the number 267, because I'm not usually using it right now. Waiting for you.

272: I don't want to be a scapegoat for my brother anymore

One.

273: Forum 1 Super Management

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The Body of the Forum "Who Moved Xue Mengmeng's Dessert"

Ch. 322 Xue Meng’s Blind Date: Mystery Matron 1

Manor Head Ma of Taobao Manor[179] has recently developed a popular tool for cultivation--the relief scroll.

There are eight shining golden words on the user guide:

With this holy tool, marriage is no concern.

Xue Meng was practicing his sword on SiSheng Peak’s practice field when he first heard of this scroll. He wiped Longcheng clean with a white handkerchief, then turned his head irritably towards the disciple of Taobao Manor who recommended it to him, "What is this bullshit? Why did the Manor Head recommend this kind of junk to me?"[180]

"Well, this... our Manor Head Ma said that Sect Leader Xue, who works hard day and night, must not have any leisure time to go out and meet female cultivators. These past two years he has received a lot of advice from your Shizun Chu-zongshi, and our crafting has gotten better and better. He wants to thank SiSheng Peak with a gift...so this relief scroll was made for Sect Leader Xue.

Xue Meng was furious, and with a flash of light from Longcheng, he split the white handkerchief in two: "Made for me? How ridiculous. Do I really seem to lack women?

Taobao Manor's disciple very very carefully looked at Sect Leader Xue, who was in the prime of his life and had such a dignified bearing, sized him up, swallowed, and cautiously said, "If you’re lacking men, we could also find you a man, as long as there’s fate..."

Lack...lacking men?

Xue Meng was so angry that his face turned blue. He sheathed his sword and stood in the cool breeze of the practice field, and called angrily, "Men!"

"Sect Leader, here!"

Xue Meng's handsome brows stood upright, and he snapped, "Send our guest out!"

"Yes sir!"

Xue Meng wasn't wrong to send this guest away. Manor Head Ma is a great businessman, of course he can't just be out to set couples up. It's true that Manor Head Ma developed this "relief scroll" and that it can match up cultivator couples. But to say that Manor Head Ma developed this especially for Sect Leader Xue, that would be a huge lie.

He pulled in Xue Meng for a very simple, single reason——

To attract female cultivators.

After the Heavenly Rift, the structure of the cultivation world had completely overturned, and SiSheng Peak became one of the leading factions in the country. The rankings in the "Unintelligible List" had likewise been reshuffled, and Xue Meng unsurprisingly rose greatly in the ranks, becoming many girls' dream lover.

As a businessman involved in a wide range of fields, Manor Head Ma is bound to pay close attention to the best-selling "Unintelligible List". So, on a dark, windy night, Manor Head Ma happily picked at his feet while eating melon, and turned through the latest rankings, clicking his tongue.

“Hero ranking number one, Chu Wanning . Current status: living in seclusion."

"Hero ranking number two, Mo Weiyu. Current status: ditto.”

Spitting out a stream of watermelon seeds, Manor Head Ma and his trusted underling sobbed, "Ahh, if only these two people were single, then we could drag them in too. Who knows how many young lady cultivators we could attract to go mad over the ‘relief scroll’ then, such a pity."

After that, he showed the portrait of Chu Wanning painted in the pamphlet to his underling: "Take a look, I didn't think so before, but the more I look, the more I can appreciate him. This Chu-zongshi, such an immortal spirit, and so handsome and elegant. Alas..." The more he thought about it, the more dissatisfied he was. Finally, he bluntly said, "Why don’t we we discuss it with Mo-zongshi, flatter him a bit, and ask him to get his Shizun to help us procure some girls?"

"Sect Leader," said his subordinate coyly, "Asking Chu-zongshi to procure for us, shouldn’t we be scared of Mo-zongshi’s split persona?

"....." The cute Manor Head Ma rubbed his neck and felt a little cold. "You're right. Let's move on.”

After pondering over a cup of gongfu tea, Manor Head Ma has a new target: "What do you think about dragging Mei Hanxue in?"

The subordinate once again said coyly, "Sect Leader, our scroll is selling a lifelong match, but if Immortal Mei comes in, it’ll become a single night of romance. We shouldn’t do it, we are decent, upstanding businessmen.”

"What are you saying! I'm talking about the older one."

"Aren't you afraid of the younger one pretending to be the older one? He's done that plenty of times before."

"... That's right."

He pondered another cup of gongfu tea.

"Then why not Jiang Xi? He's good-looking, he can bring in lots of resources, and he's quite shrewd.

"But he's a shady dealer," continued his subordinate. "Sect Leader, you are decent and kind. You'd better not do business with people like him. Be careful not to lose everything. And with his temper, if he found out that you wanted to use him as bait to attract female cultivators to buy relief scrolls, I'm afraid he'll turn you into a human pig and throw you into Gu Yue Ye's pigsty so female pigs could spend their youthful days with you.

Manor Head Ma laughed and stroked his subordinate's head: "Little brother, I like your honest and outspoken manner."

Turning back and forth several times, Manor Head Ma finally said, "I suppose... we should still get Xue Meng. Although he has no position on the rich list, and also no position on the tall list, at least he's pretty high on the looks list. Furthermore, he's a new sect leader, and he's about the age when he should be considering marriage...let's give it a try? Send someone to talk to him.

Hence, Taobao Manor's disciple would say the nonsense phrase, "Quietly ask the Sect Leader if we lack men".

Xue Meng, Sect Leader Xue, was furious.

His lungs were going to explode - does he look like he lacks men? It's more like men lack him - ptui! No, that’s also wrong to say that men lack him! He was so mad he became confused!

Since Xue Meng succeeded as sect leader, his temper had become somewhat restrained, and it was rare for SiSheng Peak's people to see him so angry. So Elder Xuanji asked with great concern, "Lord, what's wrong? Is something worrying you?"

Xue Meng gritted his teeth and said, "I don't understand. There are so many people in this world who lack cultivation partners. Why did that one named Ma think of me?"

Elder Xuanji was exceptionally clever, and immediately understood that he was afraid of having his sensitive points hurt, so said in a rush, "The Lord is Sect Leader. After all, you’re someone the people will focus on, it’s only normal that you’d be the center of attention. Don't take it to heart."

Xue Meng said angrily, "Then why doesn't he pay attention to Jiang Xi?"

"... Sect Leader Jiang’s face is as before, but after all, his age is up there. Actually, when he was young, there also weren’t just a few people who thought of him.

Xue Meng listened, and for some reason became even more depressed. He thought of his mother, and his heart ached. He also couldn’t help but think of a young Jiang Yechen--fickle, untrusting, cold-blooded, and arrogant--and thought: how much did he cause his mother to grieve?

But he didn’t want to make the secret between him and Jiang Xi clear to others, so he just cursed a few times and changed the subject: "Why doesn’t the one named Ma care about Mei Hanxue then?"

Elder Xuanji smiled with unspoken meaning: "Lord, you know how Mei-xianzhang[181] is. If he wants to settle down, I'm afraid he could cause another rain of blood in the upper and lower cultivation world.

“……”

“Then then then, then--”

He “then”-d for a while, but couldn't think of a third person who could be pushed forward. Previously when Xue Zhenyong urged him to start a family, he could use Chu Wanning and Mo Ran as shields. But if they were to be mentioned now, it would only make him feel more desolate and gloomy, as if he was all alone in the world.

Xue Meng's breath sat in his chest like a big stone, and he could hardly move it.

He was so angry he began to have a headache, and finally he simply said:

"That's not true! Whether this Sect Leader marries, and when it might happen, what concern is it of others? There’s nothing to worry about! I'm leaving!"

Having learned from his Shizun how to stop a conversation, he haughtily brushed his sleeves and left.

Xue Meng sincerely hopes that Manor Head Ma’s creation will make him go bankrupt.

However, contrary to his wishes, and despite the lack of his help, within a few months the "relief scroll" became popular throughout the land.

Xue Meng was indignant: "What is this world coming to? Are people nowadays so idle?"

"You can't say that." Elder Xuanji is very fair. "The previous two months were leading up to New Year's. Lord, you know that during this festival, the elders in the family will use every possible method to encourage their heirs to marry. Manor Head Ma's relief scroll has resolved many Jianghu youth's desperate situations, it isn't strange that it's sold out."

"……"

"Also, I've heard that the scroll is very intricately made, so that even if you weren't looking for a partner, you can simply treat it as a fascinating novelty.

"For example?"

"I can't say." Xuanji gently said, "But Elder Tanlang was bored and bought one to amuse himself. He said he thought it was boring, but ten times I went to his room to find him, and nine times he was pondering that scroll.

Xue Meng was amazed: "Doesn't Elder Tanlang have no interest in remarrying?"

"En. He has no intention of remarrying." Xuanji smiled faintly. "He just has the temper of a child and likes to play with new things, so he spends his leisure time with that scroll."

"……"

Tanlang is like a child?

Xue Meng was silent. Xuanji and Tanlang became elders of SiSheng Peak at approximately the same time. Typically, Tanlang always speaks eccentrically, isn’t very close to other people, and is completely incompatible with Chu Wanning. Xuanji is the only one who can not only talk to Chu Wanning, but also amuse Tanlang to the point of laughter.

Xuanji is probably the only one who can compare the sneering Tanlang to a child with such calmness and composure.

Elder Xuanji laughed and said, "Lord, if you are curious, why don't you buy one and try it?"

"... Cough." Xue Meng cleared his throat and said arrogantly, "I'm the leader of a great sect, why would I be curious about such a lousy thing? I won't try it!"

However, the next night.

SiSheng Peak's Danxin Hall is ablaze with lights, but both sandalwood gates are closed.

Sect Leader Xue said that tonight he would seal off his cultivation, and sent all the high-ranking disciples in charge of serving him to guard the gate. The only exception would be if Elder Yuheng visited from Nanping Mountain; otherwise, he was not to be disturbed even if the sky collapsed.

The disciples all highly admired the hard working Sect Leader Xue. Moved by Sect Leader Xue's diligent efforts to govern, they each expressed their dedication to protecting him with all their heart, and that they would definitely make no mistakes.

None of them knew that Sect Leader Xue was at that moment sitting on the renovated high seat of Danxin Hall, looking at the jade scroll he holds in his hand with the utmost earnesty. There are two impressively large words on the scroll:

Relief Scroll.

Yes, that's right. It's Manor Head Ma's best seller.

It just arrived today.

And for the sake of protecting the Lord’s face, Xue Meng had obtained it using the name of Elder Xuanji.

The young Sect Leader Xue held the relief scroll and scanned it curiously. This tool was made from a particular jade that had been filled with abundant spiritual energy, and can autonomously manifest a faint golden script. In terms of appearance alone, it’s very well done.

Xue Meng began to follow the instructions on the case and silently read the spell of unsealing, and tried to use this mystic tool that was so popular throughout the land——

"The extinguished upstairs light accompanies dawn frost, the single sleeping person awakes in a joyous bed. Thinking of the night’s passions, the ends of the earth aren’t so far.

After this dismal and wretched line of poetry, a few new lines appeared on the Jade Slip:

"Spring returns to the earth, even swallows are paired, Xianzhang, are you still alone in the empty room?"

Xue Meng：“……”

Jade Slip: "Please give Taobao Manor your trust, but also give yourself a chance. Put aside the embarrassment of meeting the matchmaker, close the distance between the upper and lower cultivation worlds. This relief scroll will allow you to no longer envy the courtship of others, and allow you to find true love in the vast seas of people.

Xue Meng again: "....."

Jade Slip: "Xianzhang, before using the scroll, please name yourself."

What?

He needs to name himself?

Xue Meng was an honest man, so he picked it up and answered earnestly, "My surname is Xue, I’m called Xue Meng."

The Jade Slip did not respond.

Xue Meng went on to add earnestly, "You can also call me Xue Ziming."

The Jade Slip reacted this time, and a line of golden words appeared on it.
——

Manor Head Ma would like to gently remind you, when using the scroll, please employ a nickname. Such as "Jieke Ma" and "Dongqiang Liu". This instrument is refined by Taobao Manor of the West Lake. We must regretfully decline any names such as "Gu Yue Ye ***";[182] we hope you understand.

Xue Meng looked at this, wrinkled his brows, and frowned, muttering, "That Jiang Xi, is he stealing that one named Ma's business again?"

Whispers aside, any animosity with Gu Yue Ye doesn't have much to do with him. Xue Meng saw the orange cat left behind by his mother spread out on the carpet, licking its paws. He suddenly thought up a name for himself and said to the Jade Slip, "My name is Veggie Bun then." After that, he patted the head of the big orange cat and said, "Sorry, I'm borrowing your name for a bit."

The orange cat turned his face indifferently and continued to lick his back hair.

Xue Meng vaguely felt that the beast's eyes were full of contempt, and seemed to imply something about him. After careful consideration, he had a sudden realization - his mother's cat was called Veggie Bun, something all of SiSheng Peak knew. If he used this name, wouldn't it be easy to be recognized by someone he knew? It really wasn't appropriate.

Xue Meng sighed and stroked the big orange cat: "Smart Veggie Bun, truly you've thought this through."

"Meow..."

So Sect Leader Xue thought about it again. Finally, he gazed upon the potted plants planted by his mother in the hall before her death, and at the scrolls of waterways that his father had hanged on the walls. Finally, he gave himself a name that wasn't in the least original——

"My name is Wang Xiaoxue."[183]

The inability for anyone from SiSheng Peak to name things, as it turns out, had been inherited, from Xue Zhenyong's nickname for Shi Mei "Xue Ya",[184] to the two peaks "Aaaaahhhh" and "Waaaahhhh", then to Mo Ran's spiritual weapon "Jiangui", and finally to Xue Meng's present nickname "Wang Xiaoxue".

No one has the right to laugh at anyone else.

Originally, the nickname Wang Xiaoxue was unpleasant enough, but then the Jade Slip had a wonderful misunderstanding. After receiving Xue Meng's nickname, a few new lines of gold characters appeared.

Ok, Wang Xiaoxue-xianjun.[185]

Xue Meng：“……”

Xue Meng：“？？？”

Xue Meng: "That's a woman's name! I said my name is Wang Xiaoxue! My mother's surname Wang, my dad Xue Zhenyong's Xue!"

The Jade Slip continued to display golden words: "The rename spell is being adjusted; great apologies to Wang Xiaoxue-xianjun, but name changes are temporarily unavailable."

Xue Meng was getting a little angry: "It's clear that you misheard, why can't you change it?"

Jade Slip: "Xianjun, please don't be angry. if you have to change your name, I can pass on a message to Manor Head Ma, and ask him to modify it for you.

... There's no way he wants to contact Manor Head Ma!!

He could just imagine Manor Head Ma snickering and coming over to tease him --- Is Sect Leader Xue not so shut off anymore?[186] Has Sect Leader Xue accepted reality? Is Sect Leader Xue short of men or short of women today?

... what a nightmare.

Xue Meng had to say, "Okay, okay, you say Wang Xiaoxue, then we'll go with Wang Xiaoxue. You really are lousy, it's like you're hearing impaired."

The Jade Slip isn't angry, and said mildly, same as before: "Good Wang Xiaoxue-xianjun, in order to have a better understanding of your character, please cooperate with the relief scroll's instructions, and answer the following questions. After this, the scroll will present to you the talented, intelligent, beautiful person best matched to you. We wish you luck and success on a quick connection, and a successful match.

Xue Meng isn't very interested in quickly finding an opportune match, but he is rather curious about the greater cultivation world, and who in that world the relief scroll thinks could catch his eye.

Thereupon he said swiftly: "Ask away."

"First question: have you ever been hurt by love?"

Xue Meng touched his chin and answered, "No."

"Second question: have you ever been in love with someone?"

"No."

"Third question: have you ever secretly admired someone?"

"No."

"Fourth question: have you ever been confessed to?"

"No."

The Jade Slip did not ask any more questions. It hesitated for a moment, but then a new line of words appeared: "Xianzhang, please don't use the same incantation repeatedly to take liberties with this scroll."

"Who's repeating incantations?!" Xue Meng was immediately upset. "If I said no i just meant no, are you telling me I have to make something out of nothing now?"

The Jade Slip quickly said, "Sorry, I was wrong. Fifth question: what is your age this year?

Xue Meng was reluctant to report his age. He muttered vaguely, "twenty-something."

"All right. Twenty-something year old Wang Xiaoxue-xianzhang, in the past two decades of your life, you have never been in a romantic relationship, never secretly admired anyone, never been confessed to, and never been hurt by love.

"Yes."

Jade Slip: "Good Wang Xiaoxue-xianzhang. I want to ask you a sixth question, but before I do, I want to know whether you prefer a straightforward person, or someone who beats around the bush.

Xue Meng raised his eyebrows and said, "Nonsense, of course I like straight people. Who likes to beat around the bush?"

"All right." The Jade Slip then asked very frankly, "Sixth question: are you ugly?"

Xue Meng：“……”

After the long silence, the high-ranking disciples outside Danxin Hall heard the sound of the Sect Leader smashing things angrily and the big orange cat’s horrified meowing.

It has to be said that Taobao Manor's refinement techniques have progressed greatly over the years. The relief scroll stood strong and undamaged under Xue Meng's smashing, and it tenaciously produced glittering golden words trying to persuade Sect Leader Xue to answer the remaining questions. Finally, the scroll manifested twenty mystical playing cards, and one by one they floated into Xue Meng's hands.

No, they’re not really playing cards, they just look like them. They don't have any pips; rather, in a very illusory and hazy manner, they depicted twenty cultivators.

"Wang Xiaoxue-xianjun, who is not ugly but has been single for 20 years, congratulations! According to my divination, the soul who matches you best in the world is hidden in these twenty cards, waiting for your discovery."

Honestly, Xue Meng does not believe in this nefarious business.

He felt that during that time with the gourd he only saw his own face, so there must be no one in the world who could catch his eye. But he couldn't help his deepest curiosity, so he still couldn't wait to see the twenty cards.

Sect Leader Xue named himself "Wang Xiaoxue-xianjun", and naturally no one else on the cards would boldly use their real name. The first card Xue Meng saw was for a cultivator named Ruo Ying.

The relief scroll described them as follows:

Ruo Ying-xianzhang, dresses in misty silks, shines like a pearl, has a quiet fragrance, is still and relaxed.

This person is of sublime social position, is from a wealthy family, is good at handling bad accounts, is an expert at housekeeping, is clean-living and honest, but lives simply. Although there are often people who flatter them, Ruo Ying-xianzhang's heart is aloof, and will ignore all temptations as if they were nothing. This person is a high mountain flower that everyone desires, but cannot pluck.

Hobbies: Cultivating flowers and plants, caring for the sick.

Without looking at anything else, just seeing this shocked Xue Meng.

This person appears to be a cold beauty capable of causing the downfall of cities, but also someone who doesn't get contaminated by any surrounding filth, is self-sufficient, doesn't depend on a man, is a sensible housekeeper, kind-hearted... and their most important hobby is like his mother Madame Wang!

How rare this is!

As a good son well-versed in the Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars, who worshipped his mother like a god, Xue Meng believed from an early age that if a girl had a temperament like Madame Wang, she would never err

after marrying into a family. Just look at his mother and see how well she cared for her husband and son.

It has to be said that Xue Meng feels his heart quicken just a bit.

But he still had some doubts. First, he doubted that if there was such a rare creature in the cultivation world, then how could he never have heard of them?

Second, is a bit of somewhat eccentric intuition.

He pinched the card filled with golden text and read it again. Ah, how strange, why is it that when reading it more, he feels like he seems to have met someone similar somewhere?

...Who is it?

Ch. 323 Xue Meng’s Blind Date: Mystery Matron 2

Xue Meng originally just wanted to learn a bit more about this popular relief scroll, and didn’t intend to use it in depth. He had even less intention of following the scroll’s recommendation and actually meet a cultivator it suggested on those cards.

There were probably quite a few people with this same mindset. Manor Head Ma felt this was no good; spiritual tools should be used after all, and if they were just played with, not used, they’d soon be thrown into a corner to gather dust.

So a few days later, the Jade Slip burst out with a huge announcement:

"For the next three months, all those who actively seek cultivation partners through the relief Jade Slip will be added to the Taobao Manor VIP list. After three months, no matter whether you find a partner or not, Manor Head Ma will choose a name from this list, and offer to them Taobao Manor’s most incomparably grand gift box. We sincerely look forward to your participation.”

The day the Jade Slip made this announcement, the upper and lower cultivation worlds exploded.

Almost everyone was talking about this matter.

"Taobao Manor’s most incomparably grand gift box! Have you seen its contents?”

Passerby A was a money-grubbing miser: "I saw! One hundred and eighty high-grade magic documents, one thousand pieces of high-grade refining

stones, one hundred Taobao Manor discount iron vouchers, ten top-grade magic smelting drawings of Taobao Manor. Great! Truly an exemplary model of a righteous businessmen, the greatest merchant of the cultivation world!"

Passerby C is neither a miser nor a lapdog; his thoughts are the most pure: "Ah, you're all a bunch of commonors, take a look at me... I've got no interest in these in jewels, techniques, or diagrams. But I did hear that in the box there are 500 pieces of original and rare erotic art and stories...Heh heh heh, I hear these have never been publicly distributed, so if I get my hands on them, I'll be set for the rest of my life! "

The crowd all glared at him: "What a good-for-nothing!"

But one must admit, Manor Head Ma's treasure chest accurately jabs at the weaknesses of almost all the cultivators in the world, whether wealth, sex, or knowledge... these are all points of extreme temptation.

And Manor Head Ma said that it wasn't necessary to successfully find a partner; as long someone actively used the relief scroll, even if they were still single after three months, they could also participate in the drawing, same as everyone else.

Since then, due to the reduction in restrictions and increase in enticements, countless cultivators who used to just play around casually out of curiosity all planned to genuinely and vigorously use their scrolls, all for this gift box.

Among the most pitiful of these is the poor and low-ambitioned leader of Sisheng Peak, the arrogant Xue Meng, Xue Ziming.

Xue Meng rummaged through the twenty playing cards again.

He had already read through the introductions of the recommended cultivators once, and thought that they were all decent, but the first one, "Ruo Ying" made a strong first impression, so he thought that she was the best.

The relief scroll's so-called "active use," is to meet the other party in person.

And the way to meet in person is very particular. Manor Head Ma wants to let people look for their "soul companion", so he thought physical appearance should matter least. So how to prevent people judging each other by their looks?

The solution was quite natural.

When two people meet, they need to wear a special Taobao Manor sachet, which will make the wearer's voice and appearance change in the other person's senses. Thus, when they meet, both will know that the other's appearance is false, and they will take more care to understand their counterpart's inner self.

It is not until the sachet is removed that the illusion will disappear and the real appearance of the other person will be seen.

It has to be said that Manor Head Ma truly loves money, and really has taken a lot of trouble.

In order to find soul companions for the lone wolves of the upper and lower cultivation worlds, how much did he rack his brains and leave no stone unturned!

Xue Meng made an appointment to meet with Ruo Ying-xianzi.

His motivations weren’t pure, he didn’t hold any hope of actually finding a lifelong partner, and he went for the sake of Taobao Manor's gift box, but Sect Leader Xue is still Sect Leader Xue after all. When he was young, he could casually trade insults with girls out in the open streets, but when he became a Sect Leader, he had to show some elegance and appropriate bearing.

In Xuan Ji's often repeated advice, "Sect Leader, your words and deportment not only represent yourself, but also represent SiSheng Peak."

So in order to not lose face for SiSheng Peak, Xue Meng diligently prepared for his date.

To tell the truth, it was the first time in his life that he had a date with a female cultivator all alone, and it would be lying to say that he wasn’t nervous. Sect Leader Xue seems very indifferent and calm, when in fact, there are still some weaknesses in his heart. The day before his appointment, he laid in bed, holding Ruo Ying-xianzi’s card, flipping it over and looking over it countless times, muddling over the phrase "of noble status, with a home filled with magnificent jewels".

This is a rich woman.

But that didn’t matter. Xue Meng secretly gave himself a pep talk; even though he didn’t rank on the list of the wealthy on the "unintelligible list", he was still a man who owned several mountain peaks, so how could some nobody little girl be wealthier than him? How high could her position be, higher than his?

He couldn’t make a decision.

Wait, yes, that's it. When they meet tomorrow, he must take her to the most luxurious venue, eat the most sumptuous meal, and get her envy, really let her know who’s the hottest guy in the lower cultivation world!

Sect Leader Xue embraced this wrongheaded dream of being wealthier than his date, and imagined that Ruo Ying-guniang[187] would cast envious eyes on him, and say to him with incomparable awe, " Wang Xiaoxue-gege, how rich you are!" He couldn’t help but reveal a sweet, contented, smile, hugged his Longcheng, and fell asleep in his big bed in a daze..

The next day, Xue Meng got up early. As agreed, he wore Taobao Manor's special sachet and went to Yangzhou City to meet this female cultivator.

Before leaving, he specifically asked Xuanji what was the best tea house in Yangzhou, and also in passing asked how expensive it was. Although it was very painful for him, he felt he could bear it to save face for SiSheng Peak. In short, he couldn’t make a fool of himself in front of this rich lady!

When he used the relief scroll to transmit the words “Xihua Pavilion” to his date, Xue Meng had a very smug expression on his face.

The most luxurious teahouse in Yangzhou City! Just see if you can handle it!

Xue Meng could almost imagine her waking up in her chambers and, seeing the meeting spot appear on the scroll, lightly parting her vermilion lips, her bright eyes widening in astonishment, and murmuring softly, "Ah, he truly is a noble and generous young master..."

While his imagination was flying, the relief scroll in his hand lit up.

Ruo Ying: OK.

... OK?

That...that’s it?

Xue Meng was so angry he almost fell head-first off Longcheng. No! if you don't express any joy and surprise, that’s fine, but why didn’t you at least say say thank you? What family are you from, this is absolutely improper!!

Seething with rage, he sat on his sword and flew over the Yangtze River. The relief scroll lit up again. This Ruo Ying girl once again sent a message: Xihua Pavilion is very busy today. If you don't mind, why don’t we go somewhere else. I’ll treat.

Xue Meng's displeasure eased slightly.

... Alright, so this girl is pretty polite. First date with a man, she’d prefer to take the lead. The single "OK" was probably because she wasn’t good at expressing herself, just like his Shizun.

Thinking of Chu Wanning, Xue Meng sat up a bit straighter and thought, yes, a gentleman should be more generous. Besides, the other party was a girl. Even if she wasn’t very polite, he should be more patient.

So he replied on the relief scroll, "I said it was my invitation, no need to change that."

After five minutes, she replied again with one word.

"OK."

Xue Meng：“……”

The first time he threw a tantrum, the second time he remained calm. Xue Meng wasn’t so angry this time. He sat on Longcheng, swaying his legs, breaking through the clouds, and flew all the way from the misty clouds to the waterways south of the Yangtze River.

He will arrive at Yangzhou City soon.

Before it was time for his meeting with Ruo Ying, Xue Meng walked through the bustling and noisy streets, and looked around leisurely. Yangzhou City was under the jurisdiction of Gu Yue Ye. The people flowed through like water, the flowers were like brocade, and it all seemed like a great show of happiness and prosperity. This was coupled with old men giving pedicures on the sides of the road and flower-selling aunties lazily hawking their wares with accents like his mother’s. Hearing this made him feel quite pleasant, and his bearing relaxed.

He bought a sweet candy from the candy stall, and ate as he strolled. When it was almost time, he went straight to Xihua Pavilion on the edge of West Lake.

At first glance, there are a lot of people.

Almost every guest was equipped with Taobao Manor's sachet. It seemed that there were quite a few cultivators actively participating in Manor Head Ma's grand event, and everyone wanted to show off beyond their means by crowding into the most expensive place in the city.

Xue Meng, quite speechless, looked around the lively lobby, and said to the waiter approaching him, "I have a reservation for a second floor room. My surname is Xue... *cough* Wang. The surname is Wang."

After a pause, he added a line with some embarrassment: "Wang Xiaoxue."

The waiter at this time was probably numb to this flock of matchmaking cultivators. He didn't even blink about such a foolish name. Wang Xiaoxue didn’t even compare; names like Zhao Dagen,[188] Du Jiyan,[189] and so on, he’s heard them all. So he calmly and indifferently led Xue Meng upstairs.

"The Wind Room. As you requested, it's got a window view."

Xue Meng looked at it. Good man! Southern people really are elegant; this was supposed to be a private room, but was actually just divided by a thin bamboo curtain. The bamboo curtain was fine, with exquisite workmanship. Beyond it you could see impressions of potted plants on the other side. Elegant, definitely, but also misleading. If you raised your voice a bit everyone around you could hear.

But he’s here, so what can he do?

Xue Meng sat down, and it just so happened that Ruo Ying-xianzi had messaged him through the relief scroll:

"Just now sent off a business client. I just left, so I’ll be a bit late."

“……”

Xue Meng stared at these lines multiple times and thought he had met a master.

This is too much. The woman's showing off her wealth even before she’s appeared! Instead of showing off jewels or jewelry, she’s showing off having important business clients to see her early in the morning, so you knew that for her time is money.

What a busy woman boss! What a stark contrast to himself, who spent the morning idling around and eating tanghulu.

Xue Meng bitterly a cup of tea brewed the waiter brewed for him.

This is a ferocious woman, Xue Meng thought, I'll let this round go. When she comes, he must give her a show of strength, and let her know.——

He, Xue Ziming, was inexhaustible!

Ch. 324 Xue Meng’s Blind Date: Mystery Matron 3

Xue Meng waited until he almost couldn’t stand it anymore, and finally heard the waiter from outside the room: "For the Wind Room, please come this way."

At long last, the woman was here.

Xue Meng shook off his annoyance and sat up straight. Learning from his father, he adopted a steady attitude, and lifted his eyes to gaze outside.

He only heard a set of unhurried footsteps that, neither too fast nor too slow, walked towards him. An indistinct figure passed through the bamboo curtains, which were partly rolled aside. The first thing that came into sight was a silver water pipe engraved with a one-legged dragon pattern.[190] Attached to the pipe was a blue silk sack embroidered with pollia flowers.[191] The hand lighting the pipe was exceedingly elegant and slender, with a sensuous wrist that had upon it a delicate cinnabar-colored mole.

Xue Meng vaguely felt as if he had seen such a hand somewhere, but with his blurred vision, he couldn’t properly recall. As he was puzzling this over, the other person entered the room.

On the relief scroll, it was declared: when wearing the blind date sachet, the sachet will wrap an illusion around your body. The way you look in the eyes of others will be a mix of your own original appearance, plus the likes and fancies of those others.

To clarify, Ruo Ying definitely didn’t actually look like this. Since Xue Meng felt that she should look a certain way, her face when she appeared would

lean towards that appearance. However, there would remain some shadow of her true self.

Therefore, since Xue Meng thought that Ruo Ying should look something like his mother, the person who came out from behind the bamboo curtain really did look somewhat like Madame Wang.

Her skin was very white; she looked very dignified and gentle, and between her knit eyebrows she exuded a slight aura of sickliness.

Xue Meng suddenly stood up as if he had been smashed by a boulder. It was no wonder he was so moved; anyone who has someone resembling their beloved deceased mother appear before him, even if he knew the appearance was false, couldn't help but have mixed feelings.

He opened his mouth, and the word "mother" almost came out. Fortunately, the waiter just then followed Ruo Ying into the room, which suddenly snapped Xue Meng's mind back to the present. Xue Meng's tongue rolled up, and he carelessly changed "mother" into "you".[192]

"You……"

"You are Wang Xiaoxue?" Ruo Ying spoke; her voice was like cold clear water. Although this voice was also distorted by illusion, it wasn't the least bit like Madame Wang's.

"Y-yes."

Ruo Ying sized him up with her glass-colored apricot eyes.

For a split second, Xue Meng had a very strange feeling. He felt that this Ruo Ying's gaze held an innate fussiness and coldness, even a tiny bit of impatience.

"I don't have a very good memory, and I forget names easily." Ruo Ying said. "Let’s make this simple. Can I call you Wang-xianzhang?"

Even though she said it like a question, there was no uncertainty in her tone at all.

There was even some arbitrariness there.

Xue Meng began to whisper to himself, how could he feel that this kind of person was like his mother?

But whispers aside, Sect Leader Xue was still a sect leader. Under the careful guidance of Xuanji, Xue Ziming's current ability to deal with people couldn’t be compared to his past. So he brought forth the demeanor of a sect leader, cleared his throat and said, "That’s fine. It’s nice to meet you, Ruo—"

He wanted to call her Ruo-guniang, but Manor Head Ma was quite an ingenious man. In order to help people find their soul companions without interference, he added various spells to the sachets. Aside from creating an illusory appearance, for the other party, the sachets also forbid the wearer from asking their date’s age, height, weight... even gender.

So before the word "guniang" even left Xue Meng’s mouth, he was stopped by the sachet’s silencing spell.

Old Manor Head Ma seemed to be waving his arms and shouting—age, height, weight, looks—and gender, none of these are the key to finding love!

Will all cultivators please pay more attention to the soul beneath the skin!

Xue Meng, however, was at this time not aware of Manor Head Ma's painstaking design. He thought Taobao Manor’s product had probably once again malfunctioned, so he knit his brows and corrected himself: "Ruo-xianzhang".

"En." Ruo Ying accepted it with ease, and with the attitude of some big shot sat opposite Xue Meng.

Xue Meng：“……”

No way, this sister, shouldn’t you be making some proper salutations and give some kind of thanks?

Matron Ruo glanced at him indifferently and nodded. "You can sit, no need to stand up."

Xue Meng: "...???"

What kind of tone is this?

If this had happened before, Xue Meng probably would have already jumped up and started loudly arguing, but now Xue Meng resisted.

He was already the most attractive youth in the lower cultivation world, a master possessing several mountain peaks, and a mature man who glorified SiSheng Peak on behalf of his father.

That’s right, he shouldn’t get mad at girls.

So Xue Meng sat down in front of Ruo Ying. He straightened his posture, extended his fingers, and pushed Xihua Pavilion’s refreshments menu towards the other person: "What would you like to drink?"

Ruo Ying didn’t seem interested in any tea or pastries, and said, "Get what you’d like."

After that, he leaned back in the one-legged dragon patterned sandalwood chair, and added some dried grasses into the water pipe.

Xue Meng: "... Do you smoke hemp? Tobacco?

"A special recipe." Ruo Ying’s eyelids were lowered, and not inclined to look up. "It won't affect you."

"Hold on, you're so young—"

"Who told you I was young?"

Xue Meng stared. "How old are you?"

Ruo Ying leaned against the window, ignited a flame at her fingertips, lit the water pipe, took an indifferent puff, and slowly said the following:

"What’s that got to do with you?"

“……”

"Also." Ruo Ying lifted her refined chin and pointed at the brocade sack hanging around Xue Meng’s waist. "That Ma set up a pile of restrictions. I can't answer your question until I get rid of this sachet."

"Why don’t we just relax? I’m just here to see you, not to actually find some kind of cultivation partner."

Xue Meng was shocked. Fuck, how did this woman steal his lines?!

If neither of the people having a blind date have any genuine intention of continuing, it's especially important to seize the first opportunity to say this, since the one that lags behind would then be the one to lose face.

Xue Meng currently felt like he very much had no face.

He not only felt that he has no face, but also feels that the other party must have some exceptional level of experience with blind dates — otherwise how could she know so soon to strike first and gain the upper hand?!

She must have been dragged off to meet a thousand potential matches by a matchmaker, and been rejected a thousand and one times for being too ferocious.

This must be so!

Xue Meng's handsome face was slightly green, and he ground his teeth: "You thought I was here for a blind date? I... I'll tell you the truth! My family circumstances are very good, and if I just wave my hands the line of people knocking at my doorway would stretch from Yangzhou to Sichuan!

Ruo Ying looked at him indifferently.

When Xue Meng spoke he felt like an emperor.

After he spoke, the eyes of the other party barely paid him any mind.

Suddenly, he felt like an idiot.

And the gentle, mild tone of Ruo Ying's following statement increasingly reinforced his feelings of being an idiot.

Ruo Ying took another puff of her water pipe, slightly tilted her head, and said to the waiter, whose face said he'd seen this all before, "Bring the Jade Terrace Plum Blossom set. For this Xianzhang.

Xue Meng's eyes bugged out. "Didn't you say I can order?!"

"I'm a regular customer here," Matron Ruo Ying said with great presence. "The Jade Terrace Plum Blossom set is quite sweet. It's most suitable for you unsophisticated young folk."

Xue Meng got even more angry.

He was so mad that when the tea arrived, he didn't want to move at all. The tea was clear and cold, the pastries were sparkling. They looked exceptionally attractive, but he wasn't tempted one bit.

Ruo Ying: You're not eating?

Xue Meng, in a rage: "I like to waste my money, what's it to you!"

When Ruo Ying heard him speak like this, she squinted her apricot eyes and sketched some faint lines in the pipe smoke. "Is Wang-xianzhang from West Lake Taobao Manor?"

"No."

"A wealthy merchant from Linyi?"

"Also no."

"A disciple of Yangzhou Gu Yue Ye?"

"Gu Yue Ye? What's so great about them," Xue Meng said lightly, "Forget their disciples, hehe, even if their sect leader Jiang Xi were to lose money

to present a gift to me, I wouldn’t take it!”

For an unknown reason, Ruo Ying, after hearing this, slightly raised her eyebrows.

Xue Meng：”What’s with that expression? Don’t believe me?”

Ruo Ying sneered and did not reply, but continued to smoke her water pipe. After a while, she suddenly said, "Since you’re so wonderful, why don’t you order some more? I haven't had breakfast yet."

Although Xue Meng currently found her very unpleasant, he has no intention to refuse, since she said she wanted to eat. He picked up the menu and asked, "What do you want?"

"Eighteen exquisite delights. I order this every time I come.”

Xue Meng said indifferently, "Okay, just order - cough cough!"

Glancing at the price listed on the menu, his eyes almost popped out!

"Every time you come—this is what you get?!"

Ruo Ying said apathetically, "And add a pot of top-grade Jincheng Chunlu tea."

Xue Meng felt blood coagulating in this chest. At this moment, even a gentle pat from a kitten would lead to him violently coughing blood.

If it weren't for the fact that he arranged this date himself, he would have wondered if Ruo Ying wasn’t just some tea-selling little sister from Xihua Pavilion in disguise! She just wanted to play Xian Ren Tiao with him!!![193]

After the meal, Sect Leader Xue’s heart dripped blood and his purse was half empty. When the two exited Xihua Pavilion, Xue Meng's footsteps were drifting.

"Are you unwell?"

Faced with Ruo Ying's slightly concerned inquiry, the face-saving Sect leader Xue forced his spirits up: "Unwell? No no no, I'm not unwell, I’m very well."

"If one is sick, one should not treat it as taboo and avoid the doctor."

Xue Meng stared. "You’re the one who’s sick!" I'm perfectly fine!"

"Really?" Ruo Ying's voice seemed to have been soaked in Chinese herbal medicine, and her words were suffused with a clean, medicinal fragrance. He said quietly, "Your lower disk is hollow, your waist and knees are limp and aching, and you have heat in the five centers."[194] Her almond eyes swept across Xue Meng's whole body, giving Xue Meng the illusion that he had been cut open from skin to bone, "Your distinguished self has a kidney deficiency."[195]

Xue Meng was so angry that he shouted, "Shut up you quack!!!”

The quack added detachedly, "Also, your liver fire is blazing."[196]

Xue Meng：“……”

It seemed that his previous fancies were totally wrong. Women who followed the path of medicine were not necessarily like his mother, who made those around her feel enveloped in a spring breeze.[197] There are also these disgraces who make people feel like they’re sitting on pins and needles!

But the thing that caused Xue Meng to crumble is one of the Jade Slip's rules: according to its requirements, when two people meet, they must stay together at least six hours, or the date will not count towards his active use.

Well alright, he's here now, and the money has been spent. If this still doesn't count, then he's really lost out.

For the sake of not having a total loss, Xue Meng decided to endure. He must endure!

Also, this woman had apparently been indifferent towards him since the very beginning, which greatly gnawed at Xue Meng's ego. Thus, Xue Meng made a secret decision in his heart:

Not only do I have to endure, but within the next five hours I'll also establish my persona as some mysterious big shot! Yeah, like someone who can treat pearls and gold like nothing, that kind of guy!

He must make this wealthy matron, who looks down upon him with dog eyes, regret endlessly. At the very least, he must leave impress upon her a strong sense of failure.

But he's already brought her to Yangzhou's most lavish Xihua Pavilion, and she didn't have any super emotional reaction, so where else could he go that might intimidate her?

When he thought about it, he suddenly remembered an exquisite place—

Sect Leader Xue, whose morale was boosted by his current sense of injustice, raised his head like a millionaire and said profoundly, "We strangers came together by chance, sp I will not allow Ruo-xianzhang to

disturb herself over my health. In any case, we still have quite a bit of time left in the day, so we shouldn’t just stand around foolishly. Why don't I take you to a nice place and broaden your horizons?

Ruo Ying was silent for a moment, then asked, "Where are you taking me?"

Xue Meng eventually led her to Changye Market.

This was a structure with deep eaves, and numerous roof ridges that kissed along its three wooden stories. It stood near Yangzhou Port and was well-known by all the residents of Yangzhou as a market for stolen goods. It was rumored that most of the things that could not be seen in public in the cultivation world all eventually flowed into this sumptuous building, and the reason the guild behind this black market could arrogantly defy the Jianghu was in large part due to the support of Gu Yue Ye.[198]

When Xue Meng was young, he once wanted to go south for some fun. Madame Wang deliberately called him over, took his hand, and warned and implored him a thousand times. She first went through a pile of trivial nonsense, but at last gave a final warning, "Meng-er, the Changye Market in Yangzhou City isn’t a good place. To say nothing of prices, the things they sell are...there are some..."

She seemed to be too embarrassed to speak, and her white cheeks reddened slightly. At last she coughed softly and said, "Anyway, you don't have much money. If you go in, you'll come out completely broke. So when you see Changye Market, you have to avoid it, understand?

Xue Meng was a good son who obeyed his mother, and he was of such incomparable pureness that he couldn’t hear the implications behind his

mother’s words. He could only ask curiously, "Is the Changye Market a place where only idiots with too much money go?"

Xue Zhengyong, who was nearby, laughed heartily and said to his already weak son, "Aiyah, not exactly. Your mother always treats you as a baby and is too embarrassed to tell you things. But as your father, I’m different, some things ahh—" Before he could finish, Madame Wang elbowed him.

"Cough cough!" Xue Zhengyong covered his struck chest and hastily changed the subject. "There are some things you really shouldn't know!"

Xue Meng looked at them confused, but his parents only smiled at him, embarrassed. This foolish boy, couldn’t make heads or tails of what was going on; fortunately just then Shi Mei asked him to go with him to the other side of the mountain to collect medicine for Shizun. So he just left, bewildered.

But from that day on, Xue Meng remembered. When he saw “Changye Market” he should avoid it, because it was expensive, and he’d just burn his money away, and the only people who’d hang around there were stupidly wealthy.

Today, in order to retrieve his dignity, but also because he felt that as a Sect Leader he should broaden Ruo Ying’s horizons, he led her to this vast, imposing gold and red building. Along the way, Ruo Ying repeatedly asked him if he really only wanted to go to Changye Market. In order not to show his ignorance, Xue Meng just waved his hand and haughtily raised his chin, just like a peacock spreading its tail.

"You are a frequent client of Xihua Pavilion, and I’m a VIP at Changye Market. So, I'll take you there."

Ruo Ying's expression was rather inscrutable.

Just then, Xue Meng found himself in front of a senior manager of Changye Market, and, looking as if he'd been struck by five bolts of lightning, he was red from his ankles to his hair—

"Wha- what VIP pendant? My mother didn't say anything about that, she said I could go in whenever!"

The old manager looked at him through the seam of his eyelids. "Has it been over ten years since your mother has come to Yangzhou? Changye Market's rules have changed; only the masters and mistresses with jade VIP pendants are welcome to do business here. If you don't have one, then please go back.

"I, I, I —" Xue Meng wanted to find a piece of tofu he could use to clobber himself to death. He already boasted that he had free entry; wasn't he just punching his own face here?

After knocking around for a while, he stubbornly proclaimed, "Ah! I have a bad memory! I just remembered! Here's what happened!"

The old manager tucked his hands in his sleeves. This old turtle had reviewed innumerable people, and Xue Meng was too pure and naive. He chuckled and waited for what shoddy explanation Xue Meng would give.

"I, I, I left in such a hurry today that I forgot the pendant at home!"

"Aiyoh, that's truly unfortunate. Then I'll ask you two to please leave for today."

Xue Meng looked at the old turtle, who looked down on him with dog eyes, and once again felt embarrassed and wronged and at his wits' end, so he

overlooked the hand coming out out from beside him.

A slender wrist like the finest porcelain, around which was wrapped a jade and gold-beaded pendant. The warm glow of white jade against that arm made the delicate cinnabar mole particularly stand out.

"I brought mine."

When the old manager saw the pendant, he suddenly shook. The wrinkles on his old face almost disappeared from his astonishment, terror, and need to flatter: "A hea-heavenly VIP pendent?!"

"Why haven't you opened the door yet," Ruo Ying said coldly.

"Y-yes, yes of course!"

The thick, heavy sandalwood-carved doors immediately opened, and the old manager first bowed then made his obeisance, kowtow-ing almost as if he were making amends to a great-aunt. Ruo Ying brushed her wide silver and blue sleeves, and looked back at Xue Meng, who was as dumb as a wooden chicken.

Then, with a touch of mockery, she said, "Wang-xianzhang's experience is so great. Won't you lead the way?"

Xue Meng：“……”

Ch. 325 Xue Meng's Blind Date: Mystery Matron 4

>>idk how to warn for this properly but there are spirit dildos in this chapter so please proceed accordingly.

Before entering the main gates of Changye Market, Xue Meng braced himself: "You want me to lead the way, I'll lead the way!"

When he got in, he became a bit overwhelmed.

What sort of trashy place is this Changye Market!? Isn't this kind of thing harmful to society? Look at those maidservants! What are they wearing! Why are some of them dressed up as Nine-Tailed Fox demons? Legs, chest, waist, they're just letting everything hang out, how could he bear to look at them!!!! The elder in charge of Yangzhou is Jiang Yechen, right? That fraud! How could he allow this kind of immoral venue to arrogantly operate in the middle of the city!!!

Ruo Ying seemed to notice his embarrassment, and smiled faintly. "If Wang-xianchang is not used to this environment, then we can go somewhere else. Don't force yourself."

"Who, who said I was forcing myself? Ha-haven't you heard of the 'Unintelligible List'?"

"I have some idea."

Xue Meng's dead duck mouth said: "W-well, I, I rank No. 1 on their list of most accomplished cultivators!"

"...Isn't that Mei Hanxue."

"That's me keeping a low profile for other people's sake, I asked someone to remove my name from the list!"

"You can do that?" Ruo Ying sneered, "How much did it cost?"

"What's that go to do with you?"

Xue Meng rolled his eyes and walked forward with a swagger, even though his ears were red.

Changye Market had three stories altogether, but Xue Meng found that he could sum up the entire place in one condensed sentence: weirdly-dressed shitheads selling weird shit.

No need to discuss those pretty women shopkeepers who might as well have their butts hanging out; he could turn off his senses, so as long as he didn't pay too much attention to them they weren't that provocative. More importantly, he couldn't make heads or tails of anything these stalls were selling. He couldn't even understand the cries of these black market vendors hawking their wares.

Xue Meng could understand the individual words, but together—

"The Haitang Essence Collected Edition! Nine dragons one phoenix, double dragon penetration! Now in full lush detail, don't miss this opportunity, these volumes are signed by the authors Han Mei and Di Sheng Kuang Cao!"

"Dagen-jun, Dagen-jun, luobo cultivated into jing![199] The Dagen-jun of our shop have condensed a unique solitary magic, allowing them to transform into the size of any cultivator on the "Size List of the Great Heroes of the Cultivation World". Do you want to feel the same stimulation as Master

Chu? Do you want to experience the twins of Kunlun taking you on a shared flight? You only need one Dagen-jun, it's an extraordinary experience, sure to be eternally memorable!"

Just listen to that! What is this bullshit?

But in spite of the chaos in his heart, his face was still perfectly calm. It was especially calm as Xue Meng stole a glance at Ruo Ying, and found that she was smirking at the sight of him. Xue Meng got even angrier, and marched to the stall with the unscrupulous air of a frequent customer.

"Give me ten of those luobojing ."

Shopkeeper: “……”

Ruo Ying ： “……”

"Xue Meng stared with his apricot eyes and said, "What? Why are you looking at me?" He rubbed his nose. "Is there something on my face?"

The shopkeeper choked for a long time before he cordially said: "Honored guest, our family's Dagen-jun are all refined in accordance with the "Great Heroes List". Once the seal is released, the effect is quite vigorous, and very similar to the original heroes. If you are not like a wolf at thirty and like a tiger at forty, I suggest you buy only one.[200]

Xue Meng had no idea what he just said. He looked down at the seemingly white, tender and plump radishes nestled in brocade boxes. He had no clue what the Dagen-jun would become after they were unsealed, and less than no clue what the hell the "Size List of the Great Heroes of the Cultivation World" or "like a wolf at thirty and like a tiger at forty" meant.

"It would have been a sign of good character to humbly ask for clarification at this point.

Unfortunately, Xue Meng didn't.

Xue Meng thought that men who thought independently were the most capable. So he thought independently for a while, and had a small epiphany—these Dagen-jun are probably like thousand-year-old ginseng—once unsealed, they'll have a vigorous effect on a person, exactly like ancient ginseng would. And cultivators in their thirties and forties often encounter roadblocks to their cultivation, which are like tigers and wolves, and these will require ginseng tonics to treat. But these Dagen-jun are highly potent, so an ordinary person would only need to eat one of them to unblock their meridians.

Everything made sense now!

Xue Meng applauded himself loudly in his heart and said haughtily to the shopkeeper: "How could one be enough for my consumption?"

"Shopkeeper: "... Two's not impossible, but you really don't need more than three. I'm a black market merchant, not a profiteer, and I want to make things clear for you."

Xue Meng said impatiently: "You really...! I meant what I said!"

"S-sir, you're asking for too many." The shopkeeper wiped the sweat off his forehead. "Your body wouldn't be able to handle it."

"Hmph." Xue Meng said, "You act as if I haven't had these before. Forget two, twenty are only enough to last me two or three days."

This time the shopkeeper was completely silent.

He looked at Xue Meng's pale lips with awe, then his eyes moved down all the way down to Xue Meng's...

"What are you looking at?" Xue Meng was alert, glaring at him angrily. "Business is business, don't look where you shouldn't!"

The shopkeeper quickly removed his eyes from Xue Meng's lower body and coughed: "This honored guest has been endowed with great gifts, thi- this one pays his respects. Then, I'll pack you ten luobojing—do you want ones the size of Mo-zongshi?

What does he mean by the size of Mo-zongshi?

What does that dog Mo Ran have to do with anything?

Xue Meng pondered for a while, then figured it out with his extraordinary understanding.

Does he mean that the scale of spiritual endurance is the same as that of Mo Ran? That he can't accept; if you're talking about the spiritual endurance of current great heroes, then he's not much worse than Mo Ran.

"No," he said at once, calmly. I want the size of Sect Leader Xue.

The shopkeeper was stunned: "Honored guest, you're joking. Where's Sect Leader Xue on the top ten list?"

"Xue Meng was even more stunned than he was, and even more angry than he was stunned—

"No Xue Ziming?!"

"The shop owner was utterly baffled: "??? Why Xue Ziming??"

"Xue Meng's veins started popping out: "Why not Xue Ziming!!!!"

The two yelled past each other like a chicken talking to a duck for a very long time until they were both hoarse. Neither noticed that Ruo Ying, who had been standing by and watching them, suddenly frowned, and kept frowning more deeply as they went on.

Her glasslike eyes looked back and forth at Xue Meng several times. Suddenly she came forward and grabbed Xue Meng's arm.

Xue Meng turned his head: "What are you grabbing my arm for, you know there shouldn't be direct contact between men and women!"

"... Do you know what these luobojing are used for?"

"No shit! It's like ginseng, you use them restore spiritual energy!"

Ruo Ying ："……"

Shopkeeper ："……"

"Ruo Ying turned around and said to the shopkeeper: "I'm unsealing one of your monsters; you can bill two taels of silver to the account of Gu Yue Ye." As she spoke, she raised her hand and pointed to the sky. The sealing talisman on a brocade box was released with a bang.

What appeared to be an ordinary luobojing suddenly sent out a brilliant light, and before the eyes of the staring crowds, turned into a length of... vivid and lifelike... clearly detailed... delicate and exquisite... incredibly humongous...

Jade. Penis.

Oh look, it could even move by itself.

Xue Meng stiffened and his face instantly turned green.

"He pointed at the shopkeeper angrily and almost bit his tongue: "You, you, you, you scumbag!"

The shopkeeper was shocked and aggrieved: "You were the one who wanted to buy it! And you said one wasn't enough for you..."

"AAAAHHH!" Xue Meng could no longer recall what he had said. His green face suddenly turned red again, then flashed between red and green a few times. Covering his face, he suddenly wanted to run away, but then he hit a solid body.

He had run into Ruo Ying, who was blocking his path.

But why did it feel...not like a woman at all???

Ruo Ying looked at him coldly. "Xue Meng?"

Xue Meng was shocked: "How did you know? Who are you?!"

Ruo Ying said nothing else, grabbed his collar and dragged him out of Changye Market. Xue Meng yelled and tried to resist, but it was like pushing back against a mountain.

When they got outside, and she had found an isolated pavilion by the river, only then did Ruo Ying let go of him, brushed her sleeves, and turned to face him.

Xue Meng felt like he'd almost been strangled to death. He held his neck and repeatedly coughed: "You dog! You, you, cough - who the hell are you?!"

Ruo Ying raised her hand, and her fingertips flashed blue. Before Xue Meng could see clearly, the Taobao Manor illusion sachets around their waists were neatly shredded to pieces.

Xue Meng looked up in shock and almost hit his head on the pavilion pillar.

"It's you?!!"

After the illusion disappeared, the man standing in front of him was tall and handsome. He wore magnificent silver-blue robes that fell to the floor, with luxurious peacock silk thread embroidery that delicately trace out Gu Yue Ye's phoenix totem. But no matter how sumptuous and grand his clothes, they couldn't compare to this man's own presence. He had a refined eyebrow and a straight nose, an elegant mouth, and a pair of apricot eyes that seemed to be filled with an unceasing misty rain. This man had been born with a sense of arrogant pride.

"Jiang Yechen?!!!!"

Who else could this Ruo Ying-xianjun be, but the sect leader of Gu Yue Ye, the richest man in the cultivation world, Jiang Xi?

Matron Jiang... no, Jiang Yechen, stopped Xue Meng's words in one sentence: "You are such a disappointment."

"???"

If Xue Meng hadn't been choked until he was light-headed, he really would have killed him with one blow. This person's face was so delicate, how

could he say such shameless things without even blinking?

"Wow, what a great sect leader you are, thoughtlessly wandering about, idling in this kind of place, who knows what you'll do next?"

At this point, he shook himself back to full awareness. Xue Meng coughed some more, put down the hand that was rubbing his neck, and stared at Jiang Xi. "And why are you scolding me? What gives you the right to do that?"

Jiang Yechen said angrily: "You're still young, shouldn't you be meeting female cultivators from good families in decent proper settings? But no, here you are listening to that shark Ma Fangzhi's poisonous words, and you actually bought that promiscuous relief scroll! You're a disgrace!"

Xue Meng replied, also angrily: "Why don't you say anything about yourself? Look how old you are, and you even...with my mother...Why aren't you managing your Gu Yue Ye like you're supposed to, and running out to mess with the younger generation with that pretty face of yours! Didn't you think that your date might be younger than your son? Not that I'm saying I'm your son, I'm just saying, you're the real disgrace!"

Jiang Xi got even angrier. He whipped his sleeves around and fumed between gritted teeth: "I wasn't doing this to go on a date."

"Then why did you do it? Oh, I see, researching the tools of your rival Manor Head Ma, right? You said he was a shark, well, why don't you look at your own Gu Yue Ye? Absolutely shameless!"

"I'm shameless but you're not?" A big strong man, nicknaming himself Xiaoxue like a girl, haven't you lost face?"

"I can't lose any more face than you have!"

"You impudent-"

"You bullshitter!"

"Xue Ziming!”

"Jiang Ruoying!"

An old couple driving an ox cart slowly passed by them. The wife asked, "Husband, what's the young couple in that pavilion arguing about?"

"Wife, your eyes are going bad, those two are brothers."

"Eh? Isn't that one in the silver and blue robes a girl?"

"No, it's a man, his face is delicate, but you can see he's a lot taller than his brother."

Xue Meng：“……”

Jiang Xi：“……”

Xue Meng stamped his feet: "Look how old you are! And you're still out all day and night trying to take advantage of other people!"

Jiang Xi said indifferently: "Our medical sect has always been like this. If you don't like it, you can join Gu Yue Ye yourself."

Xue Meng was so angry he screamed: "Aagh! I don't want to see you anymore! That old woman said you were a woman and she was right! I named myself Wang Xiaoxue because the relief scroll made a mistake, you naming yourself Ruo Ying was you pretending to be a woman!"

"I picked Ruo Ying because—"

"Because what?"

Because when the pollia flowers flourish, I'm happy.[201]

But knowing that Wang Chuqing's favorite flower is this flower, Jiang Xi was afraid that saying anything would just increase the misunderstandings, so he kept his lips shut.[202]

"Ahah! So you were just pretending, admit it already!"

Jiang Xi suddenly raised his hand towards Xue Meng's face, as if to teach him a proper lesson on how he should talk to his elders. But as his hand came near Xue Meng's mouth, he suddenly felt that arguing with this idiot by the river was truly beneath him, so he aggressively put his hand down.

At this time, the unwell feeling deep in his chest rose up again. Jiang Xi turned his head, covered his mouth with his sleeve, and coughed repeatedly.

Xue Meng thought at first that he was choking and felt some happiness at Jiang Xi's pain, but when he saw that the coughing grew more and more serious, such that even Jiang Xi's apricot eyes began to dim and tear up, he became nervous: "Hey, hey... what's wrong with you?"

Jiang Xi coughed violently; his eyes had turned red. He raised his water pipe with his fingertips, trembling slightly, and took a few puffs.

Xue Meng was startled: "Why are you smoking when you're coughing like that?"

Jiang Xi ignored him. After a few more drags, the symptoms lessened. He gasped for a bit, and slowly straightened up. Walking outside the pavilion, he looked out silently at the running water and said after a long while, "Get lost. Go back to SiSheng Peak."

"Your wounds from the war..."

"There's no illness in the world that I, Jiang Yechen, can't treat. I have no use for your concern."

The small thread of softness that Xue Meng had with great difficulty developed towards Jiang Xi had been forcefully cut. He stood there for a while, neither hard nor soft, desperately trying to control his face from revealing too much.

Jiang Xi took a few drags on his water pipe, looked up, and exhaled gradually: "Anyway, you're not a child anymore, it's time you find a decent person and start a family. But don't put your energies into this vulgar dating nonsense. Find a wife you know inside out. Her character, family, skills, and looks; you should know all those clearly." He paused, then frowned again. "This isn't the kind of thing that Ma Fangzhi's relief scroll can do for you."

"Xue Meng stared: "Jiang Yechen, what are you saying? What's with this love talk nonsense? I can understand other people pushing me to get married, but you...did you take some wrong medicine?

Jiang Yechen cooly turned to half face Xue Meng. "It's true that love talk is nonsense, but it's nonsense for me."

“……”

"It's not the same for you. For you, not carrying on your family line is nonsense. You should get married."

Xue Meng was very glad that his father is Xue Zhengyong, not Jiang Yechen. He has never met anyone more hypocritical than Jiang Yechen; he dares to excuse himself from one rule after another, but when it comes to Xue Meng, suddenly he'll force him down to get married?

Jiang Yechen is truly a dog!

When Xue Meng returned to SiSheng Peak, he furiously stuck a giant fork through the card with the words "Ruo Ying" on it, and tore it to pieces.

If Jiang Xi doesn't let him play, then he'll definitely play!

There's no way he'll let the gift box of good businessman Manor Head Ma fall into the hands of bad businessman Jiang Xi!

"With this in mind, Xue Meng's felt flames rise in his heart, and once again spread out the cards and began to look at the remaining mysterious people.

This time he knew better, and understood that the relief scroll might recommend a man to him. He resolved to carefully do his own screening. This time, at the very least, he'll pick a woman close to his own age!

He, Xue Ziming, will never admit defeat!

After careful study, Xue Ziming, who refused to admit defeat, turned over a second card, which was for someone nicknamed "Leng Gong".[203]

Although the relief scroll mixed men and women, surely someone who'd entered the cold palace can't be a man? This must be a sad lonely girl.

The card described this Leng Gong-guniang as follows:

Leng Gong. Peevish temperament, direct with people, not well versed in common sense, a hidden gem.

Because she had long ago been abandoned in the cold night, and spent over ten years alone guarding an empty bed, Leng Gong-xianzhang holds a level of mistrust and paranoia regarding love distinct from the rest of the world. This was to the point that she suffered from some level of madness, which made it easy for her to fall into negativity and self-doubt. Perhaps only the most tolerant and gentle cultivation partner can heal the scars in her heart and ignite her inner blazing love.[204]

Likes: Intense things.

One can't help but say that Xue Meng is actually a very kind-hearted child. Normal people should run far away from this kind of date, but Xue Meng chose her.

The reason for this is that Xue Meng, besides believing that she was a woman, felt that when he read between the lines on the card, there was someone pitiful there.

Guarding an empty bed, mistrust and paranoia, madness, and scars on her heart.

Look, what a miserable girl!! How shameful and cold-blooded is that fickle lover who once abandoned her! It's like a second Jiang Xi! A scum of the cultivation world!

Xue Meng thought in any case that this wouldn't be a real date. The girl's condition was so bad that no one would choose her, and then her heart

would be hurt even more and she would get entangled even more in paranoia and denial. What a sad story this would be.

This girl also liked "intense things" and seemed very aggressive towards others. He wondered if she would hurt herself if she reached a point of severe emotional pain.

The more Xue Meng thought about it, the more he felt he could not stand aside. A lesson Xue Zhengyong taught him many years ago seemed to ring in his ears once again:

"Pity mankind, with all its suffering. If you have enough strength, use all that strength to help."[205]

So Xue Meng, who had the same sense of justice and compassion as his father, made a grand decision - OK, he's going to gift this Leng Gong-guniang a warm flame!

His mind made up, Xue Meng immediately messaged Leng Gong-guniang through the relief scroll, requesting a meeting in three days time wearing illusion sachets in Wuchang Town in Sichuan.

Ch. 326 Xue Meng’s Blind Date: Wayward Young Lady 1

The day for the meeting with Leng Gong-xianzi soon came.

This time Xue Meng went to the appointment with warm-hearted zeal, aiming to make a new friend and steer this wayward young lady straight, so he didn't go in with a competitive spirit.[206] Thus, the way he arranged this date, naturally, was also in contrast to Ruo.... Bah! This was completely different from meeting with that cheating lying son of a bitch Jiang Xi.

Wuchang Town was within Xue Meng's own territory, so he had a very clear idea of where to get the tastiest dishes, the best wine, and the nicest snacks.

Xue Meng chose a family-run restaurant that he himself often frequented. This shop's small dishes and hotpot were excellent, but it was a bit out of the way, and not easy to find. He was about to send another message to Lenggong to tell her the exact location, when he heard a slightly raspy, alluring female voice coming in from the street: "Hello? Shopkeeper, I'm looking for Wang Xiaoxue."

"Wang Xiaoxue?"

"Yes, a customer," the female voice said impatiently.

Before the shopkeeper could answer again, Xue Meng opened the half-rolled curtain and looked out.——

Standing beside a beech cabinet was a tall female cultivator around 27 or 28 year old, with long inky hair, eyes so black they flashed purple, fine eyelashes so long they curled up like smoke, and extremely beautiful

features. She wore black and gold cultivation robes with a cinched waist that truly showed how slender her waist was and how long her legs were. She had a profuse aura that exuded an abundance of wildness and tension.

This appearance was the illusion sachet's interpretation of Leng Gong's original appearance and original sound, so her voice and appearance have both been readjusted. But one could tell that her original appearance was quite tall, and that she was an outstanding beauty.

Xue Meng beckoned to her. Leng Gong glanced at him. She boldly swaggered over, and looked at him through her eyelashes. "Are you the one who asked me out?"

"Yeah, it was me."

"Excellent. You have a good eye."

She sat down opposite Xue Meng with great force, crossed her legs, clasped her hands, and assumed a posture that could only be described as domineering.

Xue Meng thought that she would be plaintive and mournful, and come to this date holding a deep grudge. To see someone so firm and resolute; that was unexpected. But in all honesty, Xue Meng wasn't very good at dealing with crying women, so seeing that Leng Gong still held her head high even through her emotional pain increased Xue Meng's positive feelings and admiration towards her a bit more.

But Xue Meng was also someone who was bad at giving compliments. From birth to now, the number of people he'd complimented could be counted on three fingers: his father, his mother, and his shizun. So he

stifled his words for quite a long time before he stiffly choked out a sentence: "You...you're really hard huh."

"....." As soon as Leng Gong sat down, she had crossed her arms and looked out the window. When she heard this her purple and black pupils whirled around peacefully, staring at Xue Meng like an eagle staring at a rabbit.

After a while, she said: "So, even you can tell?"

Xue Meng thought to himself: You've been thrown to the side, and yet you still walk with such majesty and authority. Only fools could overlook such a resolute spirit.

So he nodded.

Leng Gong tapped her tall nose, and smiled with a bit of arrogance and coldness: "Of course. You're all like this, you're here either for this , or you're here for status and money."

As she said this, she leaned back in her chair, stretched her arms back, and lifted her chin slightly.

"Why don't you order."

Her words carried with them the feeling that she was looking disdainfully down at the breadth of the world from the heavens. Those simple words came from the tip of her tongue, but when she spat them out it felt like an imperial decree. Xue Meng felt a great sense of oppression as well as discomfort.

He stared at her.

"Why are you looking at me?" Leng Gong's gaze was cold, but also held a degree of enticement. She spread her legs, raised a cold white finger and impatiently pulled at her tight lapel. "Looking for a fuck?"

Xue Meng was shocked!

"Wh-, whaaaat?"

This wayward young lady Leng Gong, without skipping a beat or a flicker of change in her expression, made a second mental attack on the properly-raised Xue Meng: "I asked why you were looking at me like that. You wanna fuck?"

Xue Meng suffocated just a little bit.

His face turned white, then red, then red, then white again, then he suddenly raised his head: "You you you—you're absolutely shameless!——you you, you—give me some respect here!"

Leng Gong raised an eyebrow slightly, pursed her thin moist lips, and smiled slightly while faint dimples appeared on her cheeks. Her fingers casually drummed on the table: "Isn't that what you came to me for? Relief scroll: sleep with a lord, relieve a thousand sorrows."

"You're speaking nonsense!" Xue Meng was almost about to jump up. Under normal circumstances, if someone had talked to Sect Leader Xue like this, he would have already taken out Longcheng and started dueling them to the death. But Xue Meng knew that Leng Gong had suffered tragic emotional wounds and that her mind was quite fragile. With a heart resolved to save this wayward young lady, Xue Meng didn't draw his sword.

But he was still so angry that his nose almost went askew. "How can you talk like that? I, I had no such thoughts when I chose you!"

"Oh? Really?"

Leng Gong seemed a little more interested than she had been before. She finally put down her long legs and sat up straight. "Excellent. Great minds think alike. To tell you the truth, I've actually recently stopped washing my coins in a golden basin, so even if you wanted me to fuck you, I wouldn't do it."[207]

Xue Meng covered his ears, and didn't even realize that Leng Gong's newly invented phrase got around the Relief Scroll's restrictions such that she could talk freely while actually exposing her gender: "Aahhhhh!! Can you stop saying such gross things!?"

"Wow, that bewildered innocent confused look of yours really looks like someone I know." Leng Gong continued: "Okay. Since you do have good taste, if you don't want me to keep talking, that's fine. But you have to do me a favor."

Xue Meng raised his head. Because the woman was so scary, he couldn't help but be a little nervous: "What favor?"

Leng Gong said: "Be my lover."

"....." Xue Meng almost flipped the table. "Didn't you come here for a blind date?!"

Why are you in such a rush? I didn't even finish yet." Leng Gong rolled her eyes. "Pretend. I want you to pretend to be my lover."

"... Why?"

Leng Gong's eyes suddenly held an ominous gleam. She slammed her hands on the table, leaned forward and whispered: "Because I want to piss someone off."

"Who?"

"My real lover."

Xue Meng: "....."

Oh. So it turned out that this person had been abandoned and left alone to guard an empty bed for so many years, and had become so mentally twisted and negative and depressed and prejudiced and insane that—she actually still wanted to remain hopelessly entangled with that cultivation world Chen Shimei?[208]

So she hadn't kicked that fickle man to the curb, but instead continued to rant about him and is trying to drag him back, and even took great pains to find someone to disguise as his rival to anger him. This Leng Gong-guniang really isn't mentally well, is she?

"No good?"

"....."

"To tell you the truth, I've met quite a few people these days. Either they won't go along with my plans, and they actually want this pretend thing to be real, or they just refuse to help me, and run away after they hear me out."

"....."

"If you won't do it, then forget it. No need to talk any more, I'll try something else."

What something else? Would she turn to self harm?

Xue Meng had a headache.

He kneaded his temples, waved his hand, and opened the menu: "Okay okay, like my father said, saving a life is better than building a seven-level pagoda.[209] I'll help you, is that enough?"

Leng Gong's eyes lit up: "You're serious?"

"A gentleman can't go back on his word. If I deceive you, then I'm a dog. If you're happy, and don't take things too hard, then that's good." Xue Meng sighed. "Why don't we talk more over food? You should take a look first. What would you like?"

Leng Gong raised her hand: "No need to order."

Just as Xue Meng was wondering if she planned to go hungry, he saw that she raised her hand and snapped her fingers with a clear "pa" sound.

"Shopkeeper, bring all the most expensive dishes you have to this ven—cough , to me!"

This time not only Xue Meng's nose was askew, but his entire face was askew.

Where did this bandit come from? What an uncivilized ill-mannered bumpkin!

Xue Meng cried out: "You! Don't you know how shameful it is to waste food?"

"That's exactly what my sweetie always says." Leng Gong squinted. "But I'm not happy, so I want to be wasteful today, and you can't say anything. Otherwise, I'll buy everything in this whole place, I'll wipe them out."

Xue Meng was terrified by this cold rich woman: "... Are you from Taobao Manor?

"No."

"... A rich merchant from Linyi?"

"Also no."

"... Ya-, Yangzhou Gu Yue Ye?”

Leng Gong sneered: What's Gu Yue Ye worth?" They're not worthy enough to carry my shoes."

Xue Meng: "....." Why are these words so familiar?

The hot dishes and hotpot didn't come quickly, but the side dishes didn't take so long. Xue Meng took a look at the white porcelain dish of shredded cold tripe with peppers, and suddenly realized: "You're from the Lin'an area, so you don't eat spicy food right?"

"Who says I don't eat it?" Leng Gong said, "I love spicy food."

After saying that she grabbed her chopsticks and, without changing her expression, stuffed food into her mouth.

"So good! It's been a long time since I've had something so good."

"If you like it, why don't you eat more?" asked Xue Meng.

Leng Gong said simply: "Because my lover can't handle it."

"Ah? So if he can't handle it, then he won't let you enjoy it either?"

"That's not it." Leng Gong rubbed her chin, and for some reason her eyes got misty. "Actually, sometimes the more he can't handle it, the happier I am. I really like the way he gets when he can't take it anymore, especially since he's normally so aloof and self restrained, but I always get him to lose it in the end. And when he loses his mind, he'll start moaning and wrapping himself around me with want, and then I..."

Xue Meng didn't understand. But Leng Gong's face looked very happy.

During her speech Leng Gong suddenly realized how distracted she was, and snapped back from her gentle reveries. Clearing her throat, she said, "Anyway, it really was because of him that I haven't touched spicy food for a while."

This sentence he could understand.

Spice enthusiast Xue Meng became very indignant: "Outrageous! Bring us a Mandarin duck pot!"[210]

"No, it's not that he wouldn't let me eat, it's that I wouldn't let me eat."

Xue Meng stared: "Why wouldn't you let yourself eat?"

Leng Gong wanted to explain, but she seemed to feel that she couldn't explain it succinctly, so she

pursed her mouth in embarrassment and said unhappily: "Because I'm sick. I'm unreasonable."

So here was the negative thinking and self-doubt the relief scroll mentioned.

"Forget it. I don't want to talk about it." Leng Gong said, "Let's talk about how you can pretend to be my fake lover, so I can piss off my real one."

"I could do it..." Xue Meng said, "But what's your goal in getting him mad?"

Leng Gong snorted, her face tyrannical, and said while grinding her teeth: "Because he lost the

brocade bag I gave him!"

Xue Meng thought to himself, hasn't he been snubbing you for many years now? Shouldn't you be used to things like him losing your brocade bag...

But before he could say anything, Leng Gong added, "It was a present I gave him for the Qixi festival!"

You know, compared to leaving you in an empty bed, that's not actually that serious...

Leng Gong kept talking, and her complexion got more and more off, and her tone became more and more fierce: "When have I ever given something like that to someone else? He wasn't happy with gold and gems, and there wasn't any novelty giving him arms manuals, so I went to the trouble of hand making a brocade bag for him. Who knew that he'd be so careless, he didn't treasure it one little bit!"

Wow... That did seem a bit unreasonable.

When Leng Gong said this, she pursed her lips, looking angry and embarrassed, as well as some other difficult to explain emotion. After a while, just when Xue Meng thought she had finished complaining, Leng Gong suddenly slapped the table angrily and said, "I can forgive him for losing what I gave him, but fucking wearing the one someone else gave him on his person? What the fuck

does that mean, is he deliberately trying to piss me off?!"

Xue Meng was stunned for a moment, and then immediately stared: "He accepted someone else's brocade bag? Did, did he fall in love with someone else?"

Leng Gong was furious: "Why do you think I'm so mad at him? I need to remind him how many people admire this ven... cough , admire me in this world. If he doesn't cherish me, there are other people who will. I don't care about him at all. If he won't come asking for me back, then I'll completely disappear from this world, and let him get on with that sanctimonious slut!"[211]

Ch. 327 Xue Meng's Blind Date: Wayward Young Lady 2

>> Leng Gong takes a very cavalier attitude towards the issue of consent when discussing "her" previous sex life

Xue Meng: "!!!"

"Hearing these words, Xue Meng, who held the same sense of justice as his Shizun, felt an immediate intense sense of shock and anger. A spring of poetry surged in his mind like a flood: beginning with chaos and ending with abandonment, throwing away one's family; a red apricot tree leaning over a garden wall, saying three in the morning and four in the evening, eating in the East and sleeping in the West, on and on..."This is an absolute disgrace!" he said furiously.[212]

Then he mulled over what Leng Gong had just said in rage, that she would "completely disappear from this world." His heart pounded, and he realized that this girl indeed had a fierce tendency towards self-harm.

"He must stop her from hurting herself! With righteous indignation, Xue Meng said: ""Please rest assured, what I can't stand the most are those who serve Qin in the morning and Chu in the evening, who change like water and bend like willows. Leave it to me, I'll support you and make him so angry he'll spit up three liters of blood, that'll make him regret what he did!" After a pause, he said seriously, still furious: "However, if you know yourself and know your enemy, you'll come out unscathed through a hundred battles. You should clarify your story to me, and let me get a measure of what happened."[213]

Leng Gong wrinkled her brows: "Our story is too hard to explain. It'll take me a long time to make everything clear."

"... Oh. Then why don't I ask questions, and you can answer." Faced with such a pitiful woman, Xue Meng experienced a rare bit of consideration: "If there's something you can't say, we can skip it. How does that sound?"

Leng Gong thought about it and nodded, "Yes. That should work."

At this moment, their hotpot and stir-fries came one after the other.

As they ate and talked, Xue Meng said: "Why don't you talk about that cultivation partner of yours first. How long have you known each other? How did you meet?"

Leng Gong used her chopsticks to pick up a tender, crisp piece of sauteed garlic shoot, ate a few bites, put down her chopsticks, then lifted her gaze towards Xue Meng.

"The things that happened between us are honestly rather shocking, so I'll first ask you if you're afraid to hear it."

Xue Meng said: "Nothing could be more shocking than what I've experienced in my own life. You can go ahead."

He didn't think that Leng Gong would turn out to be a gossip; she suddenly leaned towards him with great interest and said, "Oh? Really? What happened to you?"

Xue Meng: "... Do you want me to help you get him mad or not?"

Leng Gong retracted her curiosity and coughed: "Okay, let's just talk about me then."

Then she opened her mouth.

Her first sentence is indeed appalling.

My lover, he used to be my Shizun.

"....." Xue Meng suddenly remembered a certain unpleasant experience. He raised his teacup and silently took a sip, trying to suppress his alarm.

The second sentence is even more appalling.

"We bowed to heaven and earth and got married a very long time ago."

The hand that Xue Meng used to hold his teacup was shaking, but he could still hold his ground.

Until the third sentence comes out——

"We had sex every day, and started even before we got married. Then after we were married we became even more excessively wanton, and freely did it day and night."

Xue Meng spat out his tea: " Cough cough !"

The relief scroll said that Leng Gong-xianzi was "direct", but Xue Meng didn't think that a girl could be this direct!

Nevertheless, Leng Gong kept going as if she couldn't stop until she shocked people:[214] "He's not very good in bed, so I'm the only one who doesn't avoid him. And since I'm very good in bed, he's gradually getting a taste for bodily pleasure. So even though his mouth says no, he still does it with me fiercely three or four times a night, sometimes even seven or eight

times. On the bed, in the courtyard, in the reception pavilion, in the hot spring, we've done it in all those..."

"Stop!" Xue Meng finally recovered from his cough, his ears smoking. Cleaning off the water he'd coughed up while blushing, he said: "You don't have to describe those details so clearly. All I really needed to know was that your marital life was harmonious."

"Right. Our marital life was very harmonious, and every night we did it three or four, sometimes even seven or eight times. A normal person couldn't manage it, but I could, and we did it on the bed, in the courtyard, in the reception pavilion, in the hot spring, we've done it in all those..."

Xue Meng: "....."

"Fuck!" Leng Gong suddenly got angry and slammed the table, rattling the cups. "If we hadn't been able to get pregnant, we'd probably already be having kids, so why did he still go for that fucker?"

Xue Meng was startled. So it turned out that this cold girl couldn't have a baby, and so her place got taken up by some hag.

Speaking of which, his mother also couldn't have a second child, but Xue Zhengyong didn't neglect her even a little bit, and they supported each other through a lifetime. There were too few men like his father in the world, which was why so many sect leaders bred resentments, and a lifetime of miscommunication.

Xue Meng became angry and couldn't bear it any longer, so he asked: "Did you try to nurse your body and seek medical advice? Gu Yue Ye's Jiang Yechen isn't worth much as a person, but his medical skills are decent. You could—"

"Hmph, don't you think I asked him about it? Other people thought it was impossible, but my fate is up to me, and not the heavens, and especially not other people. I wanted a baby with him, whether he could have one or not. So I went to Jiang Yechen to discuss how we could do it, but that little beauty Jiang was horribly stubborn and said that it was bad for the body and refused to give it to me, like he knows right from wrong!"

Xue Meng: "....."

Jiang Xi not knowing right from wrong is true, but since when was he beautiful??? How did you connect the words "little beauty Jiang" to him??

But aside from this beauty talk, why did this story sound so familiar…

Xue Meng thought about it and couldn't remember, so he stopped thinking about it and urged, "Jiang Yechen, the dog thief, has always been fickle and indecent. He doesn't care about human suffering, he's just a black merchant. Don't try to bargain with him. What happened later? What about the person who came between you and your Shizun? Your Shizun and you... well. Since your thing was harmonious, then he should have loved you, so how could he fall in love with someone else?

Leng Gong had been okay until he mentioned this, but once it had been mentioned, she gnashed her teeth in anger: "That's because that person took advantage of my absence, seized the opportunity, and freely stole into my empty spot!"

Xue Meng cried out, eyes wide: "So when you were guarding your empty bed, they started living together?"

Leng Gong ground her teeth: "That's right."

How miserable! All he can see is the smile of the new love, while the old love weeps unheard![215]

Xue Meng was so angry that he slammed the table and leapt up: "He isn't even second to Jiang Yechen, he's entirely on par with him!"

Leng Gong was curious again; she tilted her head and drummed her long fingers unconsciously on the table: "How come you seem to understand Jiang Yechen so well? How do you know him?"

"....." Xue Meng sat down with a dry mouth and poured himself a cup of tea. "I'm his father."

Leng Gong: "???"

Xue Meng: "Aiyah, I just said that because I was angry. I don't actually have any relationship with Jiang Yechen, I was just using him as an example. Everyone knows he's the scum of the cultivation world and a scourge to female cultivators." After that, he let out a vicious "bah".

Leng Gong opened her purple and black eyes widely: "Really? How come I've heard that he detests male-female relationships? If a line of women go to him to deliver love letters, then a line of women will return with prescriptions for all kinds of conditions. And they'll be written very honestly too, telling them directly they suffer from things like 'adult acne' or 'obese limbs'. Is this the kind of man to play around with women?"

Xue Meng opened his mouth and found that he was left speechless, so he could only close his mouth: "... No. I'm just saying that he's a profiteer and morally unscrupulous."

"You're not wrong there."

Xue Meng felt that he couldn't continue on with this topic any more; his anger towards Jiang Xi was always difficult to quell once he started. If he went on, he might inadvertently reveal something. So he said: "Let's talk about your Shizun then. Since you can't bear to part with him, why didn't you chase after him?"

"I can't bear to part with him?" Leng Gong sniffed. "What a joke, I don't cherish him at all."

"……"

After a while, looking sideways at Xue Meng, she reluctantly asked: "Sigh. How could you tell that I couldn't bear to let him go?"

"... It's because I know someone." Xue Meng's expression was vague, seeming to show embarrassment and irritation and helplessness, all tangled together at length. With a parched throat, he continued: "His symptoms, to be honest, are quite similar to yours."

"Oh really? What's the matter with him?"

"When he was weak, he avoided his Shizun every day. He hated how cold he was, and hated how he would deliberately make things difficult for him. He also said that he didn't cherish him, didn't care about him, and didn't like him even one bit."

Leng Gong listened with relish, and began munching on peanuts: "Then what? What happened after that?"

Xue Meng crossed his arms in front of his chest and rolled his eyes: "What else could have happened? He ended up regretting it."

"……"

"He screamed and cried and rolled around begging for his return, going through hell and high water, flattering and fawning and committing all kinds of crimes." Xue Meng said, "So I advise you, always behave around people as if you'll meet again in the future, and don't say such definitive things."

Leng Gong didn't care. She leaned back, raised her chin and sneered, "I'm not the type to cry and beg for someone to come back. If I didn't want him to go, there were plenty of other ways to keep him."

Xue Meng saw that she didn't understand, so even though he knew she wouldn't be able to handle it, he stabbed her where it hurt: "So did you keep him?"

Leng Gong's smug smile froze.

Another stab: "Didn't you still get dumped?"

Leng Gong's frozen smile slowly disappeared.

Yet another stab: "After he dumped you, didn't he take advantage of your absence to get together with someone else?"

Leng Gong's disappeared smile gradually turned to anger.

Xue Meng said: "Look, if you sat down and talked it out with him earlier, and weren't too stubborn to humble yourself, he might not have left."

Leng Gong seemed to have been touched, and her rage immediately fizzled out. Despite how tense she was, a thread of hidden pain flashed in her eyes.

After a while, she said, "...When he left, it was because I forced him to."

"....."

"But I didn't really want him to go. I've always... I've always..."

She paused so she wouldn't overdo it; her eyes were a little red.

Xue Meng suddenly felt a little nervous. Aya, was she going to cry? He was already so old, but he never knew how to comfort women!

He was still worried, but found that they were just groundless fears. After this bout of red eyes, Leng Gong started being fierce again, and said roughly: "If he wants to go, fine. What's so great about him? Does he think I can't live without him?"

Xue Meng: "....."

"I don't want to talk about this anymore, it just makes me upset." Leng Gong poured a cup of tea for herself, drank it dry in one gulp, and then said: "Come! Let's talk more about that sanctimonious slut."

"Fuck." On mentioning this person, Leng Gong seemed like she was collecting more than ten years of resentment. She became so angry she slapped her hand down, pointed her finger like she wanted to say something, but seemed to lack the bitter poetry that could be used to properly vent her anger. So she breathed out ferociously: "...I just don't understand, on what level are they better than me?"

Xue Meng: "...In what ways does your Shizun think this person's better than you?”

Leng Gong said angrily, "Him? If he dares to think that slut's better than me, I'll make him really suffer in bed!

Xue Meng felt a little tired, and he kneaded his temples: "Then explain. If it was an outsider, like me, where would I think this person was better than you?"

Leng Gong reluctantly began to think about it.

After thinking for a long time, she said gloomily: "They're worse than me in every way."

"....."

Neither of us were born well. But that person didn't strive for progress and spent their days idly, while I stood on my own feet to create the world I wanted. After sleeping with Shizun for the night, I could coax him to happiness by giving him ten tons of gold to smash as he pleased. That person and Shizun do it seven times a night, and when they're done, they'd only take Shizun to a fifty-coins-a-table roadside stand. Damn it! It's infuriating. Tell me, how can their face be so thick-skinned?

"....." But for this young lady to say this kind of thing, your face isn't thin either.

Leng Gong didn't notice Xue Meng's embarrassment at all. She confidently said: "I have good prospects, I'm rich, I can support him. When I was with Shizun, he lived in a magnificent home and wore magnificent clothes. I spared no expense for food or clothes and I always gave him the best of everything."

Xue Meng hesitated and said with some difficulty, "So your Shizun was living off a woman?"

"Don't make it sound so shameful." Leng Gong said, annoyed. "I'd be happy to buy things that couldn't be bought with a thousand gold, as long he liked it. But ever since he's been with that person, he's lived in a shabby hut, dressed in ordinary clothes, had to grow his own food, had to make everything himself—it's enough to raise your hair on end. Tell me, in what way could that person compare with me?"

Xue Meng has seen many people who wouldn't leave each other through life or death, through good times and bad. Listening to her, he simply said, "Ah... that's not necessarily the case. Maybe your Shizun didn't want to be supported by you. Let me give you an example: let's say you have a father who's a really good person, and has raised you for many years and has been very good to you, but he isn't the richest. Would you like him?"

"Yes," Leng Gong said without thinking.

"Then let's say you have another father..."

"Why are you always talking about fathers?" Leng Gong couldn't make heads or tails about Xue Meng's lack of other examples. "Are there problems with you and your father?"

Xue Meng's eyes bugged out, "I, I I was just using it as an easy example!" Regardless, he continued: "You have another father, and he's not as good of a person as your original father, and he didn't even know that you existed, plus he neglected your mother. But, he's incredibly rich. Would you like him?"

Leng Gong was enraged: "No, I'd boil him alive!"

Xue Meng: "......That's...not necessary. I'm just saying. You think money can make him happy, when maybe all he wants is for the two of you to read

together, or something..."

Leng Gong thought about it. The more she thought about it, the uglier her expression got. Although she was as imposing as before, in her eyes was a sense of grievance.

At long last she said, stiffly: "... I don't really know how to read, and I'm uncultured. I single-mindedly studied for ten years, but I still couldn't compare to someone who just read while wandering around for five. All I have is money and physical strength. If he doesn't like it, what can I do?"

Xue Meng suddenly felt she was very much like a wolf dog who had been abandoned by her master and left in the rain, who felt so aggrieved that she wanted to die, but still needed to sit straight and upright and pretend that he didn't care.

Xue Meng sighed: "Let's move on. Why don't you talk about something else?"

Leng Gong said, obstinately: "There are other ways that I'm better than that person."

"... For example?"

"They're not as pale as me."

Towards Xue Meng's suspicious eyes, Leng Gong said moodily: "What? I meant before. I'm not as pale now as I used to be. The reasons are very complicated, I won't explain them to you."

"Ah." Xue Meng said, "I don't want to hear them either. What else?"

"They're not as good looking as I am. They have ugly taste in clothes."

"They're not as straightforward as I am. They've got a lot of twisty schemes."

They're not as high up as I am."

Xue Meng didn't know why, but when Leng Gong said the last sentence it seemed like she accidentally revealed something she meant to hide.

There was no point in continuing with this topic; probably the ultimate result would only be to figure out how many sentences Leng Gong could think of beginning with "they're not as". Also, Xue Meng has realized this Leng Gong was lacking when it came to self-reflection—if you asked about others' merits, she couldn't answer, and if you asked about her own shortcomings, she couldn't answer either.

So he had to use a different approach.

Xue Meng suddenly had a bright idea and said to Leng Gong: "You know, the way you're talking makes things a bit unclear. Why don't we play a game?"

"Oh? What game?"

From now on, pretend I'm your Shizun, and I'm asking you for something. Why don't you take your reaction, compare it to how that person who's stolen your place would react, and explain them to me?"

Leng Gong: "... You look pretty young, and yet you know how to play this kind of game."

After considering for a moment, she said: "Okay, but I need to make one thing clear. Don't get jealous of how my great talent emerged quickly, and

develop some weird romantic feelings, and use this chance to pretend to be my Shizun to take advantage of me. I won't sleep with you."

Xue Meng was startled, and exploded: "I'm fucking helping you here! What stupid fantasy is that! Who wants to take advantage of you?! Take back those vulgar words! From now on I forbid you from saying anything about sleeping!!"

Leng Gong raised one eyebrow and crossed her arms. "....Ah."

Xue Meng was pulling his hair out: "Also, it's ‘great talent emerges slowly,’ not ‘quickly’! Don't randomly use messed-up idioms![216]

"Huh?" Leng Gong's expression was stubborn. "Really? This kind of thing... if you don't get settled when you're young, can you even become great when it's later?"

Xue Meng: "??? I understood not a single word of what you just said. Forget it. I know you're not well read, that's fine. Let's not talk about this anymore and get started."

He cleared his throat. "I'll start asking questions now."

Leng Gong's interest piqued, and she sat up straight.

"Bring it on."

Ch. 328 Xue Meng's Blind Date: Wayward Young Lady 3

Translator's note: So in Chinese, the words 他, referring to someone male in the third person, and 她, referring to someone female in the third person, are pronounced exactly the same. This leads to a misunderstanding in this chapter that works in Chinese, but not really in English. So I've chosen to have Taxian-jun refer to his other self as "they," and have Xue Meng misunderstand it as "she," because he still thinks TXJ is a woman referring to her love rival.

And so they began.

The two immediately got into the proper positions and pulled themselves apart.

Xue Meng said: "Listen well. Right now I am your Shizun. You are still you. In front of us there are only spicy stir fries and spicy hot pots. We can't order anything else. What will you do?"

Leng Gong said concisely: "Smash this place."

"...."

"I'll smash things until they're willing to make us some non-spicy dishes."

"...."

Having decided to begin roleplaying, she glanced at Xue Meng and said: "You're pretending to be Shizun right now, aren't you?"

Xue Meng: "... Yes."

"Good. What would you like to eat?"

The person who didn't like spicy food who Xue Meng knew best was Chu Wanning, so he casually chose some dishes that were to Chu Wanning's taste: "I want lion's head meatballs with crabmeat, sweet and sour fish, green vegetables with tofu, and lotus pastries."

Leng Gong stared when she heard this: "Why is your taste..."

Xue Meng: "What's wrong?"

"... Nothing much." Leng Gong said, "You sit here. I'll go down."

Xue Meng said in a rush: "No smashing the shop!"

"You never change do you, always begging for me to be lenient." Leng Gong narrowed her eyes theatrically. "Fine, I won't smash anything, I'll just go find the cook."

"What are you going to do with the cook?"

"I'll give him two choices," Leng Gong said solemnly: "Make the dish I want with no peppers in it..."

"And what's the alternative?"

"He'll put peppers in, I'll cut his head off."

Xue Meng's mouth twitched: "....."

This person is quite the poet.

The poet Leng Gong said efficiently: "I'm going."

When Xue Meng saw that she was really going down, he got so mad he felt dizzy: "This is just a play! What are you doing? Ok, ok, stop acting as

yourself. What about your homewrecker; if it were her, what would she do?" After he finished, he hastily raised his hand and added, "And if she'd also smash the restaurant or take someone's head, you don't have to act that out!"

"What restaurant could they smash?" Leng Gong rolled her eyes. "They treasure their good reputation like a bird treasures its feathers. Wait a second, I'll show you."

In the blink of an eye, Leng Gong changed her face. If she didn't perform in the Pear Garden, it would have been a great loss to ticket-holders.[217]

In a split second, even her aura changed. Her outward wildness and swagger was held back in her bones; although she was still the same person, she now seemed extremely calm, reserved, tolerant and considerate.

She looked at Xue Meng softly. When she opened her mouth, her low, gently husky voice raised goose bumps along Xue Meng's back: "Shizun..."

"...." Xue Meng was caught off guard by such style. He stiffened, then quickly shouted, "Stop! Stop, stop! Let me warm up first, I, I...I need to get used to it!"

Leng Gong laughed, dimples appearing on her cheeks, and crooned, "Isn't it sickening? I told you they weren't direct. They were clearly thinking about eating meat, but first they have to make all these excuses for it, nowhere near as straightforward as I am. You should take your sweet time warming up, it's going to get worse soon enough."

Xue Meng: "..."

Slowly, Xue Meng suddenly had a question: "Wait a minute, that sanctimonious gold-digger, how come she calls your lover Shizun too?"

"Shouldn't they?"

"Is she also a disciple of your Shizun?

"Yes."

Xue Meng went blank for a moment, suddenly bowed his head and began to count on his fingers. He mumbled as he counted: "One, two, three, no, this can't be counted as two people..."

Leng Gong looked at him, baffled. After a while, she couldn't help asking: "What are you doing?"

Xue Meng shook his head. "It's difficult for me to say but, I was wondering if I want to accept any disciples in the future. It feels a bit dangerous, especially when I'm so good looking..."

After that, he sighed again: "Well, I mean, your competition, the way she fawned over your Shizun was really too much. If someone talked like that towards me, I'd probably lose my appetite."

Leng Gong clapped for him: "Well said!"

Xue Meng asked curiously, "What do you usually call him? Do you also call him Shizun? Because when you say 'Shizun' you don't have that simpering tone."

Leng Gong waved her hand: "We normally don't call him the same thing."

"Then what do you call him?"

"I use his name directly."

"So you're doing things more normally."

"Or I call him Baobei."

"... I take back what I just said." Xue Meng had a headache and supported his head on his hands: "Okay okay, let's go on, you keep acting. I, your Shizun, have a headache now."

Leng Gong blinked and fell into character very quickly. Looking at him supporting his head, she immediately asked tenderly: "Are you tired?"

Xue Meng: "..."

"How did you get sick so quickly? Maybe you caught a chill..."

Xue Meng: "... No I'm angry."

"Ah." Leng Gong widened her eyes slightly, her voice as softly yielding as before: "Did I do something wrong to make you unhappy?"

Xue Meng's face turned green, but soon enough he couldn't hold it in any longer. "Ah!," he shouted, "No! No good! Stop stop stop!"

The star of Pear Garden, Miss Leng Gong, seemed to have become addicted to this act and couldn't break character. Adoringly, she said: "I'm sorry I'm so stupid. Even when I want to please Shizun, in the end I always make him unhappy. Shizun... please look at me, don't turn away."

Xue Meng's eyes rolled to the back of his head, and he looked like he was going to die from disgust.

At this moment, he suddenly felt a sense of respect for Mei Hanxue. Thinking about it, he was currently only dealing with one young lady, and he had exhausted all his patience, having to use eighteen types of martial arts to deal with her. Right now he even had to see if he had any theatrical skills—was it because Mei Hanxue had such talents, that he could play around carelessly with all those flowers for so many years?

If they switched places, he'd have gray hair in a month's time!

The young lady stubbornly kept up her passionate performance: "Is Shizun unhappy because he can't get used to the food here? It's ok. If that's the reason, then I'll go downstairs and find the cook now."

Xue Meng was like a dying carp that had been beaten into life. He grabbed her and said, "Hey, hey, hey! Didn't you agree not to smash the store? I'm telling you now, I won't allow you to do evil deeds in Wuchang Town!"

"Oh?" Leng Gong minutely widened her beautiful eyes, and smiled: "What are you talking about? The head cook here just isn't good at making non-spicy food. How could I embarrass him? I've brought some silver, and I'm going down to give the cook a few ingots and ask him to lend me the kitchen. I'll personally make the dishes you want for you."

Her voice was agreeable, and then it slowed down, as soft as the rippling water: "I remembered. Shizun wants xiaolongbao with crabmeat, sweet and sour fish, green vegetables with tofu, and lotus pastries."[218]

"The crabmeat needs to be broken down with roe, the sweet and sour fish needs Zhenjiang vinegar to be fragrant, the green vegetables with tofu need the most tender seasonal vegetables, and the lotus pastries should have rose-flavored red bean paste to be exquisite. But maybe the

restaurant doesn't have these ingredients, so I might go to the market later to check. It might take a little more time."

As Leng Gong said this, she raised her hand to gently stroke Xue Meng's head—although she only stroked air, and didn't actually make contact: "Don't get mad, why don't I also make Shizun a bowl of lotus paste tangyuan?[219] Wait for me, I'll be back as soon as possible."

Xue Meng was getting goosebumps and hadn't yet opened his mouth to answer her, when suddenly, the room's bamboo lattice door was flung open with a crash.

He turned his head, and couldn't yet see the face of the newcomer, when a vine whip flowing with oppressive golden light rushed forward like electricity. It crossed his head in an instant and directly whipped Leng Gong's hand!

With a "pa!" sound, sparks exploded!

Leng Gong muffled her cry of pain; she prepared to retaliate, but then saw that willow vine and was startled: "You—?"

Xue Meng also turned pale with fright, and cried out involuntarily: "How could it be... Tian, Tian Wen?!"

The next moment, a cold-faced man walked into the room. He had sword-like brows and phoenix eyes, a straight nose and thin lips, black hair tied in a ponytail, and was draped in clothes of raw white silk, flowing with silver light. He floated like an immortal, but his manner was as fierce as thunder. Who could it be but Tian Wen's master, Chu Wanning?

Because Xue Meng wore Manor Head Ma's phantom sachet, Chu Wanning didn't recognize him, but only scanned him worriedly before turning his eyes back to "Leng Gong". At that moment, the Beidou Immortal's features were icy cold, and his elegant face was filled with impatience. Upon opening his mouth, even more sparks flew in all directions.

"Mo Weiyu, how long are you planning on making trouble?"

Xue Meng turned his head and gaped: "Mo- mo- mo-.....you're Mo-mo-..."

Taxian-jun impatiently interrupted him: "Mo mo mo yourself; do you have a stutter?" I'm not Mo-zongshi. Don't fucking scream at me."

What's the difference??!!

Xue Meng felt like the sky was covered in black clouds, roiling with wind and thunder. And when he recalled the conversation he had with "Leng Gong" before, he felt like a thunderbolt had struck down from the sky, splitting him into bewildered pieces, from the top of his head to his scorched insides...

God! What did they say to each other!!

He said that Chu Wanning had a human face but a beastly heart, and that he was the Chen Shimei of the cultivation world! He said that Chu Wanning was a heartless fickle comtemptible shamess person like Jiang Xi!!

He, he he even compassionately listened to Mo Weiyu like a caring big brother, heard him describe in great detail all those things he didn't want to know about his activities on Wushan, something bed reception pavilion

hotspring he'd done it everywhere aaaahhhhhhhhh someone please save him and give him a memory-wiping pill! Even if Jiang Xi was the one to give it to him he'd swallow it without blinking!!

Taxian-jun had been struck by Tian Wen, but Chu Wanning's intent was only to interrupt him carelessly fooling around with a "young maiden"; he controlled his strength and the strike wasn't heavy, only scraping a bit of skin—

However, the audacity of shameless people has no end. The barely-injured Taxian-jun stiffly sqeezed out some blood from his wound, and deliberately show the spot where he bled to Chu Wanning. And with unending depths of eroticism, he exaggeratedly lifted his hand up close to his lips, extended the tip of his tongue, and licked it with menacing implications: "Very good, Chu Wanning. You truly are presumptuous to ignore the proper order of this world."

Chu Wanning: "..."

"Today, you made this venerable one bleed, something this venerable one will remember deep in his heart. You'll suffer for this, you'll..."

Chu Wanning held Tian Wen in his palm, and once again it hissed as sparks flew everywhere. He narrowed his eyes: "Are you finished yet? Do I need to do this a second time?"

Taxianjun raged, agitated: "Chu Wanning! Don't rely on this venerable one to indulge you anymore, I've spoiled you rotten! If you dare to use Tian Wen a second time, this venerable one will— will—"

His phoenix eyes narrowing dangerously, Chu Wanning let out an "oh" sound, and said portentiously: "You'll do what?"

Ta Xianjun slapped the table: "This venerable one will give you two to hold in three years!"[220]

"....."

This dreadful dialogue made Xue Meng helplessly wish that he could just die already.

Why is it that long ago when his cousin was always talking about how he wanted to torment his Shizun, Xuemeng was a bystander, and now after so long, when his cousin is still spouting similar nonsense, he's still a bystander? God! He just doesn't want to listen to this kind of talk, is that too much?

Chu Wanning had overestimated Taxian-jun's integrity and the thickness of his face after all. His face suddenly turned green, and he glanced over at Xue Meng, at a loss. Then he angrily said in a low voice: "... You are absolutely shameless beyond belief! Return with me immediately!"

"Return? Hmm. Why should this venerable one return? Taxian-jun said frostily: "Everything under the sky belongs to this venerable one, so what's inappropriate about coming out in disguise to visit some lucky beauty?"[221]

As he spoke, he hauled Xue Meng over, patted him on the shoulder, and said to Chu Wanning, "Come. I'd like to introduce you to my new flame, they're known as...cough...known as, um..."

He wanted to make up some title like "Linjiang-xianzi" or "Yu Mian Jiao Niang ".[222] This was something he was actually capable of, if he just referenced the books that he had gnawed through in boredom during his years spent alone. The problem was, ever since he went to Nanping Mountain to live in seclusion, Taxian-jun's days had become rather lively.

He no longer needed to live alone, cold and distressed, in Wushan Palace, nor did he need to pass the lonely hours through solitary reading and martial arts practice. His mindset was good, and he could do many things. This directly influenced Taxian-jun's approach regarding his education, which fell from profound but unpopular works to the common and popular.[223] When he was guarding Wushan Palace he read The Book of Changes and The Book of Songs;[224] he never wanted to see those again. After all, Chu Wanning had returned. If he wanted to see that person write, "Is my heart not stone, that it can't be turned" with his own hands again and again, he could do that.[225] It was no longer necessary to use those thick books to fish for the fragmented reflections of the beloved deceased, nor was it necessary to hunt down particular phrases that Chu Wanning had himself spoken in the past, in order to feel a momentary fierce joy and sorrow.

This contented Taxian-jun was willing to fall from grace again. This year, aside from the "Unintelligible List", the only book he read was the "Haitang Romance: Stories of Love" ten volume collected edition.

So he racked his brains and searched his guts. Finally he slapped the table, seized Xue Meng, and majestically spread out his harms to introduce him: "This person is the peerless rascal - Long Ao Tian."[226]

Chu Wanning: "....."

Xue Meng's face turned green for a moment, even brighter than his Shizun's. He said angrily, "Bah! Peerless your grandpa! You, you're a hooligan whose dog mouth can't produce ivory! I, I I'm not...". He was so furious with his verbal attacks that he couldn't get them out clearly; so if

he couldn't use his words, he might as well take direct action. He wanted to release the phantom sachet directly.

Who would imagine that when he left that morning, he'd come out short-handed, and end up tying himself into a dead knot!

Taxian-jun still didn't know who he really was, and believed he was still willing to help him piss Chu Wanning off. So he stepped on Xue Meng's foot and whispered in his ear, trying to bribe him with money: "Let's coordinate a bit; that fickle man who lost my embroidered bag. After we're through with him, I'll send you a big red envelope, it'll have at least a hundred gold leaves in it."

Xue Meng was so mad he screamed, and directly cast a curse to break apart that phantom sachet.

Back in his original form, he pulled out Longcheng, kicked over a chair, brandished his sword and rushed toward Taxianjun, bellowing angrily:

Mo Weiyu! You're not a person! You are a dog!!! Who are you calling some peerless something rascal? Who are you calling Long Ao Tian?!! You dare to anger Shizun!! Don't you dare hide!! Today I, I, I'll take your dog life!!!!"

Ch. 329 Xue Meng’s Blind Date: Wayward Young Lady 4

It has been said by some esteemed members of the Jianghu that the most miserable profession in the world is not a funeral director, nor a beggar, but an innkeeper.

Throughout the ages, masters of all kinds seem to have a special love for inns. They carry on clandestine love affairs in inns, fight and brawl in inns, confront their love rivals in inns... and then there are people like Taxian-jun and Sect Leader Xue, who are clearly dealing with private family issues and could go two steps to have their battles at SiSheng Peak. But they have their particular stubbornness, and refused to do so, and thus, unable to wait, they had their bird-pecks-dog dog-bites-bird fight in the inn.

The innkeeper, an old lady, was quite cross about this.

She leaned on a cane, tottering towards them, and for some reason unnecessarily announced herself like so: "I, Shi Longxia, am an old lady."

The three people couldn't understand this pronouncement, and looked at each other in dismay.

Finally, Taxian-jun waved his hand, and said pompously: "I, Mo Weiyu, am Emperor."

He pointed to Chu Wanning: "He, Chu Wanning, is a Xianzun."

He then pointed to Xue Meng: "He... forget it, he's not important."

Xue Meng: "???"

Taxianjun said: "I ask, are you afraid?"

The elderly Shi Longxian wasn't afraid of violence, and was bold enough to fight against dark, evil forces. She held her cane and scanned the mess, and threw resonant words to the floor: "None of you have any sense of morals!!!"

Xue Meng's face turned red.

Chu Wanning's face also turned an ugly color.

Taxian-jun crossed his arms, disapprovingly, not willing to accept this: "Hey, old lady, can't you be more tactful? Don't you know the heroic deeds of this venerable one? Of everything that lies under the heavens, if this venerable one had not exerted his godly might to stop the flood that would have extinguished this world, your pathetic little inn would have been dashed into splinters and fragments of brick. What's smashing a few tables and rooms compared to that?"

Chu Wanning said sternly: "Mo Weiyu!"

Taxian-jun coughed: "If, if worst comes to worst, this venerable one will compensate you for the damages, just say how much you want! One or two hundred taels of silver should be enough, correct?"

Innkeeper Shi Longxia was not motivated by money, and continued to rub her cheek and glare at them, spitting mad. She forcefully repeated her previous words: "None of you have any sense of morals!!!"

"Hey, you—"

Xue Meng pushed Taxian-jun aside and walked forward a few steps, embarrassed. He said to the innkeeper, "Elderly one, I'm truly sorry. My temper is too awful, I temporarily lost control and destroyed so many of

your chairs and tables and rooms, and I also stabbed several holes in your roof. I sincerely apologize, and will compensate you for the damages appropriately. Do you think this is satisfactory?"

After this, he looked back at Chu Wanning: "Shizun, do you think this is satisfactory?"

Chu Wanning had not spoken yet. The little old lady thumped the floor with her cane again and once again said furiously: "Morals—"

"We have no sense of morals." Taxian-jun interrupted, rolled his eyes and said impatiently: " Sigh , come on, old lady, what exactly do you want? We're providing compensation and we've apologized, and you're still going 'no morals no morals'. Besides, if you wouldn't give face to a monk, wouldn't you at least give face to the Buddha? You say that this venerable one has no morals, this venerable one won't complain, you say that Xue Meng also has no morals, this venerable one won't argue. But will you go so far as to not know who he is?"

As he said this, he dragged Chu Wanning over.

"Are you blind?"

Chu Wanning brushed his sleeves, wanting to free himself from Taxian-jun's grasp. He scowled with his sword-like eyebrows and said angrily, "Get lost."

"This venerable one won't get lost." Not only did Taxian-jun not release his hand, but also crooned lowly, forcibly pulling him in until they were stuck together. He reached out and pinched Chu Wanning's chin, licked his lips, and said in a low voice: "You're acting like a spoiled child."

Xue Meng: "..."

Chu Wanning: "... Do you want to die?!"

The old lady didn't seem to buy the story of this savior Xianjun, and continued to thump the floor with her cane, muttering: "Truly no sense of morals!"

Everyone looked at each other. This time, even Chu Wanning didn't know how they should talk to her.

As these three brilliant famed cultivators were stuck in a dark corner of the second floor of an inn, trapped with no way to escape by the words of a white-haired wrinkly old lady too weak to truss a chicken, there suddenly came the creaking sound of footsteps coming in from the stairs. A half-grown little girl ran upstairs, hugged the arm of the innkeeper, turned her head and stated clearly: "I'm sorry I'm sorry! My grandma can't hear or see clearly, so she doesn't really know what's going on around her. She doesn't recognize you or know who you are."

Xue Meng let out an "ahh," and said: "No wonder, so that's why..."

Taxian-jun was also shocked. He coughed uncomfortably and said in a low voice: "Then why didn't she tell us earlier..."

"Huh?" The little girl blinked, confused. "No, every time grandma talks to someone, she'll tell them from the beginning."

"What'll she tell them?"

"I am a deaf and blind old lady."

Chu Wanning: "..."

Xue Meng: "..."

Taxian-jun: "Who thought she was called Shi Longxia just now?"[227]

Xue Meng said angrily: "Wasn't it you, you dog?"

Since they had smashed the old lady's shop, and couldn't find a carpenter to come repair it, and it was getting dusky outside and looked like it might rain at any moment, the three of them decided to stay for the innkeeper's sake and make the necessary emergency repairs to the building before it started to storm.

Of the three, one is a master of machine armor, one has been used to hard living since childhood, and one Xue Meng used to frequently help Xue Zhengyong. Together they busied themselves, easily fixing the chairs, tables, roof, and anything else.

When the last broken beam was repaired, torrential rain began to pour down with a crashing sound, and all of Wuchang Town was enclosed in a misty haze. The old woman's little granddaughter saw that the rain was too heavy, so she told them they might as well stay for a bit, and wait until the next day when the rain has stopped to return.

In actuality, as far as Chu Wanning's party went, it wouldn't have been difficult to open a portal to return to the mountains. But in the end it was still a bit of a hassle, and it had been a very long time since the three of them could set aside their normal duties to spend some time together.

Rain cannot trap people, only the heart can trap people.

Chu Wanning looked at Xue Meng looking anxiously back at him, sighed, and said to the little shopkeeper: "We'll just have to trouble you then."

"It's no trouble at all!" The little girl knew exactly who was in front of her. She blushed with joy, and went off hopping and skipping to prepare dinner and their rooms.

The atmosphere of this meal was very delicate.

What Mo Ran had said before was right. Nowadays the three of them, master and disciples, aren't fit to stay under one roof at all. Although Xue Meng desperately missed them, and desperately wanted them to go back to the days when they were as inseparable as light and shadow, a broken window screen can't be whole again, and gluing it back together would only be an act of self deception. It's impossible for them to pretend that nothing has happened, and relate to each other as before.

Can Xue Meng pretend not to know what their relationship is? Of course he can't.

Therefore, although he has been trying to chat with Chu Wanning, he felt something strange. It was like when he had been informed that when they were all at Taobao Manor and Chu Wanning had faced him directly, that behind a curtain he was actually being possessed by Mo Ran. Although this matter is long past, and that strong sense of his world falling apart had also passed, when he sits next to them, when he's sitting right next to them, he can't help but think back on this incident, and then he can't help but imagine...

Chu Wanning and Mo Ran...

His Shizun and his cousin...

!!!!

He truly wanted to know if back then Chu Wanning had been bullied too badly to resist. After all, Mo Ran was too unreasonable. But he dared not ask, and he dared not speak, so he only glanced at Chu Wanning, wanting but unable to say something—

"Shizun..."

"Yes?"

"...Please have some more meat."

"Shizun..."

"Yes?"

"...Please have some more meat."

"Shizun..."

"....."

"...Please have even more meat."

"It is said that the fighting spirit aroused by the first roll of drums becomes depleted by the second and exhausted by the third. Xue Meng felt a bit tired.

But when Taxian-jun saw Sect Leader Xue cozying up to the Beidou Immortal, he uncharacteristically didn't stop them. Instead, as if he didn't care, he gnawed at a bone and smiled grimly."

The three of them ate at one table in silence, until Chu Wanning couldn't bear the strange atmosphere any longer, got up and said: "I'm going back to my room."

Taxian-jun: "Okay, I won't see you off."

Chu Wanning's face was gloomy, and he walked off brushing away his sleeves.

Seeing this, Xue Meng couldn't hold it in any longer, and threw down his chopsticks with a "pa" sound: "Mo Ran!"

Taxianjun gnawed his bone and said lazily: "What is it, still looking for a fuck?"

"You—" He gritted his teeth: "You have no idea what's good for you!!"

"How'd this venerable one offend you again? Peerless Daozhang?"

"... Wha-?"

"Peerless Rascal Daozhang."

Xue Meng almost jumped up and strangled Taxian-jun. Like a flying bird and a jumping dog they fought until they were both out of breath. They stared at each other, separated by a table. Xue Meng slammed the table: "Tell me! Why did you betray Shizun!"

"Hey, come on. Xue Meng, you can't actually be that serious with your bootlicker act. Before the appearance spell was broken, you said he was unfair to this venerable one, that he was the Chen Shimei of the cultivation world, on par with Jiang Xi. You said all that yourself."

"That's because you took everything out of context!" Xue Meng argued angrily: "What was all that about leaving you alone at home, when clearly at that point he had already...already...."

He had already transformed into floating ash and smoke on the wind, for their sake and for the sake of the mortal world.

Even if their misunderstandings was corrected, and the entire story and all its details became known, this part of their past is, for Xue Meng and Taxian-jun, a most delicate wound that neither of them could dare to touch.

Taxian-jun stared at him: "Don't say it."

"I wasn't going to."

After mutually staring at each other for a bit, Xue Meng said: "Anyway, I'll never believe that Shizun would treat people unfaithfully. The person you're talking about who dug into your corner must have been someone you made up!"

"This venerable one didn't make that up!"

"Then who is it?"

"It's that hypocrite Mo-zongshi!"

"You... "Xue Meng's voice suddenly seized up, and he lost his ability to think. After freezing for a long time, he finally came to his senses. He slammed both hands on the table, stood up, and shouted furiously: "You're insane!"

"We've been fighting all this time, and I wasted so much time helping you, and it turns out I've been listening to you beat yourself up this entire time! You've been eating your own vinegar, you sicko! You you you...you deserve to go to Gu Yue Ye for treatment!! Should I make an appointment with Jiang Xi for you? I can save you money by giving my name!!!"

"Oh?" Taxianjun was a man who was particularly keen when it came to certain matters. He shrewishly lifted his head and, detouring past all obstacles to strike directly at that blind spot, said: ""Hold on. Why can I save money by giving your name?""

"I—"

Taxianjun narrowed his eyes. "Since when did you have such a good relationship with Jiang Yechen?"

"I, I..."

Xue Meng "I"'d for a while, but couldn't "I" up an answer.

If we were to say that there are things Taxian-jun, who has lived for two lifetimes, still didn't know, the only thing was probably the secret of Xue Meng's birth. The fact that Jiang Xi was Xue Meng's father had been Madame Wang's well-kept secret. After the deaths of Madame Wang and Xue Zhengyong, only this father and son pair knew; without exception, no outsiders had any clue.

Taxian-jun naturally couldn't figure out the real relationship between Xue Meng and Jiang Xi. He watched Xue Meng's little face turn from white to red, from red to green, until finally he looked like he was suffering greatly from trying to restrain himself from speaking. Suddenly, a flash of light went off in his mind, and he instantly gained holy wisdom of what was going on.

—— Ah! Could it be....

So it's like that!!

Taxian-jun himself liked an older, frigid man like Chu Wanning, and had pushed himself onto him, so he felt that other men must also have smilar tastes. So instantly his thoughts turned crooked, and he looked at Xue Meng with an entirely new level of respect. While he looked he felt deeply moved; who could have known...

"No need to speak." Taxian-jun suddenly lost all his anger. He got up and filled up a cup of wine in the manner of a hero facing a fellow hero. Admiringly, he raised the cup and drained it in one gulp. Then he turned over the empty cup and praised: "Xue Meng ah, a scholar who has been away three days that, um... cough , I have an entirely new level of respect for you! You really did it! This venerable one congratulates you!"[228]

Xue Meng: "???"

It has to be said that Xue Meng hadn't interacted much with Mo Ran's Taxian-jun personality. He's used to dealing with his upright cousin Mo-zongshi, and so he didn't realize a very important point: when speaking to Taxian-jun, the phrase "did it" oftentimes won't have the connotation that normal people would think of.

Xue Meng had in a haze been poured one cup of wine after another, and hadn't realized what Taxian-jun's "Brother, you really did it," was actually praising, nor what his "Congratulations!" was congratulating.

He could only vaguely hear Taxian-jun cozying up to him and asking: "Hey, what did you think of it? Was it good? Could you handle it?"

Xue Meng thought he was talking about wine and muttered: "How could I, it was way too much... I can't really take..."

He was dizzy and growing more and more nauseous; Mo Ran that dog actually poured Shao Daozi down his throat.[229]

This won't do, he's going to complain to Shizun...

He staggered towards Chu Wanning's room, but was stopped by Taxian-jun. Xue Meng's eyes stared blankly, wondering why Taxian-jun was suddenly so animated. He said vaguely: "Wha-, what are you doing?"

Taxian-jun grabbed Xue Meng and raised his eyebrows: "One gets to know the self through wine, and a thousand cups is too few; it's so hard for us to get a chance to chat, so what are you embarrassed about? You know, with your personality, this venerable one has long thought that no girl would be able to stand you. For you to finally understand this isn't an easy thing; listen to gege—"

Xue Meng could hardly stand up, and his face turned green: "Let go, I....I want..."

Taxian-jun didn't care at all what he wanted.

He only felt that it was a rare thing for Xue Meng to understand things like this. This didi was finally learning from him, and realizing that bedding a more senior cultivator was this world's greatest pleasure.[230]

First gege will pamper Yuheng of the Night Sky Chu-xianzun.

Then didi will seize the Night-Fragrant Pollia Jiang Yechen.

How wonderful!

After he returned home, he wanted to hang the grand records of their brotherly heroic exploits around the necks of booksellers, and demand that

they print ten million copies to distribute throughout the cultivation world.

With this, he could become rich again!

So Taxian-jun joyously said: "This venerable one has done quite a lot of study in this field. Since you are this venerable one's didi, it's possible to lend you a hand with the difficult points..."

"Let go...I wanna...."

"This venerable one knows you want to, but your physical strength is not as good as this venerable one's, so you can't take on too much The key point is in your skills. Naturally, the skills of this venerable one are exceptionally —"

"Huurkk-!!!" A violent sound of retching interrupted Taxian-jun's incessant self-promotion.

Xue Meng, Xue Ziming, after having vomited on the face of the beautiful dashixiong Mei Hanxue, had now vomited on the handsome face of the butterfly boned beauty banquet emperor of the world, and did so wildly with no reservations.

"....."

Taxian-jun's face suddenly turned black.

"Xue Meng! How dare you throw up on this venerable one's clothes! This venerable one had to go down the mountain and help chop firewood for an entire day to earn enough spending money to buy this. Fuck!"

In response, Xue Meng's eyes rolled up, and once again making a spectacular mess: "Bluurgrghhhhh一!"

Ch. 330 Xue Meng’s Blind Date: Wayward Young Lady 5

Taxian-jun felt that he had never been so wronged before in his life. Not even going down the mountain to help people plant crops and chop firewood and slaughter pigs and babysit could compare.

After all, the work he did off the mountain to earn his secret pocket money was in disguise, and besides, he only did it under the alias of "Gou-zongshi".[231]

It was unclear whether using this nickname made him happy or anxious. In actuality, the villagers all had good things to say about his "Gou-zongshi" role; they praised "Gou-zongshi" as strong and valiant: if you paid him he'd work, and when he's done he'd leave without complaints. He was quite an excellent day laborer.

The only thing was, this person liked to brag, and would frequently spout things like, "this reminds me of when I possessed a thousand servants," or "this reminds me of when I had countless treasures," and so on.

And when his temper got fired up, he would always threaten to chop off people's heads, and when comforting a child would also threaten to cut off that child's head. As a result, when his boss said that his wages would be deducted, he could only force an unnatural smile and bounce the child that he had scared into tears.

Between gritted teeth, he would comfort the child, saying: "Rocking, rocking, rocking down to Naihe bridge, Granny Meng will call me a good baby.[232]

When the child burst into laughter and the boss turned away, no longer paying attention, he ground his teeth and whispered: "Just you wait! When Chu Wanning isn't looking, this venerable one will take off with all the property you fiendish villagers own! Bah!"

But this time was different. This time he had no disguise, nor did he have an alias.

Xue Meng had vomited all over the robes of the Magnificent Emperor Taxian-jun; he could only throw them away. Now, wearing a plain unadorned inner robe, he looked like a destitute, dejected laborer.

Even worse, he still had to mop up the floors. Who let everyone else fall asleep, and leave him the only one still awake?

Taxian-jun, with a disgusted face, carried Xue Meng back to his guest room, threw him on the bed, then carelessly threw a quilt over him.

"You damn drunkard!"

He raised his hand and with a "pa!" sound slapped Xue Meng. In response, he got Xue Meng's groans and whines. Taxian-jun stood for a moment, felt this all to be exceptionally pointless, then went out.

But instead of returning to his room, he asked the shopkeeper to buy a few pots of wine, and went to the stairway of the inn, where he sat by himself to drown his sorrows.

While he drank, he looked furtively at Chu Wanning's room.

He deliberately made a lot of noise, exaggerating all his movements and sounds, in hopes that Chu Wanning would give some sort of response.

Unfortunately they'd been busy working most of the day, and the one who finally responded to him was a random inn guest, who poked his head out to shout: "Are you crazy?!"

Taxian-jun viciously looked up: "Do you want to die?"

The random inn guest never would have thought that the one outside was Emperor Taxian-jun. He startled, and with an "eep!" sound crawled back into his room.

Taxian-jun rolled his eyes and muttered, "If this venerable one hadn't been in a good temper, you'd already be missing your head! You fiend!"

He continued to drink, and the more he drank, the more wronged he felt.

When he finished drinking, he glanced hatefully at the guest room at the end of the hall—the lights had already gone out, and Chu Wanning hadn't come to comfort him, or even seem to care whether he returned or not. He actually went straight to bed!

Taxian-jun ground his teeth. If he were Mo-zongshi, Chu Wanning would long have since come to keep him company and support him with kind, sweet, comforting words.

He was so angry that he gulped down yet another pot.

Xue Meng said that he was no different from Mo-zongshi, Chu Wanning said that he was the same person as Mo-zongshi, and Mo-zongshi himself said that they were no different, just different stages of one person.

They're all wrong!

Taxian-jun's paranoia and his petty twisted ways of thinking were different! Just look at Chu Wanning's attitude towards him! Why did he lose the brocade bag he gifted him, and only keep the rag made by that hypocrite?

They tricked him into being uncivilized! They tricked him into studying less! Everyone in the world has betrayed him!

Even Chu Wanning didn't care about him at all! Yes, he came to Wuchang Town to look for him, but he didn't have a single kind word for him, and didn't even apologize for losing his Qixi gift. Taxian-jun had searched through multiple books to find his favorite phrases to embroider on that brocade bag, no one else could have gotten such a gift, even if they wanted it!

Chu Wanning has no idea what's good for him!

Drinking even more, he became a bit confused, hugging the wooden railings of the stairwell to steady himself, the words "this venerable one is not happy" written all over his face.

In his daze, he seemed to hear a door opening somewhere, then approaching footsteps that stopped where his body was.

Taxian-jun raised his head, and in the misty candlelight, he saw that pure, beautiful face that he had wrongly hated for half a lifetime, foolishly pined after for ten years, and had thirsted after across two worlds.

He stared for a bit, then muttered "Chu Wanning..." to the new arrival.

Just saying this name out loud made the pit of his stomach feel moist. Whether controlled by the Eight Sufferings Everlasting Hatred Flower or not, his heart from beginning to end has always had the strongest, most

desperate desires for Chu Wanning. His heart seems to be steeped in longing, but aside from longing, there was an excess of grievance, warmth, hurt, and fondness. Did he not love him? From the bottom of his heart, his feelings towards Chu Wanning had never been less than those of his other self.

But what could he do? He has been a puppet for the last ten years of his previous life, and then a walking corpse. The Eight Sufferings Everlasting Hatred Flower had carved a hole in his flesh. He was like a wicked dragon who has been trapped in darkness for too long. and had gotten used to loneliness as a companion, tyranny as his footsoldiers. When the sunlight of the mortal world once again unreservedly embraced him, he was terrified.

The dragon that he was could only howl like a demon and display his claws, riddled with scars yet still sharp. In this way this venerable one could show off his disdain at associating with you.

In actuality, he knew inside how much he envied the "him" that could relive his life in another world.

Even if you arranged the facts in front of him one by one, even if everyone told him, " Mo-zongshi is you, you two are the same being," he wouldn't be able to acknowledge it. He'd cover his head and refuse the entire world.

He'd say: no, this venerable one is different from that person.

In actuality, he knew that he was lying. After all, how many times had he dreamt of it when he was at Wushan Palace: dreamt that he had gone back to the beginning, that the world was ablaze, that he was beside him. But every time he woke up, all that vanished.

He laid in his too-large bed, curtains flying around him. He hated having to wake up, hated Duke Zhou for not returning those nice dreams to him, and hated Zhuang Sheng for not allowing his butterfly to become his reality.[233]

So every time he shouted, "this venerable one is not Mo-zongshi!" he wondered who might come to comfort him. He wanted to grab a few thousand palace maids, and have them yell out 810 times a day, "You are Mo-zongshi, you and him are one and the same." Then he would be at peace.

"Why did you drink so much?"

Chu Wanning entered his field of vision, brows knitted, and tried to help him up, but was himself pulled down by an outstretched hand.

"Mo Ran, what's gotten into.... Oh..."

He embraced Chu Wanning with enormous strength, and caring for nothing else, enveloped him in a fierce, deep kiss. But when that kiss became more and more fervent, he seemed to have thought of something and, as if deliberately imitating someone, suddenly gentled.

"This venerable one can do it too..." While Chu Wanning was entwined in the fragrance of wine and his melancholy kiss, Taxian-jun murmured vaguely: "It's not hard."

Chu Wanning didn't know what he was talking about, but stiffened. The hallway was too open; there was no cover to speak of, and he was afraid that someone would come out and chance upon this scene. He tried to struggle free, but Taxian-jun pressed him against the wooden railings and kissed him even deeper. Based on Taxian-jun's typical way of doing things,

it wasn't out of the question for them to start unabashedly doing thigs right there on the stairwell.

But as Chu Wanning resisted more and more, Taxian-jun suddenly uncharacteristically ended the kiss. His black and purple eyes drooped slightly, fixated on Chu Wanning's moist lips. He moved closer, wanting to continue. After a while, like a loyal dog begging to be fed by his master, he kissed him again.

Chu Wanning: "..."

Taxian-jun kissed him three more times, then stopped. Although his eyes were moist, he restrained himself, and held Chu Wanning in his close embrace.

He sighed heavily: "Tell me, is this venerable one dreaming again..."

This man was always uncontrollably agressive, and rarely sniffled like this into Chu Wanning's shoulder. Chu Wanning was startled, but then gained some understanding.

In this world, no matter which one of Mo Ran's soul threads it was, no matter which fragment, he would always know him best.

Chu Wanning raised his hand, caressed his back, and petted him as he had done when he was a teenager. He said: "It's not a dream. Let's go back to our room."

Taxian-jun was drowsy and stubborn, muttering, "I'm not sleeping. I'm not going back."

Chu Wanning said helplessly: "... What are you fussing about now?"

Taxian-jun wasn't happy, so Taxian-jun made a fuss, groaning and whining, as if he still felt terribly wronged: "You already put out the lights, and you still didn't come find this venerable one, you're trying to make this venerable one mad on purpose...

This person was the emperor of the previous world, but when he was drunk and rubbing against his neck, Chu Wanning had an sudden thought, that Taxian-jun was like a beautiful concubine, jealous and clamoring for his favor.

Chu Wanning felt silent at this momentary image; finally, he said: "Didn't I learn this from you? It's you who said you had to put out the lights, so that those who wouldn't dare to come in could take advantage of the darkness and sneak in. I was saving face for you."

"...? Nonsense. Who wanted you to save face for me?" Half asleep and half awake and still mad, he continued: "this venerable one has destroyed the heavens and extinguished the earth, what things could this venerable one dare not..."

The voice slowly faded.

"Chu Wanning..."

"Yes?"

"Wanning..."

"....."

In the end, the voice became gentle, not much different from when he was young and naive: "Shizun..."

Chu Wanning was silent for a moment. He raised his hand and stroked his hair.

"Yes."

"When I wake up tomorrow, will you still be here?"

Chu Wanning closes his eyes, and repeated a phrase he had often repeated in these two years of seclusion: "Go to sleep, I'll be here the entire time."

With this, Taxian-jun felt content. After a while, there was a sound of even breathing. The drunk emperor was finally at peace, and finally slept soundly. Chu Wanning supported him carefully and returned to their room. Lying in bed, that man's face was upright, with no hint of wicked tendencies. He looked no different from the youth he took as a student all those years ago, who would raise his umbrella to save earthworms.

The parasitic flower had withered, and the nightmare would never come again.

Just -

"Then why did you lose this venerable one's brocade bag?" In his sleep, Taxian-jun suddenly kicked the quilt and shouted.

"This venerable one will go on a blind date! this venerable one wants to win... win... Taobao Manor's Gift Box... 500 volumes...." of rare erotic art.

Fortunately, the second half of the sentence was in vague mutterings, and Chu Wanning didn't hear.

But even though Chu Wanning didn't know that the ultimate goal of his blind date was to get erotic storybooks, when he was faced with this man

who was asleep and yet could make petty complaints in his dreams, he still had to facepalm, and endure endless headaches.

Even if you beat him to death, he wouldn't tell Xue Meng that he had lost Mo Ran's brocade bag because Taxian-jun had shamelessly embroidered on it a selection from some erotic story's "Eighteen Caresses".

Compared with Mo-zongshi's dignified embroidery of verses wishing for peace and contentment, who would prefer to wear eighteen caresses...

He would also never tell Mo Ran, not even if you beat him to death, tha he had not actually lost that brocade bag that exemplified Taxian-jun's temperament so well. It was actually locked in a wooden box that only he could open.

It was there with everything else that he had ever gifted to him.

The next day, Xue Meng got up early.

Being under the same roof as Chu Wanning was a rare thing, so he decided to go out and buy some of his Shizun's favorite breakfast items as a sign of his respect. But when he went downstairs, he found that a table near the inn's window was already covered with a sumptuous breakfast, and that Mo Ran was laying out bowls and chopsticks.

As soon as he looked up and saw him come down, Mo Ran laughed: "Up so early?"

"....."

Although he had long since known that Mo Ran changed consciousness every three days, it was still strange to experience it directly. Xue Meng

remained still for a while. He stood there for a long time before he grunted an affirmative.

"I made a fool of myself yesterday. Sometimes I'm just like that."

Xue Meng scratched his head, and said uncomfortably: "Forget it, it's not like it's the first time I've had reason to laugh at you." He went to look over the table, and couldn't help but ask: "Did you borrow the kitchen from the shopkeeper?"

"Yes." Mo-zongshi looked at him with a laugh and put a plate of golden, crispy pan-fried pork buns in front of him. "There's still congee boiling on the stove. It's almost ready. Would you do me a favor and help me make three bowls?"

"Ah." Xue Meng answered, and went into the small kitchen with Mo Ran.

When he lifted the pot lid, the steam from the congee emitted a strong fragrance, and the congee itself was full of shrimp and sliced fish. Mo Ran nimbly filled three bowls, and Xue Meng helped to find condiments.

He placed halved soft-boiled eggs right on the steaming congee, then sprinkled on white sesame seeds, chopped tender scallions, golden crisp fritters, and a few drops of sesame oil, until the final result was fragrant and beautiful.

Xue Meng was curious, and couldn't help asking: "Ta...ah, the you from yesterday. Can he make this too?"

"Yes, and no worse than I can now." Mo Ran said: "It's just that he likes to get angry and throw tantrums. Actually a lot of these recipes are ones he

thought up when he was in control, but he neve made them, and just left them for me to prepare."

Xue Meng said "ah," made a few muttering sounds, then asked: "Why did Shizun lose his brocade bag and keep yours?"

The hand that Mo Ran was using to slice eggs stilled; he turned to Xue Meng with a smile and said: "We're one person, and this is an embarassing matter. So I can't tell you."

Xue Meng stared at him: "Haven't you embarrassed yourself plenty of times in front of me? So you're all discreet now; why didn't you feel embarrassed when you called me that Peerless something yesterday? Speaking of which, our accounts aren't settled yet—"

Mo-zongshi truly was a man who did what he pleased. He immediately changed his tune and said: "Ah, then we should count as two people. You can settle with Taxian-jun when he comes back, be good now."

Xue Meng: "???"

"That's right." When the last bowl of seafood congee was ready, Mo Ran seemed to suddenly think of something and said to Xue Meng with great seriousness, "I still have something else to tell you."

Xue Meng was shocked by his sudden solemnity and felt inexplicable pressure : "S-, say it then."

Mo Ran said: "Actually, I don't know what you were thinking, or what happened between you two, that suddenly... well, in any case, it's your private business, and I'm not in a position to ask. But I thought about it,

and as your gege, since I now know about this matter, I should give you some advice.

Xue Meng: "Ah?"

"Xue Meng, you're still young, and you're free to experiment with your feelings, but his age, experience and status are all higher than yours, so it'll be hard for you two to get along. You have a strong temper, so remember to be more restrained, and to be tolerant. I'll keep your secret, and if you have anything you're confused about, you can come to Nanping Mountain to see me while Shizun is away."

Mo Ran patted him on the shoulder: "Never learn from me and go on a blind date to piss him off."

"...Do you have no shame saying that?" Xue Meng, paused, then repeatedly shook his head: "No, hold on, what are you talking about?"

Mo Ran warmly and indulgently looked towards him in the manner of an older brother: "It's alright, gege has experience and understands your difficulties. In fact, whether it's Shizun or Jiang-zunzhu, they're both highly positioned, isolated people who value their dignity. You're still young, so when you argue, you should admit your mistakes first. A harmonious, talented family leads to prosperity.

Xue Meng immediately turned deathly white: "How, how did you know that? How did you find out? Me and him... we're...we're not!"

Mo Ran said: "I could tell from yesterday, that's why I'm congratulating you now."

Xue Meng was shocked: "Is it that obvious?"

Mo Ran laughed and patted him again: "It's...not that bad. But you could stand to be little more restrained."

Xue Meng collapsed.

Xue Meng thought he had restrained himself well enough. How could Mo Ran see so quickly that he and Jiang Xi were father and son??!

Fortunately, as he swiftly flew out of the kitchen, he didn't hear Mo Ran shaking his head and sighing: "Strange. What happened these past two years? How could Xue Meng and Jiang Ye start to have feelings for wach other... Didn't he used to always like girls? Sigh, I could break my head and still never understand..."

Even as Xue Meng bid his farewells to to Mo Ran and Chu Wanning, he didn't know that in Mo Ran's eyes he had undergone a tremendous change, and that Mo Ran now thought that they were of the same type.

When they parted, Xue Mong grabbed on to Mo Ran, and warned him anxiously: "You can't tell anyone about Jiang Yechen and me!"

You can't tell anyone that I'm the son of that dog thief!

Mo Ran sincerely raised his hand and swore: "I will keep your secret."

I'm not going to tell anybody that you've picked up Sect Leader Jiang.

The two brothers reached a tacit understanding, and under Chu Wanning's perplexed gaze, they bumped fists. Then gege took Chu Wanning back to Nanping Mountain, while didi stepped out into the puddled streets, suffused with the clear rays of the morning sun, and returned to the misty, cloud-covered Sisheng Peak.

Ch. 331 Xue Meng’s Blind Date: Tea-Selling Little Sister 1

>>casual jokes made towards a hypothetical abortion

After that incident, Xue Meng saw another seven, eight people in succession, but every time, either the other party's revealed true appearance turned out to be uglier than he could have imagined, or the two of them, even before undoing their sachets, had already started fighting to the point they teetered between life and death, aiming desperately to throttle the other into oblivion.

After that, Xue Meng gradually became suspicious of this cultivation tool from Manor Head Ma, and that suspicion grew deeper and deeper.

Finally, he came to the eleventh cultivator. When she cutely said to him: "This one likes Taxian-jun very much. This one would like to be his empress, and if that's not possible, a concubine would be fine too. I heard that Taxian-jun likes children very much, and I also like children very much. I think we must be a match made in heaven. If he wishes to mary me, this one could give him a new baby every year until he's satisfied~" Xue Meng finally collapsed.

He not only collapsed, but also exploded in rage.

"What kind of woman are you! Don't, don't you know what the relationship between Mo Ran and Chu-zongshi is?!”

"I know!" The woman, pleased, covered her face bashfully. "But this one is virtuous and kind, and won't be jealous of Chu-zongshi, and is willing to have babies for Chu-zongshi too, heehee ."

Xue Meng in his rage shook the table: "Don't be so pleased with yourself, you shameless hussy!"

The woman stared, wide-eyed. "How could you yell at me like that?"

"I'm not just going to yell at you, if you ever say that you lust after Chu-zongshi again, I can smack you too!"

"You dare!"

"I do dare! Also, is there something wrong with your brain? If you like Taxian-jun, then what are you doing playing around with the relief scroll and wasting other people's time? You could just go intercept him on Nanping Mountain!"

The woman became so indignant that she rolled up her sleeves and cast off her previous charming manner. "Fuck! You think I haven't tried?" she said fiercely, "I'll have you know I waited seven days and seven nights trying to ambush him! "

"...You're fucking sick!"

"You're the one who's sick! You're the one who doesn't understand the power of love!" As she yelled, her eyes began to tear up. "Ah, you don't even know; that evening, when I finally met him, he came out from behind a fence, and looked at me—when our four eyes met, I heard a bang in my head, like fireworks exploded. Now I've even figured out which sect our child should study under in the future!"

The girl recounted her adventure passionately, as if she were trapped and couldn't free herself from those honeyed memories: "And then, I rushed over in excitement, and told him—"

"Don't tell me you just directly told him that you liked him?" Xue Meng said incredibly.

"That's what you think? Wow, with an imagination that terrible, no wonder you've had to go on these blind dates." The girl rolled her eyes at Xue Meng. "You've gotta be shocking, you've gotta be provocative, you need to use overpowering rhetoric! With one phrase you need to capture his attention and interest! Got it? So anyway, I told him—"

She took a deep breath, and with practiced enunciation she loudly vomited out two words: "I'm pregnant."

Xue Meng: "...???"

"What the hell does that have to do with Mo Ran???"

"It has everything to do with him. It was his eyes, his gaze made me pregnant," she considrately explained to her audience.

"....." Xue Meng sat frozen for a very long time, shocked by her mad energy. He didn't know what to say. Finally, he asked in horror: "Did Mo Ran actually pay any attention to you?"

"Of course, I succeeded in using these words to attract the Emperor's attention. He was so warm, not at all cold like I heard he was. He was even willing to take responsibility on his own initiative!"

Xue Meng was once again shocked: "Wh-, what? He, he... What did he say?"

The girl covered her face shyly and said: "He asked me if I wanted an abortion? One tael for a kick in the stomach, don't tell Chu Wanning."

"...."

Xue Meng's mouth twitched, and finally he couldn't help it anymore: "HAHAHAHAHA!!"

"What are you laughing at? He was willing to kick me! It's fate! As long as I'm sincere enough, I won't believe that I can't be with Taxian-jun!"

Still laughing, Xue Meng stood up to stretch out his muscles. "Alright, c'mere, I can give you a kick in place of Taxian-jun right now!"

"Ahh—"

Xue Meng finally couldn't stand this bleak, depressing blind date process anymore. With the pen name of "Taobao Manor Destroyed My Youth", he successively left a hundred bad reviews for the relief scroll on the "Ranking of Cultivation Instruments". Each bad review came with nearly a thousand words of personal accounts, denouncing this tool that Manor Head Ma had refined.

However, what Xue Meng couldn't expect was that his writing was too full of his sincere emotions, too full of his surging passions, which led to many in the cultivation world to fall over themselves to read and spread his writings—

Of course, this was done in the spirit of mockery.

There was even a black-market businessman who copied his bad reviews and compiled them into a book. Since it was officially published and sold on August 18, the black market bookseller titled the book "818".[234]

The table of contents for the book are as follows:

"818's My Delicious Daddy"

"818's My Savage Cousin"

……

And so on and so forth.

Other people's trivial misfortunes will always arouse the interest of everyday people, so 818 for a short while became the most popular black-market book on the streets. Many people even called for the hero "Taobao Manor Destroyed My Youth" to go on even more dates, to bring more happiness to everyone.

It was fortunate then that the book was soon banned by Jiang Xi.

Jiang Xi stared at the words "Delicious Daddy", and his eyes shone with sinister light: "What sort of nonsense is all this. Burn it all."

"Yes, Sect Leader!"

A crowd of Gu Yue Ye's lackey disciples immediately bought all the 818s on the market, dug a pit in the outskirts of Yangzhou, and set it all aflame.

818 burned, but the relief scroll kept selling out. Xue Meng was unbearably furious, until finally, he secretly sent a letter signed with his real name to Manor Head Ma, angrily cursing out our sincere, adorable, kind and innocent Manor Head Ma for ten thousand words straight.

But in fact, the letter only had one core meaning .—

Jieke Ma! You dog thief! What kind of cultivation instrument is this? Aren't you just spreading human suffering? I'll tell you now, if I don't like your

response to this letter, I'll end any relationship between your Taobao Manor and my Sisheng Peak! Don't you even think about getting my Shizun's machine armor diagrams!! Aagghhh!!!

When the sincere, adorable, kind and innocent Manor Head Ma received this letter, he was happily counting money, and when he read its contents, he almost passed out in surprise.

How could this be!?

Breaking off their relationship is a trivial matter. That the one sending the letter was Xue Meng was also a trivial matter. The non-trivial matter was that there was a customer dissatisfied with his masterpiece!

Oh goodness, is that "818" not some fabrication that Gu Yue Ye made up to wickedly compete with him? There really was someone in the world who hated him that much!

Manor Head Ma felt sad, and hiccuped through his sobs.

He also felt a bit depressed.

He would never allow any customer in the world to not be satisfied with his lovingly made relief scroll. Never!!!

So Manor Head Ma pulled out his secret weapon—Shou Hou.

Shou Hou is the collective name for a group of disciples cultivating at Taobao Manor. Typically, they're female disciples with soft voices, pretty faces, and good temperaments. The objective of their cultivation that Manor Head Ma established for them was this: "To be able to grant a customer long life (shou) after one conversation, and to be able to form a profound friendship (hou) after one smile."

In short, Shou Hou.

Considering how angry Xue Meng was, the honorable and serious Manor Head Ma attached great importance to this matter, and dared not neglect him. So he immediately sent the elder Shou Hou Bu Shenqi to go in person to Sisheng Peak and Sect Leader Xue, so she can serve his tea, pour his water, and massage his back and legs.[235] All in all, the point was this:

Every effort must be made to restore Xue Meng's favor and provide customer satisfaction!

Nevertheless, the elder Shou Hou Bu Shengqi who had been appointed for this task didn't have such a deep understanding of the situation as Manor Head Ma. She was a young, pampered, timid,and pretty female cultivator who liked to play the coquette, and has great fear of Xue Meng, who once ranked second on the cultivation world's rankings for arrogance. She was terribly frightened of being hit by Sect Leader Xue...

Bu-guniang spent some time mired in her sadness. Soon afterwards, she told the story to a cultivator she had recently met through the relief scroll.

It's no wonder that Bu-guniang confessed everything; this cultivator going by "Wang Mei Zhi Ke" gave off an aura of extreme reliability.[236] He was gentle and steady; he didn't lack wit, but he wasn't frivolous. The intimacy teasing in his words was right on point: a bit more would have been sleazy, a bit less would have been insipid. He was just like a perfectly brewed cup of tea; everything just right.

And moreover, he was exceptionally considerate, and eager to help.

Once "Wang Mei Zhi Ke" heard of Bu-guniang's plight, he thought for a moment, and sent her this message:

"Worry not. Let me settle this matter for you."

Bu Shengqi was enormously shocked and moved: "Really?"

Wang Mei-xianzhang's tone on the jade slip was as gentle and considerate as ever: "Of course, a gentleman is a man of his word. Relax and leave Sect Leader Xue to me. I'll definitely make him happy."

On that day, Xue Meng was cleaning off the dust that had accumulated at Red Lotus Pavilion. Suddenly, a disciple came to report some news—

"Reporting! Sect Leader! Someone from Taobao Manor is requesting an audience!"

Recently Xue Meng had a headache whenever he heard the words "Taobao Manor". He wiped off a file left behind by Chu Wanning and threw it into a bamboo canister. He said angrily, "Tell him to get lost!"

"It, it's a woman!"

"So what if it's a woman?" His period of dating had led Xue Meng to once again recognize a cardinal truth, that whether men or women, awful people were all the same. "You can tell her to get lost too! I won't accept any more tools recommended by Taobao Manor. Tell them all to give up already!"

Saying this, he began to wipe off Chu Wanning's qin stand.

"And you can tell her to report to Ma Yun, that even if I'm stuck only doing business with Jiang Yechen in the future, that I still won't have any contact

with his sect! Look at the disreputable things they're doing! What a nuisance!"

The little disciple pitifully suffered the wrath of his sect leader, and at last he plaintively said: "But she said she was one of Taobao Manor's Shou Hou disciples."

"Shou Hou disciple?" Xue Meng frowned, "What the hell is that?"

The little disciple: "I heard she's here to apologize..." He swallowed, and then recited, "Whether rolled round or kneaded flat, her dimples are like flowers, here for your errands or your anger, until you are satisfied, only then will she leave."

"....."

Xue Meng thought, so she's like a wooden board you break in martial arts practice?

Despite his heartfelt dissatisfaction, since she came to make amends, Xue Meng reluctantly went out to meet her. Before leaving, he also told the disciple who was watching over the Red Lotus Pavilion: "Hey, don't touch the qin stand I was cleaning. I'll go back to working on it when I return."

After the guardian disciple assured him for the hundredth time that he wouldn't dare to move even a speck of dust from Red Lotus Pavilion, Xue Meng finally felt reassured, put aside his cleaning rag, and left.

When he arrived at Danxin Hall, he saw an unfamiliar female cultivator at the center of the hall. She was dressed in silvery robes, with long pale brown hair that naturally curled at the ends, held up with a white jade

hairpin. Her skin was whiter than snow. Even indoors, she seemed to emit a soft light.

She was at that moment crouching to tease Veggie Bun the orange cat. The fat cat, who normally only looked at people with disdain, uncharacteristically liked her very much. He not only graciously turned over his white belly for her approval, but also squinted his eyes and let out a a satisfied purr.

Hearing someone approaching, Shou Hou-guniang turned her head. When she saw Xue Meng, she immediately got up and, with both great warmth and shyness, smiled at him.

"Ah, Sect Leader Xue. It's an honor to finally meet you."

Xue Meng: "..."

Huh? Why did this person feel so familiar?

Xue Meng sized her up to make sure that she wasn't wearing an illusion sachet. If it wasn't an illusion that caused him to get that sense, it was probably just a coincidence.

Her complexion was white, her eyes and hair were both rather pale, she had her facial features gave off a profound sense of mystery, breathtaking and cold. But she has a pair of loving eyes brimming with emotion that looked everywhere with great interest, and she posessed an air of romantic yet unmalicious charm.

Xue Meng was a very picky person. From birth to now, the only woman who in his eyes he'd call "beautiful" was his mother, Madame Wang.

But this Shou Hou...Even though Xue Meng felt she wasn't as good looking as his own self, he had to say she wasn't too bad either.

The two looked at each other for a while, and when Shou Hou-guniang was just about to open her mouth to introduce herself, Xue Meng suddenly raised his hand and said: "Wait a minute."

Then he went aside and said to the little disciple, "You, come here."

As soon as the little disciple approached, Xue Meng lowered his voice and asked: "You're sure this Shou Hou is actually here to offer apologies?"

The little disciple didn't understand: "Y-, yes."

Xue Meng said gravely: "Isn't there a chance that Ma Yun is just deploying a beauty strategically, so that by underhanded means he gets me to give up fighting for the victims of the relief scroll?"

"....."

The disciple thought to himself, aren't you the only victim of the relief scroll? Everyone else has been having a good time with it except you.

Also, "818" was really funny!

...

On second thought, he valued his life.

So the little disciple pumped his fist and cheered Xue Meng on: "Sect Leader, justice may come late, but it will always come. Manor Head Ma using a beauty as strategy is nothing; even if someone used all 36

Stratagems against you, you're still the upright and forthright Sect Leader Xue! Believe in yourself, you can do it!"

Xue Meng was greatly inspired and moved when he heard this. He patted the young disciple on the shoulder and said, "Well said! True gold isn't afraid of fire, true men aren't afraid of female entanglements. Even if I let her grind me down, it'll never change my heart! I'll alienate her, be cold to her, embarrass her, so that she'll make a tactical retreat and leave Sisheng Peak as soon as possible!"

After he finished, he turned around and said aggressively to Shou Hou:

"What are you called?"

"Oh, me?" Shou Hou-guniang gently smiled, and said: "My lowly name isn't worth your ears. It is enough for Sect Leader Xue to call me Shou Hou."

"...Ok!" Xue Meng waved his hand vigilantly and impatiently. "It's impossible for me to change my view of the relief scroll. If that's your purpose for coming here, just go away so we don't waste each other's time."

Shou Hou smiled indulgently and said: "Apologies are just one of many reasons I'm here. There are so many Shou Hou disciples like me at Taobao Manor, I had to ask to come to Sisheng Peak on my own initiative, not only for the relief scroll, but also because..."

She stared at Xue Meng with her pale eyes, and suddenly he felt that inexplicable familiarity again. It felt like he was a rat being stared at by a cat. Goosebumps raised along his back, and had a sudden dangerous sense that shortly he would become a toy for her amusement.

He was on guard and ready to drive her away from the mountain as soon as any excuse for it arose, but suddenly, he saw Shou Hou's face widened with a smile full of boundless charms.

She warmly said: "Because Sect Leader Xue is the cultivation world's most remarkable, most righteous, most generous, most spicy..."

"Wha-?"

" Cough , most striking cultivator." She seamlessly corrected herself without even blinking, then continued smiling: "This one has admired you for a very long time, and has freely come with the desire to keep you company."

Ch. 332 Xue Meng's Blind Date: Tea-Selling Little Sister 2

Translator's note: Going forward, I'll be denoting the older Mei Hanxue as "Mei HanXue" so readers have a clearer idea of which one is which.

Also, I've made some translation choices in this chapter that aren't quite appropriate to the setting and are likely to age very poorly. But also, they're funny and it's my doc so ¯_(ツ)_/¯

On one hand, Xue Meng felt like he in no way needed female companionship.

On the other hand, Xue Meng felt that every word Shou Hou said was correct, and had no aversion to such an honest woman.

It's said that "a raised hand can't strike a smiling face", and besides, she had been so well-behaved and sincere that Xue Meng was momentarily too embarrassed to chase her away. So he could only let her stay for a bit at Sisheng Peak, and let her "practice what I preach, and represent Manor Head Ma in expressing our most sincere apologies to Sect Leader Xue."

A few days passed, and Shou Hou remained extraordinarily discreet. Without Xue Meng's express permission, she never in any way fooled around, and actually deftly and peacefully helped support Sisheng Peak.

Sisheng Peak was in fact quite busy. After the great war, even though the sect's standing rose triumphantly, it still, as before, liked to take on errands like "Granny Wang's cat climbed up a tree again and can't get down."

When Xue Meng was young, these tasks were usually handled by Shi Mei. Sometimes when Mo Ran was bored he'd also take them. But after he took over the sect, he hoped that every disciple could go out into the countryside and understand the concept that that good deeds, no matter big or small, were all significant. So he asked the twenty elders of Sisheng Peak to line up their disciples to undertake such piecemeal errands in turn.

It's Tanlang's turn this month.

Besides Chu Wanning, Tanlang has the fewest disciples. They were all chosen through his own particular methods, so all those under him were also rather particular and rather odd.

These disciples would absolutely refuse to do things like leave the mountain to help Granny Wang get her cat down. But they couldn't refuse direct requests from the sect leader, so they normally just found some easy to bully junior disciple from Xuanji's group, and bribed them, or threatened them with a beating, and bully Elder Xuanji's disciple into crying and doing these trivial tasks for them.

For this reason, even though Xuanji was quite gentle, he'd had to go to Tanlang multiple times to settle the score.

But with Shou Hou, everything was different.

Somehow, with just a few words, she managed to charm Tanlang's disciples into going down the mountain to help, and even got them to leave with great cheer.

Besides resolving arguments, she helped Mengpo Hall's auntie make food, wiped down the stone lions of Naihe Bridge, and catalogued the books in the library pavilion. She was willing to do any errand, and did them well.

From all the elders on high, down to Mengpo Hall's dog and Madame Wang's cat, all those who had breath in them had only one thing to say about her:

"Mee OW !" said the cat.

"Bow-WOW!" said the dog.

"Wooooow..." said the people.

It was clear that Shou Hou has the wisdom and serenity befitting someone coming from a cohort of da-shijie.

By the third day, Xue Meng couldn't sit still any longer.

He felt that this woman was quite skillful, so he could ask her for her advice. But he also felt he had to save face, and he couldn't get himself to go to a young lady from another sect to discuss such matters.

As he was deliberating, he heard from a nearby corridor the sound of some young disciples whispering among themselves.

Disciple A: "Shou Hou-guniang is sooo beautiful. Sigh , but I don't know how long she can stay in Sisheng Peak. If she could stay for three, five months, I have to pursue her!"

Disciple B rolled his eyes: "The toad wants to eat swan meat! Can't you see that Shou-guniang clearly secretly admires our sect leader?"

Xue Meng was shocked! And just then, they walked around the corner. Xue Meng quickly raised the sword manual in his hand to cover his face, meanwhile straining to listen in on their conversation.

"Eh? Really?"

"Are you stupid? Look at when she talks to other people, she can't go three sentences before she turns the subject to Sect Leader Xue. I think that besides helping out the sect, she's here for two things."

"What two things?"

Disciple B lifted his finger: "First, to praise Sect Leader Xue. Second, to ask around about Sect Leader Xue. See how blindly she's praising him? She says that our sect leader is handsomer than Mo-zongshi, smarter than Manor Head Ma, richer than Jiang Yechen, and has a heart kinder than Chu-zongshi...and worst of all, she said that his stature and height are both excellent. You tell me if she seems blind or not!"

"???" Xue Meng was angry.

Everything she said was all undoubtedly true, you two are the blind ones!

"She's asking about everything, from his favorite foods to his recent mood. Yesterday I even saw her asking Sect Leader about what he thinks about Mei Hanxue."

"Eh? Why does she want to to know our sect leader's feelings towards Mei Hanxue?"

"Obviously it's because Sect Leader and Mei da-shixiong are childhood friends. If you want to get the measure of a man, you need to get the measure of the men around him. I think Shou-guniang is set on him, so you better give up competing with the sect leader, because you have no chance."

As they murmured, they walked away.

They left Xue Meng standing where he was, slowly lowering the sword manual covering his face.

Although he thought Shou Hou wasn't as good-looking as he was, she was still quite a remarkable girl, and now, now that that she was already praising him to death...

He should ask her to dinner, maybe ask her how she manages sect things... that wouldn't be shameful, right?

This was certainly an idea he had.

With such an idea in mind, Xue Meng asked around for Shou-guniang's whereabouts. He heard that she was in the library, so he tidied his clothes, cleared his throat, and walked in her direction.

At this time, in the library:

Taobao Manor Shou Hou-guniang, Bu Shenqi's hero, master of the Yi Rong Technique, the one nicknamed "Wang Mei Zhi Ke" — the one whose true identity is Kunlun Taxue Palace's da-shixiong, the cultivation world's number one dandy—Mei Hanxue-xianjun, was just then dedicating his focus to an antique book titled "Registry of Ancient Barriers".

This book was originally in Chu Wanning's Red Lotus Pavilion. After Chu Wanning's retirement to Nanping, Xue Meng was asked to move all his books to the library for the disciples to study. Along with "Registry of Ancient Barriers," the collection included numerous books such as "Plantlife Records", "Journey to Shu", "Linyi Rufeng Sect Qin Scores" and so on.

As a music-focused cultivator, Mei Hanxue's interest in barrier techniques wasn't very high. Reasonably speaking, he should have been looking through "Linyi Rufeng Sect Qin Scores, but he didn't. Instead, he was perusing this cryptic, complex book on barriers with keen interest, and from time to time, he would rub his chin and chuckle to himself, as if he deeply engaged with the material.

And how could he not be?

Because in this volume of "Registry of Ancient Barriers" that Chu Wanning had left behind, there was a pile of erotic art!

Mei Hanxue was keen, and naturally knew that these wouldn't be related to Chu Wanning. With a little thought, he could make a general guess as to how they got there. Presumably, these ink treasures must have been sneaked in by a naughty Mo Ran. The scene must have been brilliant, and the idea of it made him gasp in admiration.

He had to say that Mo Ran was quite an ingenious young man. Mei Hanxue had spent so many years making his way through the lovely flowers that normal beauty didn't even catch his eyes anymore, yet he was deeply moved by Master Mo Weiyu's early authentic works.

What impressed him more was that this man dared to put such a lewd picture in Chu Wanning's book, and lived to tell the tale. Truly an extraordinary man.

Mei Hanxue kept looking, and couldn't help but let out a breath of laughter.

Mo Ran truly was quite interesting. And Xue Ziming had been with him for so many years, yet he hadn't been sullied by Mo Ran's filth - even more

interesting.

"Being interesting" was one of the most important requirements for Mei Hanxue to have any regard for a person. And ever since he met Xue Meng, he hadn't yet found anymore more interesting to play with than him. In the eyes of Mei Hanxue, Xue Meng was too impulsive, too impatient, too simple and forgetful. He was like a pufferfish; if someone sitting on land would poke him, he'd immediately puff up in anger, but it wouldn't take too long for him to stupidly forget what he was mad about, and go right back to strutting his fins in the water.

Mei Hanxue couldn't help but be like an addicted cat. He'd casually poke at him, and swat at him, and the more angry Xue Meng became, the more he'd purr.

In the past, Xue Meng had asked him about this when he couldn't take it anymore: "Mei Hanxue, are there any bad feelings between us?"

Mei Hanxue thought, you are my son of my benefactor, of course there aren't any bad feelings. But there is indeed an old debt that you seem to have forgotten.

Yes. Xue Meng couldn't remember that when they first met as children, he had done something so evil that Mei Hanxue still fumed—

He made Mei Hanxue wear women's clothes.

At that time, Mei Hanxue was a chubby-cheeked child with stubby, round limbs. He had come with his Shizun and a group of people from Mingyue Tower to Sisheng Peak. It was winter, and he wore a fluffy white fur cap and heavy robes. The cap was slightly too big, and always slid sideways,

covering his pale golden hair and his blue eyes, so that Xue Meng didn't even notice the little disciple with the foreign face.

It was the first time Mei Hanxue left Taxue Palace to go to another sect. At that time, he was young and a newcomer to this land, and because his words always came out in a broken accent and he didn't want to be laughed at, he simply didn't say anything. Standing in the corner with his pale golden eyelashes drooped, it was the complete opposite from his honeypot future self.

So how did the feud between him and Xue Meng start?

Everything else was fine, but it was all the fault of the heavy mist at Miaoyin Pool.

There were many hot springs near Kunlun Taxue Palace, and the disciples were used to bathing in them. Mei Hanxue was the same.

That evening, he wanted to take Mei HanXue to take a bath in Miaoyin Pool. But after waiting and waiting, Mei HanXue still hadn't returned to their room, so he had to go to the baths by himself.

After taking off his outer robe, leaving him only in thin white undergarments, Mei Hanxue realized that he didn't know where to put his clothes. So he simply piled them on top of his golden hair and walked onto the flower-strewn cobbled path. When he came to the springs, he suddenly heard a childish and wildly energetic voice.

"Shi Mei, you should get more sunshine. You've already been at Sisheng Peak so long, but you're still this tiny! Look at how swole I am! Sigh , I'm worried about what you'll look like when you grow up... what if you end up

like Wuchang Town's shaobing seller Uncle Wu, who's even shorter than his wife?"[237]

Then there was a soft, gentle voice: Shaozhu is naturally the best looking, how could I compare with you?"

Mei Hanxue wasn't very good at Mandarin at that time. He didn't understand that Shaozhu meant "young master"; If he could understand it, he would know that this was the son of his benefactor. Unfortunately, because he didn't know the meaning, he thought that "Shao Zhu" was this person's name.

Having just been complimented, Xue Meng felt quite happy and satisfied, so he encouraged Shi Mei: "I like your honest enthusiasm, but you need to get taller! Just learn from me. Every day I get lots of sun, so you should do it too, and when I drink milk, you should drink with me! Never give up!"

"But I'm afraid—"

"Ehh, what are you afraid of? Believe in me who believes in you! If in the future you really do end up short like Uncle Wu, then I'll have to cover you. When we see a bad guy you can hide behind me, how about that?"

Shi Mei laughed at his teasing: "Then I'll have to thank Shaozhu in advance."

"Look at how you're talking! We're all disciples, stop being so polite."

Mei Hanxue listened in as he approached. Just then he could see clearly that there were two children just about his age in the small hot spring pool, covered in wild flowers. One was slim and breathtakingly lovely, with red lips and white teeth and skin the color of pear blossoms. The other

one's back was towards him, and he couldn't see his face. But what Mei Hanxue thought was absolutely ridiculous was that this boy, even when bathing, bound his hair with one of Sisheng Peak's shining silvery guan.[238]

Did he forget to take it off or did he keep wearing it on purpose?

Are people in Shu really so strange?

Before he finished his thought, Shi Mei in the pool noticed him. When he saw that it was a stranger, he immediately gave an alert: "Shaozhu, look behind you..."

"Look at what?" The child with his back to him followed Shi Mei's gaze and turned his head.

— That was the first time in his life that Mei Hanxue saw Xue Meng.

But this meeting was truly doomed by fate. At the moment Xue Meng turned around, the mists of Miaoyin Pool settled over them. Mei Hanxue could see Xue Meng's face clearly, but Xue Meng didn't have time to do the same. He only saw that this person's skin was very white, his eyes were very big, and his facial features were very deep.

He felt this was probably a girl.

As luck would have it, Chu Wanning had just been peeked at by his female disciples while bathing in the Red Lotus Pavilion, and Xue Meng immediately thought of this incident. With a screech, he yelled: "Help! Someone come quick!! It's happening again! Quick, someone catch this dirty peeper!!!"

"Ah, friend, I am not dirty, I just...just..." Mei Hanxue's Mandarin at that time wasn't fluent, and when he was nervous, it went all over the place.

He wanted to say that he had gotten hot during sword practice, and he was covered in sweat, and looking to cool down.

But when he couldn't remember how to say all this, he lowered his head and tried to think, "Look...look....looking...."

Xue Meng was scandalized: "You admit it! You're sneaking into other people's baths to look at them?!"

Mei Hanxue bowed his head and kept trying: "Hot....hot....hot...."

"Thot?!" Xue Meng rolled his tongue and imitated him, and sounded like he wanted to vomit. He grew even more shocked, and on top of that, furious.

"How dare you call me a thot?! I know I'm good looking, but how dare you!! Shi Mei, back me up!"

Shi Mei hurriedly coaxed him with his soft voice: "Y-, yes..."

Actually, Xue Meng wasn't quite comfortable showing this "girl peeper" the muscles that he hadn't actually developed yet: "Look at my arms, my legs... I'm as swole as my dad! Take a look at how beautiful Xue men are!"

Mei Hanxue didn't understand, and he was still thinking seriously about how to say that he felt hot enough to be boiling and was covered in sweat, and just wanted a bath: "But..."

His Mandarin was truly not great.

Xue Meng stopped his flexing mid-motion: "...You want to see my butt?"

Mei Hanxue finally got it. He clapped his hands and said happily, "But! But here for bath!"

"....." Xue Meng stood there dumbly for a very long time. his face turned green, his mouth opened and closed, but he couldn't get a word out. At last, he suddenly launched a chunk of soap at Mei Hanxue, and exploded like a volcano: "Guards!! Why aren't you here yet!! Get this dog thief!!!!"

"Yes!"

Mei Hanxue was still a little confused when he was dragged down to the ground.

…..?

He was hot and just wanted to take a bath. Why was he a dirty peeper?

Thinking about it, the child next to Shao Zhu was called Shimei. The meaning of Shimei in Mandarin was that she was a younger girl disciple.

Mei Hanxue had a realization—

Ah... at Kunlun, boys couldn't bathe with girls. Could it be that in Shu, boys couldn't take baths with other boys?

Ch. 333 Xue Meng’s Blind Date: Tea-Selling Little Sister 3

>>attempted assault

On the day they met for the first time at Miaoyin Pool, due to the confusion of the scene, there were some details that Mei Hanxue couldn't recall clearly. But in short, because of how inarticulate, laborious, and stuttering his speech was, he was unable to defend himself, and finally he was thrown by the righteous shixiong of Sisheng Peak into Yanluo Hall to repent.

Between their pushes and shoves, Mei Hanxue's own robes were also lost in Miaoyin Pool.

His clothes were flimsy, his long pale golden hair hung loose, and he stared with his jasper eyes. Helplessly standing in the hall, beneath the words "Reflect On Your Loyalty, Unchanging In Life Or Death," he felt terribly wronged.

"Let me out..."

Everyone treated the young scoundrel harshly, and nobody let him out. But after a while, a shixiong of Sisheng Peak came to give him clothes, saying that "Shaozhu gave these for you," and additionally handed him a book.

Mei Hanxue unfolded the clothes, and saw they were a female disciple's robes.

Then he looked at the book, and saw that it was a volume of "Female Virtues".

"....."

To tell you the truth, Mei Hanxue had always been a very tolerant person, and not easy to anger, but this time his throat knotted up so tightly he choked on it.

He knew that Suiye City had its own Suiye City customs, Taxue Palace had it own Taxue Palace regulations, and that Shu had its own Shu practices. For example, he hated eating pork, but before they left, their Shizun at Mingyue Tower warned them that the human world had a hundred different types of people, that they were all different, and that perhaps something he hated was something that someone else loved. Thus, Mei Hanxue has always respected others—for example, he would never jump around and yell "gross!" in front of someone from the Central Plains who was happily eating roast pig's foot.

Although he would feel disgusted inside, he would still courteously pass salt and pepper over to the person.

And then he would go home and wash his hands a hundred times.

But this "Shao Zhu" didn't know how to respect differences at all; not only was he not aware that "to have friends come from afar, isn't that a delight?", but he even sent women's clothes and "Female Virtues" to humiliate him—

Didn't he just go into the wrong bathhouse? Couldn't they have talked it out? Why did they need to fix things so roughly?

Mei Hanxue, a foreigner venturing into the outside world for the first time, couldn't understand it, and didn't want to think about it anymore, so he just stuffed his anger back in his heart.

It was nighttime, and terribly cold, and he only had on a thin inner robe that was stained with mud. Despite his humiliation, a good man knew better than to fight against insurmountable odds, and eventually he put on the clothes that "Shao Zhu" gave him.

As for the book of "Female Virtues", he didn't hesitate in throwing it into the fire. The moment the fire lit up, Mei Hanxue thought darkly: he will remember today's disgrace, and if that "Shao Zhu" ever lands in his hands, he'd kill him himself!

However, the next morning was even more embarrassing.

According to the rules set down for the two brothers by Mingyue Tower for this time, he would show his face one day, and the next day would be his brother Mei HanXue's turn.

Mei HanXue came to Yanluo Hall to look for him. When he went to exchange identities, he saw him wearing blue and silver female disciple's robes from Sisheng Peak, his blond hair loosely tied, sitting in a small dark corner.

Mei HanXue: "... What are you wearing?"

Mei Hanxue answered: "Ge, this is what you should be wearing today."

"..."

"Come on, I've enjoyed them all night. These clothes actually smell pretty nice. Let's change quickly."

"Mei Hanxue!" The older brother angrily said, "What trouble did you get into again when I wasn't around?"

Mei Hanxue sometimes felt that his brother's life was really too tragic. Maybe it was just bad luck, but every time he fell into a bad situation, the one who always ended up cleaning up the mess was his brother.

The same is true this time.

The rage he felt at being forced into women's clothes to stew in Yanluo Hall for an entire night was justified, but the persecution his brother would suffer at the hands of "Shao Zhu" made it even more severe, because according to the arrangements of Yanluo Hall's guards, today his brother had to go out to the library to wipe down the books.

When Mei HanXue was forced into that blue and silver female disciple's uniform, Mei Hanxue thought he might go crazy.

At that time, the younger brother truly felt that "if that Shao Zhu ever lands in his hands, he'd kill him himself."

When the older brother heard the whole story, he made a small deletion for his younger brother, and removed the "if".

Mei HanXue said frostily: "You wait here. After I finish wiping down the books, I'll kill him."

Then he stepped to the library on his short little legs.

At that time, Kunlun Taxue Palace had several arrogant, bullying shixiong who came along with Minyue Tower to visit Sisheng Peak. Because the Sect Leader favored Mei Hanxue, they had a very unfavorable view towards him. One of them was especially awful; as soon as he heard that Mei-shidi had been disciplined by Sisheng Peak, he sprang towards the library to rubberneck.

Seeing that Mei-shidi actually wore a girl disciple's clothes, and stood on a small wooden ladder wiping books with a face that looked like it was made of the most bitter frost, he couldn't help but scream with laughter. And then, he called over his posse of scoundrel friends to join in humiliating him.

"Isn't this Mei-shidi....ah, no, it should be Mei-shimei! You look quite lovely, hahahaha!"

"How did you provoke the people of Sisheng Peak to make them bully you like this?"

"Tell Shige who this person is, Buahahaha, Shige will present flowers to that man!"

Mei HanXue was cold-natured and not fond of nonsense. Having been provoked, he immediately tried to hit back. However, he was still too small, and hadn't learned too many techniques. With one of him facing a group of them, this group of intractable thugs managed to press him into the ground.

These people didn't know that Mei Hanxue was actually a pair of twin brothers, so they yelled:

"What's wrong with you? How come one day you're nice and polite and the next you're screaming about killing people? Do you need your Shixiong to come fix up that brain of yours?"

"Strip him. He's from our Taxue Palace, so why should he wear clothes from Sisheng Peak?"

During the struggle, he suddenly heard the hum of a passing blade. A long scimitar, shining like snow, had been suddenly thrown deep into the wooden floors!

"What do you think you're doing!"

The group of scum from Kunlun Taxue Palace were shocked, and suddenly dispersed, turning their heads—

"Xue, Xue Meng?!"

On hearing this name, Mei HanXue shook aside the messy blond hair covering his pale eyes, and lifted his gaze.

He saw a half-grown boy standing in the library's doorway, his arms crossed. His face was elegant, his aura domineering. He wore a full set of Sisheng Peak silver-blue armor, his hair in a ponytail, and a black finger guard, which was impatiently tapping his crossed arms.

Xue Meng said, ill-tempered: "Bullying people in my Sisheng Peak, did you get permission from my father? Have you asked my Shizun? Have you asked me??"

The disciples of Kunlun Taxue Palace obsequiously laughed: "Aiya... this, this is just us teaching a disobedient shidi a lesson..hehe....hehehe..."

"You call this a lesson?" Xue Meng stared, and he pointed at Mei HanXue. "Shouldn't this be called group of strong young men ganging up on a single weak person?"

"Ye-yes....you're right..."

Xue Meng said angrily: "What are you doing still poking around here? Scram!"

This group was all made of bullies, and, Xue Meng, after all, was the son of the Sect Leader. How could they dare provoke him? They immediately bowed and bent, and scattered, flapping away like birds.

Xue Meng had a serious look on his face, and placed his steel-reinforced boots into the wooden floors until they creaked. Then he raised his hand and grasped Longcheng. He wanted to pull it out in a cool manner, but when he pulled with one hand, it didn't budge.

Xue Meng had to cough lightly in embarrassment, use both his hands with great force, and breathe from his core. Only then could he pull the sword, which was just about as tall as he was, out of the ground.

He staggered back two steps.

Xue Meng: "..."

Mei HanXue: "..."

Xue Meng coughed awkwardly again and turned to look at Mei HanXue.

He didn't recognize that this was yesterday's "dirty peeper" from Miaoyin Pool. Mei HanXue naturally didn't recognize him either. They looked at each other for a moment. Xue Meng saw that his golden hair was messy, the corner of his mouth was bloodied, and his clothes were torn into unrecognizable shreds. Only a thin robe of raw silk specially made by Kunlun Taxue Palace remained on his body. Xue Meng couldn't help wrinkling his brows.

"Despicable."

Saying this, he took off his own outer robe, and draped it over Mei HanXue's shoulders.

"Put this on."

Mei HanXue, draped in Xue Meng's robes, raised his head and looked carefully at this child's face. He didn't think he looked at all like his benefactor Xue Zhengyong. His face was small and delicate, his nose pointed, the black and white of his apricot eyes were clear and distinct, and he carried himself with a certain natural brilliance and pride.

He said hesitantly: "So you're...Xue Meng?"

"I am." Xue Meng said, pleased with himself. "What do you think of my skills? Do you think my reputation's well deserved?"

Then he is indeed the son of his benefactor.

Mei HanXue wanted to thank him, but then he heard Xue Meng laugh, and say his next sentence: "Ever since this Shaozhu has gone out into the world, no one has managed to best me!"

"....."

"You're Shao Zhu?"

Xue Meng: "? Obviously?"

"Isn't Shao Zhu a person's name?" That night, after Mei HanXue returned to his room, Mei Hanxue asked him, astonished: "How did he become our benefactor's son?"

As the older brother was steadier than his younger brother, he silently pulled from their luggage a book titled "Suiye Kunlun and Mandarin Translation Guide". The two brothers sat together and read the book under the light of a lamp.

"Shaozhu." Mei Hanxue pointed his finger and read word for word, "Refers to a young master. It can also refer to when there is an adult master; the one that he designates as his heir is the Shaozhu."

Mei Hanxue: "..."

Mei HanXue: "..."

They fell into a long silence. After a long time, Mei Hanxue asked:

"So does that mean we can't kill him?"

The elder brother pondered this for a bit. He looked down at the outer robe he was wearing, lowered his long pale golden eyelashes, and said coldly: "What do you think?"

Mei Hanxue sighed, his blue eyes like those of an exotic cat: "Okay okay, I see."

"....."

"But bullying him a bit should be okay right?"

"No."

"Ge, look, you saw how he bullied me yesterday."

"No."

"He also made you wear a female disciple's clothes!"

Mei HanXue was silent for a bit, and finally gave his brother five words: "... Fine. Don't go too far."

Later on during that time, Mei Hanxue would often take the initiative to find Xue Meng. Slowly, the two children became playmates.

But to Mei Hanxue, Xue Meng was far too dumb. One day it was his brother, one day it was him, yet Xue Meng never felt that something was off, only that he was temperamental. On the contrary, that little shidi called Shi Mei, nicknamed Xue Ya, always looked like he felt something was off, and would look at him thoughtfully.

Mei Hanxue didn't like people who were as coldly intelligent as Shi Mei. Someone like Xue Meng who walked sideways like a crab, but whose head wasn't too bright, that kind of person was the type he liked to befriend, and who was fun to tease.

The only problem was—

"You're not allowed to sleep with me today!"

"Ah?" Mei Hanxue held a bamboo pillow, dressed in his silk sleeping robes, with his soft blond hair hanging down, and stared widely with his sea-like eyes: "Why?"

Xue Meng was furious: "Because you kicked me out of bed in the middle of the night last night! Did you forget?"

Mei Hanxue: "..."

Didn't his brother say he wouldn't bully Xue Meng? Why would he kick someone out of bed in the middle of the night?

Mei Hanxue smiled. Although he had yet to grow up, and hadn't yet developed his later stunning looks, there was already a trace of Mei-gongzi in this smile.

"I won't do it tonight. I'll sleep on the outside, and if you still don't trust me, I can stick to you while you sleep."

Mei Hanxue's intentions were good. He wanted to sleep with Xue Meng. If Xue Meng fell out, then he would fall out too; close brothers should share all trials and tribulations.

But the problem was that Mei Hanxue's Mandarin still wasn't good, so although he wanted to say "stick to," what Xue Meng heard was—

If you still don't trust me, I can lick you while you sleep.

Li-...licking?

Xue Meng was stunned, and after picturing that image, he couldn't help throwing a tiger pillow at him: [239]"Aaahh! Why are you Kunlun people so perverted? Get out of here!!!"

It was because the young Mei Hanxue had suffered so many times from Xue Meng not understanding his stuttering words that he, from a very early point, understood what a splendid subject speech was. And so, every time he had the chance, he would take the initiative to talk to girls from the Central Plains. These girls were generally more patient than men, and were willing to teach him, but they would occasionally cry to him:

"I don't think you like me at all! You're with me just to learn Mandarin!"

But that was all in the past.

Thinking about those past incidences, Mei Hanxue laughed. As he curled his hands around his mouth to hide his laughter, he heard the door creak. He turned his head in search of the sound. Backlit by the sun, Xue Meng seemed to be full of arrogance, yet he also seemed somewhat at a loss as he walked towards him.

" Cough ...um, hello."

With no anger at all, Mei Hanxue smiled, lowered his legs that had been resting on the shelf, sat up straight, and smiled: "Ah, the Sect Leader has come to visit."

Xue Meng coughed: "Yes."

"Does the Sect Leader have something he wishes to discuss with me?"

"...uhhh...."

"Yes?"

Xue Meng didn't speak, and just stalled, and looked at him, and slowly, his face turned red.

"..." Mei Hanxue's smile froze, and he began to have some hesitance.
"....?"

He has read countless people, both men and women. Multitudes of these cultivators would have cheeks that bloomed with rosy clouds upon seeing him—he had a very clear idea of what the meaning of this was.

But he never thought that Xue Meng would cast this kind of look upon the crossdressed him.

The Xue Ziming he was familiar with wasn't this kind of person.

Xue Ziming was arrogant and honest, brimming with honor and lacking in brains. He had never known how to do well with girls, and the thing he liked to do most daily, besides practicing martial arts, was probably admiring himself in the mirror.

To blush at a female cultivator; did he take the wrong medicine?

Even if this particular "female cultivator" was one he created himself, Mei Hanxue still felt strange. It reminded him of a snow-white Persian cat that he had once raised at Taxue Palace. He had cared for it from when it was a tiny kitten until it was grown, and always thought it was stupid and cute, and so he believed that it would always remain stupid and cute.

Until one day, he saw his Persian cat mating with a wild cat. No, not just one, there were two piled on top, and a third cat watching them do this incredible feat from the side.

Mei Hanxue was shocked. He couldn't comprehend what he was seeing. What happened? Where did the innocent, adorable, silly little kitten he raised go?

Faced with the scarlet-cheeked Xue Meng, Mei Hanxue felt that his mood now seemed to delicately coincide with his mood back then.

Seeing Xue Meng's face getting more embarrassed and awkward, repeatedly biting his lips only to release them, as if he wanted to speak but kept stopping himself, Mei Hanxue began to think about how he should

gently let him down if Xue Meng really opened his mouth to confess to "Shou Hou".

Should he tell him that "she" actually liked women, or that "she" has a terminal illness and would probably suddenly die in the next several months?

— These were the kind of words that he would use when he needed to dump a woman. He'd said these things so many times that he could make the words rain from his mouth like a deluge of heavenly flowers, but this time, for some reason, he felt a little faint.

As he struggled with his tangled thoughts, he heard Sect Leader Xue say, blushing: " Cough ... that..."

"...."

"That is, you've been at Sisheng Peak for a while now, and I have something that I wanted to ask you."

“...Sect Leader, please.” Mei Hanxue's face was very calm and gentle, but his brain was buzzing.

What should I do? How to answer? Do I like women, or am I terminally ill? Am I terminally ill, or do I like women?

Xue Meng awkwardly started speaking: "I, I just wanted to ask..."

"Yes?"

"Ahem." Xue Meng gritted his teeth and stamped his feet. Filled with determination, he sacrificed his need to save face, clenched his fists, and

shouted out in one breath: "Excuse me! How did you manage to rub Veggie Bun's belly without getting scratched???"

Ch. 334 Xue Meng’s Blind Date: Tea-Selling Little Sister 4\

>>do not trust random danmei characters to give good cat care advice! Do not use their bad cat care advice to harass the innocent!

Mei Hanxue: "..."

Xue Meng was a red as the clouds over a sunset.

Mei Hanxue couldn't help but raise his brows: "... Is that all? "

"Ah..." Xue Meng pondered for a moment, and remembered problem. "Oh yeah, how did you keep Tanlang and Xuanji's disciples from fighting?"

Mei Hanxue: "....."

Forgive him, he had thought too highly of Xue Meng.

Even though he had read thousands of people, he had definitely never seen a man as exquisitely focused as Xue Meng.

Sect Leader Xue's life really did revolve completely around physical strength.

But in spite of this, Mei Hanxue was patient, telling him how he mediated between Tanlang and Xuanji's disciples, and began to share his knowledge of animal training with Xue Meng.

"Cats are animals that have to be disciplined. The more you indulge them, the less they take you seriously."

Mei Hanxue smiled lightly, and wore a gentle face and spoke in a kind tone, but he also gave off a vague sense that he treated all living beings with

indifference: "Sect Leader, just because you think it's cute, doesn't mean you can freely spoil it. You need to control it between the palms of your hands, bully it, let it know that it can't get the better of you. Only in this way will this fluffy little one naturally become obedient."

"... But won't it run away?"

Mei Hanxue laughed and said: "Can't you chase it?"

"Can't it hide?"

"Can't you find it?"

"Can't it bite?"

"Can't you hit it?"

During this back-and-forth Xue Meng saw that her face was smiling, yet for some reason he developed goosebumps. He swallowed the knot in his throat and then said: "... You haven't hit Veggie Bun, have you?"

"Hah!" Mei Hanxue clasped her hands, held them to her mouth, and smiled even more brilliantly: "Sect Leader Xue is truly an honorable man. I was joking. I've always encouraged people to take the bait willingly. I would never forced anyone to do anything."

With this, Xue Meng relaxed a bit. Otherwise, he would have really felt that Shou Hou was terrifying.

After Mei Hanxue stopped laughing, he raised his pale eyelashes, and with an air of puzzlement in his shadowed eyes, he began to speak, as if guiding Xue Meng down a new path: "But Sect Leader, now that you mention

it...Taobao Manor has a unique technique for disciplining cats. Do you have any interest in learning about it?"

As a martial arts enthusiast, Xue Meng was exceptionally curious about anything that was labeled a "unique technique". Mo Ran once had a suspicion that if he ever wanted to drag the incomparably pure Xue Ziming into reading porn, as long as he titled them things like "Unique Techniques For Amorous Feelings" and "Unique Techniques For Romantic Encounters," said person would argumentatively and obstinately take the bait.

Mei Hanxue smiled and said: "Well, would you like to learn?"

"....."

"It's quite a difficult technique to come by. If it weren't for the fact that I admire you so much, I would never so lightly reveal it to outsiders."

Xue Meng couldn't resist the temptation of both the cat's fluffy white belly and the two words "unique technique". Finally, he became tangled up in Mei Hanxue's dubious trap, hardened his face, and coughing, said: " Cough , well, since you asked me so sincerely...then...I guess I could try it out."

Thus, Mei Hanxue began his lecture.

"First of all, all cats have a certain natural instinct." Mei Hanxue gazed at Xue Meng and said with profound meaning: "As the saying goes, 'curiosity kills the cat'. Every cat's soft spot is related to that overly inquisitive nature and that and heart that is unwary of danger."

Xue Meng stared, hungry for knowledge: "Really?"

"Yes." Mei Hanxue raised one slender, graceful finger. "You see, if people just stretch out a finger in front of them, nine out of ten of these little ones

can't help coming closer to take a sniff. Then you just quickly grab them, press them to the ground, lift open their legs, and then they'll go weak and start yowling..."

Mei Hanxue had intended to make a disastrous statement to provoke Xue Meng into screaming and flailing.

Unfortunately, even wise men make mistakes. The exceptionally pure Xue Meng didn't understand that the exceptionally dirty Mei Hanxue was teasing him. He listened attentively and asked, "Wouldn't it be unhappy then?"

"....." Mei Hanxue wasn't successful in his teasing, but he wasn't discouraged, and smiled. "Yes."

"So what then?"

"Coax it."

Xue Meng waved his hand: "It's no use. It can't understand human speech."

Mei Hanxue said: "Speech is empty. Once you start moving, the kitty will start to find it pleasurable and stop resisting. Instead, it'll find that it's no longer enough, adjust its body to better fit yours, and start to vocalize how nice it feels... have you tried this before?"

Xue Meng held his chin and pondered: "So they'll start to make a snoring sound?"

Mei Hanxue, looking at his ignorant appearance, found that his itch to tease him was growing ever stronger. He couldn't help laughing and said: "Yes, that's what cats sound like."

"But every time I touch its stomach, it resists. At most, I can touch its chin."

"That's because your technique wasn't correct, and you didn't pamper it properly. Mei Hanxue's soft eyelashes twitched. After a while, he said gently: "If the Sect Leader doesn't mind, may I take the liberty of teaching you hands on?"

"Uh...."

Although propriety stated there shouldn't be direct contact between men and women, exceptions could be made in order to provide practical instruction and to clarify any confusion. And Xue Meng saw that Shou Hou-guniang, so gentle and refined, so dignified yet warm, was an honorable person. He hesitated for a moment, but then nodded.

Nevertheless, when Mei Hanxue started to raise his hand, Xue Meng still shouted in a rush: "Wait! Wait, hold on a second!"

"What's wrong?"

"I, I want to be straight with you, I'm just here to learn how to pet a cat, and I have no intention of taking advantage of you!"

"..." Mei Hanxue laughed: "Alright."

And I definitely, absolutely have no intention of doing anything physically immoral!

Mei Hanxue laughed so hard his ribs almost broke, and his eyes were brimming with tears when he finally got out: "Why are you so nervous? If nothing else, I'm still a disciple of Taobao Manor, which is a decent, honorable sect. I don't plan on playing immortal jump, let alone make you

take responsibility for my honor after just a few touches. Sect Leader, is there any need to be so fierce?"

Xue Meng cleared his throat with embarrassment: " Cough , okay then... I guess we can get started."

Mei Hanxue shifted to the side, made a space for Xue Meng, and said: "Sect Leader, please come closer first."

When Xue Meng approached, Mei Hanxue raised his hand and said seriously: "Look, when you see a cat, you should first approach it slowly, and let it freely sniff your fingertip out of curiosity." Saying this, his fingertip brushed Xue Meng's nose, paused for a moment, then slid down to fall on Xue Meng's chin, "and then, you can gently scritch it a little."

Mei Hanxue knew Xue Meng's temperament, so he didn't make too much contact, only giving him the slightest touch. He snickered in his heart: Aiyah, so Xue Meng didn't slap his hand away.

Not only didn't he strike out, but probably because Mei Hanxue's "Shou Hou" performance was too honest, Xue Meng didn't even think to be suspicious, and even copied him in touching his own chin a few times.

"Like this?"

"Use a bit more force."

"How about this?"

"You can't always use the same strength. There's one very good technique, called Nine Shallow One Deep.[240] Once you learn it, you'll find it impossible to give up.

"...What kind of technique is this? How come I've never heard of it before?"

Mei Hanxue held back a laugh: "This is a highly advanced skill, ordinary technique guides wouldn't have it."

Xue Meng was annoyed: "You're kidding me. I'm the Sect Leader of the majestic Sisheng Peak, do you really think there are advanced skills out there I haven't seen?"

"...I guarantee that you haven't seen this one before."

Xue Meng refused to accept this and raised his black eyebrows: "How do you know I haven't? Show me! Let's duke it out!"

Mei Hanxue: "I am indeed quite proficient in this particular skill, but I'm afraid it would be disrespectful if I were to recklessly use it on the Sect Leader."

After a pause, he saw that Xue Meng still stubbornly looked like he wanted to fight. If they continued down this road, he was afraid he might let something slip; thus, Mei Hanxue giggled and said: "Sect Leader, there's no need for you to concern yourself so much with this skill. Nine Shallow One Deep is a bit of a cheat, and not something that can be learned by everyone. It just doesn't suit some people physically. I personally think that although your Shizun, Chu-zongshi, has experienced a masterful version of this many times, his nature might prevent him from being able to practice it himself.

When he said this, Xue Meng reluctantly gave up, but he still grumbled: "Since my Shizun didn't learn it, it can't be anything that amazing."

Mei Hanxue laughed and said: "Chu-zongshi doesn't know it, but Mo-zongshi is almost certainly quite skilled at it."

"?" Xue Meng's eyes grew wider. "Mo Ran? How come I've never heard of him knowing something like this?"

Mei Hanxue, motivated by a desire to watch the world burn, smiled, eyes crinkling, and said: "He who has treasure won't show it easily. Next time you see him, why don't you ask him if the sensation of using this technique isn't something especially wonderful."

Xue Meng was suspicious, but he kept this matter in mind, and decided to ask Mo Ran when he had the opportunity next time he saw him. What on earth is this Nine Shallow One Deep skill? So mysterious.

The two of them spent some time practicing the proper technique for petting a cat. Xue Meng scritched himself a few times, more-or-less grasping the appropriate strength to use, and asked happily: "Not bad! I got it. Now what?"

"Then," Mei Hanxue's white jade fingertip slowly slid down and finally landed on Xue Meng's stomach, hovering over the silver lion's-head armor at his waist. "Then, you've made the cat feel good, and so it'll lie down and show you its white belly, which means that it's starting to trust you."

"So now I can touch it?"

"Not yet." Mei Hanxue smiled: "Be patient. You have to do like I'm doing, and stop just around its belly without actually making contact."

As he spoke, his hand gently, languidly wandered around the area of Xue Meng's stomach. As time went by, Xue Meng began to feel a little tense,

and stared at the hand, not knowing when exactly it would actually touch him. But even after quite a long while, "Shou Hou"-guniang still kept her distance, and so he slowly let down his guard.

"Just like this."

Xue Meng nodded: "...Oh..."

Unexpectedly, at this very moment, Mei Hanxue suddenly took hold of his waist, pulled him close, and laughed: "Then, you just surprise it, and take __"

Mei Hanxue didn't have time to finish saying how he would be taken.

Because Xue Meng, gobsmacked at having been suddenly grabbed by the waist, wasn't able to adequately defend against this trick. He was pulled foward, and was thrown against Mei Hanxue, sending them both tumbling.

"Fuck!"

"....." Mei Hanxue felt a weight pressing directly on him. Accustomed to acting protectively towards the fairer sex, he instinctively embraced Xue Meng, and held him on top. Unsteady, the two of them fell to the ground.

There was a loud, muffled thump.

The thin layer of dust covering every surface of the library puffed up in a cloud, choking Xue Meng and making him cough uncontrollably, his eyes tearing up. The library's ancient wooden floorboards creaked and groaned under their weight. Like a perplexed cat, Xue Meng sat in a daze,a blank look of confusion on his face, and it was only after quite some time that he realized that he was pressing Mei Hanxue into the floor.

Mei Hanxue: "..."

Xue Meng: " Cough cough, hack !! I, I'm so sorry!"

He waved his hands back and forth to fan away the dust cloud, and only then saw that Mei Hanxue's clothes were in disorder, and that his hair was coming loose. A pair of pale eyes looked at him with a somewhat strange expression out from under long curling eyelashes, as if there was something that needed to be said, but couldn't be.

Xue Meng was stunned. He suddenly realized how inappropriate the situation was, and stood up in a rush.

However, the more nervous a person was, the more likely he was to make a mistake. Flustered in his rush to stand up, his feet fell unsteadily during his first few attempts, and he found himself rubbing against Mei Hanxue.

Mei Hanxue's eyebrows raised just the tiniest bit, and his expression grew just a bit stranger.

After getting up, Xue Meng's face was fully flushed with embarrasment. He stuttered: "W-, well, um, da-, dajie, I'm uh, truly, s- s- sorry."[241]

"....."

Because of his temperament, even from a young age, Xue Meng never had good fortune with women, and the girls of his generation didn't like to deal with him. Instead, he invited the fondness of older girls and aunties. Therefore, he habitually only addressed women in two ways: one is "yi" and the other is "jie".[242] And so when nervous, he inadvertently called Mei Hanxue's beautiful young lady "dajie".

Mei Hanxue looked at him with an air of profound mystery, and sighed in his heart. It serves this person right that even to the present day he hasn't even held a girl's hand!

What kind of stupid address is dajie?

When greeting girls, those ninety years or older should be called xiangu, thouse five years or younger should be called mitang, those in between, whether fat or skinny, should all collectively be known as meiren.[243] How could Xue Meng not understand such a simple lesson after having been alive almost thirty years now?

Xue Meng was still stuttering. "Dajie, I didn't hurt you, did I? I, I don't think I'm that heavy, and you look pretty sturdy..."

"....." Mei Hanxue felt that if the person in front of Xue Meng at this moment wasn't himself, but a real girl, Xue Meng might have already received multiple slaps to the face.

Fortunately, Xue Meng seemed to finally realize how inappropriate it was to refer to a young lady as "sturdy", and awkwardly corrected himself: "I, no, I didn't mean that, I just felt like you probably wouldn't break with one tap, because you have some muscle on you, um, ugh...I should probably stop talking. Anyway, are you alright?"

Mei Hanxue remained flat on the ground for a while, then sat up with a complicated expression: "... I'm all right. I just didn't think that your reaction would be so extreme."

After another awkward silence, Mei Hanxue asked: "Did I frighten you?"

"No, no way." Xue Meng still blushed violently, and didn't know what to say. He stalled for a long time, then changed the subject. " Cough ... so, that's how you tamed Veggie Bun?"

"Yes," Mei Hanxue said with a faint smile, "Of the animals I've trained, there isn't one who isn't obedient."

"Oh..."

"The technique we went over just now, does the Sect Leader understand it?"

Xue Meng: "Pretty much, yeah..."

Mei Hanxue said: "That's good. As long as the Sect Leader is happy, then falling down was worth it."

Xue Meng was flabbergasted. To have these words gently come from the mouth of a beautiful girl...any normal man would feel a great sense of relief come over his body.

So Xue Meng's heart began to shudder. Although he didn't think so highly of Ma Yun, who stupidly cobbled together the relief scroll, this Shou Hou disciple of his wasn't too bad. She was alm, even-tempered, unpretentious, and was moreover honorable, steady in her work, and was wholeheartedly devoted to the needs of her clients.

Xue Meng used to think that these pretty, delicate little girls were like people made of glass. They were weak and easy to hurt, and would cry and scream over any little thing. If a man ever dumped them, they would grind their teeth and stamp their feet, or start wailing pitifully, or scream hysterically, "This is harassment! You scoundrel!"

But this Shou Hou-guniang, in order to change his negative opinion of the "relief scroll", didn't even respond to being taken advantage of —of course, he didn't intentionally take advantage of her, but the kind-hearted Xue Meng couldn't help but develop a threat of deep, sincere pity for this poor girl, who had to eke out a living through submission and docility.

So he hesitated for a moment and finally said, "... Well, you know, it's almost time for dinner. Why don't I...take you out for a meal?

Mei Hanxue smiled: "You just bumped into me me. There's no need to feel so guilty."

"No, thank you for teaching me your unique cat skills." Xue Meng still blushed, embarrassed. "As for me changing my reviews of the relief scroll, well, we can talk about it...anyway, we should eat first."

And so he extended his hand towards the person he saw as the pitiable tea-selling little sister Shou Hou-guniang, with the intent of helping her up.

Yet Mei Hanxue didn't move; his eyes moved from Xue Meng's palm up to his face. Finally, he said: "Sect Leader, you go first. I can sit for a bit longer."

Seeing this reaction, Xue Meng couldn't help feeling a bit lost: "... Did I actually hurt you badly just now?"

Mei Hanxue raised his eyebrows silently, but then finally smiled: "It's not bad, there's just a bit of swelling, but it should be fine. As long as you don't run into me again, it should go down soon."

When the kind Xue Meng heard that he had actually hurt this delicate maiden, he couldn't help but feel even guiltier.

"So it's like that..." Xue Meng bit his lip in embarassment. "Then how about I find Elder Tanlang to take a look at you?"

"....There's no need. I'm not used to disturbing others due to things like this."

Xue Meng's impression of how forlorn yet prudent she was grew even stronger.

"Then, can you tell me where it's swollen? I have some medicine on me, maybe I could put some on you?"

"Or actually, I could also massage it a little, if you'd be okay with that?"

Mei Hanxue, looking at his serious appearance, wondered more and more how this person could be this cute. He used his full energy just to resist laughing and simply kept silent, fearing that once he opened his mouth, he wouldn't be able to resist slapping his leg and bursting into full-throated howls of laughter.

Thus, in Xue Meng's eyes, Mei Hanxue became a girl with quivering lips and eyes brimming with tears, unable to speak the words she wanted to get out.

This girl stared at at him, and the tighter she pursed her lips, the more inexplicable her expression became.

Finally she bowed her head said with a light cough: "If you rub it, it might just swell up more."

Xue Meng: "?? Huh? Is my hand poisonous?"

"...no."

"Then it should be fine then."

Originally, Mei Hanxue had been looking at Mo Ran's erotic drawings, and added to that the typical reaction he'd get from someone rubbing against him, there was no further explanation needed for what was happeneing. But when he looked at Xue Meng's pure, innocent appearance, the itch to tease him grew worse and worse, to where he wanted to see him run away with terror or to have him screaming and cursing with rage.

Thinking of such things, his eyes grew a bright, captivating luster, and seemed to emit some form of vital energy. Pursing his lips in a smile, he said: "Then...if you really wish to help me, it's not out of the question, but I must make something clear to you..."

Just then, someone knocked resolutely on the library's door.

Mei Hanxue raised his brows, and closed his mouth.

Xue Meng turned his head, and saw Elder Xuanji in blue, standing at the doorway, fingers knocking at the door frame.

"Sect Leader." As Xuanji spoke, he saw Mei Hanxue behind Xue Meng, and smiled: "Oh, Shou Hou-guniang is here too."

Mei Hanxue smiled and nodded.

"Yes, I had some things to discuss with her." Xue Meng, unaware of how dangerous his situation was just then, said pompously: "What's the matter?"

Elder Xuanji reported: "This is the situation. Mei HanXue of Kunlun Taxue Palace has paid us a sudden visit. He said there was an urgent matter involving you, and he is now waiting in Danxin Hall."

Mei Hanxue's smile froze.

Ch. 335 Xue Meng’s Blind Date: Tea-Selling Little Sister 5

Xue Meng and Mei HanXue hadn't seen each other for a while.

Mei HanXue could be classified as someone who would never make visits with any kind of ulterior motive. During the dimensional annihilation wars, the matter of him and his younger brother's use of the same identity was revealed to the world. Now the entire cultivation world knew that there were two Mei-xianzhang in the mortal realms, and those female cultivators who had their hearts broken by the younger brother suddenly zeroed in on the elder.

They think Mei HanXue is handsome and steady, and moreover not promiscuous, with no romantic history; a perfect substitute for Mei Hanxue. One after another, they expressed no desire for men from other families in this lifetime, only to sleep with Mei-shige.

Mei HanXue was so furiously hounded that for these past two years he barely appeared in the mundane world.

The last time he and Xue Meng met, he had been sent by Mingyue Tower to give Xue Meng a box of top grade Tianshan snow lotus. Coincidentally when he arrived, he came upon Jiangdong Hall's new female sect leader, who was there before him to pay her respects to Xue Meng.

Jiangdong Hall's new head, Hua Ruowei.

Although a sect leader, she couldn't compare to the heroic Ye Wangxi, the loving and virtuous Madame Wang, or the awe-inspiring Madame Rong. She was a curiosity who managed to sleep her way through all the sect

elders and was thus elected to her current position after the death of the old sect leader Huang Xiaoyue.

The most incredible thing about this person was simply that she slept her way through Jiangdong Hall's twelve elders, a feat known throughout the streets and book stalls. Moreover, each one of these twelve ancient turtles had their heads firmly in their shells, with not a single one of them knowing the full truth of the situation. Even if rumors were to float past their ears, as soon as Hua Ruowei would start wailing, those twelve elders would rise with indignant fury and say with outrage: "Weiwei is pure! She's nothing like those flirty sluts outside! None of you are allowed to spread rumours about her! "

Mei HanXue thought that this woman was truly strange. She should duke it out with his brother over who was more degenerate.

Unfortunately, although he had a clear idea of what sort of person Hua Ruowei was, Xue Meng didn't.

Xue Meng didn't like to listen to rumors. There had been a time where he was willing to humor them, but after hearing eighteen different accounts of Chu Wanning and Mo Weiyu's exploits during their seclusion in a row, Xue Meng fell apart, and stated that Sisheng Peak was no longer allowed to spread such common gossip. Thus, he hadn't heard a word of Hua Ruowei's coquettish ways and her habit of using men.

So when Mei Hanxue came to gift the snow lotus herb, he coldly stared at Hua Ruowei doing her utmost to provoke Sect Leader Xue

"Ziming-gege, this one just adores you!"

"Ziming-gege, can I touch your armor? It's so shiny!"

"Ziming-gege, Weiwei thinks you're super incredible. You're so young and you're already in charge of the entire lower cultivation world, you must work super hard!"

Although Xue Meng thought this was all incredibly corny, flattery could get through the toughest armor, and he was a man who loved to hear others sing his praises. Having been praised by Hua Ruowei in such a syrupy sweet manner, he still felt a bit floaty despite himself, and started to giggle like a fool.

"....." Mei HanXue couldn't stand to look at it anymore. He wondered if Xue Meng didn't have a hole in his head. So he slammed the wooden box containing the snow lotus onto a table, making Hua Ruowei jump with surprise at the noise.

The first thing the little beauty did after she regained her senses was to pat her plump bosom and throw a flirty look at Mei HanXue with her limpid, glimmering eyes: "HanXue-gege's hand strength is truly great, how strong you are!"

Mei Hanxue looked at her with cold indifference: "I don't have a younger sister."

Hua Ruowei, not expecting that anyone would react so indifferently to her overtures, stuttered with embarrassment: "I, I was just joking around."

"Yes. I can see you're a joke."

Hua Ruowei: "..."

Xue Meng couldn't take this anymore. "Okay, enough already. Sect Leader Hua is still a guest. And she just told me that after the dimensional

annihilation wars, she had a revelation, and realized that what her Jiangdong Hall did before wasn't right. So this time, she came here especially to mend relations with Sisheng Peak. Isn't that right, Sect Leader Hua?"

Hua Ruowei had been handling Xue Meng with ease, but under Mei HanXue's stare, she felt a weakness, as if he saw straight through to her calculating little heart. Shrinking her neck into her shoulders, she smiled stiffly and said, vaguely: "Yeah, that's right. Sect Leader Xue is the one I admire most. I really adore him, hahahaha. "

Mei Hanxue sneered: "But when you were last at Gu Yue Ye, it seems like you said the same thing about Jiang Xi."

Hua Ruowei's face suddenly changed: "That...that's nonsense! "

"After you said it, you rubbed yourself against Jiang Yechen's leg."

Xue Meng was startled: "What?!"

Hua Ruowei: "..."

Mei HanXue said expressionlessly: "Last month, this Sect Leader Hua went to Gu Yue Ye and tried to use these same words to seduce Sect Leader Jiang, and incidentally sought death by rubbing herself again his thighs. Jiang Yechen, in a rage, dragged her by the arm and threw her bodily out of Gu Yue Ye. Afterwards, he sent someone to gift her a set of gynecological Prescriptions Worth A Thousand Gold, to express his feelings.[244]

Xue Meng: "..."

"This news has already spread throughout Yangzhou City. I had some business these past two days and happened to stay in Yangzhou, where it

found its way to me."

Hua Ruowei never expected that of these two people both called "Mei Hanxue," the older brother would be so much harsher than the younger, and that he wouldn't leave a woman any face at all! She blushed, but still held only a desperate hope to turn the tides. Pitifully, she said: "HanXue-gege, those are all rumors, look at my eyes, so I look like I'm lying to you..."

Mei HanXue really did turn to look. Hua Ruowei felt a spark of happiness, and wildly cast her flirty, teary-eyed gaze onto him.

"Stop batting your eyelashes," Mei HanXue said apathetically. "I'm frigid, especially towards you."

"....."

Mei HanXue has no sense of romance! He's not worth carrying his brother's shoes!!!

Hua Ruowei never wanted to fight against him again. She was so angry that her pretty face look like a slab of pig's liver, and after saying her goodbyes in a rush, she wiped away her tears and ran away, wailing.

She had run off, but Mei HanXue still felt upset towards Xue Meng, who was stunned and rooted in his original spot. He pointed at the wooden box and gave Xue Meng six words: "These are for you. Eat up."

Xue Meng was still in a stupor. In his heart, he wondered secretly how Jiang Yechen, at his age, could still unceasingly provoke these swarms of girls. He glanced at the snow lotus box absently and said: "Thanks."

"No need for thanks." Mei Hanxue's jasper-glazed eyes held a sense of irony. His pale lips opened: "This is to repair your brain."

Xue Meng: "???"

After a while, he suddenly processed what he heart, but Mei HanXue had already left, and he was left shouting at Mei HanXue's back: "Mei HanXue! You're looking for death! You dare more me! "

In reality, Mei HanXue is a much more reliable man than his brother. Ever since Xue Meng inherited his current role, he has always followed the proper etiquette and propriety. But that day, Xue Meng didn't know what kind of bitter medicine he took that led him to taunt him as before. And after taunting him, he didn't even turn his head back and just left. The two parted unhappily. After they parted, Xue Meng secretly cursed Mei HanXue's shamelessness! He even wondered if in his past life he had also been seeded by some kind of poisonous flower that made his mother become inseparable from these two exotic flowers of the Mei family.

Could normal people stand to be with them for long? Not even for a day!

Afterwards, Mei Hanxue never returned to Sisheng Peak. Xue Meng thought his intent was to never see him again for the rest of their lives. Yet, today Mei HanXue suddenly has something urgent he needs to talk about. Xue Meng couldn't help but have some questions.

"Why's he here? Come to repair my brain again?"

Xuanji was stunned: "What?"

Xuanji's blank eyes called back some of Xue Meng's rationality.

Xue Meng coughed softly, and told himself internally to forget it. He's a sect leader, and Mei HanXue is just a dashixiong. He didn't inherit the

mantle of Mingyue Tower, so his own position is a level higher, and he shouldn't argue with him.

Humph!

He cleared his throat and said with dignity: "Well, what's his emergency?"

"It seems like...there's a large upheaval going on at Taobao Manor," Xuanji said.

"Ah?" Xue Meng's eyes widened in astonishment, and then he looked at Taobao Manor's "Shou Hou"-guniang beside him, frowned, and asked: "Tell me clearly. What the hell is happening?"

Xuanji shook his head: "Mei-xianzhang didn't talk about the particulars of the situation, but according to him, his brother is the cause of the problem."

Mei Hanxue, standing on the side, raised his brows in confusion: "....."

Xuanji didn't sense that "she" was behaving oddly, and with some hesitancy, said to Xue Meng: "You too, Sect Leader."

Xue Meng: "???"

The Mei Hanxue brothers weren't outsiders, and didn't need to wait in the outer hall of Danxin Hall, but was rather invited to rest in the garden veranda of the back hall. When Xue Meng arrived, Mei Hanxue was leaning against a pillar, looking up at a newly grown Haitang flower.

He wore the snow-colored, flowing-sleeved silk robes specially made by Kunlun Taxue Palace. Its pattern was simple yet elegant, the edges of his sleeves and hemline trimmed with pale blue. Perhaps it was because his

crown of brilliant, gently waving golden hair was too dazzling, but his clothes didn't make him seem dull or lifeless at all. Instead, he gave off the impression of a glacier-topped mountain in hibernation: cold and lofty, but with heat buried just under the snow, filled with deadly lava silently roiling and waiting to explode.

It's unknown when he'll erupt, when his heat will boil over, when he'll burn those who've gotten too close.

Xue Meng coughed, and Mei HanXue turned his head.

"You..."

They hadn't seen each other in such a long time; truly awkward. Xue Meng didn't want to waste any trivial words with him, so instead he coughed to express his true feelings.

His first cough was to get Mei HanXue to turn around.

His second cough was to express his greetings.

His third cough meant that bygones were bygones.

His fourth cough...

Mei HanXue's jasper eyes looked askance at him, and he asked coldly: "Are you learning to crow like a rooster?"

Xue Meng: "..."

"It's an unusual technique you're using."

Xue Meng didn't think he understood the deep meaning behind his four coughs at all, and even ridiculed him! He couldn't help but glar: "Mei

HanXue! You —! "

"Let's not talk about us for now." Mei HanXue stands with his hands at his back, the water drop jewel on his forehead shining with a bright lustre. "Xue Ziming, you're in big trouble, did you know that?"

"Huh?"

As a good child who cared to please his mother and his shizun ever since youth, Xue Meng was naturally wary of the three words "in big trouble". He never thought that he would ever cause any trouble; The master of causing trouble at Sisheng Peak was always Mo Ran, Mo Weiyu. So he immediately asked nervously, "What did I do?"

"Did you or did you not use the pseudonym 'Taobao Manor Destroyed My Youth' to leave more than a hundred negative comments on the relief scroll?"

"... So what?" Xue Meng was so angry that he crossed his hands at his hips. "Are you saying that Ma Fangzhi got so mad that he couldn't bear to live anymore and killed himself by jumping into West Lake?"

Mei Hanxue glared at him.

Xue Meng, faced with this glare, couldn't help but feel guilty. Feeling a bit of shock, he hesitantly said: "No way? Did he actually jump in the lake?"

"What jump." Mei HanXue's eyes fell unabashedly onto Xue Meng's hip. With a gaze that could make one feel like they were sitting on pins and needles, he stared at Xue Meng's crossed hands, and said, rudely: "Also, you're the master of a cultivation sect. Be conscious of your bearing and appearance. Don't copy the manner of shrewish women."

"???" Xue Meng's rage spot had been hit: "Hold on, Mei HanXue. No matter what, I'm still a sect leader. How can you talk to me like that?"

Mei HanXue's eyes swept over him: "I'm only being straightforward with you now that we're alone. If you don't want to take my advice, then fine, please continue crossing your arms. Keep them there while you eat, and remember to find a disciple who can hand feed you."

"You, you —"

Xue Meng was so furious that he almost fainted.

He really didn't know who was more hateful, Mei HanXue or Mei Hanxue. Mei Hanxue incessantly teased him, and maintained his romantic, carefree demeanor no matter who was around, which sometimes made Xue Meng felt like he just lost an exceptional amount of face.

Mei HanXue was different. Mei HanXue let him save face when they were in front of others, but when those people were gone, or when he was in a bad mood, he would say things more infuriating than his brother.

And because Mei HanXue normally put on airs and had very few relationships with the outside world, the cultivation world's impression of him was very superficial, and he maintained a good reputation. So no matter how much Xue Meng would stamp his feet in rage and condemn Mei HanXue's poisonous tongue, everyone would look with pity at Sect Leader Xue, and advise him: "Aiyah, Sect Leader, when you're free please remember to drink some white fungus and lotus seed soup to decrease your heart fire, there's no need to fret so much."

Just like that!

No matter how Mei HanXue bullied him in front of him, he used to say that his facial puffing was unique, and that he won first place for foolishness. Later, he said that he needed to fix his brain, that he needed to be fed by others. And when Xue Meng would tell this to other people, no one would believe him!

Xue Meng felt like a mute man made to eat goldthread; forced to suffer in silence![245]

He was so angry that he couldn't figure out what to do, when he heard Mei HanXue say, "Let me get to the matter at hand. The problem lies in the over one hundred negative comments you left." After a pause, he wrinkled his pale golden brows. "Of course, there was my brother's contribution as well."

"What the hell is going on?"

"The mother vessel for the relief scroll has cultivated into a higher state."

Xue Meng was gobsmacked: "What?!"

Mei Hanxue went on: "Thanks to what you and my brother have bestowed upon it."

Xue Meng's mouth repeatedly opened and closed. Finally he said, stunned: "Then, then what did it become?"

"Human."

"It gained human form?!"

"Yes."

Xue Meng nervously smacked his lips. His rushed nature meant that he couldn't bear Mei HanXue wearing him down bit by bit like this, so he said anxiously: "Keep going, what's the situation?"

"Simply stated—"

"Don't state it simply!" Xue Meng felt he was being worn down to tears. Anxious, he jumped up. "You're complicated, so explain its complications!!"

Mei Hanxue glanced at him indifferently and said lazily, "OK. Complicated. When Ma Fangzhi was refining the relief scroll, he put a rare wisdom spirit stone into its mother vessel in order to give it a more human-like intelligence. That wisdom spirit stone can imitate the actions and manner of a living person. However, it's still a dumb stone after all; if you only interact with it once or twice, it won't learn anything. But one day, Hanxue also bought a scroll. "

"... And then what."

He created a hundred identities on the relief scroll and talked to five hundred girls at the same time. He did this over a hundred times, which allowed the relief scroll's mother vessel to gain some extraordinarily thorough knowledge of him.

"..... Alright, this sounds very much like Mei Hanxue."

Mei HanXue looked at Xue Meng with an expressionless gaze, lifting his eyebrows the tiniest amount: "Don't you dare think this problem was caused by him alone. If it were just Hanxue, things would be fine. It's because right at that time you happened to leave more than a hundred negative comments for the relief scroll. With those harsh, cutting words,

you gravely injured the spirit's newly-emerged sense of pride, causing it to rage and flee."

Xue Meng was astonished: "This kind of thing is possible?!"

"There's more," Mei Hanxue said unsympathetically. "In its wrath, the mother vessel of the relief scroll began to absorb all of the spiritual energies of its users, and also began to imitate you and Hanxue. Not long ago, it broke through Ma Fangzhi's seals, and with the help of heavenly lightning, cultivated into a human form, becoming a monster. This monster has high spiritual power, and suffers from two incurable diseases. "

"What diseases?"

"One, extreme playfulness."

"Sounds like he got that from Mei Hanxue." Xue Meng continued: "And the second?"

Mei HanXue paused, lowered his pale golden eyelashes, and looked down at Xue Meng. His pale, thin lips opened and closed on a profound statement: "Two. Abnormal narcissism. "

Xue Meng nodded with no self-awareness, and said solemnly: "Mei Hanxue is indeed narcissistic."

Mei HanXue: "..."

The completely non self-aware Xue Meng continued: "it seems like even though I left bad reviews a hundred times, it didn't learn any of my habits." He breathed a sigh of relief. "So what's the situation? Can Manor Head Ma not catch this monster by himself?"

Mei Hanxue had no words for a moment, and was about to open his mouth, when suddenly, he heard the sound of plants rustling behind a rock garden, and immediately shouted: "Who's there?!"

The flowers trembled, and after a bit, the clever and lovely Shou Hou-guniang came out from behind the rocks, with a dead leaf stuck in her pale hair. She didn't dare to look at Mei HanXue, but smiled and waved to Xue Meng: "Sect Leader, I was just passing by, I'll be leaving just..."

Before she could tiptoe away two steps, Mei HanXue called out to her darkly: "Stop right there."

Xue Meng frowned and said, "This is a guest of our sect, Taobao Manor's disciple Shou Hou. She's really nice, you don't need to be so rude to all girls you know."

Mei Hanxue squinted. "Girl?"

"Yeah."

"Taobao Manor?"

"Right."

"Shou Hou?"

That's right.

Mei HanXue, face like the coldest frost, walked down the steps until he reached Shou Hou-guniang's side: "Mei Hanxue."

Xue Meng: "???"

"Are you playing with him again?"

Ch. 336 Xue Meng’s Blind Date: Tea-Selling Little Sister 6

How miserable.

That night, Mei Hanxue sat in front of the bronze mirror, and sighed at the injury to his face.

Even he didn't know how he managed to escape from under Xue Meng's killing intent earlier today.

The way Xue Meng was acting, he seemed like he wanted to tear off all Mei Hanxue's clothes, and then execute him with a hot pillar![246] Fortunately, Veggie Bun was loyal; seeing the person who had fed it so many dried fish these past few days, it bravely jumped out and started yowling, stopping Xue Ziming from eating him alive.

Truly too miserable.

"Did he have to use so much force?" Mei Hanxue touched the bruise at the corner of his mouth, hissed, and frowned. "I just crossdressed and teased him a bit, there was no reason for him to go for my life."

In the guest room, Mei HanXue said coldly: "You deserved it. That'll teach you to bully him so much."

Mei Hanxue stared at his brother through the bronze mirror: "You talk as if you don't also bully him. Who's the one who takes advantage of every opportunity to insult him to death? Also, I don't always tease him, I've helped him out too!"

"What help?" Mei HanXue said indifferently, "He was clearly going mad with rage, couldn't you tell?"

"I could tell." Mei Hanxue paused, then suddenly smiled. "But you know, he gets so interesting when he's mad, so even though I really did mean to just give him a bit of happiness, in the end I couldn't resist how much he was provoking me."

As he spoke, he stood up, and swaying, leaned up against the wooden table, and bumped against Mei HanXue. "I was only playing. It was just a bit of fun. I'll still do my best to look after him."

"....."

"Look, he'd been happy the entire time I've been here at Sisheng Peak, and he only got mad this one time today. I think I did a pretty darn good job being Shou Hou for three days straight." Mei Hanxue batted his cat-like jade eyes and pouted: "So you shouldn't be upset."

Mei HanXue had an odd expression on his face: "Next time you're not allowed to trick him like this again."

"Hah, alright, next time I'll come up with a different scheme."

"You—!"

"I'll bring you along too."

"....."

"This is all your fault," Mei HanXue said angrily. "I suggest you start thinking about how you're going to explain the situation to Manor Head Ma tomorrow. I'm going to sleep."

"Weren't we going to go out and have another round of teasing Xue Meng?"

"Don't you think your face has gotten cut up enough for one day?"

Mei Hanxue silently opened and closed his mouth, and listlessly laid his head down on his brother's bed: and sighed: "Alas, what meaning is there in a life where you can't mess with people?"

Mei HanXue's face blackened: "Who said you could lie on my bed with your shoes on?!"

Due to what Xue Meng and Mei Hanxue unleashed through their meddling, Taobao Manor was already being beaten black and blue, and overwhelmed with complaints. As the original source of the problem, it didn't matter whether they meant to cause them or not, they were tasked with settling the mob for Manor Head Ma.

So on the morning of the following day, even though Xue Meng was still brooding with all manner of unhappiness, he had to go out with the two Mei brothers. The three of them rode their swords, and rushed to West Lake.

When their swords landed, and they arrived at the giant night cat totem at the entrance to Taobao Manor, Xue Meng was stupefied.

Outside the magnificent manor, he saw a crowd of commonly-dressed civilians, their hands holding red-lacquered wooden cards, aggressively shouting something. Because there were so many different roars, even though the sound was loud, he couldn't make out the contents of the complaints. While Xue Meng was stunned, he saw a line of women coming from around the stret corner, wearing red skirts and green sleeves and thickly-applied makeup. These were the madames of all the pleasure houses in Lin'an.

These old brothel keepers, who normally lunged to tear each other to pieces at the sight of each other, were suddenly working with a common purpose. Together, with one voice, they shouted: "Return my No. 1!"

"Return my top flower!"

"Return my daughters!"

"Return my tea-serving little sister!"

Xue Meng has never seen such troops like this. He was afraid of nothing under the heavens or on earth, but today he discovered that had a sense of foreboding towards these women. Mei Hanxue saw that he was flustered, smiled, and patted him on the shoulder: "It's alright, girls are very soft creatures, they won't eat you."

As soon as he finished speaking, a madame suddenly pounded her huge bosom with the force one would use to break a stone on their chest, striking it with such magnificent ferocity that Xue Meng's eyes bugged out.

The madame shouted angrily: "Taobao Manor must cease its bewitchments!"

"That's right!" Some common people in the crowd shouted, "return my daughters' self-esteem!"

"He called my wife a cake! My wife is crying!"[247]

"...What's all this mess? What's going on?" Xue Meng muttered.

Mei HanXue tapped him on the shoulder with his Shuo Feng sword and said to him: "Follow me through the back door."

Xue Meng was still angry and didn't want to talk to the brothers, but when he saw that the front gate was impenetrably besieged, and the disciples of Taobao Manor were pitifully selling themselves at the door, he had to turn his eyes and just follow the Mei brothers to the back of the manor.

"Sisheng Peak Sect Leader Xue Meng and Kunlun Taxue Palace disciples the Mei Hanxue brothers, here to see Manor Head Ma."

"Ah!"

The eyes of the disciple guarding the back door brimmed with unshed tears of excitement.

"Sect Leader Xue! Mei-xianzhang! You're all finally here!"

Xue Meng said, "Where's your Manor Head Ma? There's so much noise outside, he should at least go outside to try and appease the crowd. How can he shut himself inside now?"

The disciple had been alright up to now, but once this issue was brought up, the the guard disciple immediately began to cry and snivel, and started to rub himself against Xue Meng: "Ma-, Manor Head he, he....."

Xue Meng always looked down on Jieke Ma's mentality, and believed that Manor Head Ma was a man who loved returning to nature, so he once again said nervously: "He didn't jump into West Lake, did he?"

The guard disciple sobbed: "No, no! It was last night, last night....Manor Head Ma became a flutterfly and flew away!"

Xue Meng jumped to alertness: "This flutterfly...what exactly is it?"

"A flutterfly! You know, the thing that flies, and everyone likes!" The guard disciple anxiously gesticulated with his hands: "Fat flutterflies!"

Xue Meng still didn't understand. Mei Hanxue suddenly asked, "Are you Fujianese?"[248]

"En en en!!" The gatekeeper nodded repeatedly.

Mei Hanxue turned his head indifferently to translate to Xue Meng: "He's talking about butterflies."

Xue Meng: "..."

However, when they went into Taobao Manor's reception pavilion and saw the pitiful and inspiring Manor Head Ma, Xue Meng asked a question that originated from deep within his soul: "Fuck, you call this a butterfly?"

A little bee was buzzing and flying left and right, up and down.

It flew so fast that Xue Meng couldn't help but want to lift his hand and smash it flat. An elder of Taobao Manor immediately stopped him: "You mustn’t! If you hit him, our Manor Head will die! "

Jieke Ma, who had been turned into a diligent little bee, looped around once and then rested in the middle of a red sandalwood table. A pair of bee eyes stared at Xue Meng, seeming to be silently crying to Sect Leader Xue about his plight.

"....." Xue Meng thought this was entirely ridiculous. He pointed to the bee: "No. This thing is really Jieke Ma? Are you sure he didn't make up a story to fool you in order to avoid the people outside yelling at him?"

"It's absolutely true, we guarantee a replacement if it's not authentic." The elder said miserably: "Last night I saw the Manor Head become a flutterfly with my own eyes!"

Xue Meng: "Are you from Fujian, too? "

"I'm from Funan!"[249]

"....." Xue Meng had a headache. "Fine, go on."

"After our Manor Head became a flutterfly, he circled Taobao Manor, pollinating flowers, doing what his strength allowed him to do."

Xue Meng clenched his teeth: "This is a bee. "

"No need for suspicions, Sect Leader Xue. Have you ever seen such a careful, cheerful and exceedingly canny and clever flutterfly?

Xue Meng choked: "I'll say it one more time! This is a fucking bee!"

"The Manor Head has turned into a flutterfly and is starting his flutter dance, so today I am afraid he cannot personally receive our guests. Therefore, it must fall to me. This insignificant one, Chen Xuyuan, Elder Chen, will serve as the temporary Manor representative." Saying this, Elder Chen rose halfway out of his chair. "Please, this way."

Xue Meng: "..."

From what he can see, this Elder Chen might not understand human speech.

The disciples of Taobao Manor quickly brought them tea and cakes. The three of them and Elder Chen ate as they talked, and the little bee that was

formerly Manor Head Ma squatted cutely on the teapot lid.

It turned out that the relief scroll had absorbed the emotions of the cultivation world's foolish men and desperate women, and had begun to develop within itself a thirst, a desire to find the partner of its dreams. So after it gained human form, it began to plot.

Originally, this wouldn't have been a big deal; if you could find some other small spirit that also desired companionship, the two of them could match up and the problem would have been solved. But problems emerged due to how its activities came from imitating Xue Meng and Mei Hanxue. Because of this, the scroll spirit became exceedingly picky. Whether it was a well-bred young lady from a major family or the jade of a minor family, whether it was the top flower of a pleasure house or a tofu Xi Shi, none were worthy of itself.[250]

It called the most beautiful bride in Lin'an "too fat."

It said the most charming maiden was "too bawdy."

It said the top flower of the pleasure houses "had hairy legs."

It said that the tofu Xi Shi "had big stinky feet."

Normally, such a poisonous mouth should have long ago caused ladies to trample it into the ground and hammer it into a meat patty. Most unfortunately, it had refined Mei Hanxue's charm into a spiritual power, so that no matter how cruelly it mocked a girl, she would inevitably become lovesick for it. And if it teased a girl who already had a lover, it could take on that person's appearance, and profit from the girl's pearly tears.

When Xue Meng heard this, he was filled with righteous indignation and said: "This is too outrageous!"

As he spoke, he turned towards Mei Hanxue: "Look at yourself, look what a disaster you've caused!"

"....." Mei Hanxue was speechless.

Xue Meng asked "But Elder Chen, why did Manor Head Ma become a bee?"

Chen Xuyuan sighed: "It's like this. The scroll spirit had provoked too many of the common people of Lin'an. From the streets to the brothel, and even to Guan-xiaojie's house; it's provoked them all. It seems to have a special impact on women; all the girls who have been provoked by it have experienced complete personality changes. For example, the top flower at Chuncha Lou was originally a clever social maven who could coax happiness out of any guest. But ever since she encountered the scroll spirit, it's like her character has completely collapsed, and she's become a well-behaved, honest, and blunt-spoken elmwood knot.[251]

"What do you mean?"

"In the past, when she greeted guests, she would say things like, 'Guanye, how lovely your complexion is, I see the redness must be a sign of coming good fortune and wealth," or "Guanye, how hale and hearty you are at your age, I bet you could manage a household of eighteen, no eighty concubines!"[252]

Mei Hanxue: "I feel some of this praise may be overly excessive."

"Well, the guests like to hear this kind of thing," Chen Xuyuan said. "But now it's different. For the same guest, she'll say things like, "You dog, your yintang is black, there's a leak coming from your face.[253] You shouldn't come out too often, I'm afraid I'll be contaminated by your bad luck." Or, "Old man, other people can do it seven times a night, you on the other hand can come seven drops at a time. Look how your wrinkles flap around like a turtle; aren't you ashamed to still be coming to pleasure houses at your age?"

Xue Meng: "..."

Mei HanXue：“……”

Only Mei Hanxue laughed as he heard this, and grinning, he asked: "Did that pleasure house continue to stay open?"

"It was destroyed. Why do you think they've come to complain at Taobao Manor?"

Chen Xuyuan sighed and said: "Our Manor Head went to investigate and found that all the girls were the same, all of them experienced total personality changes. Those who were too shy to even leave the house are now out running wild in the streets. Those who were pampered and charming and loved beauty now like to take a writing brush and look in the mirror to draw chest hair on themselves. Those who would say 'rabbits are so cute, why would we ever eat rabbits?' now can eat five rabbit heads, five duck heads, and five chicken heads in one bite."[254]

The more Chen Xuyuan said, the more he crumbled. He covered his face and said, "We couldn't go on like this, so our Manor Head Ma took charge, and he—"

"He went to take down the spirit?"

"No, this scroll spirit can't be subdued violently. One, it's not really a bad spirit, it's just wrong in the head. At the end of the day, it hasn't physically hurt anyone. Two, our Manor Head found that should the scroll spirit be defeated through violence, it would explode, and spread all the information that anyone has ever mentioned to the relief scroll across the cultivation world. This would be a leak of private client information, and our Taobao Manor is a serious business. If something like this were to happen, the manor's glorious name would be destroyed."

Mei Hanxue shook his head: "Not only that, I'm afraid it could cause a toxic atmosphere among the populace. What if any married men or women revealed shameful things behind their spouse's back?"

Xue Meng had a headache: "So then what did Jieke Ma do?"

"The Manor Head personally arranged to meet the scroll spirit, and then disguised himself as a woman. He said he would seduce it, make it feel an emotional connection, and then persuade it to return home with no hard feelings."

"...Jieke Ma wanted to use himself as a honey trap?" The corner of Xue Meng's mouth twitched. "Does Taobao Manor lack a mirror? Sisheng Peak can lend you one, no worries."

When the little bee heard this, it flew up in fury, and began to circle Xue Meng's head back and forth, buzzing his condemnations.

Chen Xuyuan glanced at the bee and said awkwardly: "This...ahem, even though our Manor Head Ma is a magnificent and heroic specimen, he knew that the scroll spirit had very demanding, precise requirements. So

obviously, he did more than just dress up in women's clothes. He also bought some bewitching incense from Jiang Yechen. This incense is very strange; as long as the other party voluntarily stays in the same room for the length of time it takes to drink a cup of tea, you can dazzle them, and make them think that a sow looks like a fairy."

When he got to the last part, he quickly added: "Of course, I'm not saying that you, Manor Head, are a sow!"

The little bee: "BZZZZZZ!!!"

Xue Meng asked: "And then what happened? Did the bewitching incense fail? Did that bastard Jiang Xi sell fake goods again?"

"No.Chen Xuyuan became even more embarrassed, and kowtowed: "It...when the scroll spirit caught sight of Manor Head Ma dressed as a woman, it let out a gagging noise, and then rushed away...so, so it didn't stay in the room long enough for tea..."

What a miserable story.

Xue Meng wanted to laugh, and was making a great effort to hold himself back, when he heart Mei Hanxue let out a chuckle. Xue Meng looked back at him and said: "Don't laugh, this is serious!"

"Women who have been rejected by the scroll spirit will have their temperaments changed, but men who have been rejected by the scroll spirit will directly turn into animals." Chen Xuyuan looked devastatedly at the bee Manor Head Ma. "The elders of the sect have spent an entire night, trying all sorts of techniques, but they can't release the spell. We have no choice, so we've already sent someone to ask for help."

"Ask for help?" Xue Meng was stunned for a moment, and he had a bad premonition, "from who?"

As soon as he finished speaking, he heard a loud announcement from a disciple outside the reception hall: "The head of Gu Yue Ye Medicine Sect—Sect Leader Jiang has arrived!"

Ch. 337 Xue Meng’s Blind Date: Go Balls to the Wall, Jiang Xi!

Jiang Xi, leading a retinue consisting of two rows of disciples all dressed in pale green, entered the chamber.

Today, as usual, he carried himself with an arrogance that seemed to say, "the entire world is made of sick people, and I alone am sane." He wore a silver-trimmed robe, colored pale green towards the bottom, that was long enough to trail on the ground. The silver pattern was made of silver silk thread; the green fabric was made from an extract obtained from the feathers of jade-spirit birds. As his outer layer, he was draped in a light golden cloud muslin cloak; it glowed like the dawn, and was resplendent to behold.

His attire would forever make people feel like he was saying: "I'm filthy rich, you're welcome to rob me," yet no one had ever been able to rob him.

His striking face seemed to have written on it: "Don't you want to sleep with me? I know you do," but no one has ever been able to get him into bed.

The only thing anyone could do towards him was to face him, bow, and make their obedient, respectful obeisances: "Our greetings to Sect Leader Jiang!"

The Mei Hanxue brothers also spoke: "Greetings to Sect Leader Jiang."

Xue Meng was the only exception. He crossed his arms, turned his head, and snorted, completely ignoring Jiang Xi.

Everyone blanched with fright — it was obvious to all how terrible Jiang Xi's temper was; had Xue Meng eaten the heart of a bear and the gall of a leopard?[255] As a junior, how dare he arrogantly repudiate his senior!

For a time, everyone sweated stressfully for Sect Leader Xue. No one knew whether Sect Leader Jiang would bestow him with "ten feet of red," or simply with “crane-head red".[256]

But who would have thought that Jiang Xi's eyes would only glance over Xue Meng for a moment, and without saying anything, silently move away.

"???"

Others were shocked, but Xue Meng didn't notice anything at all. He'd long gotten used to arguing with Jiang Xi, and it had become instinctual for him to provoke him. This time he'd been disregarded; he couldn't stop himself from glaring, repeatedly clearing his throat, readjusting his stance, and letting out a snort once he'd achieved a more belligerent pose.

Jiang Xi paid no attention, and had no words for him. His eyes wandered around the hall, and finally fell on Elder Chen. He asked: "Where is Ma Fangzhi?"

Before Elder Chen answered, Xue Meng snorted angrily again.

Elder Chen: "..."

This time, Jiang Xi finally turned his eyes and looked at him coldly: "do you have a sinus infection?"

Xue Meng choked and said: "I, I....."

"If you do have a sinus infection, let me hear you snort again. I have medicine."

Xue Meng: "Y-you, you..."

Jiang Xi calmly said: "I also have treatments for stuttering. We will medicate until your illness is cured; our house offers fair treatment to all."

The disciples of Taobao Manor were shocked!

How could someone who'd snorted thrice towards Jiang Xi not only not get beaten to death with a cane, but even receive Sect Leader Jiang's meticulous attention? Receive the blessing of having the sect leader ask about his health? His genuine and sincere care??

Even Mei Hanxue looked back and forth thoughtfully between Xue Meng and Jiang Xi. His pale golden eyebrows were at first lightly knit, but grew more and more furrowed.

Outside the reception hall, a group of female Shou Hou disciples who were there to peek in on the commotion were madly whispering among themselves. They couldn't help twittering excitedly; Shou Hou A: "Aahhhhh! Look at Sect Leader Jiang spoiling him! That story 'The Tyrannical Immortal's Pampered Bride' is true!"

Shou Hou B: "Nonsense! This is clearly from "The Years I Spent Sleeping with My Elder Immortal"!

Shou Hou C: "You're all blind! Don't you see Mei-xianzhang's expression! Look how unhappy he is! With all sincerity, I recommend you all read Dongshi Tea and Mushroom Book Shop's "Dual Meis Trick the Pig"!

Shou Hou A and B raged simultaneously: "How dare you call Sect Leader Xue a pig!"

The individuals in question heard nothing of this chatter. Xue Meng, enraged by Jiang Xi, was on the brink of attacking, but was blocked by Mei Hanxue.

Xue Meng stared bug-eyed in shock: "What are you doing? How can you be helping him?"

Mei Hanxue held Xue Meng's face in his hands and smiled: "Your face has turned green. Why don't you sit down and have some tea, calm down a bit..."

"Let go of me!"

Jiang Xi looked over at the two of them indifferently.

In the eyes of outsiders, Jiang Yechen was the top-ranked elder of the cultivation world, powerful and authoritative. And Xue Meng, no matter how brilliant a rising star, could be defeated by a single finger from Gu Yue Ye. Everyone could see that the discerning mediator in this fight, surname Mei, was there helping Xue Ziming, stopping him from pointlessly gaining the enmity of Gu Yue Ye.

However, Xue Meng was blind to this fact, and was unable to see Mei Hanxue's earnest efforts. Jiang Xi mentally shook his head, and turned his eyes away these two noisy members of the younger generation.

With a calm face, he asked Chen Xuyuan, displeased: "I've been here for quite a while now. Why hasn't Ma Fangzhi come out to greet his guests?"

Elder Chen was stunned under Jiang Xi's eyes, and suddenly he felt a pressure like he was about to be crushed by five hundred billion gold pieces. He explained hurriedly, "No, no, no, it's not like that! Our Manor Head isn't deliberately snubbing you! He is really very ill... "

Jiang Xi was still displeased, and shook out his sleeves: "Oh? How grave is this illness. Is he unable to come out?"

"N-no, that's not it....our sect leader has been bewitched, he....he turned into a flutterfly and flew away!"

"....."

Jiang Xi and the disciples from Gu Yue Ye all fell silent.

After some time, Jiang Xi's anger almost gained physical form. He narrowed his eyes, his thin lips holding back his fury. Sneering, he said: "Elder Chen. Have you perhaps read 'The Legend of the Fragrant Concubine' too many times?[257]

Chen Xuyuan became so frightened by Jiang Xi's attention that his head almost shrank into his neck. He felt that Sect Leader Jiang might, in his fury, throw him into an alchemical cauldron and grind him into medicinal powder. Thus, his brain spun rapidly in search of something to say to close the distance between them, and possibly cause Sect Leader Jiang to grant him enough mercy to spare his life.

Thus he cried out in nervous dread, surrounded with a ring of divine light: "Don't kill me, Sect Leader Jiang! For the sake of us both being fans of 'The Legend of the Fragrant Concubine', spare my life, please!"

"....." The whole hall fell into silence. Since the law couldn't be enforced when everyone was an offender,[258] those cultivators who didn't find the blind spot in Jiang Xi's words before also showed their sudden realization without fear of death.

That's right. If Jiang Xi hadn't read this book, how could he know that the plot featured someone turning into a butterfly and flying away?

At this point some of the onlookers came to visualize Sect Leader Jiang, in his leisure time, earnestly perusing a book with the giant words "Legend of the Fragrant Concubine" written on the cover.

....no one could bear to look straight at him.

Some people even started whispering: "So it turns out that Sect Leader Jiang's literary tastes run this way..."

"I would never have thought, I guess it's true you can't judge a book by its cover..."

Jiang Xi's complexion had turned quite ugly. He held Chen Xuyuan's collar and briefly stared intently at the man. Suddenly, he unexpectedly pushed Elder Chen away, and a few chilling words came out of his thin lips: "Pull out his tongue. Immediately."

Gu Yue Ye lackey: "Yes my lord!"

"AAHHHH!" Chen Xuyuan screamed, "Manor Head! Help! Help! Save me! "

Just in the nick of time, the little bee that had been resting on a teapot heroically flew out, buzzing around Jiang Yechen, spiraling around him in circles, trying to thwart this merciless act.

Jiang Xi frowned impatiently: "Kill this fly for me, too."

Gu Yue Ye lackey: "Yes, my lord!"

Xue Meng couldn't stand the brazen actions of his supposed father any longer. Pushing aside Mei Hanxue, who had been blocking him, he shouted at Jiang Xi: "Jiang Yechen! Stop screaming about maiming and killing people!"

Pointing to the little bee, he said: "This is the Jieke Ma you've been looking for!! If you don't believe it, ask him to dance for you!"

Jiang Xi brushed his sleeves, the silver and green fabric billowing in glimmering waves. Suppressing his anger, he said to Xue Meng: "What nonsense is this?"

"Who's talking nonsense?" Xue Meng turned to Jieke Ma, "hurry up, start dancing. If you don't dance, you're dead. "

"bzzz...." In order to survive, the little bee miserably landed on the table, and began to flap its wings to the left, flap its wings to the right, then flying up in a spiral.

Jiang Xi ： “……”

"Now do you believe me?" Xue Meng said irritably. "You were invited here to help, but here you are ordering people killed. Why don't you think of an actual plan!"

Jiang Xi stared at the bee for a moment and then turned to look at Chen Xuyuan: "You said that this is a butterfly?"

Chen Xuyuan covers his newly-released throat, coughed, and trembled: "Y-yes."

"...Come. We need to treat your eyes."

Chen Xuyuan: "Ah?"

Jiang Xi threw back his sleeves with a whoosh and said to his retinue, black-faced: "Then, we'll examine Manor Head Ma."

Gu Yue Ye lackey: "Yes, my lord!"

After some commotion, Gu Yue Ye's disciples diagnosed Manor Head Ma: He truly was under the influence of the scroll demon's peculiar abilities, and was thus turned into a diligent and daring little bee. However, the spell wouldn't last for long. After five days, he would recover his own human form, and be able to play with his favorite abacus again.

"Ah..." After hearing this, Elder Chen Xuyuan clasped his own eye medicine and asked nervously: "Do we have to wait five days? Can't we directly give medication to the Manor Head now? "

"I could prescribe medicine. But it would be pointless."

"Why?"

Jiang Xi: "It would take six days to refine the medicine."

“……”

With no way out, Manor Head Ma could only begrudgingly spend five days as a bee. After providing medical treatment, Jiang Xi's business was done, yet he had no intention of leaving just yet.

He said to Xue Meng: "I already told you not to get involved with Ma Fangzhi's spiritual instrument, but you wouldn't listen. Now look at this disaster."

Xue Meng crossed his arms and glared: "Why don't you mind your own business?"

Jiang Xi said coldly: "This already is my business."

"You!" Xue Meng said angrily: "Jiang Yechen! Are you looking for a fight?! I said I didn't need you to worry about my business, and that's final! Hurry up, shoo shoo shoo, don't disturb this Sect Leader's plans! "

Jiang Xi lowered his eyelashes sneeringly and glanced at him: "Who wants to care about your business? I need to be involved, because the scroll spirit is chasing after beauties all across Lin'an. Yesterday, it broke through the barrier to my Gu Yue Ye. It was disturbing my peace. Did you think I would come here otherwise?"

The lackeys beside Jiang Xi added in support of their sect leader: "Yes, exactly! This matter requires Sect Leader Jiang's help. You don't even know...last night, it impersonated Sect Leader Jiang's appearance. It blew through Yangzhou City's pleasure district and slept with seven, eight famed courtesans in a row, and promised to make them Gu Yue Ye Sect Leader's first wife, second wife, third wife...all the way down to the eighth wife!"

Xue Meng: "..."

Lackey: "When our sect leader went out this morning, he unexpectedly met this group of women face to face. They surrounded him, whining at him, calling him husband in front of all the people of Yangzhou. Oof, Sect

Leader Xue, you couldn't imagine it, Sect Leader Jiang got so mad, his face even—"

"Are you quite done yet?" Jiang Xi loomed, cutting him off.

With this scolding, the lackey was scared into shrinking his head into his neck.

Mei Hanxue couldn't help but lower his eyelashes and giggle. Jiang Xi noticed, and his gaze sharpened like two knives, yet he only turned his eerie gaze back towards Xue Meng: "In any case. This matter is for me to settle. You don't need to concern yourself with it anymore."

Chen Xuyuan listened to Jiang Xi's plan to eliminate the spirit all by himself. He couldn't help blanching from fright: "Se-sect Leader Jiang! You absolutely can't subdue it by force! If you do, it'll leak out the intimate secrets of everyone in the cultivation world!"

According to Jiang Xi's original plan, he really was going to send out an invitation to the scroll spirit tonight, and then when it came, finish the matter by weakening it with medicinal powder then smashing it into pieces.

But when he heard Elder Chen, Jiang Xi couldn't help furrowing his brows: "What intimate secrets? Aren't they only some conversation records?"

"How could that be it?" Chen Xuyuan said: "The first time every cultivator used the scroll, they had to answer a series of questions. Once the scroll breaks, all these answers will be made known to the entire world." After a pause, he carefully reminded Jiang Xi: "Sect Leader Jiang, if you've ever used the relief scroll, then you should have also answered these questions."

Noble people often forget things. Jiang Xi lightly tilted his head and tried to think for a while, until he finally remembered the incident in question.

At that time, the scroll did ask him many very personal and perverted questions—

"Is there anyone you like?"

"If no, then why not?"

"Do you have children?"

"Why do you have a child?"

"May I ask if it was an accidental pregnancy?"

"Why did you insist on reproducing when you don't like children?"

"Did your spouse abandon you?"

Xianjun, Xianjun, please don't scold me here. This scroll is only concerned about how you express love. Additionally, in light of your situation, we recommend that you purchase Taobao Manor's sunset-red spiritual instrument. Every week, we will introduce to your single-parent self three to five outstanding lonely xianjun. We wish that you may achieve a happy second marriage as soon as possible.

——

How wonderful. He remembered that unpleasant experience in its entirety now.

Jiang Xi kept a steady face. He thought: even unto death, he would never allow his answers to those answers to be made known to the public.

While he was gloomily resting his hand on his chin, silently considering other potential methods of subduing the scroll spirit, he heard Mei Hanxue's voice: "Sect Leader Jiang, if nothing else, your position is lofty, and you are our elder. This matter is the fault of myself and Sect Leader Xue. Let us gently resolve it; it doesn't appear to be something suitable for your abilities."

Jiang Xi didn't quite understand what he meant by "gently resolve", but he couldn't help but raise his apricot eyes towards Mei Hanxue: "What are your plans?"

Mei Hanxue smiled: "Just like Manor Head Ma, my plan involves crossdressing in order to tempt it."

"....."

Although he didn't quite understand why this young generation was so coquettish, it had nothing to do with him, so he let it slide. Jiang Yechen's eyes swept up and down Mei Hanxue, and he was just about ready to say "Alright, please do your best," and leave the scene; then Mei Hanxue added with a smile, "And it won't be too difficult to get Sect Leader Xue dolled up either."

Jiang Xi stared.

Xue Meng also stared; his expression was exactly the same as Jiang Xi's. "What?! You want me to pretend to be a woman and and flirt with that scroll spirit?"

"Exactly," Mei Hanxue confessed with a grin.

"Why not do it yourself!" Xue Meng yelled.

"The three of us will do it together, then one of us should definitely be suitable, and also—"

Before he finished, Jiang Xi interrupted with a dark face: "Be quiet. Listening to you gives me a headache."

The Mei brothers and Xue Meng simultaneously looked at him.

Jiang Xi's mood seemed cold enough to send people into shock. His face seemed carved out of ice; he glanced at Xue Meng. He then turned his head, and said frostily to Mei Hanxue: "…He's not suitable. I'll do it."

Ch. 338 Xue Meng's Blind Date: Jiang Xi Gets Hoisted By His Own Petard[259]

Although Jiang Xi volunteered to stop the job, in fact, no one believed that Jiang Xi would have any skill in dressing up as a woman.

Everyone suspected that Jiang Xi only had a perfunctory idea of what "women" were. But when Elder Chen ran up to him and cautiously asked: "Sect Leader Jiang, you...you do know the ways that girls differ from yourself, correct?" Jiang Xi only replied indifferently: "I know."

"Ah..." Elder Chen was very surprised. "I thought you'd never had contact with any woman..."

"Who said that?" Jiang Xi said, indifferently again.

Xue Meng was surprised to hear this. Frightened, he thought Jiang Xi would want to use Madame Wang as an example. Hurriedly, he wanted to stand up and stop him, but then he heard Jiang Xi's next sentence:

"A being measuring less than eight che , comprised of skin and flesh. Its outside dimensions are obtained through measurements; once deceased it can be dissected for analysis."[260]

Elder Chen's face showed befuddlement: "...what does that mean?"

"Aiyah, our sect leader is saying," a Gu Yue Ye lackey replied, "that he has dissected female corpses."

"....."

Apologies, this medical sect is truly too terrifying.

Elder Chen sputtered for a while, before he managed to stutter out: "Th-then, Sect Leader Jiang sh-should be very familiar with the particularities of young ladies?"

Jiang Xi glanced at him with indifference, and displayed his thorough understanding of the subject with an expressionless face: "The bones are fine, the voice is pitched high and smooth, there is a high percentage of fatty tissue, the body shape is curved, and contained within are parts such as the vulva, ovaries, and so on."

Dead silence.

Jiang Xi coldly and confidently looked down at him, paused, and said: "I wrote the volume 'Gu Yue Ye's Gynecological Prescriptions Worth A Thousand Gold'. The book contains anatomical diagrams. If you are curious, you can take a look."

Mei Hanxue: "Pfft!"

Xue Meng: "..."

Mei HanXue：“……”

After quite some time, Elder Chen facepalmed. He thought of the ways this cold-blooded hothouse flower might think up to disguise himself as an amorous beauty to deceive the scroll spirit, and couldn't help but softly wail: "It's over, it's all fucking over..."

Excuse me, with Jiang Yechen's level of understanding, how the hell is he expected to convincingly play a woman?

Is he planning on dissecting himself?!

Night time.

Taobao Manor's lanterns were brightly lit, its windchimes gently chiming.

Jiang Yechen had early on finished his preparations, and was waiting alone in a side room. In accordance with Ma Yun's theory on how to catch this spirit, Sect Leader Jiang also lit some bewitching incense in the room. Dressed as a woman, he waited for the scroll spirit to come in. As long as the spirit voluntarily stayed in the room for a cup of tea, their plan would succeed. The scroll spirit would inevitably lose its will, and express its adoration to anyone, even a sow. They could then take the opportunity to subdue it gently.

Of course, the letter inviting it in was written by someone else, because Sect Leader Jiang had no idea how to write it himself. After a long time of deliberation, he had written one vigorous and ferocious character, "COME", which inspired awe in onlookers. Fortunately, Taobao Manor's Shou Hou disciples were experts at soft persuasion. Soon, they wrote a new letter for Sect Leader Jiang, filled with unceasing affection and longing that flowed like the tides. So that emergency was solved.

At this moment, all the manor's disciples were hiding in the dark. Xue Meng also watched from the grass. He whispered to Mei HanXue with some uncertainty: "Will it be okay? Could Jiang Xi really distinguish between all those different makeup powders? Does he really know how to dress up as a woman? "

Mei HanXue replied with no attempt at consolation: "We'll see."

"....."

Feeling even more uneasy, Xue Meng swallowed his saliva, and said with difficulty: "Maybe I should check up on him, I—"

Just as he was about to emerge from the grass, Mei Hanxue grabbed him and pressed him down: "Hush."

Then he motioned at Xue Meng to look at the walkway leading to the side room and whispered: "Here it comes."

In the moonlight, the scroll spirit wore a cloak, probably a deliberate imitation of the style of Taxue Palace. Surrounded by an unceasing ring of floating petals and fluttering butterflies, the spirit wandered aimlessly into the courtyard. Although its face was hidden by a hood, looking at its gait you could tell it wasn't too clever.

From Jiang Xi's chamber came the faint sound of a bamboo flute. After listening to this music for some time, the scroll spirit thought this flute player wasn't too bad, but might be better playing the xiao.[261] It then happily walked to the door, and softly knocked twice: "M'lady, this humble one has received your invitation, and has come to call on you. May I disturb you?"

After its two knocks, Jiang Xi ignored it. Seeing that the door was open, it stopped being polite and said: "If m'lady doesn't mind, this one will enter."

Jiang Xi still didn't answer, but Xue Meng suddenly gasped: "Why does this voice sound so familiar?"

In that side chamber, the scroll spirit has opened the door and entered the room, and the flute finally stopped. Although Xue Meng felt uneasy, he still thought, ah, as long as Jiang Yechen could delay it for a cup of tea, it would then become entranced by the incense in the room, and develop affections

for anyone in the room. And then, they could bring it down in one fell swoop—

Before he could finish his thoughts, he heard a loud boom!

Xue Meng said, alarmed: "What happened? It's only been a blink of an eye! Surely Jiang Yechen's disguise as a woman couldn't have been so bad that it made it vomit!!"

In front of the dumbstruck eyes of all onlookers, the scroll spirit flew into the air, along with a wooden door and an overturned table, all of it lit by the light of an unsealed spiritual weapon. Contrary to Xue Meng's expectations, it wasn't making a "bluurgh!" retching sound, but rather an "aaaahhh!" screaming noise. Under everyone's attentive gaze, it smashed into the ground with a "thump".

Everyone: "....."

"Uaaoowwww....." The scroll spirit cried out miserably: "Ow, owowow...it hurts ow...."

Meanwhile, Jiang Yechen came out brimming with murderous intent, brandishing his sword. Mei Hanxue stared, blinked twice, turned his head and asked Mei HanXue: "Am I blind? In what way is he dressed as a woman?"

"You're not blind." Mei HanXue looked at Jiang Yechen expressionlessly from a distance. "He didn't dress up."

But then Xue Meng said: "He did dress up!"

Mei HanXue：“……”

Mei Hanxue: "???"

"...In what way is he dressed up?"

Xue Meng pointed to Jiang Xi's wrist: "Look, he's wearing a slender white jade bracelet. Only women wear that."

The Mei brothers simultaneously fell silent. After a while, Mei HanXue said indifferently: "The way I see it, you and Jiang Yechen really aren't that different. You probably think the difference between whether someone is dressed up or not depends on whether they've put on lipstick."

Xue Meng stared blankly, and said, at a loss: "...well, isn't that the case?"

Mei HanXue：“……”

"While they were talking in their corner, over in the yard:

No one knew exactly what had happened between Jiang Xi and the scroll spirit, but he was so furious that his handsome eyebrows were knit into a vertical line. His spiritual weapon Xuehuang flowed with silvery light in his hands, making a buzzing sound. With one hand, he hauled up the paralyzed scroll spirit that had been lying on the ground. The monster cried out: "Aah! Great beauty! Great beauty! How can you be so tyrannical? How can you bear to raise your hand to my handsome face!"

Jiang Xi snarled: "You're dead!"

"Waaahhhhh this is murder!"

In the fight between the man and the spirit, the scroll spirit's hood slipped down, revealing the face hidden inside—

The onlookers were speechless.

This scroll spirit truly deserved to be beaten to death. It...it it had the audacity to wear Jiang Xi's face!

If they thought about it, this was something they already suspected. Around last night, it had taken on Jiang Xi's appearance to visit courtesans in Yangzhou, and had received quite a warm welcome. This spirit probably got a bit arrogant, so tonight it once again copied Sect Leader Jiang's facial features to show off and swindle the innocent.

It just so happened to bump into Jiang Xi himself.

But because it wasn't very clever, it didn't realize that it was indeed Jiang Yechen himself who it was flirting with. So just now in the room, everyone could think of what kind of things Jiang Xi had experienced—

Unfortunately he probably saw "himself" grinning as he entered the room, flirting and saying all sorts of things as he played with his hair, sweetly and intimately calling out "M'lady~". Maybe he'd even received some arrogantly flirtatious once-overs from "himself."

...no wonder Jiang Xi was so furious. Who wouldn't be furious in his place?

Seeing that Jiang Xi was genuinely seething in rage and wanted to execute the scroll spirit on the spot, the disciples of Taobao Manor who were lying in ambush rushed out one after another, and in an uproar hurried to soothe him.

"Sect Leader Jiang! Don't act impulsively!"

"As soon as you strike it, it'll release all its secrets!"

"Please calm down Sect Leader Jiang!!!"

The scroll spirit looked stupid, but it made a nimble, speedy escape. When it saw that the situation wasn't good, it immediately scrambled away in the chaos, seeming to fly as it scuttled away to escape into the night's darkness.

While running away, it bellowed in a profound theatrical voice: "I, Gu Yue Ye's Jiang Yechen, will return! Wahahaha!!"

"...." Jiang Xi's straight, finely-shaped nose looked like it would grow crooked in his fury.

"You vile little beast!" he screamed, livid.

In this life, he had never before seen "himself" flee like a rat. Who would dare to even think of such a thing!

The scroll spirit probably thought that just yelling wasn't quite irritating enough, so he went ahead and imitated an echo, calling from far away: "I, Gu Yue Ye's Jiang Yechen, will return—will return—return—turn—"

"You're dead!"

All the disciples coaxed: "Sect Leader Jiang, Sect Leader Jiang please—"

Jiang Xi: "I'll show you what happens if you dare use my face again!"

All the disciples begged: "Sect Leader Jiang, Sect Leader Jiang please—"

Jiang Xi roared: "I'll make you suffer from epilepsy, gonorrhea, hysteria, nasal hemorrhage, craniotomy, scrotal gangrene, every single illness in the

Feng Lao Gu Ge—"[262] he continued roaring, but everyone had already ceased to have any comprehension of the medical terminology he used.

Everyone tried to coax him down, but only Xue Meng asked a question in all earnesty: "....What does Feng Lao Gu Ge mean?"

Mei Hanxue, standing to the side, said: "I believe it is the four incurable illnesses as described in medical books."

Seeing that Xue Meng seemed to understand (but really didn't), Mei HanXue on his other side explained expressionlessly: "Simply put, he wants it to suffer and be tormented by every single illness until it dies."

Xue Meng's face twitched ever so slightly, and he turned his head to continue watching the fight.

The furious Jiang Xi was surrounded by a group of Taobao Manor's Shou Hou disciples, who ceaselessly begged him: "No, no, let it go, please, let it go!"

"Sect Leader, please calm down, please relax, please!"

Jiang Xi's rage was obviously not easy to quell. Sect Leader Jiang was not a broad-minded man, and having been recently bedridden for several months only made his temper more vile. Adding to that the fact that this spirit took on his appearance to do disgraceful things only made him boil with fury. He momentarily lost all sense of decorum, and ferociously yanked his sleeves away from the grasp of whichever little disciple was supporting him: "Release me!"

"Okay okay okay, i'm releasing you, whatever the Sect Leader says, goes—"

"I will kill that—"

The disciples who had just breathed a sigh of relief hurriedly blocked him again: "You mustn't! You absolutely can't!"

"Hurry, bring the sect leader a seat, pour some tea, let's cool him down."

In the chaos, suddenly there was a flash of green light. The disciples screamed in utter shock, and one after another scattered. At the same time, Jiang Xi's gait suddenly became unsteady; he stumbled a few steps, then suddenly fell into a kneeling position on the ground.

Everyone instantly fell silent. They all blamed each other with their eyes—

Heavens, why didn't you hold on to Sect Leader Jiang!

You were the one close to him, and you're blaming me?!

But what was that green light...

At this time, the little bee that the Manor Head had turned buzzed its way over. Elder Chen Xuyuan froze for a moment, suddenly changed color, slapped his bald head, and shouted: "No no no not good! Sect Leader Jiang couldn’t contain the scroll spirit either! He's going to be cursed too! He's going to turn into an animal too!!"

When Xue Meng heard this, he jumped up from the grass with a crashing sound; alarmed, he said: "WHAT?!!"

Ch. 339 Xue Meng’s Blind Date: Go Balls to the Wall Wanning!

Under the moonlight, the disciples of Taobao Manor lined up in a row and looked with utmost deference at the steps in front of them.

In addition to the tiny bee lying prone on the steps, there was also a fantastical bird with a shimmering white body and jade-toned tail feathers —it looks a bit like a crane, a bit like a phoenix, and a bit like a peacock. In short, it looked like an animal that definitely wasn't from the human world.

In truth, there was no such bird in the human world.

It was Sect Leader Jiang's transformed form.

The celestial bird that used to be Jiang Xi has a slender, elegant neck, eyes like colored glass, and pupils that shone like the reflection from a cold sword, like moonlight on a lake. His delicate, yielding plumage was suffused in silvery radiance, and overflowed with brilliant light as if it were Shuangjiang.[263] His entire body was of the lightest silver; only the very ends of his tail feathers were tinted in the palest green, like verdant jade condensed under ice.

"It looks like Sect Leader Jiang's clothes," someone in the crowd whispered.

One female cultivator said softly: "Such beautiful feathers...I want to pluck one out to keep."

Only Xue Meng, that honest and earnest child, solemnly studied Jiang Yechen. After a while, he released the question that had been burning in his soul: "What breed of chicken are you?"

"....."

In response, Jiang Yechen fixed him with a fierce yet icy gaze.

"Or are you a duck?"

If anyone else had dared to ask this type of question, they definitely would have already been killed. But this was Xue Meng. Jiang Xi couldn't do anything; he could only look at him with haughty indifference. He didn't want to deal with these foolish commoners anymore, so he spread his glimmering wings, flowing with light, and flew away from Taobao Manor without a sound.

It looked like he wasn't planning on coming back.

There was a possibility that he would never want to come back to Taobao Manor in this lifetime.

Everyone gazed reverently at Xue Ziming with hero worship in their eyes. Xue Meng didn't understand: "Does he plan on going back to Gu Yue Ye like this?"

The female cultivator who wanted to pluck Jiang Xi's feathers looked at his trail with starry eyes: "Aahhhh, Sect Leader Jiang is sooo beautiful, his flight is leaving behind a trail of silver and green lights!"

Her sisters reminded her: "It might be because of his clothes. You weren't here to see how long Sect Leader Jiang's robes trailed after him...oh hey, do you think when he's walking that he'll trip over himself?"

At these whispered comments, the two major lackeys from Gu Yue Ye, who were intimately familiar with their sect leader's temper, gave a fierce warning to all the people in the courtyard: "No one is permitted to speak of

what happened tonight. Otherwise, should you be afflicted with a difficult-to-treat ailment, forget about coming to Gu Yue Ye, and accept your imminent death!"

After they were done, they led away the retinue from Gu Yue Ye, and with flapping noises, followed Jiang Yechen away from Taobao Manor to return to Gu Yue Ye.

Who would have thought that Sect Leader Jiang, head of the world's number one ranked sect, would be defeated by the scroll spirit? Although the scroll spirit couldn't really hurt Jiang Xi, how many people in the world could disgrace him so thoroughly?

Everyone couldn't help but worry. Of the leaders of the nine great sects, Ma Yun and Jiang Xi both had broken. They each had their their own strengths, and neither were weak leaders. So then...the ones who served as the younger generation, Xue Meng and the Mei brothers, could they really smoothly defeat this spirit?

This felt very worrying...

Taobao Manor was suddenly shrouded in a cloud of doubt and a fog of misery. Even the little bee that had been Manor Head Ma drooped his wings, and seemed so dispirited that he might never flutter again.

At this time, Mei Hanxue, who was examining the things that Jiang Xi had left behind in the room, suddenly let out a laugh.

Xue Meng turned to him: "How can you be in the mood for laughter? What's so funny?"

"Come and see."

Xue Meng was still a bit unwilling to deal with Mei Hanxue, but he couldn't help his curiosity, and sidled over.

Mei Hanxue smiled so widely his jade eyes sparkled. He raised a paper document and said to Xue Meng, "I've never seen this method of dressing up as a woman. Sect Leader Jiang is truly brilliant."

"What's this....he relied on a piece of paper to dress up as a woman?" Xue Meng, utterly baffled, took that sheet of paper from Mei Hanxue. Upon reading it, he was gobsmacked.

What the hell is this!

Jiang Xi actually took one of Gu Yue Ye's prescription slips, and wrote upon it, with calligraphy as bold as flying dragons and dancing phoenixes, two lines of script—

This is to certify that this person is a woman.

-Signed, Medicinal Sect Gu Yue Ye Sect Leader Jiang Xi.

He even stamped it in crimson red with his sect leader's official seal.

Xue Meng: "....."

Mei Hanxue looked at him while holding himself back from bursting into laughter. He was resisting so hard it looked like his ribs might crack from the effort.

"Well fuck." Xue Meng crumpled up that prescription. "Is Jiang Yechen a pig??!!"

Mei Hanxue smiled and raised one slender index finger. He brought it close to his lips, indicating that he should lower his voice and calm his temper.[264] He said with a smile, "He's a celestial bird! Not a chicken, not a duck, and definitely not a pig. You saw it yourself just now. Actually..."

He paused for a moment, his smile faded, and looked at Xue Meng thoughtfully: "Why do I suddenly feel like....you look a little like him?"

"!!"

Xue Meng jumped up like a cat that had its tail trampled, and shook his head like a bolang gu:[265] "That, that that's nonsense!!! The two of us are total strangers, we have absolutely no relationship to each other!!!"

"I see." The color of Mei Hanxue's jade-colored eyes deepened. After a moment's silence, he didn't say anything more. He just smiled mysteriously. "I wonder, if you were the one to be defeated by the scroll spirit, what kind of bird would you turn into?"

"....."

Under Mei Hanxue's relentless gaze, Xue Meng felt that he couldn't fail lest he risk death - maybe Mei Hanxue would pluck out all his feathers and gift them to some girl to coax her favor! Yeah! This was definitely the kind of thing Mei Hanxue would do!

He, Xue Ziming, definitely must not fail!

Aside from himself, those who thought Xue Ziming definitely must not fail, and also definitely must not turn into an animal, were the numerous elders and disciples of Taobao Manor.

After all, Xue Meng was the last card in their hand, and couldn't be played lightly.

Thus, Chen Xuyuan said: "I advise that you three gentlemen shouldn't act recklessly. This scroll spirit has been formed by the tastes of Sect Leader Xue and Mei-xianzhang. If you want to catch its eye, perhaps you two should think deeply about what kind of girl you think is the most suitable to your tastes, and could make the scroll spirit fall in love at first sight."

Mei Hanxue said: "I think all the girls in the world have their own beauty. If this spirit is so picky, it must not be because of me." He turned to Xue Meng: "We should consult Sect Leader Xue for his sage opinion."

Xue Meng thought for a moment, and said: "...The best woman in this world is my mother. "

Upon hearing this sentence, Mei Hanxue immediately stopped smiling. The pair of jade-lake eyes below his brows looked askance at Xue Meng's face, and in his heart he ever so softly sighed.

In truth, when he pretended to be Shou Hou to accompany him, it was precisely because he knew how poorly Xue Meng had been feeling for a long time now. Even if Xue Meng would occasionally raise a ruckus like he would do in the past, the part of his heart that had been shattered to pieces was extraordinarily difficult to return to its original form.

He wanted to make him happy, tease him to laughter, help heal him, as a sort of expression of their shared friendly affection.

But it seemed like Xue Meng's scars were still exceptionally difficult to heal.

Mei Hanxue shook his head internally, and raised his hand: "I agree with this statement."

Elder Chen Xuyuan said awkwardly: "But, Madame Wang, she...."

The more the old man said, the more pained he sounded. Mei Hanxue interrupted him and turned to Xue Meng and said: "Let's talk of someone else."

"....someone else? There isn't anyone else. No one else is worthy of me."

"Then think carefully for a bit. It's alright if it's someone that doesn't exist," Mei HanXue said. "Talk about your requirements, we can change our looks to match them."

Xue Meng had no choice but to start thinking seriously.

After thinking for a long time, he finally began to talk about his requirements: "Number one, white skin."

"Okay."

"Number two, big eyes."

"Good."

"Number three, she must be...ah, at least prettier than, you know." He was visibly uncomfortable. "She has to be prettier than...than Shi Mei."

The crowd listened to Xue Meng's spousal requirements. In the beginning, some elders kept notes, in preparation of finding a girl who would meet all the noted demands. But after listening to more than a dozen, the elders stopped this stupid endeavor.

It's because they began to realize that what Xue Meng wanted probably wasn't a woman.

What he wanted was probably a Buddha.

They were afraid that only Buddha had the openness to tolerate Xue Meng's youthful mind—were these really the kind of things that a young man in his twenties could say?

Does he just fundamentally not understand the concept of women???

And he's still yammering on???

"Number twenty, genuinely and sincerely admires me."

"Number twenty-one, is diligent and thrifty, and doesn't waste too much soap when doing the laundry."

"Number twenty-two, restraint is a virtue. I don't want her to eat too much, no more than two bowls of rice at each meal."

"Number twenty-three. I don't really like makeup on girls, so she shouldn't use any cosmetics."

"Number twenty-four, but she should still be beautiful. Her lips should be naturally rosy, her skin should be naturally fair, her cheeks should have a natural blush."

"Number twenty-five, she needs very long legs."

"Number twenty-six, but she shouldn't be taller than me."

Finally, one furious female disciple couldn't take it anymore. In a crowd that had resisted rolling their eyes and yawning this entire time, one

person couldn't resist shouting out: "For fuck's sake, enough already!! Why don't you go home and marry a red-crowned crane?!!"

Xue Meng crossed his arms, and turned his head to stare at her: "...."

The present couldn't be compared with the past. Female cultivators from before could dare to challenge Xue Meng, but now he was a sect leader. For the sake of self-preservation, the female disciple nervously licked her lips, and shrunk down with an "eeep!": "I was wrong Sect Leader Xue I was only talking in my sleep eeeeep!"

"Twenty-seven, she can't sleep talk."

The female disciple: "....."

When Xue Meng reached his 370th requirement,[266] Mei HanXue finally interrupted him. Everyone let out a giant sigh of relief. They thought that if there was no one to stop him, Sect Leader Xue might stand there the entire night until dawn. Mei HanXue obviously also had developed a headache; Although his expression remained ice cold this entire time, a trace of aggravation could be seen in his face.

"Xue Ziming, why don't you stop."

"I haven't finished yet."

Not caring that he hadn't finished, Mei HanXue asked coldly: "Are you familiar with Nüwa?"

Xue Meng's expression was blank. "What do you mean?"

"Were you the one who forced her to die?"[267]

"....."

Seeing the two arguing again, Mei Hanxue helplessly smiled and raised his hand: "Alright, let's calm down. Let me ask a question: Xue Ziming, is there someone out there who you would never dismiss, never argue with, who you would never lightly ignore when you see them?"

He paused for a moment and explained to the crowd with a smile: "I think this person will be a little easier to find than Sect Leader's Xue's wife."

All the people who had been tormented by Xue Meng for the last two hours nodded their heads in succession, recognizing this to be true.

Xue Meng glared at him: "Well, it definitely won't be someone like you."

Mei Hanxue wasn't angry, and smiled: "I know."

After thinking for a while, Xue Meng suddenly stood up straight and opened his eyes wide—he actually did think of someone he would absolutely never look down on—

"Yes! I've got it! My Shizun, Chu Wanning!"

A drowsy female cultivator who had fallen into a fetal position listening to Xue Meng enumerate his requirements was suddenly startled awake, and furiously wiped away the drool that had fallen while she was asleep: "Ehh? What got it? Who's got it? Chu-zongshi got it???"

The whole crowd of disciples: "....."

She raised her head, and faced a Xue Meng who glowered at her with the ferocity he would use facing a ghost. The female cultivator let out an

"eeek!," silently shrunk herself into a ball, and sat in this fetal position in the farthest corner.

Ch. 340 Xue Meng's Blind Date: Wanning is Super Great!

>>dubcon

Chu Wanning. Mo Ran. Taobao Manor.

When these three names floated in Xue Meng's mind together, they reminded him of some past events that he couldn't bear to remember—in the past, Taxian-jun told him that Chu Wanning had slept with Mo Ran at Taobao Manor, right in front of him, just behind a curtain.

The trauma this caused to his psyche was far too great.

If he could turn back time, he would scream out, right before Taxian-jun could open his mouth to say that first word—

"Stop talking! I can already imagine what happened!!!"

Yet one cannot walk back to the past, and must face the present.

In order to subdue the scroll spirit, Xue Meng had to ask Elder Chen Xuyuan to write a letter to his Shizun and his cousin, and respectfully invite Chu-zongshi to come out of seclusion to help.

Then they began to wait.

Nanping Mountain was on the banks of West Lake, and is the mountain closest to Taobao Manor. Even if you didn't travel by sword, and went through the barrier hidden in the clouds by foot, it would only take around one or two shichen.[268]

But for some reason, after the letter was sent and they waited until dawn, there still was no response from Chu Wanning.

Mei Hanxue was very perceptive, and realized the cause of this. He looked at the rising sun, stood up, and said to the crowd: "You all should go and get some rest. I'm afraid we won't hear from them at all this morning."

Taobao Manor's disciples had stayed up all night. Hearing him say this, they didn't think too deeply about the implications. They simply nodded their heads, yawned, and scattered, with the intent of taking a restorative nap.

Only Xue Meng frowned and looked at him: "Why aren't we waiting any longer? My Shizun will arrive soon, he never sleeps in."

Mei Hanxue smiled slightly and said: "There is still so much you don't understand about your Shizun."

"Bullshit! You think you know him better than me? Want to bet on that?"

"Oh?" Mei Hanxue saw how obstinate he was, and his spirit was roused. He said, as if to tease a bird: "What are we betting? I seem to recall you didn't take much money when you left, so what are you putting up?"

"Who said I didn't take any? You just wait..." Xue Meng gritted his teeth, and began feeling around in his money pouch.

It wasn't as if he had no money, but he had only recently become sect leader. Although he did his best to puff himself up in front of others, he still lacked experience. Elder Xuanji worried that he would spend money wastefully, or be cheated by a woman like Hua Ruowei, so the Elders as a group scrupulously managed his funds. And so every month, Xue Meng could only get from Xuanji a few handfuls of pocket money.

And this month, shamefully, in order to date Jiang Xi, he has already spent the majority of his savings.

And Jiang Xi still dared to look down on him! That look Jiang Xi had when he was "Ruo Ying" was obviously mocking him for being poor!

Not to mention dating Taxian-jun and those other "marvelous" blind dates.... Xue Ziming, the proudest son of his generation, has been squeezed by those flirty bitches to the point that he had to start rationing the number of straws in his straw hut.

But in order to defend Chu Wanning's reputation, no matter how hard, no matter how exhausted he was, Sect Leader Xue must bet!

If it comes to it, he could cut the amount of straw by half!

So Mei Hanxue watched Xue Meng rummage through all his nooks and crannies, and take out a scattered pile of copper coins, which all together numbered probably less than fifty. Xue Meng slammed them on the table with the air of presenting 500 billion, and two small copper coins rolled and tumbled to the ground.

Mei Hanxue: "....."

"I bet that my Shizun will arrive right after breakfast time!" Xue Meng said with the firmest resolution.[269]

"...and if he doesn't come?"

"That's up to you!"

Mei Hanxue looked at that shabby pile of copper coins, turned his head, and smiled: "I heard that Chu-zongshi said that if you want to gamble, you should gamble big. Why don't we put money aside, and look at something else?"

"What something else?"

"You'll run naked through the streets, and sell your skills in a pleasure house."

Xue Meng: "??!!"

Mei HanXue raised his brows: "What's this nonsense?"

Mei Hanxue covered his mouth with his hands, rolled his hands and smiled: "I wasn't serious, just teasing him."

"Let me think some more..." Mei Hanxue crossed his arms, and frowned in thought. "How about this...Why don't we have the loser dress up as a girl according to the directions of the winner?"

"....." Xue Meng wrinkled his forehead with dissatisfaction. "Hold on, Mei Hanxue, have I ever forced you into women's clothes before? Why can't you seem to get past this issue?"

This time, Mei Hanxue and Mei HanXue both stared at him with an aura of unfathomable mystery, to the point where Xue Meng felt goosebumps rise on his back. Stuttering, he said: "What are you doing? I was kidding, it's not like I've actually done that. I, I have always been upright, never b-bullying the weak... "

"Of course." Mei Hanxue said with a smile, "you are the best."

Xue Meng: "..."

Why did this all feel so ominous....

...

It turned out that Xue Meng's intuition was occasionally truly accurate.

Xue Meng, waiting in hope, waited until that hope was lost, and finally fell into despair. In the afternoon, he finally heard an announcement from the disciples outside the Manor: "Chu-zongshi, Mo-zongshi have arrived—!"

Chu Wanning's hair was bound with a jade guan , his white robes billowing. As always, his demeanor was pure and profound, aloof and cold, carrying the aura of a celestial being. Yet for some reason his eyes were ever so slightly red, his expression unexpected, and there were the smallest hints of anger lines between his brows. Mo Ran, on the other hand, stood to his side a step behind, with an expression of helplessness, looking somewhat comical.

It turned out that last night Chu Wanning had already heard the spirit bird that Taobao Manor sent, crying outside. Concerned that it might be an emergency, he wanted to take a look. But last night was Taxian-jun's turn, and his nature was to be disinclined to care about other people's affairs. He was already so far in, how could he stop? Several times, Chu Wanning wanted to interrupt him, and initially, Taxian-jun humored him, saying things like "almost there," or "we'll take a look as soon as we're done."

But Mo Ran was a dirty lying scoundrel. What "almost there"? What "we'll take a look as soon as we're done"? There was no "done" to speak of! Ma Yun's bird was screaming its head off outside; meanwhile, the head of Taxian-jun's own little bird wasn't the least bit tired.[270]

Finally, Chu Wanning insisted on going out to see just what was going on. In a fit of rage, Taxian-jun actually tied him directly to a pillar, and in order to break Chu Wanning's will, fed him some illicit under-the-counter medications. With these shenanigans, the spring night became endlessly

delightful and sweet, and even if later in the night his personality switched back, Mo-zongshi, seeing Chu Wanning in such a state, also couldn't stop himself.

So it wasn't until the next day's afternoon that Chu Wanning woke up from his haze and received the notice from Taobao Manor that the scroll spirit was causing disasters in Lin'an.

This delay was clearly caused by Taxian-jun. However, Mo-zongshi and Taxian-jun were one and the same. Tracing what happened back to its source, it was all due to Mo Ran's own faults. Chu Wanning refused to speak to him the entire trip down the mountain, treating him as if he were a statue.

"Chu-zongshi, Mo-zongshi!"

"Greetings to Chu-zongshi, Mo-zongshi!"

Chu Wanning knew the exact cause and effects of the trouble the scroll spirit caused. So when he entered the reception hall and saw Xue Meng, he wanted to lecture him for his willful stupidity. But Xue Meng's position couldn't be compared to that of the past, and he had to save him some face.

So Chu Wanning, finally, just frowned slightly and said: "how did you get into such a mess?"

Xue Meng originally started to complain, but when he saw Chu Wanning, all his unhappiness vanished. Immediately, he said: "Shizun, the scroll copied me, I didn't intentionally..."

Mo Ran stared: "Xue Meng, after we said farewell at Wuchang Town, you...why did you keep playing with the scroll for so long?"

"What do you mean?"

Mo Ran wanted to roll his eyes, but it was a "secret" between two brothers. So he mouthed to Xue Meng behind Chu Wanning's back: "You dumbass! You're out here sowing your wild oats,[271] is this the kind of behavior worthy of Sect Leader Jiang?"

Xue Meng didn't understand: "Can't you raise your voice a bit? Do you have a sore throat?"

Mo Ran: "....."

Screw him for being a dumbass!!!

But if he turned his back on Xue Meng, this mess will never get settled, so they might as well help. Except—

"What?! You want Shizun to dress up as a woman!??"

Xue Meng said awkwardly: "I don't want to do it either, or, actually, we could have Gu Yue Ye write a prescription, and have it say this person is...is....."

He peeked over at Chu Wanning's austere, frozen profile. "This person is a woman," he wouldn't be able to say something like this even unto death.

Mo Ran looked like the sky was falling. How could he let Chu Wanning show himself in front of other people dolled up like that? This was madness!

But they had to do something about this present situation. He looked at Xue Meng, and braced himself, looking like he couldn't get out what he wanted to say. After a long silence, he finally said helplessly: "Why not me instead."

Xue Meng looked up, completely at a loss.

Mo Ran: "I will face the scroll spirit in his stead."

"You? You want to dress up as a woman?"

"Why not?"

Xue Meng: "....Dage, are you a bit confused about yourself? "

Mo ran startled, and felt a bit wounded. He turned to Chu Wanning: "Shizun, Xue Meng said that I'm not good-looking."

There was a sense of shame in his tone.

Chu Wanning knew that he was talking to himself, changing his tone to be petulant. He didn't bother paying attention. Relaxed, he drank a cup of just-brewed Zhuyeqin,[272] and then raised his gaze: "Why do you have to dress up? Isn't there a ready-made solution available?"

No one understood what he meant.

Chu Wanning turned his face towards Mo Ran slightly and said indifferently: "Your qiankun pouch. Take it out."

It was the first time Chu Wanning had spoken to him since they went down the mountain; Mo Ran couldn't help but be overjoyed. But Chu Wanning's face had an odd expression, and he didn't say anything gentle, which made

him feel disappointed. For a moment, he felt very much like a master of the house, being scolded by his pampered concubine one one hand while fishing out his money pouch with the other. He didn't know whether he should be happy or sad about this.

A qiankun pouch was the equivalent of a cultivator's entire treasury. Chu Wanning wanted Mo Weiyu's treasury, and moreover, didn't even have anything nice to say. But no matter how unhappy Mo Weiyu was, he could only hand it over.

Why did he let himself get so beastly last night?

A circle of people intently watched Chu Wanning rummage in Mo Ran's qiankun pouch to see what the so-called "ready-made solution" was.

They all thought these zongshi couldn't think straight. Jiang Xi's idea of crossdressing was to write a prescription; they had no idea what kind of astonishing performance Chu Wanning would produce. Would he find ten night deities to pull a banner behind him, and have written on it something like "Yuheng of the Night Sky Beidou Immortal Chu Wanning Has Entered The Scene"?[273]

As the crowd indulged in their flights of fancy, they heard Chu Wanning, knitting his sword-like brows, say impatiently: "Your qiankun pouch is a disaster. What on earth are you putting in here?"

"....."

Mo Ran self-consciously rubbed the side of his nose. He used to be very clean and tidy. He arranged his bag very scrupulously. However, ever since his entire soul reunited with his body, his character changed every three days, and the secret struggle between the two personalities was reflected

in the qiankun pouch. For example, as Taxian-jun, he would sneak in some hot pepper seeds, hoping to plant peppers in Nanping Mountain, but when he became Mo-zongshi, he would throw all the pepper seeds out.

When Taxian-jun reappeared, he was naturally furious. Feeling that his life was unhappy, he would absolutely never let his other self be happy either. So he would make a mess of the qiankun pouch, smash all the trinkets collected by Mo-zongshi, or go down the mountain to pawn his things at the pawnbroker, so as to buy himself beautiful clothes.

So how could this qiankun pouch not be a mess?

Everything was mixed together, and with everything in a jumble things were hard to find. Chu Wanning dropped some objects that were blocking his view onto the table; Xue Meng, curious, looked over to see.

"Records of Gods and Demons."

Mo Ran explained: This is my book, I wanted to know more about the histories of ancient gods and demons."

"Oh... Not bad." Xue Meng went on to read: "The Night Sky Collection".

"This book has the histories of many cultivators. Our predecessors all had different reputations and faced different challenges to those reputations, but they also all had their own aspirations and obsessions. They're like stars in the night sky, each with its own light in the darkness. It's a very interesting read."

"...I can't believe you've progressed this much." Xue Meng was quite surprised. "It's like one book after another."

Mo Ran smiled, and said: "It's because Shizun taught me well."

Xue Meng went to the next book.

"Postpartum Care for Sows."

Mo Ran's smile froze on his face.

Finally, he said resolutely, waving his hand: "....This was purchased by Taxian-jun. It has nothing to do with me."

Xue Meng: "....."

Chu Wanning didn't pay attention at first. Hearing this, he raised his eyes and asked: "Why did he want to buy this? We don't have this sort of animal at home."

Mo Ran said: "I.....he... it's like this. One time he went down the mountain in Yirong and saw that the people in the village were holding a livestock show. At the time, he was inexplicably confident, and ran to compete. The result was that he couldn't beat the village's veterinarian Wang, so he got angry, and bought this book....if he studied hard, he'll definitely win next year, and the shame from this year would...[274]

The more he talked, the more ridiculous he felt. When he heard a young disciple of Taobao Manor who couldn't help let out a snigger, Mo Ran shut his mouth in embarassment, and glanced over at Chu Wanning with some amount of hesitation.

Chu Wanning said, incredulously: "Why on earth would you participate in...a livestock show?"

"There...there were prizes." Mo ran blushed slightly, lowered his head and muttered, "I think...if he won, he thought he could go buy you the finest clothes from Fei Yun Zhai.[275]

Chu Wanning said, silently:[276] "Fei Yun Zhai is near Jiangdong Hall. That Hua Ruowei had sent someone to bring an entire eight boxes of clothes and accessories before, and you burned it all without even saying anything. Now you want to go and buy it yourself?"

"It's not the same." Mo Ran said immediately, "That girl looks at you the wrong way. She better not think I can't see what she's scheming. Look at the kinds of things she sent: outer robes, guan , inner clothes you wear right next to your skin... " The more he spoke, the darker his face became. "She'd better not even think about Shizun wearing those things she brought!"

"....."

As Chu Wanning listened to this speech, one couldn't tell if his eyes displayed helplessness or embarrassment, but those two dark, fathomless pools finally softened. At long last, he pressed his lips together, and suddenly asked: "Mo Ran, today, are you the you from your previous incarnation, or the you from this present life?"

"Of course I'm me from this present life." Mo Ran was briefly stunned. "Shizun, why do you ask?"

"Look at how you are now." Chu Wanning's eyes finally held a glimmer of a smile. "How are you different compared with your previous life?"

He had always been an icy beauty, cold down to the bones, and his expressions were subtle, so no other people would have been able to see this tiny smile of his. But for Mo Ran, even if Chu Wanning developed only a thread of a wrinkle between his brows, he could feel a bright change, like the coming of the wind, the snow, the rain. Seeing that he was no longer

angry, Mo Ran couldn't help but lower his long eyelashes, drop his gaze, and smile, his cheeks dimpling.

Chu Wanning seemed to be on the verge of saying something else, but then felt that what he said just then was too embarrassing. So he turned his head, and refused to speak to him again.

But this kind of ignoring him and the kind of ignoring him that happened when they came here obviously meant two different things. Mo Ran just chuckled, and stood beside him obediently like a good boy without speaking.

Chu Wanning finally found what he was looking for from the qiankun pouch—

"The illusion sachet."

His long, slender, well-proportioned hand held the band of the sachet. Chu Wanning said: "These were sold together with the relief scroll, and allow the user's appearance to change in the eyes of others based on their original appearance, without the need for any real change in dress or physical form."

Everyone from Taobao Manor: "....."

Chu Wanning paused for a moment, and finally said, with the greatest amount of incredulity: ".....No one here thought of it? "

The makers of the relief scroll and the illusion sachet shook their heads in unison. It is unknown who first came up with the phrase "to ride a donkey to look for a horse," but "to ride a donkey to look for the donkey" absolutely referred to these cultivators from Taobao Manor.[277]

In this way, the issue of dressing up was finally solved, and everyone breathed a sigh of relief. As it was time for dinner, they all planned to quickly go to the dining hall to fill their stomachs, then wait in the evening for the next appearance of the scroll spirit.

As everyone left one by one, Mei Hanxue suddenly appeared right next to Xue Meng's ear and whispered: "Xue Ziming."

Xue Meng was suddenly extremely alert: "What?!"

Mei Hanxue said with a low smile: "I'll tell you a secret."

Intuition tells Xue Meng that it's usually better not to listen to Mei Hanxue's secrets. But curiosity still drove Xue Meng to open his mouth: "Wh-what is it."

Mei Hanxue said gently: "It's just...that method that Chu-zongshi said....actually, I had thought of it already."

Xue Meng was gobsmacked and turned to look back at him. "Then why didn't you say something earlier?"

Because wasn't it Jiang Yechen who needed to dress up as a woman before?" Mei Hanxue said with a smile, "I didn't tell him, because I wanted to make things a little difficult for him, and give you a good laugh."

"....." Xue Meng was ready to give him a good scolding, but when he said that, his mouth suddenly became dry, and his scolding wouldn't come out.

Mei Hanxue chuckled: "You're not going to thank me?"

"Thank you for what! What about after Jiang Xi left! Why didn't you say anything then!"

"Oh, after he left..." Mei Hanxue paused for a second, his glass-blue eyes filled with emotion.[278] He raised his fingertip to his lips, and smiled: "I didn't tell you then, because I wanted to make things a little difficult for you, and give myself a good laugh."

Xue Meng: "???"

"By the way, I'm reminding you that you lost your bet. Remember your promise. I'll be waiting."

"In your dreams!!!" Xue Meng can't help roaring: "Fuck your waiting! You want me to dress up as a woman for you?!! In your next life! Kill this fantasy now!!! "

The sound of his voice startled the people into looking askance at each other. What they didn't know before, now they knew. In whispers, they conferred: "Aiyah, Sect Leader Xue is going to crossdress?"

"Looks like Sect Leader Xue won't do it, and he'll have to eat his own words."

"Poor Mei-gongzi, he won his bet, and he still has to get scolded."

"How miserable..."

Xue Meng's face was getting greener and greener among the crowd of twittering murmurs. Mei Hanxue was silent for a moment, and smiled: "Are you really so unwilling?"

"Bullshit!"

"Rude." Mei Hanxue smiled again, and nudged Mei HanXue with his elbow, "Ge, look at him. Isn't he fun?"

Mei HanXue glanced at Xue Meng who had blown up like a puffer fish, and said indifferently: "It's not fun. Don't make him crossdress either."

"Why? He's hot enough."[279]

Xue Meng: "You—! You—!"

“Hot enough to make my eyes feel like they’re on fire."

“???" Xue Meng was about to explode!

Mei HanXue was even worse than Mei Hanxue! Mei Hanxue just said he was hot, but Mei HanXue actually said he made his eyes burn!!!

Xue Meng couldn't help but raise his hackles, and yelled, careless of consequences: "Mei HanXue! You stop right now! Come back here! Who the fuck is so ugly they make your eyes burn? Have you ever seen me get prettied up, huh? You think I wouldn't dare!! If you have the guts, we'll see who's better at it!"

Mei Hanxue smiled: "Ah, so you really want—"

Before he could finish, Mei HanXue interrupted him, pulling Mei Hanxue's arm to stop his nonsense. Then he turned to Xue Meng and said: "No. According to what you just said, you would be better off leaving crossdressing for your next life."

"Fuck that!" Xue Meng, roused, pointed at Mei HanXue, raised his handsome brows, and lectured: "When did I say I'd be willing to do it in my next life?"

Mei HanXue raised his own eyebrows: "You just said it yourself. Actually, in this lifetime, please focus on being a good sect leader. Don't be a harlot. "

Xue Meng stuttered: "How...how dare you...you dare to...you said I'm...."

"Yes. I dare," Mei HanXue said, indifferently blinking his turquoise eyes, as if he were taunting or teasing him. "Then that's settled. You owe us a bet. "

"I'll wait for you in our next lives, Xue-guniang."

Xue Meng stood there stunned for a very long time. At the moment that Mei HanXue turned his head, he screamed: "Who owes you a meeting? What did you call me? Mei HanXue! Don't you dare go! I'll fucking kill you! Argggghhh!! You stop right there!!!"

Ch. 341 Xue Meng’s Blind Date: Wanning Gets Hoisted By His Own Petard

In order to check everything thoroughly, Taobao Manor's Elder Chen asked Xue Meng to take a look at Chu Wanning while he wore the illusion sachet, before he would officially meet with the scroll spirit. This was to see if there was anything unsatisfactory, or not in line with Xue Meng's taste.

But Xue Meng was still raging at Mei HanXue, and held his rage to the point that his chest hurt. When Chen Xuyuan ran into him in this state, Xue Meng massaged his chest and said angrily: "Nonsense! What's there to be unhappy about! My Shizun is the best in every way! "

Chen Xuyuan said: "Aiyah, Sect Leader Xue, he may be your Shizun, but he is not the scroll spirit's Shizun."

In other words: "You should put aside your own biases and look at Chu-zongshi again. You need to know that the scroll spirit will not bring personal feelings to this meeting, so please look at Chu-zongshi once more, as a stranger, and see if he meets your requirements. "

"Nonsense! How could it be just my opinion that I think my Shizun is incredible in every way?" Xue Meng glared. "I'm telling you, if the relief scroll had made me meet up with my Shizun, even if I didn't know who he was, I would've definitely thought that he was most amazing person on earth, no mistake!"

Xue Meng's conviction seemed ironclad, but Chen Xuyuan still persevered: "No no, we should still test it once, just once." Then he pushed Xue Meng into Chu Wanning's room.

However, as Xue Meng was being pushed right outside his guest room, he raised his head and saw the door. He suddenly froze.

W-wasn't this the same room that Chu Wanning slept in when they first stayed at Taobao Manor together?!!

At that time, Xue Meng didn't know what Mo Ran and Chu Wanning were doing inside. When he had confidently entered with no hesitation, Mo Ran had no choice but to hide behind the bed curtains. Only later would Xue Meng realize that Chu Wanning's watery and steamy eyes were red not because of fever, but because...

Stop right there! He can't bear to remember those events!!

In order to avoid making the same mistake, Xue Meng decided to let them know that he had arrived, especially Mo Ran! He would absolutely never let Mo Ran do such shameless and prepostrous things again! Absolutely never!

So he began to walk back and forth at the door, deliberately coughing loudly. Just in case he wasn't making enough noise, he then stomped forcefully on the floor bricks. He jumped—whirled around—stomped loudly—

The door creaked open.

Mo Ran, dressed neatly, stood at the door, his figure tall and handsome. He looked at Xue Meng like he was seeing a ghost: "....what are you doing?"

Xue Meng was at that moment in the middle of performing a Sand Flat Falling Goose pose.[280] Upon hearing the noise, he turned his head and his mouth gaped. Before he could answer, he heard Chu Wanning's sonorous

and cold voice come from the room: "Mo Ran, is it another one of those harebrained young women making mischief outside?"

Mo Ran smiled: "Ah, no, it's Xue Meng."

Then he lowered his voice, and said with a smile: "Why don't you come in? You could've just knocked on the door. With all that coughing and stomping and prancing back and forth, we thought there must have been a ghost outside."

Xue Meng settled down, no longer brandishing his tail feathers, but still wanting to spit onto his cousin's handsome face. Then, from inside the room, he heard Chu Wanning: "Since the Sect Leader is here, what are you blocking him for? Let him in."

"....." Although Xue Meng knew that he had succeeded into the position of Sect Leader, Chu Wanning, Sisheng Peak's Yuheng Elder, should have taken the senior role. Being referred to in this manner made Xue Meng feel like something was squeezing around his heart.

Mo Ran smiled and inclined his tall, upright form: "Please come in."

Xue Meng was unhappy: "I need to talk to my Shizun about some private matters. Leave."

"Ah... are you practicing how to face the scroll spirit? Mo Ran, magnanimous, didn't argue with Xue Meng. Smiling, he said: "Elder Chen told us already that we should rehearse, so nothing unexpected happens."

"What can happen?" Xue Meng crossed his arms and rolled his eyes. "Since the spirit learned from me, it should think that Shizun is faultless!"

"Not necessarily." Mo Ran agreed with Elder Chen. He patted Xue Meng on the shoulder. "In my opinion, you think he is faultless because he is your Shizun. If you had gone on a blind date back then, and had met Shizun, not "Leng Gong," and didn't know his identity, I think you almost certainly would have fought with him."

"Nonsense!"

Mo Ran doesn't argue. Smiling, he inclined his head, and stepped aside. Calmly, he went outside to wait.

Xue Meng entered the room. Before he could speak, he couldn't help but stare—

Chu Wanning was already wearing the illusion sachet, so in Xue Meng's eyes, the person standing by the window was a tall, exceedingly elegant female cultivator dressed in white.

Her skin was luminous, like a solitary white cloud in the night sky. Icy white, she seemed inhumanly youthful. A long, graceful neck rose from the collar of her white silk robes. The candle light seemed to cast a layer of hazy shadows over her taut glowing skin: they fell across her noble forehead and on her long, delicate eyelashes, they sketched the outline of the curve of her soft nose bridge and landed on her lips, as thin and pale as borneol flakes.[281]

Finally, the candle flame, a pale, billowing wave of muddled yellow light, ended softly at her refined chin.

Oh. So it turned out that Chu Wanning's illusory genderswapped appearance is like this.

Xue Meng kowtowed: "Shi-, Shizun...."

"En."

Chu Wanning acknowledged him, and turned around.

His original form would strike anyone with his exceptional beauty, but Chu Wanning's illusory female form had such a sense of austere dignity and cold pride that it inspired awe down to the bones. Especially notable were the eyes beneath those long brows; their shape had a natural charm, and their corners seemed touched by haitang nectar, showing the faintest hint of red. Yet her gaze was extraordinarily alert, and controlled.

Beautiful indeed, but she was a cold beauty. A terrifying beauty.

Chu Wanning glanced over at him: "A bit ugly."

"......ah?" Xue Meng said blankly.

I'm afraid I'll scare the scroll spirit away," Chu Wanning said solemnly.

Xue Meng jolted at this statement, and swiftly said: "What? No no no! How could that be? Good looking! Shizun is very good looking! "

Chu Wanning had never been confident in his own appearance. In his two lives, the beauties he'd seen were as numerous as clouds; leaving aside Mo Ran himself, Shi Mingjing's and Song Qiutong's looks were both peerless among the mortal realm. In his heart, Chu Wanning knew clearly that he was mean and temperamental - difficult to love.

One look at Xue Meng's frenzied panic confirmed this.

The only one who wouldn't turn his back to him was Mo Ran.

Chu Wanning shook his head and said to Xue Meng: "Why don't you sit down."

Xue Meng gingerly and primly sat at the table.

Chu Wanning sat down opposite him, brushed away his sleeves, poured two cups of green tea, raised his eyes, and said: "This appearance is insufficient, but its character can be amended. Tell me, what do you like in a girl?"

Previously, in front of the people from Taobao Manor, Xue Meng had released a deluge of over 300 requirements. But now when Chu Wanning asked, his voice froze.

The thing he was most concerned about was appearing respectful in front of Chu Wanning. To list off his requirements one after another to his Shizun's face, then to have Chu Wanning follow his directions to in order to do battle with the scroll spirit, how could he be so shameless as to do that?

So he mumbled a bit, and finally said, guiltily: "I, I have no requirements. Just...as long as she's alive, and a girl, then that's fine. "

Chu Wanning paused in drinking, and gazed at him through the dense steam drifting off the tea: "Is that so."

"Y-yes. As long as she's decent enough, I could live with that. I don't need anything else."

"But why is it that I heard," Chu Wanning indifferently raised his eyes, "that you had quite a few requirements?"

Xue Meng hurriedly waved off the question: "No, no, no, it was nothing like that! They, they didn't understand what I was getting at, I was just talking

nonsense."

"Then I don't need to be a diligent housekeeper?"

Xue Meng immediately replied: "How could I make you clean? I like people who don't know how to do laundry!"

"You don't need me to stand by the door to send you off, and welcome you home kneeling?"

"Hai, it's not like I'm Japanese."[282]

"You don't need someone soft and deferential, who would never strike back if hit or argue back if scolded?"

"No! I like someone with a strong temper."

"... You don't need me to be able to cook?"

"You must absolutely live a pampered life!"[283] Xue Meng said, "If you were to reach for a ladle, I'd fight you for it!"

Chu Wanning raised his eyebrows minutely: "I seem to recall you don't like cooking."

"It, it's a new hobby," Xue Meng explained haltingly. "I just recently started to like this kind of thing."

Chu Wanning paused for a moment, and finally asked: "...Then, you also don't need someone who's received the sect elders' approval?"

"No, I can decide on my own who I like!"

It took nearly an hour for this detailed inquisition to be over, until the conversation finally ended without a hitch. Xue Meng left uneasily. When Mo Ran came in, he asked with keen interest, "Wanning Wanning, how was the questioning? Did he ask for a lot?"

Chu Wanning shook his head and said: "It wasn't anything bad; other people misunderstood. Over the past two years, Xue Meng has really matured quite a bit. I'm relieved."

Mo Ran: "..."

As a former bad disciple who used to deceive his teacher and spew lies to avoid his Shizun's punishment, Mo Ran instinctively thought - why does this feel so off? He thought something fishy was going on; maybe it wasn't that Xue Meng had learned some sense, but rather that the honest Chu Wanning had been swindled...

Nighttime.

A Taobao Manor disciple came to report that the scroll spirit appeared in a brothel towards the south of the city. Turning the establishment upside down, it demanded to see their greatest beauty. But of the women that the scroll spirit had seen previously, all experienced major personality changes. How could the madam allow her greatest beauty to see it?

Fortunately, cultivators from Taobao Manor arrived in time, and had asked her to send some of her people to stall the scroll spirit, after which they'd hurried back to ask Chu-zongshi to come.

"We've already sneaked the great beauty from her room. Chu-zongshi, we'll have to trouble you next. Make sure it consumes that cup of tea, so it becomes drugged senseless!"

Chu Wanning thought: this scroll spirit had been transformed by Xue Meng's preferences. Although the character of the spirit is malleable, Xue Meng was nevertheless an obedient and sensible child. So there shouldn't be any difficulties.

In reality, Chu Wanning was gravely mistaken.

Of his three disciples, Mo Ran used to be duplicitous.[284] In fear that he wouldn't be able to stop himself from entering his Shizun's bed again, he pretended not to like him.

Shi Mei always held dark thoughts in his heart. In fear that he would expose his plans and reveal his true nature, he also pretended not to like him.

In actuality, both of them were people who truly didn't care for little things like whether or not Chu Wanning could cook or do laundry.

But Xue Meng was different from the other two. Xue Meng did pretend to like him.

Of course, Xue Meng did sincerely like his own Shizun, but of the three disciples, Xue Meng was the one who truly couldn't tolerate many of Chu Wanning's habits. However, in order to make him feel better about himself, Xue Meng would force himself to lie against his own conscience that, "Shizun is wonderful!" "Shizun did a wonderful job washing his clothes!" "Shizun's green vegetables and tofu are delicious!".

But the scroll spirit was different. it was equivalent to a Xue Meng who has removed his personal feelings for Chu Wanning.

So that night, after Chu Wanning saw the scroll spirit, the conversation between them went like this——

The scroll spirit: "Are you the greatest beauty here?"

Chu Wanning: "Yes."

"Tch, you're not even as good looking as me."

Chu Wanning: "..."

So this was how Xue Meng really felt.

... well, never mind, it's true that his looks weren't up to par. But no matter. His character could be mended. He has rehearsed everything with Xue Meng before; there shouldn't be any mistakes.

So he asked softly: "Would you like to listen to some music?"

"Nah, I hate listening to music, especially that weird obscene stuff from Kunlun Taxue Palace. Gives me a headache." The scroll spirit spat out a piece of candied fruit from its mouth. Before, it had been beaten into submission by Jiang Xi. And even though when it escaped it yelled out " I, Jiang Xi, will return!", tonight it was still a bit nervous, and couldn't easily take Jiang Yechen's form.

The face it used tonight was Xue Meng's.

So Chu Wanning saw his most well-behaved apprentice swinging his leg and eating candied fruit in front of him with no manners whatsoever, and arrogantly say: "Hey, let's talk about life."

"Alright."

"Do you usually cook?"

"I'm only good at making wontons."

".....Are you kidding me? How useless."

Chu Wanning couldn't help staring.

... Did he hear wrong?

Xue Meng thinks he's useless???

There must be something wrong, maybe he didn't express what he meant properly.

So Chu Wanning explained, "It's not that I don't know how to cook anything else, but I can't do it very well - Didn't I hear that you yourself enjoy cooking? That if anyone were to reach for your ladle, you'd fight them for it?"

"Who said that? Nonsense!" The scroll spirit said: "A gentleman stays away from the kitchen.[285] A manly figure like myself absolutely doesn't cook!"

"...So this isn't a new hobby of yours?"

"Of course not!"

Chu Wanning: "....."

... OK, he understands now.

It turns out that Xue Meng was a total liar!

Chu Wanning kept silent for a moment. His eyebrows twitched slightly, and a sliver of cold light slowly grew in his eyes. This was fine. He really did

want to know: how much of his true feelings did Xue Meng conceal from him?

In this way, their continued conversation became more and more tangled, and the smell of gunpowder in the air grew stronger and stronger.[286]

Scroll spirit: "Can you do laundry?"

"I can soak clothes in water and let them dry in the sun."

"Wow! A dog is cleaner than you!"

"....."

Will you stand by the door to send me off, and welcome me home kneeling?"

"You're not even from Japan."

"Wow! A dog is more virtuous than you!"

"....."

"Can you be soft and deferential, and never strike back if hit or argue back if scolded?"

"I don't think you can beat me in a fight."

"Wow! A dog is gentler than you!"

"....."

"Can you work to please my parents and Shizun?

"I'm talking about feelings with you, not with your Shizun."

Wow! A dog has better manners than you!

"....."

"Would you mind if I practiced martial arts all twelve shichen and didn't have time to talk with you?"

With each additional comparison to a dog, Chu Wanning's complexion grew paler and paler, and his expression grew ever more indignant.

Xue Ziming.....Xue Ziming!! He had thought that this disciple would never deceive him. A straightforward child; if he liked something he liked it, if he didn't like something then he didn't. He would have never thought that Xue Meng's brain would actually be like this!!!

He clenched his teeth, and said fiercely: "There are only twelve shichen in a day. Are you saying you never have to go to bed and sleep?"

Unexpectedly, this "Xue Meng" was even fiercer: "Going to bed! All you think about is going to bed! Can you not be so depressing! You have to be more energetic, am I right? Sunnier! A woman's place is to look after her husband and her children; if you're bored, don't go all 'Oh I have to be bedded, I have to get pregnant, oh, I need to bear a son and raise my household standing," blahblahblah! Less romance novels, more cookbooks! Be a pure-hearted upstanding wife!"

“……”

There were so many things utterly wrong with this tirade that Chu Wanning was momentarily left speechless. He couldn't even get a word out; he was so furious he wanted to spit blood. Pushing down his anger, he turned his

coldly raging phoenix eyes to stare down the scroll spirit and his Xue Meng face.

After a while, his thin lips trembled, and in anger, he said: "You..."

"What about me? I'm telling the truth. To be my wife, you must be honest and pure. You can't always have your mind full of such lewd things. Sigh. I don't think someone like you will do. Look at you. You're a bad-tempered, friendless, dissatisfied layabout." The scroll spirit said this with a disdainful face, and stood up. "Forget it. I heard that this house's greatest beauty was capable and virtuous, but I guess it was all a lie."

"....." Chu Wanning was about to faint from anger. He had been a Shizun to three disciples. Mo Ran had made him furious, Shi Mei had made him furious, he thought Xue Meng would be the the easiest among them, the one who would never trouble him.

He didn't expect the scroll spirit to vomit out all of Xue Meng's sincere words - so all three of them were the same, all worthless!

"I'm done talking to you." The scroll spirit Xue Meng turned around and left. "Seeya!"

At this time, the real Xue Meng, Mo Ran, and an entire party of other people were hiding in an adjacent room, listening for any developments. Elder Chen Xuyuan held up an hourglass and said: "Aiyah, it's almost time. Chu-zongshi certainly deserves the reputation of Chu-zongshi. Just a little bit longer for the tea to take effect, and the spirit will be stunned. Hehe -"

Before a third "-he" could leave his mouth, he heard from the next room an earth-shattering electric boom slice through the air, accompanied by the scream of the scroll spirit—

"Help! Help!! I'm being repressed!!!"

And then came Chu Wanning's wrathful voice: "I'll show you repression!"

"Waaaaaahhhh!! Someone save me!!!"

Turning pale with fright, they all rushed in. As soon as they pushed open the door, they saw the shining golden light of Tian Wen in Chu Wanning's palm, its willow vine wrapped around the scroll spirit's neck. The spirit's tongue hung out of its mouth; its eyes were rolled back into its head, as if it was just about to kick the bucket. Chen Xuyuan hurriedly jumped up: "Aiyah, Chu-zongshi, please calm down! You absolutely mustn't kill it! As soon as we kill it, everyone's information will be exposed! "

Chu Wanning's black eyebrows furrowed in rage, and he snapped: "So what if it does! What sort of shameful things does it know anyway?"

Xue Meng interrupted: "Shizun....."

Unexpectedly, Chu Wanning was furious towards him as well. Savagely, he said: "Silence, Xue Ziming! When I'm done with this, you're next!"

Xue Meng: "???"

Shi- shi- shizun what happened! Not only did he not call him sect leader, but he even said he would discipline him??

All sorts of emotions suddenly welled up in Xue Meng's heart. He didn't know whether he was happy or panicked - happy since it had been so long since his Shizun had scolded him this way that he actually missed it, panicked that...

For Chu Wanning to say such harsh things to him now, what exactly did that damned scroll spirit say to his Shizun!!!

Seeing that the scroll spirit was just about down to its last breath, wailing all the way, Mo Ran hurriedly grabbed his shoulder: "Wanning, let it go first."

Chu Wanning's eyes were as sharp as bayonets: "I'll kill it first and then let it go!"

Mo Ran didn't know whether to laugh or cry: "Then it'll be too late. Everyone's secrets will be leaked."

Chu Wanning said angrily: "I have no shameful secrets. Do you?"

Mo Ran laughed, and tried to placate him: "Of course I do. It's just, ah, sometimes I can't reveal them. Not because I've secretly done something wrong, but because there are things I'd rather not let other people know."

Chu Wanning frowned: "Like what?"

"Uh... for example..." Mo Ran lowered his head, closed his eyes, and whispered a few words in Chu Wanning's ear.

Xue Meng saw Mo Ran's long eyelashes become still. His black eyes betrayed a sense of helplessness, and yet still brimmed with deep emotion as his lips moved, only making the slightest motion. When he finished, Chu Wanning unexpectedly called back Tian Wen.

Angrily, Chu Wanning said: "Why you—"

Seemingly with some shyness, Mo Ran lowered his eyes and briefly smiled. Though undoubtedly handsome and mature, the dimple on his cheek gave

him the air of a pure and inexperienced youth.

Chu Wanning seemed to want to hit him, but Mo Ran took his hand at once and said with a smile, "I'm sorry, I did ask the scroll. I'm being honest."

"....."

Then he lowered his head, turned his face to the side, and clasped Chu Wanning's fingers, his warm breath whispering over Chu Wanning's ear. In a low voice that only the two of them could hear, he said: "But you know, I have no intention of letting anyone know what positions I like Wanning to take when we go to bed."

Although these were words of endearment that thrummed with deep, heavy, sensual longing, Mo Ran unfortunately didn't know what the scroll spirit had just said to Chu Wanning. When Chu Wanning heard his last words, it was like someone stepped on his tail. He immediately slapped Mo Ran's head and raged: "Go where?! What bed! Shouldn't I be less depressing? I have to be more energetic, right? Sunnier! Think more about looking after my husband and children, and stop thinking about this kind of nonsense! Stop reading romance novels, and start reading cookbooks! Be a pure-hearted upstanding wife!"

Everyone from Taobao Manor: "....."

Xue Meng: "......."

Mo Ran: "???"

Only the scroll spirit took advantage of the chaos, and skipped upward like a carp. It hollered: "Yes yes yes! Well said! You have learned my essence!

Congratulations!" Then it quickly flew out a window using qinggong, and as it flew, it cried out repulsively: "I, Xue Ziming, will return! Muahahahaha!!!"

... At this moment, Xue Meng suddenly understood Jiang Xi's murderous rage yesterday.

This spirit is truly the worst.

Truly.

Ch. 342 Xue Meng’s Blind Date: Xue Meng Finally Seizes Total Victory

Since Chu WanNing was also defeated in the confrontation with the scroll demon, it was not a surprise that he was temporarily cursed to become a snow-white cat.

When the silver light dissipated, the white cat sat majestically on the floor, with those beautiful eyes slightly raised looking at the crowd fiercely.

Although it was already known that it would be five days for the curse to loose power, the audience remained in a panicky silence.

The Ma Fangzhi bee.

The Jiang YeChen fairy bird.

The Chu Wanning white cat.

What is happening here? Are the seven masters going to summon Shennong?

Chu Wanning's eyes were more scary than Jiang YeChen's, probably because he is a cat and Jiang YeChen turned into a bird. Birds doesn't have too many expressions, but cats can look very angry. Mo Ran, anxiously and lovingly, wanted to bow down to carry him, but Wanning clenched his ears, bristled his whitish hair, and showed his sharp tiger teeth and let out an angry pur:

"Meow!!!"

A female disciple could not avoid exclaiming in a low voice: "How cuteee!"

"I even believe that Mo-zongshi made him lose it deliberately so that he would become a cat ..."

Chu Wanning heard those words, and suddenly opened his eyes, to look fiercely at Mo Ran and shouted a threatening grunt.

Mo Ran sobbed, "I didn't do it! I didn't do it!"

Chu Wanning narrowed his eyes and hesitated to raise the tip of his paws, as if he wanted to summon Tian Wen for questioning, but as he screamed, the round snow-white paws only spurred a soft golden light, accompanied by the small, fresh pink nose of a white cat; on the contrary, it seemed that this big white cat was lifting his paw to play a dirty trick on him.

Mo Ran only felt that he had been hit in the chest, and he could not avoid kneeling on the floor to touch the rage-boiling snowball, his eyes were shining: "shizun ..."

"Miaouuuuu!!!"

What he got was a fierce scratch from the white cat's paw, Mo Ran could only take a breath, Chu Wanning jumped angrily over Mo Ran's scratched hand: he and Jiang YeChen were as embarrassed as expected.

Jiang YeChen flew away immediately after becoming a fairy bird, and Chu Wanning planned to leave quickly after becoming a white cat.

Xue Meng was overwhelmed and worried that Chu Wanning would get lost because of the hasty way he escaped. He was afraid that he would not be able to run back to NanPing Mountain in that state, so he hastily stopped him.

"Shizun, calm down first, I will find someone to accompany you, so... ah!"

The white cat came down the mountain like a tiger and hit Xue Meng's outstretched hand. Seeing that Xue Meng wanted to hug him, he bit the other's finger without hesitation.

Xue Meng: "sizun!"

Mo Ran: "sizun!"

Well, these two disciples have been hurt by a cat, it's really fair.

After Chu Wanning attacked, he ran away without looking back, his white tail went away and disappeared around the corner of Chu's restaurant, hiding his merit and fame. Xue Meng put away his bitten hand and was taking a cold breath to say something, but Mo Ran rushed in and said first...

"Don't go home by yourself ! What if someone kidnaps you and boils you in a pot?"

Xue Meng also wanted to chase him, but Mei Hanxue stopped him. Xue Meng angrily glared at him and said: "What are you doing?!"

"Can't you see he's mad at you," said Mei Hanxue, "Let Mo-zongshi take care of him by himself. After five days, he will recover. It won't be too late for you to go to NanPing Mountain to look for his forgiveness."

"Nonsense! I'm the dearest of shizun, how could he be angry with me?"

Mei Hanxue looked at Xue Meng puzzlingly, "Are you sure the matchmaking requirements you told him were true, and you didn't lie to him to praise him?"

"..." Xue Meng suddenly felt guilty.

Mei Hanxue smiled and walked, leaning on his brother: "You tricked him, and you weren't honest, were you?"

Xue Meng wanted to argue, but he knew he was wrong, and mumbled for a moment, uncomfortably saying, "I, I didn't mean it, i really think my shizun is the best..."

"I understand but i express my deepest condolences". Mei Hanxue patted him on the shoulder with a smile, "But now Master Chu and Lord Jiang are already cursed, no one can help anymore."

Xue Meng nervously raised his head with a premonition of impending catastrophe.

He looked at Mei Hanxue's face, and Mei Hanxue smiled significantly, "therefore, only you, Xue Ziming, are left."

Xue Meng was surprised: "Why me? Why not you!"

Mei Hanxue touched heis nose and smiled: "Because the scroll demon's aesthetic preferences change according to you, and you have seen my appearance in a female costume. You don't seem to like it much either".

Xue Meng: "But I ..."

"Or do you really like my appearance, but are ashamed to confess, because you are already confused?"

Xue Meng's face turned green: "You're talking nonsense!"

Mei Hanxue laughed, "If you admit that you like my outfit, then I will cleanse the scroll demon. If you don't like it, then you have to face it alone, so if you choose to praise me or follow Catch monsters yourself? "

This was an extremely difficult decision for Xue Meng, and seducing the scroll demon is something that must be done. Anyway, Jiang Xi, Ma FangZhi and Chu Wanning have tried everything, and it is not shameful for him to be the fourth.

But in case he also fails and becomes a bird exactly like Jiang Xi, is it likely that Mei Hanxue will catch him and pluck his feathers out?

Mei Hanxue wanted to see the entanglement in his heart and smiled empathetically: "Is it better to praise me? Just say that Mei Lang[287] is beautiful and that I can help you".

Xue Meng contradicted herself for a moment, looked at Mei Hanxue's smiling face, clenched his teeth, clenched his fists, and said: "Very beautiful? I think your kidney deficiency is almost the same! Mei Lang's kidney deficiency!"

"..." Mei Hanxue sighed, "This is a slander, a really obvious slander."

After refusing his invitation to praise him, Xue Meng said fiercely: "I will defeat the devil and not let him go. What is there to fear? I don't think I can't understand myself! Let's see!"

After that, he pushed aside the Mei brothers in front of him, trampled the crisp wooden stairs, and went down the stairs in anger.

Xue Meng was unwilling to be a man when confronted by the scroll demon, so his choice was the same as his shizun, he decided to use a litttle magic gender change bag. He took a deep breath, stood in front of the bronze mirror, clenched his fist and slowly opened his eyes.

The mirror seems to be the female version of himself that he saw in the wine gourd.

Xue Meng felt uncomfortable and turned around twice. To be honest, he thinks that the person in the mirror is beautiful, very beautiful, but the gestures shows stupidity, of course, he calls it the dominant spirit himself. Thus, when he sees the scroll demon, I am afraid he can only be silent and not speak, like the clay sculpture carved in wood.

Otherwise, if he talks and moves, according to his own aesthetics, he would never like such a girl like him.

Turning his head and looking at his ears, she suddenly saw another person's reflection appeared in the mirror.

Xue Meng immediately turned around: "What are you doing here?"

Mei Hanxue crossed his arms, leaned against the door and said casually, "I came here to give you advice. After all, if you fail too, it will be extremely difficult to defeat this demon."

He was being dead serious, although Xue Meng was not happy, but there was no way to drive him away. I had to frown at the end: "Can you do it?"

Mei Hanxue raised her eyebrows slightly: "Huh?"

Xue Meng asked, "You haven't even touched a girl's hand?

"... You are not qualified to talk about me."

Xue Meng said angrily, "I don't want to see you!"

Mei Hanxue said casually, "It's troublesome for me."

After a pause, Mei Hanxue said casually, "To this day, I have turned down seventy-three sisters for Hanxue."

"..." Xue Meng was suddenly speechless.

How many?

Mei Hanxue: "have you tried something similar?"

Xue Meng squeezed his mouth dry and suddenly felt that Mei Hanxue was very miserable for some reason.

This man is very young, but he is forced to help his twin brother clean up the mess that is not his and is not psychologically distorted.

Seeing that he didn't say anything, Mei Hanxue entered the bedroom and closed the door on the way.

"Come."

Xue Meng said alertly, "What are you doing?"

When he didn't come, Mei Hanxue walked on his long legs, stopped at a distance that was too close and could give people a great feeling of oppression, lowering those Haitang eyes, and his pale golden eyelashes were still without moving.

--

"I will teach you to answer, so that men will not reject you." His eyes were narrow and provocative, and there was a trace of natural sarcasm in his natural indifference.

Xue Meng especially hated his expression and immediately raised his hand to hit him, but Mei Hanxue grabbed his wrist precisely without even looking at him.

Xue Meng opened his eyes wide and said angrily, "What are you doing? Let go of me!"

"It's absolutely impossible like this," said Mei Hanxue, with one strong hand, her strength was extremely strong and her body skills shone quickly, and Xue Meng was taken by surprise and fell to the ground by one of her shoulders.

"I ... fuck!"

"Such crude words are absolutely impossible." Mei Hanxue approached, Xue Meng, who fell to the ground with a face full of surprise and blushed, thought "Get up, if you don't want to be a bird tomorrow night and be plucked by Hanxue. -- "

He paused for a moment, pulled his neck tightly tied, in a posture that was ready to move, and said lightly:

"You were tuned in and taught by me one night."

Xue Meng looked up at him in a humiliating way, his eyes were red.

Mei Hanxue did not care, as if he could not see Xue Meng's anger, he stretched out his thin fingers and extended them to him, "Please go Xue Ziming."

The next day.

Chen Xuyuan in the Taobao village, once again made an agreement with the scroll demon to set where they would meet. The scroll demon was not very intelligent, and went to Hongmen for a banquet, which he happily accepted.

Xue Meng was very dismissive of this: "His wisdom is definitely not inherited from me."

Seeing that she was going to the Hualou in the Eastern City for a date, Mei Hanxue smiled and leaned forward to say a few words to Xue Meng, but Xue Meng coldly shouted, "Don't come here! I feel angry when I see your face!"

After all, everyone in Taobao Mountain Village left in a hurry. Mai Hanxue stood there in a daze and wondered, how did he provoke him?

Xue Meng was still very upset when he sat alone in the room that had been arranged long ago, waiting for the scroll demon. He was demanding with Mei Hanxue all last night, saying that he could not respond like that for a while, and then said that his behavior was wrong.

After teaching him for so long, in the end Mei Hanxue still said that he did not have the roots of wisdom and that he could not master the so-called conversational skill of "not being rejected by men".

When it was almost dawn, Mei Hanxue simply said, "Forget it, don't study it, it's really impossible. You can praise the demon in the scrolls when you see it. You can also praise a cup of tea."

Xue Meng had no temper, he lay in bed with a strange expression on his face, dying: "Why didn't you say that before, ¿just to torture me all night?

Mei Hanxue looked at the head of Xue Meng, who was lying weakly in bed, didn't speak and looked away.

As he remembered this, and was mentally cursing Mei Hanxue, the door opened with a crack.

Xue Meng's body suddenly tensed.

He knew the scroll demon was coming.

Indeed, from the shadow of the carved lacquer door, a familiar and strange figure appeared. With the lights flashing, Xue Meng saw his "self" violently entering the compartment.

She then greeted herself in a very grateful posture: "My little lady is lucky to have a meeting with me, I, Xue Meng, Xue Ziming am kind!

"..."

Xue Meng felt that he had not violently killed anyone, it was a miracle.

Then came the little talk with the scroll demon. Before the beginning of this little talk, Xue Meng thought that he was completely prepared and that the demon would be very satisfied with the answers.

However, shortly after the conversation began, he realized that he was too wrong.

scroll demon: "Do you usually do your laundry?"

Xue Meng answered his question: "Yes."

"But I don't think your hands look like they've washed clothes."

Xue Meng: "..."

Scroll demon: "Do you practice martial arts?"

"Yes ... a little bit, girls are not good at fighting, but they can't be helpless."

"I'm talking about dancing, dancing, what do you think of a girl? Nothing demure or gentle at all!"

Xue Meng: "..."

"Could you stand up as I say goodbye, and kneel down to welcome me?"

Xue Meng looked at him in the face across the table, and did not feel bad for having talked like that. But the position was reversed, comparing his heart with his heart, and he suddenly felt it was quite inadequate: standing to send him off, kneeling to welcome him? Why doesn't he go to heaven? Do you really think you are Fuxi descendant of the world or are you the apparition of Shennong?

But to make him happy, Xue Meng still bit his tongue and said, "There's nothing wrong with that."

"You're not willing to answer truthfully, you lack enthusiasm".

"..."

"You have to say, I would certainly be willing!"

After answering this question, the scroll demon stood up before the hourglass was over and said to Xue Meng, "I'm sorry, I don't think I want to talk to you anymore."

Xue Meng was surprised!

He responded to all the tricks Mei Hanxue had taught him yesterday according to his own spouse's requirements, so why couldn't she talk about it more? In haste, he became wise, remembering MeiHanxue's last words, "If it doesn't work, you'll flatter him," so hehurriedly shouted: "¡¡stooop!!!"

The scroll demon was stunned and turned: "What are you doing?"

Xue Meng hurried to adjust his tone, enduring the discomfort and forced a smile: "So that ... Master Xue, you are so handsome, so beautiful, and you are rich, so rich, but you cannot be alone. You can't be alone. "

It is too rigid.

Flattery really takes talent.

Indeed, the corner of the parchment demon's mouth moved, and a moment later, he said, "No. I admit that you are very beautiful, but it's not enough to make me fall in love at first sight. And I can see that you want to hold on to me, praising me blindly, miss, you have to be sincere. I don't want a girl like you to come near me for the sake of my wealth."

Xue Meng: "???"

"I hope you can recognize as soon as possible that only true love is trustworthy, not as a superficial woman who is greedy, loves money and admires vanity. Goodbye!"

Xue Meng choked on his chest! What is this?

How can you talk to me like that! Too presumptuous!

Indeed, learning from the night of Chu and the blood of Jiang YeChen, Xue Meng was also an angry lord. He was upset, just like his shizun and his father, he suddenly lost his mind, screamed and broke the little ghost bag he had on his waist, and suddenly pulled out Long Chen and ran towards the scroll demon.

The scroll demon was surprised: "Ahhh! you want to kill me again!"

"You're the one who killed! Where did so many requests come from!"

The scroll demon kept shouting: "Harpy! How can you shout at me for what I want! You, you, you ....!!

He brandished the sword, the lights shook.

The scroll monster escaped dangerously, turned his head and was waiting to scold again, and suddenly he saw Xue Meng's face recover its original appearance after removing the little magic bag, and suddenly he was speechless.

Xue Meng noticed that his eyes were bad, and he was instinctively alert, so that he would not be fooled. He drew back his sword, protected his chest, arched his eyebrows and said, "What are you doing!"

The scroll demon covered his mouth, still with an expression of astonishment: "You, you, are you really a man?

"you fool!"

Xue Meng was waiting to wield his sword again, but he heard it cry out in amazement, "You are a man of agility, handsome and simple!"

Xue Meng: "???"

The scroll demon's eyes lit up and he shouted to the sky: "Ah! Finally! Finally I have found my true love!"

Xue Meng: "....."

"That's why Xue Ziming is the most narcissistic. In fact, as long as Xue Meng threatens the scroll demon with a sword, he will feel that the world has its own beauty, and there is no need to spend much time disguising himself as a woman ..."

After the affair was over, the elder Chen Xuyuan stood in the flower room of Taobao Mountain Village, watching as Xue Meng spoke angrily to the sect leader Ma, who had already lifted the curse and recovered his human body.

Because the sect leader Ma was relieved of his urgent complaints, Xue Meng scolded and warned the sect leader Ma, who smiled and did not care that the catastrophe was originally wielded by Xue Meng.

"From now on, you will never sell this broken scroll that is a disaster for the people," Xue Meng ended with such an angry comment.

Sect leader Ma smiled and said, "Yes, yes! I don't want to be a bee anymore. To be honest, I saw the sect leader Jiang become a bird, the great master Chu become a cat, and I was so afraid that they would eat me. Let's stop playing, let's stop playing".

Xue Meng rolled his eyes and then reluctantly agreed not to be held accountable.

As for the scroll demon that surrendered, sect leader Ma cursed it again, sealed it into a small wooden doll the size of a palm and gave it to Xue

Meng as a gift.

Xue Meng originally did not want to accept this little doll, because the little doll opened his mouth and said, " Sect Leader Xue is so handsome and wild" Looking back, this might be right in the middle of Xue Meng's compliments, but Xue Meng was still worried about the disaster of the scroll demon. Hearing his praise like this, he would not feel happy for a while.

He frowned and said, "Okay, okay, okay, where did you hear this? Don't memorize it, don't say it, this is not true at all".

The dummy was anxious when he heard it, and then he quickly said, "Xue Lang is very beautiful! Xue Lang is very beautiful!"

"Mrs. Wang is the most beautiful lady!"

"Shizun Chu is the most amazing!"

"..."

"Don't leave me alone, the sect leader Xue is good-hearted ..."

Come on, the sect leader Xue is easy to change and his nature is hard to change. No matter how these words are heard in Xue Meng's ears, they are still useful. Xue Meng still reluctantly took the little puppet, put it in the box and returned it to the top of Sisheng Peak.

Before leaving, Mei Hanxue said with a smile, "Sect leader Xue, I suddenly remembered to ask ... Are you satisfied with my previous role of gender change? If you are satisfied, I suggest you give a good commentary."

"Commenting on you a ghost," Xue Meng interrupted him angrily, looking at Mei Hanxue, "I have written the accounts of both of you! I will let the Mingyue Tower take care of you when I get back!"

Mei Hanxue giggled and said quietly, "I'm so scared."

Mei HanXue said indifferently, "The sect leader has been in seclusion recently, and I will be the sect leader of the Taxue Palace for the time being. I invite sect leader Xue to come to the Kunlun Mountain to file a complaint at any time and welcome the big fight."

Xue Meng was surprised and shouted: "Mei HanXue... You, you are shameless! There is someone who can speak of justice in the Taxue Palace of Kunlun!"

The morning sun hangs like gold threads on a loom, shining on the white walls and tiles, and on the barrier of Taobao Mountain Village with the totem of the black night cat, the young people who scream and the poor sect leader Ma who raises his hands and cannot persuade him to raise his face.

Life turns in this comfortable world passed like this.

A month later, the sect leader Ma announced who would end up with the big gift box for the scrolls of worry event; due to the lasciviousness of Xue Meng, the sect leader Ma sadly gave away gift boxes to the ten best customers. Wang Xiaoxue "received those gold and silver jewels, plans and magic instruments ... all were brought back to Sisheng Peak.

As for the five hundred limited edition erotic books, Ta Xianjun from NanPing Mountain won them naturally.

“Shizun said that if you give her these books, he will forgive you for lying to him. Ta Xianjun blatantly told Xue Meng."

When Xue Meng, who was waiting for official faction business at Sisheng Peak, saw a paper crane with sound transmission, he tore the paper crane with an annoying blow.

"You want to be shameless! How could my shizun want to see this kind of thing! Besides, my shizun forgave me a long time ago! He wrote me a letter over ten days ago, Mo Ran your cheeky dog, and creating a riot in the middle! "

He was not yet ready to succumb to such an uproar, and said to the little disciple standing under the hall, "You! Take the people to NanPing Mountain and find the five hundred erotic books! Burn them all!"

"This..." The little disciple was horrified, and was struggling.

Sect leader, that's stepping on the fairy! To take the yellow book of Taxianjun is equivalent to taking a tooth out of the mouth of a tiger!

Xue Meng glared at him: "What are you waiting for? Don't let Mo Ran be so shameless as to deceive the elder Yuheng! Go away!"

"..."

The little disciple had to go there with bitterness, and silently hoped to meet the Mo-zongshi, and there might be a way to survive ...

He opened the door and the dazzling sunlight reflected on the newly repaired jade plate in the Danxin Hall. The four characters "Trust from the Heart" above were recently inscribed by Xue Meng. The ink is sharp and bright. The light is not as convincing, but the glass is clear and smooth.

The farewell scars of the past are slowly healing, and the war had ended a year or two years ago ... The old people who have stayed in this world have finally learned to laugh again, to fight, to run, to adapt and to silence their thoughts. Youth gradually replaced old age, vitality gradually replaced sadness, light replaced darkness, and stability replaced hesitation.

You see, no matter how long the darkness is, even the polar night will have a sunny day.

Emotion and laughter will flourish.

Just like today.

Chapter 343 – 350 are MTL and are still unedited

Ch. 343 Fighting for Affection 1

This is Chu Wanning's second birthday after his retirement.

The one from last year was unfortunate and absurd.

Because last year, it was Taxian-Jun’s turn in control of Mo Ran’s body. Although he could not fully remember what he had done under Mo-zongshi's condition, he could still occasionally remember part of it.

The immortals, who are honest men that think "gold represents my heart", will never do anything right. There are no such things as wind, flowers, snow and moon for him. He simply believes that there are only two ways to express love:

First, bed him repeatedly.

Second, give him money.

There was nothing wrong with him. Sleeping repeatedly with him meant that only Chu Wanning could ignite his desire in this world, and spending money on him meant that Chu Wanning could move his purse. Although the soil is a bit earthy, the emperor can’t think of any other elegant ideas, but he can make do.

However, the problem lies in the timing when Taxian jun gave him gold. He held him again and again his whole birthday night. The next day, he came back with nine baskets of gold bars and put them in front of his house like a rainbow. He waved his hand bravely and beautifully: "Chu Wanning! This is this venerable one’s gift for you! Are you satisfied with everything you see? If you are satisfied with it—”

What's he was about to say was unknown. TaXian Jun had been pulled down on the ground by Tianwen together with his gold bars.

Poor TaXian Jun could not understand why he would be beaten like this after they finished sleeping together. He really had no other intention. He just wanted to prove his good will. What's wrong with giving money after sleeping? Should it be given before bed? Should it be given while sleeping?

Should we charge once, fifty little things and eighty big things?

Eighty-eight eighty...

He sat on the stump in silence, wondering what he would do if he was another man. After thinking about it for a long time, he thought he shouldn’t gift someone gold directly in that case, but change it into soft and comfortable clothes, delicate and delicious dishes, new and interesting instruments... Perhaps then, on the day of Chu Wanning's birthday, he will be delighted gain Chu Wanning’s praise.

It's too much.

TaXian Jun thought indignantly and beat his legs secretly in anger: how cunning! How despicable! What a dog-legs!

Chu Wanning also felt that Mo-zongshi was honest.

—Bah!!

Only he knows what he really is!

Mo-zongshi's seemingly gentleman-like behavior, full of flowers and sweetness, really makes him shameless!! What's wrong with gifting gold? Is it not good to gift gold? How real! How practical!

How can these people not see his heart of gold!

He turned his back to the hut where he lived with Chu Wanning and held his cheeks and legs on the stump of the tree. After a long day of silent anger, Chu Wanning planned to come out and talk to him. There were signs of reconciliation. However, right at that moment, the Sect Leader of Ma in Sect Mt. Taobao unexpectedly came crying and climbing up the mountain, crossed the border, embraced Chu Wanning's thighs and began to complain:

"Chu-zongshi, it’s not fair! Mo-xianjun inexplicably went down the hill and emptied the money of my two warehouses at Taobao. He said that a smile of praise is worth a thousand gold.”

Chu Wanning's face was green again just as he was about to relax.

That evening, Chu Wanning did not allow him to enter the house until Mo Ran changed his personality. Mo Ran later wrote 3,000 times: "I will never steal chickens from the hills to get credit for crimes." It was a piece of work.

With last year's painful lesson, this year's Mo Ran was no longer willing to be careless.

Fortunately, on the day of shizun's birthday this year, the more normal consciousness will be in control of the body, so he should not make any mistakes.

Although, from his memory of TaXian Jun, it seemed he still wanted to prepare something for his shizun this year as well. But Taxian-Jun’s personality could not appear on that day, so it was unlikely he will cause

trouble. Maybe it's just because he was cold-shouldered last year, fearing that Mo-zongshi’s gift will surpass him this year, he wanted to win favor.

Fight for it.

Mo-zongshi was thinking that everyone's most difficult opponent was themselves, and he had nothing to fear.

And to tell the truth, he really wanted to see what kind of gift he prepared this year, the best way to win the approval and joy of shizun.

"Birthday gift?"

In his bedroom at the SiSheng Peak, Xue Meng stared unexpectedly at his quiet visit, Mo Ran. The latter is sitting in front of the yellow pear table, fiddling with the tea cups in front of him, and laughing, "Yes, what do you think would be the most satisfying gift?"

"Who are you going to give it to?"

"A person close to me."

Because Chu Wanning was cold, he had never celebrated his birthday at the SiSheng Peak before, and he did not talk to his disciples about his birthday. Later, Chu Wanning and Mo Ran went to live in hiding, and Mo Ran relentlessly pestered him several times. Only then did he finally relax and tell him, but he also asked Mo Ran not to tell others about it, especially Xue Meng.

So Xue Meng naturally did not realize it was about him.

But after thinking about it, he couldn't think of another person who got such painstaking consideration from Mo Ran. Xue Meng thought about it,

and suddenly realized that his birthday was approaching— ah, maybe not.
——

Xue Meng was startled, and then a warm current came to his heart. His eyes, which were staring at Mo Ran, suddenly warmed up.

Mo Ran: "???"

Xue Meng coughed softly. Although he was happy in his heart, he maintained the coldness and reserve of his own head. He calmly said, "When it comes to birthdays, it's good to put your heart into it. The ritual is not the most important thing."

Mo Ran said, "I still have to give him something. The relationship between him and me is extraordinary. I don’t just want to give him something, it also has to be the best.”

"What a shame. I don't lack anything either.”

Mo Ran startled slightly: "What?"

"Cough! I mean, they probably don't necessarily lack anything."

"It's one thing whether he's lacking or not. It's another thing whether I give him something or not."

Xue Meng's heart became even more touched, Mo Ran’s secret is now really on the road. He was unexpectedly such a considerate brother. It was really touching. He put a lot of calm effort on his face, pretended to be indifferent, and murmured: "... So, then... Let me think about it.”

"Good."

"How about the new set of golden and silver silk green feather armor in Jiangdong Tang?"

"..."

That suit of clothes glitters like a peacock's screen, but the effect of Chu Wanning's upper body was hard to imagine. Mo Ran was silent for a moment, deliberated and said to Xue Meng euphemistically, "That would suit you.” Not him.

Xue Meng said, "That's settled. That's it."

"...Think again." Mo Ran could not bear to attack his taste, so he tried to be subtle about it. "Although Jiangdong Tang's clothes are good, they are not good enough. Help me think of a more precious one?"

Xue Meng Ran opened his eyes and snapped, "How embarrassing is this?"

"?"

"Cough... I mean, it's almost all right. You don't have to spend so much.”

"A birthday only happens once a year, there’s no need to save money."

Xue Meng was so excited that he lowered his head and endured for a while. He raised his hand and patted Mo Ran shoulder vigorously. "Don't say anything, brother. I'll remember what you said today."

Mo Ran: "...???"

When Mo Ran left the SiSheng Peak in his cloak, he still didn't get any inspiration from Xue Meng.

On the contrary, he also felt that Xue Meng was very puzzling today, and acted even a little strange, often showing joy, excitement, emotion and so on. Despite the great restraint, it did little to hide it.

Was it so stressful to be a sect leader?

He would write a letter to remind elder TanLang to give Xue Meng a check in time to stop the illness. Xue Meng is really not easy, alas.

In the next few days, Mo Ran visited famous buildings and shops in Xiuzhen Secretly and checked all kinds of exotic treasures. Not that the treasures were bad, but he thought they were too vulgar, too gorgeous, or too ordinary to rival his loving heart. He wanted to make all his feelings tangible and dedicate them to Chu Wanning's eyes, but he didn't know what could be loaded with his affection. There was a sea in his heart, but only a spoon in the red dust.

How can there be nothing in the world that can be good enough to give it to Chu Wanning?

He was a little anxious.

He even managed to get a copy of the mending list from the black market. The little dwarf boasted that it contained a detailed list of gifts given to them by the distinguished figures in the mending circle over the past 30 years.

Whether the bookseller was boasting or not, Mo Ran read the list. He held the book and studied it for a long time.

"Nangong Si once gave Ye WangXi a handkerchief with a side corner embroidery with `Ru'."

"Rong Yan once gave an arrow bag to Nangong Si, which was made by Mrs. Rong herself."

"..."

Seeing the records of these old people, he could not help sighing and his eyes became slightly dim.

Ye WangXi spent all the past years wandering around the world by herself. After traveling all over the world, she planned to save some money and then reopen a small school palace in Linyi Ru Fengmen.

It is said that many years before Changying founded the school in Nangong, there was a noble lady in Linyi who opened the school and taught the apprentices six virtues, six lines and six arts. Changying Nangong was the last disciple of the school. Later, because of the decline of Xuegong, Changying of Nangong merged with each other. Based on the Tao taught by the teacher, he sprouted his idea of "seven precepts of Ru Feng sect", which created the Ru Feng sect and opened the glory of Linyi Xiaoaoxiu for hundreds of years.

Today, a circle around, Ru Feng sect collapsed, that brilliance is not there anymore, but Ye WangXi at least retained the kindling of Ru Feng gentlemen, in the form of the original learning Palace inherited.

Perhaps thousands of years later, it will be recovered.

Mo Ran shook his head and read on.—

"Nangong Liu once gave Qi Liangji a gift. Phoenix wear seven pieces of peony, silk belly pockets, and embroidered with golden thread at the corners to ward off evil spirits: 'Why are you wearing beautiful clothes?'"

"..."

When he finished reading word by word, Mo Ran was stiffly, and then aroused a strong nausea. He disliked it so he quickly turned over the list of "Ru Feng sect rituals".

"A gift on Gu Yue Ye."

"Female disciple Zhao Tiantian gave a pair of jadeite buckles to Jiang Yecheng."

"Female disciple Zhou Yanyan gave Jiang Yechen Fengyu a folding fan."

"Female disciple Zhang Chunzhen gave Jiang a golden ear stove at night."

There were more than forty pages of this kind.

When Jiang Xi was not in charge at that time, his female disciples gave him records of things, including some very thoughtful brothers and sisters.

Mo Ran can't help but sink into meditation... Jiang Xi didn't make his fortune by beauty, did he?

He turned the pages again.

"All the above 40 pages of gifts were thrown away by Jiang Xi."

That's ok.

... He misunderstood him.

Jiang Xi is really a wonderful person.

After reading for a long time, Mo Ran still couldn’t find any inspiration for the gift. Instead, he found out that Mei Hanxue recently sent Xue Meng a

superb Tianshan snow lotus with brain-tonifying effects.

Snow Lotus is a good thing but Shizun is too smart. Although there is no need to make up for it, it would be very appropriate to adopt it for a pond.

Unfortunately, after Chu Wanning's retirement, he liked to hear dogs barking in Chai Men and return to people on snowy nights. He did not like extravagance. Otherwise, the whole Nanping Mountain would have been uprooted now according to TaXian jun’s ideas. Where would there be two small houses and one yard?

Mo Ran sighed and closed the book.

It happened that the sunset had also sunk, and the soft orange-yellow light was shining through the silk paper of the windows. Today, Shizun temporarily rose up and wrapped up some handwriting. By this time, it had been cooked. From the kitchen came the clashing sound of porcelain and jade: "Mo Ran, come and help me."

"Here I am."

Mo Ran echoes, the deep bamboo forest in Nanping is now flowing with the taste of his favorite food. It is not as strong as hot pot, but it can iron people's inner peace and gentleness every time, just like water stopping.

In the kitchen, a small yellow-and-white dog they adopted last year came out bumping and helped Chu Wanning to urge Mo Ran. He circled around him twice, spitting out his tongue and turning around, all the way to lead Mo Ran.

"Move the table to the yard, wipe it, and hold a small jar of wine."

Chu Wanning stood in front of the stove, the wooden pot cover had been uncovered, the inside was rolling full and round dragon handwriting, thin and crystal handwriting skin wrapped in delicate meat stuffing, waiting to be fished into the bowl, sprinkled with red and bright spices. Chu Wanning in the transpiration of the fog and casually asked: "What books do you read outside, so absorbed reading?"

"Idle books." Mo Ran laughed and rolled up his sleeves to move the wooden table.

As soon as the arm is exerted, the muscles and meridians become prominent and distinct.

Chu Wanning frowned and said, "Read more good books. I heard that a lot of absurd words have come out recently. Don't bring them back to Nanping Mountain. There are many wooden spirits visiting here. Some wooden spirits are still young. It is not helpful to read them and teach them badly later."

Mo Ran laughed and said, "Yes."

Moving the table, he went out with the jubilant cry of the puppy Wangwang.

During the meal, Mo Ran ate and bite the chopsticks.

And the puppy squatted at the table of the two, gripping a meat bone without salt.

Chu Wanning looked at him and at the dog. He thought that the man and the dog were like each other, just a wooden stick and a bone. "What are you thinking about?" he asked.

Mo Rans came back to his mind: "Ah... Shizun. I'm thinking…”

"Well?"

Mo Ran didn’t find the words.

Of course, he could not ask Chu Wanning what he wanted. First, Shizun would not tell him. Second, even if Shizun did, the point of the surprise would disappear. He’s afraid the effect would be worse than the nine baskets of gold from TaXian Jun.

So Mo Ran thought of a more tactful way and asked carefully, "I don't know about our home... What else is missing? Does Shizun feel that there is anything else to be added?”

"No. It's quite complete." Chu Wanning said, "Ever since we have Goutou,[288] I even feel that there is some noise here, so I don't need to add any more things."

The Goutou was a puppy. After it finished biting the bones, he came upside down to bite the horns of Chu Wanning’s robes.

It's naughty by nature. When it came back, it was dying. Chu Wanning saved it, and ever since then it lives with them. For a long time, it liked to go to the house to expose tiles and skip around, Chu Wanning always dislikes it, but in the end, it was still spoiled. The corners of his robes had been gnawed, but even if he scolded it, he would not pull out.

The dog only wagged its tail happily.

Mo Ran asked, "Would you like to expand the house a little?"

"It takes a lot of work and it's boring."

"..."

"I'll do it all by myself?"

"It's noisy enough, and you'll add to it." Chu Wanning raised his eyes slightly and stared at him and said, "It's better to have free money than to spread it down the hill and build any house. Dog one, you one, me one?"

"It's fine with Shizun and me, Goutou lives by himself."

"Then it may wander to the point where it doesn't know who it is."

"Pooh." Mo Ran looked down and smiled and asked, "Dog, do you think I'm okay with you? I squeeze a room with Shizun and build one for you alone. Where can you find such a master to hurt you?"

The yellow-and-white Goutou slanted across his eyes and looked at him in a human-like manner. As if to say *"why do you want to squeeze Chu Wanning into a room where you have no compulsion in your heart? You have some face."*

"..."

There was no result.

Counting the days before the approaching birthday, there were just a few left. Mo Ran couldn't sleep that night. After Chu Wanning went to sleep, he put his hands behind his head and stared at the roof beam for half a day.

It was a good idea to renovate their cottage to be more beautiful and comfortable. But that needs more land, houses, it's better to search around for some exotic treasures, armor maps, build a library, build a machine armor room, build a treasure house...

Alas, let's get over it. Thinking about it, he knew that Shizun will be unhappy. He feels that he hasn't used his money to the right place, and that he will also feel troubled to take care of it.

Feeling sad, he suddenly heard a strange noise coming from outside.

Mo Ran was caught in a flash.

Goutou?

Wrong. He turned his eyes and saw the sleeping yellow and white puppy curled up in the corner. He immediately dismissed the idea.

... Is it a burglar?

But the place where they went to hide was surrounded by a barrier. Except for Xue Meng and Ma Yun, who had received the message and could go in and out at will, no one else could enter easily.

Unless it's not human.

It was very quiet, but it could not escape his senses. It seemed that something was quietly approaching their residence. Mo Ran held his breath and sat up quietly and went to look out through the window. He could hear the thing near the cabin, which knocked three times in a low voice.

"?"

In the middle of the night, who would come up Nanping Mountain and knock on their door at this time?

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Mo Ran quietly got out of bed and squeaked open the door, just saw the yard's wooden door open slightly, the wooden door shaking gently, a white fat soft waxy up-warped tail burning a small blue light flashing past.

He thought for a moment that he was mistaken. After all, he had stayed in Nanping Mountain for so long and had never seen anything like that.

A monster?

He wanted to catch up, but before he stepped out, he noticed a tender green lotus leaf outside the bedding threshold and a wooden box of palm size in the middle of the lotus leaf.

"This is..."

He picked up the lotus leaf in dismay. Somehow, the lotus leaf emitted a faint scent of Osmanthus fragrance. On it were a few words written in a very chubby and childish calligraphy.

Gifts for the birthday of Shenmu xianjun.[289]

Come on. I can help you.

A ricecake spirit with the hope of his village

Mo Ran opened his eyes and almost fell to the ground: "What? Is there such a monster called ricecake in this world????"

So, wasn't that what he had invented years ago to deceive Xue Meng?! It really existed?!

He could not help touching his lips. Did the demon forget to tell him that there was a hidden talent in their special beauty race, such as magic lips or something? Otherwise, how could there really be such a white, fat little monster with a little blue light on its tail?

Mo Ran stood in place for a while, although the ricecake ran too fast, and Mo Ran did not see its whole body, he had an intuition, its whole body should be as he was fabricated, round, waxy head with a large lotus leaf...

After a long delay, he returned to the house with the box.

The room was quiet, Chu Wanning and Goutou were still asleep, undisturbed by the unexpected visitors that night. Mo Ran walked close to Chu Wanning, who was curled up asleep, covered him with the quilt gently, went to the dog's kennel, touched it comfortably twice, then sat down at the table and began to look carefully at the small wooden box.

There was no killing or evil intent.

The spirit was quite heavy, but it is also had some kind of friendliness.

He tried to open the box, but unfortunately he couldn't find any keyhole openings, and the rice cake essence didn't leave any hints to tell him what to do.

Mo Ran couldn’t help but frown and wonder: What on earth is this box for? Is it just an ornament?

The problem is that it was tattered and it didn’t look good.

As if responding to his inquiries, soon after he came up with the question, two lines of goldenseal letters appeared on the top of the small wooden box, sparkling:

"Master, I'm a magic weapon from the demon world. I'm a box of thoughts."

Mo Ran was startled and almost fell off the chair.

What a ghost! How can it have the ability to read people's minds?!

"I'm not a ghost, I'm a good thing." New words continued to emerge on top of the box, and the golden handwriting slowly covered the old words. "In addition, I can only read the mind of the owner. I can't see anyone else's."

Too, too scary.

Mo Ran exhaled a few deep breaths and barely stabilized himself. He looked back at Chu Wanning, who was sleeping with his face covered by the quilt, and Goutou, who was sleeping under its paws. After several deliberations, he lowered his voice and asked carefully, "So, I... I am your master?"

"Yes, master, I've been given to you."

Mo Ran slowed down for a while, but there was still some confusion: "Aren't you a gift from the little monster to my shizun?"

"That is to be reformed by you." The small wooden box continued to fade away old words and emerge new ones, "We feel your strong desire to surprise the God-wood celestial lord on his birthday, but we also see that you are not able to give full play to your limitations due to many restrictions. But you don't have to worry anymore. So long as I'm here, you can make your dreams come true and achieve everything you want."

Mo Ran pondered on its underlying meaning and slowly came to the realization.

Yes... It was his sincerity that touched the mountain spirits. They came to help him prepare his gift?!

"Yes, that's it." The small wooden box lost no time to display two lines of shining words, "Rest assured, master, with me, he will surely have a better birthday this year than last year, come on!"

Mo Ran recalled the nine baskets of gold from last year, and didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

"... It's a bit promising, but don't compare it with last year."

After his doubts were dispelled, Mo Ran began to use this box of thoughts. According to the requirements of the box, in order to prevent it from being inadvertently activated by Chu Wanning or others before his birthday, Mo Ran needed to set a password for it. Only when the password is pronounced can it react. Otherwise, it will be like the most common box, and won't attract much attention.

"Let's set it up as *shizun*."

"No, it's too simple to be opened by mistake."

The little wooden box paused. "I suggest you set five to ten words here."

"So..." Mo Ran thought for a moment and said, *"It would be foolish to gift gold."*

"All right." The little wooden box said, "*It would be foolish to gift gold* is the password to open the box. Shall Mo-zongshi use it now?"

Mo Ran naturally couldn't wait to nod and agree.

In the instant he accepted, a dazzling white light flashed in front of him, forcing him to close his eyes instantly. When he opened them again, he found himself in a vast new world.

This is a place similar to an otherworldly fairyland.

In the mountains, there were flowing water and quiet springs. He was situated in a large open space with some wood piled up. In addition, there were clouds, light red smoke, the flourishing crabapple flowers were light and hazy, flying flowers fell red to chase the running water, quiet and beautiful.

A round ricecake spirit sat on a wooden stake, swept his tail with a blue fireball jumping, and was playing with his soft sticky left paw sticking to his right paw. Unexpectedly, it played too hard, accidentally glueing its claws together, and it couldn’t help but panic, two fat claws pulled in the opposite direction, but it couldn’t pull them apart.

Mo Ran went over and cast a separation spell. With a loud cry, the two claws of the ricecake spirit were free again.

It rolled round and fell on its tender belly, sighed heavily in relief, and then raised a pair of mungbean eyes from under the lotus leaf: "Huh… I was saved! Thank you, thank you! "

"You're welcome. Is this the inside of the box? You're in charge of the box... Uh..." He wanted to ask if he was a monster, but he thought it was impolite, so he laughed and said, "Housekeeper?"

"I'm not a housekeeper." The voice of the ricecake spirit was soft and smooth, but it could be said that it was very contrasting with the tone and color of the tyrannical words, "I, four landlord, you this… Sa, Sagua!"

"?” Mo Ran was startled. “How do you swear at people?"

"I, four, the coolest of our village, the most… most simmering ricecake! If I want to swear, I will swear. Deal with it!"

"..."

A good ricecake, not only could swear, but also articulate.

This spirit is not the same as the shy and lovely ricecake spirit that gave him the box before. It seems that it was indeed the village cake bully. No wonder it was sealed in a box by the villagers, and other ricecakes didn’t hang out with it.

The lonely cake bully stubbornly raised his head and waist, stared at Mo Ran, as if ready to meet his counterattack.

It was meant to be a frightening gesture, but Mo Ran looked at its small arms and legs, soft and white, paused for a moment, and could not help laughing out loud.

"Ha ha ha ha ha!" Mo Ran reached out and touched his little head. "You're so cute!"

The ricecake straightened out the lotus leaf on his head which Mo Ran had poked askew, and became even angrier: "Don't laugh! Be serious! You will pay for this!!”

"What did you say? I'm sorry, haha-"

"Stop… Stop laughing! I’m warning you! Your destiny is now in the hands of my search."

Mo Ran: "..."

He really didn't know that his destiny was dirty in the palm of a ricecake spirit. He had to spend all his self-control to stop himself from laughing again.

"Well, well... Cough... Pfft."

"Don't laugh!"

After some difficult negotiations, the cake tyrant and Mo Ran finally reached a consensus.

Mo Ran mustn’t laugh at it anymore, but it had to talk to Mo Ran about the current situation.

During their conversation, he emphasized that there are many cakes in their ricecake village and their personalities are different, but it was not because of his aggressive personality that he was locked in the box.—

"I, Four of our Village, the best ricecake spoken in human Mandarin, have a clear pronunciation and a clear distinction between death and death. So, I am the messenger who was chosen to communicate roughly with the humans!"

"... You’re the messenger?"

"Yes! You shrink right! The messenger!”

Mo Ran stared at it with his head held high and his chest hung up with infinite pride. He held back his chin and couldn't help but laugh again.

"Ah! Why are you laughing again?! Don't laugh at me! I have been learning verbiage for one or a hundred years! Don't laugh! Laugh again and I'll throw you away!"

In order not to let the cake tyrant murder him, Mo Ran used the perseverance he had to resist Tianwen, and once again forcefully held back his laughter.

"Well, I won't laugh. The messenger will tell me how to use this box of thoughts?"

The tyrant cake hong twinkled his mouth, claws hugged his arms, mung beans squinted at Mo Ran for a while. After seeing that he really stopped laughing, he said, "Simple and verbose, just because the space in the four boxes is different from the outside, don't you want to build a bigger house for Shenmu xianjun, even some beautiful flowers and plants?"

Mo Ran nodded his head and said, "Yes, but my Shizun thought it was too extravagant and noisy, so he was not willing to do it."

"Never mind. In this box, you will not occupy the outside place, nor will you fuck your Shizun..."

Mo Ran immediately interrupted it and said seriously, "It doesn't matter if you say something else is not standard. You must pronounce the word '*noise*'[290] correctly."

Tyrant Cake's small eyes turned around and tried his best to read, *"Fuck-"*[291]

"Noise."

"Fuck..."

"You roll up your tongue say *'noise'*."

The cake tyrant heavenly restraint small face more and more white, head up, trying to spit out a tortuous voice: *"grass -"*[292]

"Nevermind, let's move on."

Tyrant Cake: "Where was I?"

"You were saying that I'm not going to take up space in this box, and I'm not going to make noise to Shizun. But if I'm here to quietly prepare a birthday banquet for my Shizun and renovate my house and countryside, I also need those precious seeds, flowers, ingredients and utensils."

He grinned bitterly and said, "If shizun finds out, I'm afraid it'll be a waste."

"Don't worry." The tyrant cake said, "The things here are different from those outside. You can build a house, dig a pond, plant flowers and respect food materials... You don't need money to buy them, all you have to do is exchange with me, Four!"

Mo Ran opened his eyes in surprise: "exchange?"

"Yes." The tyrant Cake pointed to his stomach. Mo Ran found that there was a natural pocket on his white belly. It was only because the bag and stomach were too white that it did not attract people's attention.

"The houses and plants of your people are not good or beautiful! Shenmu xianjun is in harmony with our family's elements! You bring in the outside things and give them to me, such as cloth, flowers, clay figurines... I'll change them for you."

"But how do I know what to exchange?"

"Well, it depends on your luck. But I'm very generous and kind, and I won't usually treat you badly. If you don't believe it, you can die."

Just give it a try.

But when Mo Ran entered the box, he was unprepared, wearing underwear and nothing outside. Think about it, he could just take off his underwear and pass it.

"I have this on me. What can you give me for it?"

The tyrant cake took a look over Mo Ran clothes and took them with small claws: "Four pieces of clothes with four reasons, it has experienced a lot."

After that, he looked back and forth several times, aiming at the blackened upper body. Needless to say, Mo Ran's figure was naturally excellent, with a straight back, thin waist and limbs, and a solid chest, though with an old scar that will never disappear, but the lines of muscles contain very wild tension, which, with the breathing of one volt, seemed to suppress the body's potential to develop lava.

Tyrant Cake said, "You have good wood."

After that, he raised his underwear and looked at it. "I think it's possible to change the clothes made by Mo-zongshi, which are of good wood quality..."

He muttered and his voice faded. He stuffed his clothes into his white pocket and took them out again and again. "Ah! Yes! Four!"

Mo Ran stood up to look, saw its small soft claws lying in a glittering light golden particles.

"What is this?"

"Heshou flower of the monster clan. I think you can exchange your clothes for these seeds with the flower demon embryo. Here you are. You take it or die."

"..."

Although the baker always tells him to die, Mo Ran was not going to laugh at him. He was very curious. He took the seeds and went to the open space in front of him, and the cake tyrant followed him with a whistle.

"How do you grow it?"

"Just drop it on the ground at will!"

Mo Ran did as told. The demon flower in the demon territory was indeed extraordinary. As he sprinkled the seeds, without even blinking, the open space gave birth to a large sea of light gold and silver convergence. Those flowers were golden like pole peony, silver like clove, rich and flourishing and elegantly melting into waves, to the night in the light of stars and dots of brilliance.

What's more surprising is that in the center of each peony sits a female flower demon holding a golden pipa, and between the stamens of each lilac is a boy playing a silver flute. These little demons, who are not big enough to reach the nail cap, all have glittering and translucent wings. They play the light wings between them, dyeing the flower field which is carrying melodious songs with dream-like luster.

"One— one dress can be exchanged for these?" Mo Ran was startled.

"Four ah, all wordy me, I'm generous." The cake tyrant proudly pushed the lotus leaf on his head. "I'm the most beautiful and nice baby in our ricecake Village!"

Mo Ran felt only a ray of hope shining into his heart, and he immediately excitedly said, "Just you wait! I'll be here a lot these days. I'll go out and think about what I can exchange with you."

And he couldn't wait to go back.

But then he realized he didn't know where the exit was.

The cake tyrant turned his eyes white and pointed to the path where he came. "Run there, run for a while, don't stop, you'll get thicker, but four—"

Mo Ran did not let him finish.

He was so happy that he was anxious to figure out what could be brought in and replaced with the cake tyrant. And the more urgent the Tyrant Cake was, the more it stuttered, "but four" for half a day, even if it's stuck there, it can't say a word. After holding up for a long time, he tried hard to utter the second half of the speech:

"But four! Not every exchange is so cost-effective... You, you pick something better and bring it in! Our ricecake village especially likes the objects used by the Shenmu xianjun. I just gave you four uses and lost. Next time, there's no such a big bargain to pick up, and I'm not going to scatter it!”

Huffing and panting, he tried to say so much and looked up.

Mo Ran has disappeared.

"..." The tyrant cake stood in the middle of the flower field, stayed for a long time, scratched his head, " What a way to run so fast! Next time he'll bring—bring sen! Sa, Sa!"

When Mo Ran opened his eyes, he found himself bounced back to the table.

But he did not sit still for a moment, coupled with the agitation, and fell to the ground.

"Ah-!"

The movement immediately woke up the dog lying by the hearth. It suddenly stood up and began to bark at all conditions: "Wan Wan Wan!"

"Shh! Don't get me in trouble, Goutou!" Mo Ran quickly climbed over to hold the dog and touched it's head. "Don't make noise, another noise will wake up Wanning."

"Woo... Wan Wan Wan!"

"..."

Mo Ran was trying to shut the dog's mouth with his head when he heard a gentle noise behind him, and then a slightly tired and impatient voice lazily sounded in the quiet night.

Chu Wanning lay between the pillows, with half closed phoenix eyes, frowning at him, voice also with some special hoarseness from being just woken up: "... What are you fooling around with instead of sleeping in the middle of the night?"

Mo Ran Busily Back: "Wanning..."

Chu Wanning sleepily lying on his stomach, looking at him from the small chaotic forehead, without saying a word, as if completely awake.

But looking at it, a bright light suddenly fell into those misty eyes. Chu Wanning was very serious, and his eyes were wide open. "Why aren't you wearing clothes?”

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Chu Wanning was very serious, and his eyes were wide open. "Why aren't your wearing clothes?"

"Ah?" Mo Ran startled, looked down, saw his bare upper body, raised his hand and touched himself, but for a moment he didn't know how to explain, "Er..."

Chu Wanning looked at his guilty actions, and felt suspicious, so he said seriously, "Mo Ran."

Mo Ran raised his hand: "Yes!"

"... Goutou is still small. It may grow to be a demon in the future. Didn't I told you before? Do you want to set an example and not teach it bad things?"

"Yes, yes."

Chu Wanning narrowed his eyes dangerously: "What are you doing then?"

"..."

"That's... That's right." Mo Ran whispered, *but can this fat dog really become fine*? He's afraid it'd be no use even if he recited Buddha in his ear every day. Besides, what can a dog understand? Even if he slept in front of Goutou every day, the dog probably would probably not understand the true meaning of dog's life.

But what Shizun said could not be rebutted. Mo Ran had to say euphemistically: "Wanning, listen to my explanation, it's not what it looks

like. I didn't mean to do anything in secret..."

Unexpectedly, Goutou, fearing that the world would not be chaotic, interrupted him suddenly and began to bark "Wan Wan Wan" in his arms with the head up.

Chu Wanning put his forehead and gritted his teeth and said, "You let it go."

"All right." Mo Ran open Goutou. "Actually, I..."

"Why are you still naked? Put on your clothes and explain!"

Mo Ran froze.

Chu Wanning saw his strange expression, looked around, and found that Mo Ran was not just undressed, but his underwear simply disappeared. He couldn't help but be shocked: "... Where did your clothes go?"

In this embarrassing atmosphere, the yellow and white dog squinted and began to look at Mo Ran with that dirty expression. His expression looked like a sneer: Ha ha! Stupid?

I see how you explain it!

Mo Ran touched his nose, his throat gathered. He hesitated and said, "Wanning, Wanning, if... If I say my clothes have turned into a sea of flowers, you... would you believe it?"

Chu Wanning: "....."

In their cottage at Nanping Mountain, came the angry reproach of Chu-zongshi: "Mo Weiyu, do you think your shizun has become stupid because

he hasn't come down in a long time?"

"No, no, no, no, no! Shizun is the smartest, how can you scatter!!!”

"You talk properly! Learn what to stand and how to stutter!"

—

Mo Ran was really angry with Goutou, really.

He felt that the dog always had some ideas that he shouldn't have, especially when he looked sideways at people, it was more like a demonstration to him.

Well, it wasn't like this when Mingming picked it up from the haystack.

Now it's all right. Chu Wanning, a five-month-old dog, likes it very much. He also says that he's not mature. Therefore, Mo Ran is forbidden to do anything that is harmful to customs and bad for children in the last month.

Mo Ran asked himself that he had done well under Mo-zongshik's condition. He had adopted Goutou for more than half a month. He had tolerated it. Even the state of TaXian Jun had converged a lot. At least after a runaway accident, Chu Wanning taught him severely, and he did not go ridiculous again, nor did he mention it quietly. The Goutou went to the kitchen and stewed it into dog broth.

But now it seems that he has made a very unsuccessful choice.

—— He should have snuffed the dog in the cradle from the beginning!

Qi returns to Qi, Chu Wanning's birthday celebration can not be delayed, so the next morning, Mo Ran decided, or hurry to collect something to bring

things into the box.

"Fresh fish, millet, sugar cans... Bamboo dragonflies, paper butterflies, silk handkerchiefs..."

Taking advantage of Chu Wanning to go out and collect fresh fruits in the depths of Nanping Mountain, Mo Ran searches every grain and every inch of rags at home, and can pick up and carry the whole collection into the pocket of the heavens and the earth.

Goutou looked at him with a frightening look on his face. It seemed uncertain whether he was the owner or a burglar posing as the owner. If he could speak at the moment, he would say, "No brothers, why don't you even let my dog bowl go?"

Ah! Incorrect! Pocket-portable dog bowl!

How can we grab its bowl?

Goutou reacted sharply, and a spirit rushed up, clapping its teeth and biting the edge of its own job, and launched a class struggle with the stinky scrape of ink.

Don't snatch my bowl! Wang Wang Wang!

Mo Ran also does not let go, joking, this bowl is Kunlun blue glaze, food placed in it for three days is like fresh out of the pot. Before meeting Goutou, Mo Ran had planned to keep a cat, that kind of soft, white, quiet and sensible white cat. The cat had a small amount of food. Considering that he and Chu Wanning sometimes sworded around and would not go home for two or three days, he wanted the cat to eat fresh food, so he entrusted Mei Hanxue to find such a bowl.

Unexpectedly, the cat has not yet been raised. It's all cheap for this silly dog.

Is this glass bowl good for keeping food fresh and tender for dogs? Food is poured in, not to mention three days, blink three times, it guarantees to eat to the bottom!

"Loose mouth, this is the bowl I bought originally!"

"Wang Wang Wang!" But you gave it to me!

"I borrowed it from you! Now it's due to be recovered!"

"Wang Wang Wang!" You fart!

"Relax!"

"Wang Wang!" Not loose!

"Song!"

"Wow!" Roll!

A man and a dog were sawing hard when the yard door creaked.

Chu Wanning held a basket of sweet and delicate fruits, maintains the posture of pushing the door, stands in the doorway and looks down at Mo-zongshi kneeling in the yard and grabbing bowls with Goutou.

"..." After a long silence, Chu Wanning put the bamboo basket on the stone table in the courtyard, took a fruit, thought about it, and took several more.

Baiyi xianjun drooped his eyes and said to Mo Ran, "You just stay here and I'll wash you two oranges."

Mo Ran in the moment he turned into the kitchen, heard Chu Wanning sigh, murmuring to himself: "Alas... The porridge I cooked for him in the morning was too bad. Why is he so hungry that he grabs food with the dog?"

Mo Ran: "...???"

"Shizun! Wait! It’s not what you think! Ouch!—”

While he was eager to explain, Goutou snapped at the back of his hand with a whine, and Mo Ran screamed and suddenly released his hand. The yellow-white dog ran out of the door with its glass bowl and ran away without smoke.

Mo Ran clenched his teeth, covered his hands and scolded, "This silly dog..."

After lunch, Mo Ran put down his chopsticks and said that he wanted to buy some medicine for injuries in a Lin’an nearby city. So he went out with his mind in the box.

As soon as he left the yard, he quickly found a deserted place, recited the mantra "It's foolish to gift gold" and went into the box again.

Tyrant Cake was basking in the sunshine near the flower field from yesterday. When he saw Mo Ran, he hummed and said, "Come on, come on - come on?"

"Wait a long time."

Cake Tyrant waved his hand to show his disapproval, but his eyes turned to the Mo Ran treasure of heaven and earth: "Have you brought some, some forest?"

Mo Ran is not urgent, first laughed and handed it a fresh peach: "This for you, Wanning's picking."

The small eyes of the mungbean Cake Tyrant suddenly lit up, one claw waved, turned his head, and honestly refused to say, "Death is impossible, death is impossible!" A small claw pulled open its front pocket.

Mo Ran laughed and said, "How can we not do it, just a fresh peach?"

Said it stuffed into its pocket.

The baker who was bribed by peaches coughed a few times and his face slowed down. "Hey, you, look at you, come on, and be polite!"

After that, he coughed a few more times, moved his little buttocks to the stump and sat upright.

"Come on, let me Kangkang. You've brought something with you."

The witty Mo-zongshi laughed and said, "Okay, Mr. Lao Fan Cake has changed some materials."

"No, no problem!"

Mo Ran handed all the bits and pieces that had been searching all day to its little claws. Cake Tyrant opened the brocade bag and roughly doubled it inside, sighing.

Mo Ran's heart tightened: "What's wrong?"

Cake Tyrant raised his eyes and said, "Sao Nian, you are really poor."

Mo Ran down the curtains, some helpless way:"... I don't know what you want. There are better things, but they are all for our daily use. If you don't think it's appropriate, I'll…”

"Come on." Batiao Tian interrupted him. "Nourish that you are always scattering money to help the world, first, first make up for it."

But in my heart, I said: For the sake of the peach you gave me, let's make it up first.

"What I give and give you won't be the best, because you can give me so much. But our monster's utensils are amazing! Even if broken, broken, violet to play your imagination and hard work, but also four can make a very satisfactory drop effect!"

Mo Ran turned from worry to joy and laughed, "Really? Thank you very much.”

Cake Tyrant waved his hand again, and then began to replace the things brought by Mo Ran with the monster instruments in the box one by one.

"Fresh fish - you can change this!"

Cake Tyrant pulled out a pile of soft felt fabric from his pocket.

"What is this?"

"This cloth made of four or four kinds of cat hair!"

Mo Ran opened his eyes in surprise and took the bundle of cloth. "Cat hair can also weave cloth?"

"Nine big cats and demons." Cake Tyrant explained, and then pulled out another thing from his pocket, "Bamboo dragonflies can be replaced by another one!"

Mo Ran looked at the pile of plain sticks and said, "What is this?"

"Take one, put it in the funeral, spit, and you can turn it into the best wood, although not the best, but it's quite good."

Next, Batian Cake added to him a series of strange things, such as bigger shells, bells drifting down snow when the wind blows, swallows who are good at nesting, green bricks that can pave their own roads, and a fire that understands people's words. And so on.

The most valuable one is actually a bag of coke made by Chu Wanning. Batiao Tian loved it very much. He said that it was the favorite food for ricecakes. Mo Ran found it both surprising and funny.

He thought that if it weren't for Wanning, you would not cook everyday, you would have to eat coke, and I could bring you a lot.

He asked, "What can I change for coke?"

"You wait and see." Batian Gagaba chews a piece of coke and flicks his paws.

Soon, Mo Ran saw a golden lotus pond sinking beside the flower field. The water in the pond was like melted gold, and there were many beautiful snow lotus flowers in it.

"Everything comes to mind." The cake-maker, with his tongue still boasting, said, "If you want to read the fish twice by the river, you will have lotus leaves floating to send you mulberry, as well as fresh lotus root and tender

rhombus, you can ask for it. Enough, enough for your birthday feast... Well, four no four is great!"

Mo Ran stared at the pond for a moment, then turned his head and cut the railroad at Batian Cake. "I'll bring you a sack of coke next time!"

"Zeng, Zeng! You were great!" he stammered as soon as he was excited.

Mo Ran said sincerely, "No, you are the best."

With these materials from the Cake Tyrant, Mo Ran rolled up his sleeves and began to work.

Shizun's birthday is the day after tomorrow. Tomorrow is TaXian Jun's turn. He must work faster. As long as he works in this box all day today, and the day after tomorrow, he should be able to lead his shizun in the evening after eating longevity noodles and give him a surprise.

While thinking like this, he quickly set up the cloth, shiju, timber of those demons... Start to build an idyllic fairyland beyond the world for shizun. Neither extravagant and wasteful nor disturbing others, it is quite gratifying to move wooden rafters in a smart way with Mo Ran hands and feet:

Kungfu pays no attention. This year's birthday banquet, shizun will have a happier day than last year!

However, Mo-zongshi was still naive.

He did not intend to compete for favor with himself, but TaXian Jun is different. TaXian Jun is a person who can knock himself to death. How can he be willing to be oppressed by him?

He should know that after the retirement to Nanping Mountain, TaXian Jun was always holding his breath with himself, always fighting with himself.

The daily memory of the two personalities is not entirely in common, but shared along with each other. In fact, this situation is worse than thorough knowledge and thorough ignorance. It is like scratching people's hearts through a layer of yarn. It is easier to cause a single moth.

For example, a few days ago, TaXian Jun stared at Chu Wanning porridge, staring at it, and suddenly said, "this venerable one remembers that yesterday you did not cook porridge."

"Yes." Chu Wanning light, "What's wrong?"

"But this venerable one does not remember what you did yesterday."

"Without cooking, I went to the village and bought some steamed buns."

TaXian Jun quit, stared at the black and purple eyes, and said with great force, "this venerable one should also eat steamed buns!"

"... Didn't you wake up in the morning and say you wanted porridge?"

"No. The steamed bun is also needed in this venerable one's diet. You can't just buy it for him but not for this venerable one.”

"... You might as well take some medicine.”

"Steamed buns!"

"Only porridge."

"Porridge and steamed buns!"

Chu Wanning was too lazy to talk to him: "You can eat whatever you like, but you can't eat that."

TaXian Jun almost fainted in anger. He grabbed Chu Wanning's wrist, brought him over, pressed him against the kitchen table, and drooped his eyelashes to look down. "What's with your attitude? Why can he eat solid steamed buns while this venerable one can only drink porridge? You say, do you think he is better than this venerable one?”

"... I just think you were less ill yesterday than you are today.”

TaXian Jun was silent for a while, seemingly trying to get angry, but at last he was still sad and said, "Okay... Very good. Chu Wanning, what you said before is deceptive, what I have always been a person - is that how you treat the same person? You can't do the same dishes. Why do you favor him?”

Chu Wanning said silently: "The same person will not eat the same meal every morning, you quickly stop making noise, the porridge will turn cold."

"I won’t drink it!" said TaXian Jun.

"Really?"

"No!"

Chu Wanning nodded and said: "OK, then I will serve it to Goutou. It's just a pity since the legs of clouds were your favorite last time.”

"..."

That's it. Taxian-Jun is always in such a state of contending with himself for favor and merit.

As Mo-zongshi, who has experienced two worldly sophistications and the presence of old gods, he can't understand this foolish behavior at all.

At this moment, Mo Ran, who is working hard, has no idea at all. In a few more hours, he will switch to the character of TaXian Jun, and what kind of despondent action will he make...

Ch. 346 Fighting for Affection 4

The next morning.

Taxian-Jun squinted and sat under the loquat tree in the courtyard, peeling loquats for himself to eat while squinting at what he was thinking.

After switching over, he could not remember anything else in the past three days. He vaguely remembered that he had got a wooden box, a ricecake. ricecake Monster sent it as if it had something to do with Chu Wanning's birthday gift.

But more than that, he can't recall it.

Taxian-Jun dared not take it lightly. After all, he thought Mo-zongshi was a bird with deep intention. He seemed loyal and honest, but he was honest and respectful. He had a lot of flowers and intestines.

Where like myself, handsome, honest, domineering, powerful, treat people sincerely.

The honest man like himself is really at a disadvantage.

TaXian Jun sighed, a deep light shining in purple and black eyes. The loquat juice was very sticky. He raised his hand and licked his fingertips to taste the delicate sweetness. He said to himself, "You can't lose!" this venerable one is from the emperor's family. For the emperor's court, this venerable one knows much more than the other one. The so-called "know one's friend and know the other" can win a hundred battles. As long as this venerable one sees Mo-zongshi's congratulations in advance, this venerable one can fight back and force him!

But longing to know Mo-zongshi's gift is one thing. How to know it is another profound knowledge.

He did not expect to be able to communicate with his own soul. Mo-zongshi had no ghost until he understood him.

Well, if not... Trying to get Chu Wanning to talk like a routine?

No, No.

This idea was quickly rejected by TaXian Jun himself.

Looking back on his past life, Song Qiutong always dressed up for every festival and tried her best to please him. He came knocking around to find out if his sister Chu had prepared any gifts for him.

At that time, he was holding an evil fire in his heart. Looking at Song Qiutong's seemingly shrewd but silly head melon seeds, he spent his whole life of self-cultivation to not shout abuse - what to do! Ask what! Chu Wanning was not to give this venerable one festival gifts you are satisfied!!!

But each time they did not roar out, but suppressed their anger, grinned and chanted the gloom, slowly and orderly way: "unexpectedly, the Queen was so concerned about Princess Chu, give him a gift to see him alike."

Song Qiutong's beautiful face flashed with apprehension. She showed more submissiveness and charm because of fear, hoping to win the emperor's pity.

So she busily said, "Concubines just can't make up their minds. They want to know about the wishes of Chu's sister..."

"Oh... Want to know the mind of Chu Fei.” TaXian Jun slowly immersed these words in his lips for a while. He sneered and looked like a cold sword out of the box.

"So, you want to show that you, the queen, should have no opinions. You want to be a concubine like him, or you want to be a concubine at all?"

She was so frightened that Song Qiutong staggered and fell to her knees, knocking her head in succession.

At that time, he only felt disgusted and angry at the same time in his heart, dragon and tiger, bite and fight. Gong'e, who had witnessed the incident, said that the emperor was moody, but nobody knew it. Even if Song Qiutong herself did not know it, he was really touched by her. He had been under house arrest for so long and had only won people, but it seemed that he had never received hearts.

As for the obedience, obedience and love he longed for, it was more like a nine-day cold moon, beyond reach.

Even these years, he has not received any Festival ceremony from Chu Wanning. Even when the snow is deep on New Year's Eve, his secret wish of "Happy New Year" was delusional.

In this way, Song Qiutong pricked his self-esteem and poked at his troubles. To mock him for having nothing, for receiving nothing, to mock him for being a lonely widow, a poor wretch who seems to aspire to get what he really wants.——

How dare she... How dare she!!!

The emperor's face turned blue with anger, and Song Qiutong's face turned white with fear. He looked at her sadly. The truth could not be said quickly, and she had no idea what fault she had committed.

Neither the emperors nor the empress realized that, in fact, her struggle for favor was lost from the very beginning.

Yes.

You can't ask Chu Wanning.

After the end of this memory, TaXian Jun became more and more firm in his thinking.

The essence of the competition for favor lies in the light clouds and breeze, which seems to be indifferent. In fact, it is the most undesirable to jump out and expose your concern at the beginning.

However, how can we find out Mo-zongshi's actions lightly and indifferently?

There is not much time left for him. Tomorrow will be Chu Wanning's birthday. He has only the last few hours to win the war of defeat.

In meditation, TaXian Jun saw Goutou running past him chasing a butterfly. The dog perceived his eyes, and made a sudden stop, tilted over his head, with its usual oblique and oblique eyes on the former Emperor who was trapped in trouble. Dogs' eyes are full of wisdom and care.

TaXian Jun had a good idea.

Yes!

"Good dog, good dog, come on." Taking advantage of Chu's Wanning to go out to explore the soul of plants in Nanping Mountain, TaXian Jun took Goutou in his arms, put it on his leg, and then rubbed his dog's paws with a laugh that he thought was very kind and frightening. "This venerable one knows that you are the smartest. What this venerable one said should be understandable."

Goutou: "..."

"This venerable one asks you, do you know that a wooden box was found here a few days ago?"

Goutou: "Whoop..."

"Do you obey me and bring the box to this venerable one? Can you do that?"

"Whoop..." It can't be done.

TaXian Jun's face sank a little, but he still laughed and said, "How about rewarding you with a meat bone?"

"Wang Wang!" Two!

"Yes, two it is."

As a matter of fact, the man-like dog-like immortal monarch was better at communicating with his peers than the man-like Mo-zongshi. One man, one dog, could have reached the consensus of adultery so quickly without being able to speak at all.

"Wow!"

The dog wagged its tail and jumped out of the arms of Taxian-Jun. It ran to the depth of some humble grass. In a short time, it became a traitor of Mo-zongshi. It pulled out the thoughts of Mo-zongshi into boxes, and sent them to Taxian-Jun with mud.

"So fast?"

"Wang Wang Wang!" That's right. You don't want to see who I am.

TaXian Jun was very satisfied, smiling and touching Goutou: "Aiqing is really a good dog, this venerable one will call you -"

Why didn't Feng think of it? Suddenly he heard familiar footsteps outside the courtyard door. As soon as TaXian Jun's face changed, he immediately raised his hand and boxed his thoughts into boxes and received them in his arms in a flash of thunder.

Then he looked back calmly with nothing happening: "Wanning is back."

Goutou wagged his tail calmly with nothing happening, flatteringly spitting his tongue at Chu Wanning.

Chu Wanning, who came back from the mountain tour, looked at the man and the dog, and always felt that there was a kind of mysterious conspiracy breath running between them: "... What are you doing?

TaXian Jun quickly turned to the topic: "How was the harem of this venerable one?"

Chu Wanning said, "Your Xiao Cui and Xiao Hong are dead."

"!!!" Taxian-Jun was shocked, "What?!"

"In the storm last night, your planted Xiangfei bamboo and red crabapple on the south hillside were blown down. I told you before that you should not plant them in the windward part of the rock wall. If you refuse to listen, you can only learn from this lesson."

Taxian-Jun was instantly sad, and he quit.

When he arrived to Nanping Mountain, he rushed to pull the grass planted by Chu Wanning together. Although he had been playing tricks on Wanningooe by calling the flowers and plants his harem, there were not only concubines in the empress palace, but in fact he was quietly trying to seal the trees they planted together as princesses and princes.

Now that their children have died, that will he do?

"No! This venerable one is going to take a look!”

"Look at what." Chu Wanning was amused that he was taken seriously. He immediately pulled him over and said to him, "I have applied magic, and I have connected all the broken flowers and plants back."

"All ready?"

"It's all ready."

Taxian-Jun stared at him, and after a moment, Chu Wanning did not respond, when he suddenly opened his arms, and firmly embraced him.

"..." Chu Wanning was unexpectedly surrounded by arms embracing his waist embraced. He gave a sad and helpless laugh, "What are you doing...?"

TaXian jun sat, Chu Wanning stood, and TaXian Jun's head rested on Chu Wanning's abdomen, wanting to rub against it, but didn't have the face, and finally only muffled: "this venerable one... Is happy."

This was Chu Wanning's heart. He will be distressed. He expects that all the plants and trees planted will be destroyed by the wind and rain. He will save them without saying a word. The withered wood is still in the spring, and his once withered heart, accompanied by Chu Wanning, gradually has a bright red color, with blood, love and love.

At last he was able to walk carefully into the light.

In order to let the light shine a little more for himself and a little less for Mo-zongshi, TaXian Jun became more and more firm in his determination to solve the mystery of Mo-zongshi's gift. Unlike Mo-zongshi, who was very conscious, he refused to admit that they were one, so Mo-zongshi was not hostile to the other, but he blushed and fought with Mo-zongshi roughly every day.

TaXian Jun took "the venerable one is in a good mood today, this venerable one cooks in person" as the reason to shut himself quietly in the kitchen and began to study this idea in the box.

The emperor's experience told him that as long as he could open the box, Mo-zongshi's secret would be exposed under his eyes.

But the problem is that the box is seamless. How on earth can it be opened?

"Open the box!"

Useless.

"You want it!"

It's still closed.

"Show you this handsome face."

The box stayed motionless.

Taxian-Jun tried all kinds of statements, all of which were incomprehensible. At last, he was a little manic. He planned to harden his palm and split one in two.

He slammed down, only to hear a crash!

The bench under the box was broken.

But the box was still in good condition.

"Funny, this venerable one doesn't believe this evil..." Taxian-Jun was angry and called out the blade to cut it horizontally and vertically for more than twenty knives. But he could not freely release his spiritual power in the kitchen to prevent the house from being destroyed, so he could not exert one-tenth of his strength. After half a day of splitting, the box was still safe and sound.

On the contrary, Chu Wanning knocked on the door: "Mo Ran? What are you doing? Why are there so much noise in it?"

"... Cut stuffing!" TaXian Jun casually said, "I'm making pies!"

Chu Wanning waited for a while: "Bingjian in the day before yesterday's remaining, I had not used up the wrapping hands."

"Yes, I see."

After answering the voice, TaXian Jun reacted sensibly afterwards - no! Chu Wanning wrapped hands for Mo-zongshi again?!

Why didn't he!!!

This thought, more angry, feel more unable to let go of Mo-zongshi, never let the other party invite a contribution on his birthday! That hypocrite, villain!

Strive for favor with him? Why don't you try your best?

Taxian-Jun's eyes were covered with a layer of darkness. He stared at the box. His slender and smooth fingers were rubbing the rough texture on his head. Bad water rose in his heart. He thought, otherwise... Why don't you just drop this box at the bottom of the cliff?

Isn't it a birthday gift? He could have found a better one for Chu Wanning before sunset today.

He is the emperor of the cultivation world. What can he not do if he wants something unique in heaven and earth?

Although he was tired of the days when he was a noble king and loved the warmth of returning to the world again, he always liked to dress up and sniff the fireworks in the mountains. He even felt that he secretly disguised himself as a "Gou Master" to collect the miscellaneous money, which was worse than that in the silent and cold palace at that time. The rare treasures presented should be much more precious and meaningful.

Such a vulgar sweetness is good, but he is reluctant to show his love.

Taxian-Jun has a face, especially in order to distinguish himself from the poor Mo-zongshi. Even if he secretly loved the cabbage and boiled tofu of

the farmer's family, he would hum and pretend that his favorite food is still the grand parade, which is a precious seafood.

This kind of swollen face and fat man's prestige is also good occasionally.

For example, TaXian Jun firmly believes that as long as he risks the risk of being sucked to death by Chu Wanning, arrogantly returns to the rivers and lakes, and searches for treasures everywhere, he will be able to quickly find the kind of luxurious and exquisite on the stage, novel and meaningful congratulations!

Definite!

After this idea had taken root in his mind, Taxian-Jun stood up, intending to put away the wooden box and take it out to throw it away in the afternoon.

But in retrospect, if he really wanted to do so, his recovery conscience was somewhat disturbed.

...Well, that's one less gift for Chu Wanning. What if we can't find a better one? Should Chu Wanning really like this box and be destroyed by this venerable one, isn't it? Er... Aren't you coming to make trouble with this venerable one? This venerable one is now his favorite, he will really make trouble, then what should be done? How to coax? Would it be useless to cajole?

In this way of thinking, he felt a little sad.

Since ancient times, the ruthless emperor's family, once the emperor is in love, he can only fall into the family with his lover.

Even such a trivial matter, thought Chu Wanning may not be happy, his heart hardened.

This venerable one is not promising!

TaXian Jun sighed in his heart.

But at that moment, he suddenly found a white figure passing by the small window of the wooden grate. He knew something different and immediately grabbed it, but it ran so fast that he could only see a small blue lamp held by a white tail. Without seeing its whole picture, it had disappeared into the grass.

A rolled green lotus leaf was stuffed between the cracks of the window-only wooden fence.

... a ricecake spirit!!

A sudden flash of inspiration in the mind of Taxian-Jun suddenly aroused the memory of another adventure that belonged to him two days ago.

He immediately raised his hand to pull out the lotus leaves left by the rice cake essence, and smoothed them out by the sunshine sprinkled outside the window. He could not help but be overjoyed, but then he immediately became angry.

TaXian Jun scolded himself angrily: "Mo Weiyu, how daring you are! How dare you mock this venerable one!"

Seen only on the lotus leaf, writes a few lines askew:

Good Emperor! I'm the ricecake of the Emperor's personality. I sneaked out of the village to report to the Emperor. It's a box of thoughts. There's a fairyland in it. Mo-zongshi's personality is the key to opening the curse. It's called "It's foolish to send gold." I can only help you here! Come on. You can do it!

Although TaXian Jun did not know what "jigger" meant, he felt that the demon had not learned the common people's Mandarin well, and there were also some demon words in his speech, but he understood that the other must be praising himself with his witty mind and context.

This ricecake is very good! He knew the current affairs very well! He intends to make it a master of Nanping Mountain after it has been accomplished.

Taxian-Jun finished thinking like this and paused. In order to accomplish great things, he suppressed the humiliation which was despised by another man himself and gnashed his teeth at the wooden box.

"It would be foolish to gift gold."

A golden light flashed and TaXian Jun disappeared in the kitchen.

He was sent into the box too.

Ch. 347 Fighting for Affection 5

When Taxian-Jun came in, Cake Tyrant was sitting in the hills and rivers that had been built by Mo Ran, chasing butterflies with his short legs.

When he heard the sound of his arrival, he turned his head at once, almost fell to the ground for moving too fast, and finally staggered back to his feet. The cake tyrant put out his paws to straighten out the lotus leaves on his head and shouted, "Ah, Ah, Ah, Ah— small male harvest, you finally came. I was dying of boredom!"

TaXian Jun stared at it for a moment, and came to the conclusion that it was a foolish ricecake guard.

So he turned his eyes away.

Then, with his sharp eyes, he looked back and forth at the house thoroughly.

The paradise had not been completed yet, but it was close to. TaXian Jun could fully appreciate its elegance, flying sparkling flower fields, dwelling between the flower stamens playing piano and flute, golden flowing lotus pond, tree house twined by vines, shell summer couch in the courtyard...

The look of the gentleman's face became gloomy.

He knows Chu Wanning. Chu Wanning looks serious but, in fact, he is very curious. He certainly likes this kind of strange place which does not belong to the mortal world.

The only possible cause of Chu Wanning's dislike is that of Chu Wanning.
——

He turned his head and stared at the Tyrant Cake.

When the thin lips were opened and buttoned, Mo Ran asked, "How much is the price here?"

At this time, Tyrant Cake has not responded to the current temperament has changed greatly, some confused: "silly, silly..."

TaXian Jun wrinkled his long eyebrows and suddenly lifted them up in his palm.

"Eh-"

"Who are you scolding for being silly?"

The net pockets for catching butterflies in the hands of the baker heaven dropped, and his eyes turned white under the stranglehold of the emperor Taxian. He shook his calves sadly and gave his substandard Mandarin to the standard: "What, what's the situation?"

TaXian Jun: "....."

It was a misunderstanding. With a cold hum, he loosened his five fingers and threw the monster back on the ground. Cake Tyrant touched his neck, exhaled heavily, looked up at the man's apparently hazy face, and suddenly felt the taste.

Ouch?! This is not Mo-zongshi!

They all know that Mo Ran’s personality changes every three days. It has been in exile for a long time, so they forgot about it. In front of him, this vicious and violent version of Mo-zongshi, who was kind two days ago, is clearly...

"Ah!" Cake Tyrant uttered a scream and got up and was ready to flee. "Help! He's here!!! He's not coming back with him!!!!”

He was too scared to stutter.

The two soft ricecake legs of the Cake Tyrant strode hard, closed their eyes and ran hard for half a day. When they opened a gap and looked out, they realized that they were still there.

"..."

I don't know when, TaXian Jun has turned into a spiritual cage, like a roller water car, which runs like a hamster for half a day, but has not gone anywhere.

Cake Tyrant swallowed his saliva and turned back trembling, embarrassed and frightened.

"Brother, Brother..."

"Are you looking for death?" "Who is your brother?"

"Emperor, emperor, good!"

TaXian Jun once again: "....."

In order to survive, Cake Tyrant soon succumbed to the lewd authority of TaXian Jun. It tells the emperor everything about boxes of thoughts in great detail, and tells him the answer he least wants to know.——

"No, no, no, no, no, no, it's cheap here!"

TaXian Jun fell into silence.

It's not expensive, it's not wasteful, and it's intentional.

How can you compare yourself with a gift like this?

... Damn, luckily he found out earlier, otherwise the birth of Wanning would be in front of him. If Mo-zongshi really played this card, he would lose.

TaXian Jun's heart way, the opportunity can not be lost no longer come, he must take advantage of the time is still early, to remove the cover of the field!

His handsome face flickered with blurred shadows. He stared at the landscape dwelling built by Mo-zongshi and listened to Cake Tyrant nagging.

Cake Tyrant explained, "Everything outside can be used to exchange materials with me, but it's beautiful inside. Fourth, these building materials are not the best now. You sent them two days ago to exchange items, all four of them are not worth much money."

"Oh? Really?" TaXian Jun Road, "But this sea of flowers looks very valuable."

"Those four gifts."

TaXian Jun pointed to the pond again: "This pond does not look cheap either."

"The four were exchanged for the best thing you sent."

TaXian Jun raised his ears: "The best thing?"

"Four."

"What is it?" He can afford it, and so can this venerable one, if you will.

When the baker heard his words, his small eyes lit up: "Give me a drop?... Well, then, we like the coke made by Taxian-jun!”

"..."

He is wrong.

There is one thing in the world that he is almost paranoid and doomed not to be able to afford.

That's what Chu Wanning cooked.

In this respect, Mo-zongshi is different from him. He has not experienced the life and death years of the Wushan Palace in his previous life, nor in the suffocating loneliness, so madly missed the dishes that are not delicious but steaming with the heat of the world. Therefore, Mo-zongshi's craftsmanship of Chu Wanning was never a morbid possession.

On the contrary, Mo-zongshi always wanted to make his cooking recognized by more people, or by the monsters of mountains and forests, so that Chu Wanning would be happy, and he would be happy too.

So he heard that Cake Tyrant liked to eat the coke made by Chu Wanning. In fact, he was very willing to share it.

But TaXian Jun is different.

TaXian Jun is like a person who has been hungry for ten years and poor for ten years. He occupies all the cooking food of Chu Wanning in revenge.

Even if it is unpalatable, he will swallow it hungrily and thirstily. He has a stomachache and is unwilling to share it with others. The most exaggerated thing is that once Chu Wanning had nothing to do to wrap five pieces of bamboo flat handwriting, originally thought of putting them away and eating slowly, enough to eat for half a month.

As a result, TaXian Jun knew that he was going to cut back to another state the next day. In order to avoid cheapening another himself, he really ate half a month's handwriting before the time of his son arrived.

Then Master Jimo lay in bed for three days.

So when he heard that the Baker was so covetous, he immediately angrily said, "Don't even think about it!" Chu Wanning made coke can only be eaten in this venerable one! "

Cake Tyrant looked at him with tears in his eyes.

"It's no use crying!"

Cake Tyrant sadly wiped his eyes with his paws and claws: "Whoop..."

The emperor is indeed a bad, bad thing!

Since coke could not be replaced, TaXian Jun began to make other ideas.

"Tell this venerable one, besides coke, what else can I give you for more exquisite and valuable monster utensils?"

Cake Tyrant choked, did not want to answer, but had to answer: "... The emperor and the emperor can first grope for themselves and try four things for a change.

TaXian Jun frowned: "Mo-zongshi tried it like this?"

"Well." Ba Tian bowed grievantly. "You used your clothes the first two days and changed into a flower field."

"So... So he took off his clothes... He murmured, pinched his chin and thought for a while, feeling that he could not lose to himself.

So he also took off his robe and handed it to Cake Tyrant.

"This is the dress of this venerable one. Take a good look at it and see what you can change?"

Cake Tyrant held up his clothes and looked up and down for half a day, but he did not speak for half a day. Just when TaXian Jun was a little impatient, he hesitated to poke half of his head against the lotus leaf from behind his clothes.

"Emperor, change, change the forest is not my own decision, four rules, if the exchange of rough things is not your intention, can you stop pinching my neck..."

"Say less nonsense, what on earth can I change?!"

The voice of cakes and bullies is like mosquitoes singing: "... Keep natural, pollution-free and pollution-free... Wash, wash water..."

TaXian Jun thought he had misheard, "Foot wash water?"

"Four... Four washes of hanging water..." Cake tyrant looked like a weeping day, and then he said, "three days in a wash, in March, nourish the essence of natural herbs. You, you will be more powerful, stronger and more powerful than now."

When he was stiff, he looked like the bottom of a pot and said angrily, "I'm sorry to hear that." Do you want to die?!"

"Whoop no! I don't want to!!!! Batiao Tian shook his head and burst into tears.

"Why can he change the sea of flowers? My change is washing water! Do I look like I need this kind of thing? Ah??!"

"Whoop you don't need!"

"Think of something else! Can you change for another one?'

"No..."

On TaXian Jun's horrible eyes, Cake Tyrant cried out repeatedly: "No. 4 I can decide, we also have rules of the demon clan!"

"What rules cannot be changed? You are so absurd, believe it or not, this venerable one killed you!"

"It's useless for you to throw me away. You've also gone around my guide!"

"You...!"

TaXian Jun choked and suppressed his anger.

"All right, forget it!" In the face of great events, endure the sea and the sky for a while.

He also pointed to this cake to defeat his opponent Mo-zongshi.

So he swallowed a lot of dirty words and tried to be calm, but he gritted his teeth and asked, "Then tell this venerable one immediately what you want

to get in order to change it." He pointed to the field that had been built almost. "Better materials than these?"

"I, I can't be wordy..." the baker choked.

The emperor of Taxian jumped violently and broke through his muscles. He said angrily, "Never say that this venerable one really cuts you!"

"Whoop!"

No way out.

In order not to be knocked flat to make sweet-scented osmanthus candy ricecake and eat out, the Cake Tyrant had to sit on the stump, choking, and began to reveal the replacement tips to TaXian Jun.

It took half a day in its pocket with its plump little short hand, pulled out a tattered little book of bark, and handed it to TaXian Jun grievantly. Where else was there a little swaggering in front of Mo-zongshi? TaXian Jun was not polite either. He took the book and turned two pages.

"Goddess of the Flower... This is not good. You can't be glad at Chu Wanning."

"Supreme cook... It's not interesting either. The craftsmanship of this venerable one is much better than that of the cook. No one else has to do it."

Frowning disdainfully for half a day, TaXian Jun was suddenly attracted by one of them.

"Flowering rain - a cloud, will float over the pastoral courtyard after acquisition, constantly sprinkle petals down."

TaXian Jun, who has a delicious taste, read the praise of the festival and said, "Okay, this is good, how can I change this?"

The cake tyrant stretched out his paws weakly and turned a page for him.

Behind it was written the following words:

Exchange terms: living people.

TaXian Jun suddenly opened his eyes: "Living people? Live sacrifice?"

"... Don't think, think so bloodily." The cake tyrant buzzed and said, "Just grab someone and shut them inside the box... Close in, it rains, let go, it rains, it stops. Very literary and civilized!"

"Then why shut people in?"

Cake Tyrant poked his soft little finger with some embarrassment: "Because there is no other person in the box, in fact, the fourth year cake in our village can run around with the door, grab and catch them, so that everyone can visit."

"You demons, visitors?"

Cake Tyrant continued to rub his hands with embarrassment: "Four or four ah."

"That's a great story! How could this venerable one do such absurd things! "

Cake Tyrant: "You can also not change these, these things for living people, are the highest, but you can also change a level of..."

"Wait a minute."

As soon as TaXian Jun heard the highest level, he raised his hand and interrupted it. "Are all the living people the best?"

"Yes, yes."

TaXian Jun snapped shut the bark book and embraced his arms with righteousness and righteousness.

"Whom are you going to catch?"

.

Chu Wanning thought Mo Ran was abnormal these days.

First it was Mo-zongshi, staying awake in the middle of the night, lying naked on the ground and pressing Goutou.

Then it was Taxian-Jun. He confined himself mysteriously in the kitchen for half a day, saying that he was going to make pie, but when lunch time came, he didn't even send out the flour. When he asked him what he had been doing for so long, he answered that he was thinking about life.

What is more odd is that TaXian Jun only appears once in three days. He likes to be entangled with him most on weekdays. Although he occasionally goes downhill in the daytime and makes some secrets of his own, he will come before dinner, and he always carries a jar of good wine or a box of snacks in his hand. Don't be embarrassed and hand them to him.

But today is different. They did not eat the pie at noon, boiled some noodles, and then Taxian-Jun said he had to go out.

Chu Wanning asked, "What do you want to eat in the evening? Let me do it."

TaXian Jun hesitated for a moment. It seemed that he was engaged in a fierce ideological struggle. At last, he said abnormally, "No, this venerable one will come back very late tonight. You don't have to wait. Go to bed earlier."

Chu Wanning open his phoenix eyes wide.

This is...

Seven years itch?

But seven years don't seem to have arrived, or has it passed?

—— That's it. Chu Wanning completely forgot that his birthday was coming.

But in fact, for the former Chu Wanning, birthdays were not a particularly beautiful thing. When he was a child and was with Huai Zhiu in Wubei Temple, in the first few years, he would deliberately give him some small things to play with and pastries on this day. Every time, he was very happy, holding a wooden sword or a sweet snack, looking at the monk, smiling and saying “thank you, shizun. Shizun treats me very well.”

Huai Zhui’s look at that time seemed to be pricked somewhere.

But at that time, Chu Wanning did not know that he was bearing the pain of guilt inside.

Later, from a certain year on, the Huai Zhui suddenly stopped giving him birthday gifts. Of course, snacks and other things often happened. The monk would pull them out by magic from his broad and elegant sleeves, but not necessarily stick to the day of his birthday.

Chu Wanning thought that if he grew up, he would not celebrate his birthday every year.

He asked if it was true to cherish sin. After a while, he looked at the evergreen giant cypress in the Zen Temple all the year round and touched the head of Tanning. He said, "Yes, Tanning is very big. In a few years, it will be a weak crown."

At that time, he did not look into his eyes. When he said these words, he kept looking at the twilight sun.

A bright red reflection on the horizon was in the monk's eyes.

Like blood.

Chu Wanning had no reason to feel guilty. His face was very complex. He was not deep in the world. He had seen many words only in books, but he never found concrete expression in his life. At that moment, he seemed to realize that his guilty face was half cruel and half sad.

He didn't know why Master had such an expression when he mentioned his weak crown, but he just felt blocked and saddened by the sorrow of being guilty.

He stood up, while the guilty man was still sitting next to him. He had the courage to touch the guilty man's bald head and coax the great monk in front of him clumsily.

"Master, don't be unhappy. When I am weak, I will give you my birthday."

There was a stiffness of guilt and then a drop in the head.

Chu did not see his face in the shadows at that time.

Half a time with guilt, he laughed hoarsely and said, "No grown-up man can live this day... It's only a child.“ After a pause, Chu Wanning got up before he could say more.

The broad monk's robes and gowns floated in the evening breeze. At that time, the monk's figure was so tall. When he stood up, he covered all the oblique sunshine bloodstains that fell on Chu Wanning.

"It's not too early. There's something to go out for the teacher. You... Hello, late study."

He left without looking back.

Later, after a long period of more than 20 years, Chu Wanning never received a sentence of "Happy Birthday". No one ever wished him another year, wishing him well for the rest of his life.

Until returning to Nanping.

Until this time, he finally had his own life stability, Mo Ran will sincerely read his birthday, want to make up for the past years. Unfortunately, this concern is too late. Chu Wanning has been used to being forgotten in the loneliness of the past.

He was used to forgetting himself.

Yuheng elder, who can't remember the "birthday" at all, frowned in the courtyard and fell into deep thought. What happened to Mo Ran?

Is there anything he's been unhappy about lately?

Or is there something big going on outside?

Otherwise, no matter whether it was Mo-zongshi or Taxian-Jun, they were both very strange these days...

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Not yet.

Four hours before Chu Wanning's birthday.

Taxian-Jun steadily landed on the beams of the study on the lonely moonlit night, and could not help shouting cheers for himself in his heart. Time is so tight that only he can move freely between heaven and earth. After all, Royal Sword can not be so fast, and can not travel around the world in a short time, but he is different, he will be able to space teleportation.

Taxian-Jun was too proud of himself.

"All over the sky, rain and clouds, need to capture the level of human beings `Esais'- ginger, evening Cen, ginger Tibetan Gate, in order to exchange." Tyrant Cake’s words were still in his ears.

And I was very vigilant and serious at that time and asked, "What is the level of 'Essex'?"

"Then there are four demons." "Cake Ba Heavenly Way," on the four verbose, not hard to catch, four by our demon clan labeled as the thinning of human beings.

Hard to catch?

Taxian-Jun gave a cold hum in his heart.

It depends on who gets out of the horse. For him, it's not difficult to catch Jiang's night sinking.

He looked down from the girders painted with gold and vermilion. Jiang was so happy and quiet at night that he hated being in contact with people. Therefore, there was no boy in the room. He was alone, sitting by the window, reading books.

Jiang Xi has been badly injured since the war and has been in poor health. He was originally a man of manly stature and dignity, but he spent months on his bed and lost a lot of weight. Now he is still very thin, but his appearance is so pale that he is somewhat lacking in authority and shows some morbid decadence and beauty.

But beauty is beautiful. Although Taxian-Jun's aesthetics is not faulty, he knows that Jiang Yechen is a rare beauty, but what's more, he has seen more beautiful people in his life, and he has not learned to pity the jade.

Taxian-Jun, who did not know how to pity Xianyu, looked at Jiang Yechen for a while, finally found an angle, took out the box in his arms, and clicked open the wooden box.——

"Go ahead, you'll have everything in your mind!"

He threw it down like a rainbow and hit the melon seeds in the back of Jiang Xi's head.

In his imagination, the moment the box touches Jiang Xi's head, Jiang Xi should send out a white light, then the "whip" is absorbed by the box quickly, the lid "bang" is closed quickly, the box vibrates and struggles, and finally ends in calm.

Then he recaptured Essex's level of ginger nightfall and could get the clouds.

Unfortunately, when the wooden box was about to touch Jiang Xi, the seemingly sick door of Jiang Zhang suddenly disappeared and swept away. The broad blue and gold clothes on the door flowed with silk and satin, and instantly flashed into the middle of the study.

Perfect evasion!

Things fell to the ground in a box, and Jiang Xi stared at it and raised her head gloomily. "What are you doing?" she said.

Before the word "man" was spoken, Taxian-Jun walked down from the beams and waved his palm. He summoned a scarlet chain of spiritual power and swept straight towards Jiangxi.

Jiang Xi's face changed and her sleeves swept back to avoid the second attack.

Taxian-Jun sneered and said, "Okay, one or two but three. The third time I see you can still run away?"

The so-called "twelve but three" is actually the first recovery of Jiang Zhangmen's serious illness, who was bullied by Xianjun. Jiang Xi had dealt with him in his last life, and he did a lot of tricks under his hands. Finally, he was subdued to violence. But at the moment, Jiang Xi was caught off guard, never killed her breath, and she was still very weak.

Under such circumstances, it is impossible to avoid the third attack of Taxian-Jun.

When the scarlet chain struck again, Jiang Xi could have flicked away, but there was a sudden sweetness in his throat, which just flickered so fast that his sickness surged up and he couldn't help choking.

A master will lose if he makes a mistake.

Jiang nightfall was instantly locked in a chain, lost his center of gravity, and suddenly fell to the ground.

He gasped, raised his apricot eyes, stared at the past fiercely, but when he saw the face of Taxian-Jun, he was shocked: "... Is it you?

"Don't worry, this venerable one won't kill— "

Before he had finished speaking, he heard Jiang Xi angrily say, "Who sent you to humiliate me?"

"How did this venerable one humiliate you?" Taxian-Jun said curiously.

Jiang Xi couldn't break the rope and turned blue with anger. "Did Xue Meng send you here?"

Taxian-Jun was even more surprised: "What is the relationship with Xue Meng? What festivals do you have with him? Why does he humiliate you?"

Jiang Xi bit her thin lips and stopped talking. A few slightly disordered forehead hair hung over his icy pale face. A pair of apricot eyes stared at him in the dark light in the corner of the study.

"... Pop, wait a minute." Taxian-Jun frowned and found that things were not simple. "Why did this venerable one suddenly feel that your eyes are a little familiar with ah?" It seems that there's somebody like you..."

Jiang Xi was stiff. She immediately turned her face, closed her eyes and stopped talking.

Taxian-Jun habitually stretched out his hand to break off his face, but before his fingertips touched Jiang Xi's chin, he suddenly thought that it was not appropriate. This action was somewhat ambiguous. Although he had no other intention but to observe Jiang Yechen's eyes again, he would probably be unhappy if he wished to know in the evening.

So he quickly took back his hand and wiped his fingertips exaggeratedly on his clothes to prove his innocence.

Forget it, who does Jiang Xi look like? Anyway, he is not interested in Jiang Yesheng's affairs.

Grab it and grab it! Put Jiang Xi in a sack and add color clouds to it!

With this in mind, Taxian-Jun turned his suspicion into joy, raised his fingertips and directed Jiang Xi across the chain of spiritual power, drifting in the direction of thinking things into boxes.

How did Jiang Xi ever receive such treatment? "Let me down!" he said angrily.

Taxian-Jun did not listen at all. After commanding the chain, he put his arms around him and laughed playfully. "When you go in, let you go down. The space inside is very wide. You can rest assured that this venerable one is not interested in you. Tomorrow, you finish your task, and the day after tomorrow, this venerable one will set you free."

"You look for death!!!"

Jiang Xi's nose was so angry that she wanted to scold again, but she was chained to the wooden box. The chain circled behind him and poked him on the back.

"Come in, you."

"You...!" Jiang Xi scolded half, suddenly turned the whole into a ray of light, and was absorbed into a box of thoughts by the instantaneous powerful evil spirit.

Taxian-Jun was so proud that he bent over and picked up the wooden box and snorted, "Revolt against this venerable one? It's not like you have to put your hands together.

Just after saying this, he suddenly heard footsteps outside the study, Taxian-Jun for a meal.

Who?

Come and stop at the door, tap softly two times, gentle way: "Father, decoction is ready, you should drink medicine."

Oh... Is it Jiang Yechen's cheap son? Taxian-Jun restrained to smile, which can be a little troublesome, to let dry son see that he tied his father, not to fight with himself?

Although he was happy to fight, it was important to prepare gifts for Chu Wanning's birth. If we can't fight, we should take the best course.

Taxian-Jun thought that before the other party came in, he opened the transmission array and sent himself to the nearby Yangzhou Port.

Outside the study on the lonely moonlit night, Jiang Xi's adopted son knocked on the door for half a day without a response, frowned for a moment, hesitated, and coughed softly. "Please forgive the presumption of the younger generation." Raise your hand and squeak open the door.

After entering the door, he opened his gentle eyes in astonishment and said, "My righteous father?"

I saw only an empty room, a volume of books lying in front of the window, marking the ink was not dry, and Jiang Xi did not know where to go.

No time

There are still three hours to go before Chu Wanning's birthday.

Because of the crowding of people in the streets and alleys, he grabbed the roof of Yangzhou City and took a nap beside the lofty top of Wenfeng Pagoda, where he leaped to the top of Wenfeng Pagoda with golden pink and fluttered clothes.

Down here, you can see the streets far away. It's near evening, pedestrians are knitting on the road, but the top of the tower is very clear.

He yawned, put his arm behind his head, fell on the tile top and looked at the gradually burning clouds in the sky. Very well, Jiang Xi had caught them, and there were flying flowers in the box. Chu Wanning must have liked them.

It's too early for him to catch a few more so-called "Essex" people.

With this in mind, Taxian-Jun reached into his skirt and found an old bark pamphlet of Baba, with a few twisted words on the title page, "Outline of Ethnic Observation". He turned it over and squinted at a few.

"Esais is quite a lot." As he watched, he touched his chin and murmured to himself, "But the writing is too incomplete. It only shows the monks who want to observe Nian Cake, but it doesn't say what they can change if they catch it."

But then he thought, that's okay. Anyway, the cake tyrant said that all these high-level people can get is good stuff. They have energy. They just keep people in cages. This business is not bad.

"Jiang Xi, Ma Yun, Xuan Ji elder..." Looking at each other, I suddenly saw myself and Chu Wanning were among them.

Taxian-Jun was a little angry. He thought that these rogue officials and thieves dared to observe the emperor and the Beidou immortal. What a bold man! But on second thought, if there were no two of them, they would be looked down upon.

With this in mind, Taxian-Jun was angry again.

He roughly read all the people in the booklet "Es Ais", and thought, "This is the nearest Peach Bud Villa. It's better to grab Ma Yun in first and see what can be changed."

As soon as he said that he would do it, he flew down the pagoda immediately, intending to capture the second rare people at Taobao Villa.

But before he opened the space transmission array, he heard a familiar voice behind him: "Hey? Isn't this Mo-xiong?

Taxian-Jun was shocked. He went out in a cloak. Who was so eyesore that a blurred figure could tell his identity?

He suddenly turned around and saw a handsome man with long pale golden hair and Jasper eyes standing outside the painted yellow courtyard wall of Wenfeng Monastery. His skin was a pale ivory color, whiter than the magnolia tree out of the courtyard wall.

A blonde man with deep facial features, lips and hands on his back, leaned against the temple wall and looked at him with a smile.

"Coincidentally, I didn't expect to find Mo-xiong in Yangzhou."

"Snow in plum?"

Mei Hanxue smiled and said, "Well, long time no see."

Taxian-Jun did not like Mei Hanxue. He was stabbed by Xue Meng in his last life. Xue Meng could ignore it, but he was still unhappy with Mei Hanxue, a fellow who was angry with Xue Meng.

But besides Chu Wanning, he was not very interested in other people, and did not understand Mei Hanxue brothers. He could not immediately distinguish the twins from their expressions and gestures.

So he wrinkled his brows and swept his eyes. When he saw that there was only a blonde man here, he asked, "Are you big or small?"

"..." Mei Hanxue is very clever. Naturally, he is different from Taxian-Jun. In a word, with a few expressions, he knows that he has mistaken his personality.

I am afraid this is the personality of Emperor Taxian in his previous life, not the personality of Mo-zongshi, which he is familiar with.

If I knew it, I would not say hello.

But now that the voice has come out, Mei Hanxue has to smile, but the enthusiasm in his eyes has faded a lot. He answered, "I haven't asked Mo-xiong whether he is old or young. Why did Mo-xiong first ask me whether I am big or small?"

"What's old? You are the old one!" said the emperor.

Mei Hanxue shook his head and laughed, "How can you be alone in Yangzhou? What about Chu-zongshi, is he not with you?”

This reminds him of a meal of TaXian Jun.

He came to Yangzhou to catch Jiangxi.

Jiangxi is Ais. It can turn clouds into clouds.

Hey... Wait a minute. Mei Hanxue is Essex too!

Taxian-Jun's eyes are bright. It seems that before he goes to catch Ma Yun, he can catch another rare one first.

"..." Mei Hanxue is very good at observing his words and looks. When he sees his different appearance, he can't help stepping back and vigilantly wanted to take out his weapons. However, Taxian-Jun moved faster than he did, like a black flash of illumination coming close to him.

"Mo-xiong, you --!"

Before Mei Hanxue could say more, he could see that Taxian-Jun opened an ugly wooden box and pressed it against his head.

"What is it?"

Taxian-Jun said, "Put your sack on!"

"Mo-xiong --!"

A golden flash flashed.

Mei Hanxue disappeared.

Taxian-Jun quickly covered the box, the handsome face showed a malicious smile, purple and black eyes flashed the light of ambition, triumphantly said: "Grab another one."

Two.

Where can Mo-zongshi's small wood, small shells and small flowers compare with his Ais ethnic group? Only when Mo-zongshi wins his favor this time can he be a ghost!

He shook the box satisfactorily, opened the transmission array and went to Taobao Villa to catch the third person, Ma Yun.

.

At the same time, inside the box of thoughts.

Mei Hanxue was suddenly snatched in and fell on his knees unsteadily. He got up from the ground, coughed, dusted his robe and looked around with blue eyes.

As far as he can see, there were mountains and rivers, fairylands, trees and grass are different from the rest of the world. Flowers are floating in the sky, lotus ponds are flowing with gold, houses are exquisite and magnificent, and there is also a large field of flowers with the sound of tinkling elegant music.

This place... is... Where?

He looked at it suspiciously, and suddenly saw a man lying on the ground, shackled by chains, humiliated on the ground, stained with dust and unable to move. However, Mei Hanxue had been with numerous people and was very sensitive to good looks. Even though he was very confused

and far away at the moment, he still knew that he was a very beautiful person by looking at his silhouette alone.

Why?

This beauty… is... Who?

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At present, Mei Hanxue always pays attention to her appearance. He brushed the dust off his body, raised his hand and tied up some messy blonde hair, pulled up a neater ponytail behind him to make sure he was not so messy, so he cautiously went to the unfortunate ghost lying on the ground in the distance.

It's not that Mei Hanxue is too calm to be sent to a strange place and cares so indifferently about whether his clothes are wrinkled, his hair is untidy and his partner is beautiful.

It is because he knows that Mo Ran is now under the control of Chu Wanning. It is impossible for him to do anything harmful to nature and reason. Besides, there is no evil and murderous spirit in this place - except for the sad lady lying there.

However, as he approached, he could see more clearly the face of the "beauty" and suddenly opened his blue eyes.

Although it’s dull again, Mei Hanxue was somewhat surprised: "Jiang... Lord?"

Jiang Xi was tightly bound and frowned. He was really a pig. He was so glad to have thrown him in. He forgot to spell it out for him.

Mei Hanxue was speechless for a moment. She quickly walked over and half knelt down to check Jiangxi's condition.

Taxian-Jun's chain is the kind that the other side struggles and gets tighter. Jiang Xi's noble person, of course, has never suffered such humiliation, and

has been trying to break it, but the result is extremely tight. Mei Hanxue noticed that his wrist, which is tied back, has been worn even skin, deep red marks.

"... Lord Jiang?

More disturbing is that Jiang Xi may have been ill and failed to take medicine in time, so at this time he had already passed out. Ren Meihan-xue called him several times, and he did not show any signs of waking up.

Mei Hanxue can't help feeling frustrated. Alas, when I went out today, I really didn't see the Huang Calendar. How could I encounter such troubles?

To be honest, Mei Hanxue is somewhat hostile to Jiangxi. At the foot of the SiSheng Peak, because he could not bear to see Jiang Xi's willingness to accompany those who condemned the summit of death and life, he sneered at Jiang Xi. Mei Hanxue had always been light and breezy. He could not understand Jiang Xi's persistence in power, let alone the way that Jiang Xi was restrained and put up in a high cabinet when he became the Lord of the Ten Gates School.

What's more, Xue Meng and Jiang Xi have always been out of line, and the relationship always seems to be somewhat delicate.

Mei Hanxue is naturally close to Xue Meng, so I don't like Jiang Xi more and more. Otherwise, how could a person with exquisite heart like him before give a cold face to the world's richest man and respectful master so clearly?

Mei Hanxue has some headaches.

Why did Jiang Xi fall unconscious?

No way, no one left or right, he had to take care of it.

Mei Hanxue raised her hand and probed the neck of Jiangxi's collar, which was overlapping. She felt that the pulsation was extremely disordered, and the skin touched was burning fiercely.

Mei Hanxue's heart is not good. He stops and calls out:

"Wake up."

"..."

"Lord Jiang, wake up soon!"

There was no movement.

Mei Hanxue was not optimistic, so he had to sit down on his knees and take his wrist pulse to give him the Kunlun Snow-treading Therapy for a while to ease, but once his spiritual power was lost, Mei Hanxue felt the chaotic Yanyang bumping in Jiangxi's body, which was a kind of fierce magic gas running around him.

Jiang Zunzhu was seriously injured during the war. Although he barely recovered his life, his body gradually became abnormal.

That's what I think.

Fortunately, Mei Hanxue was able to heal the water system. After pressing his dry fire for a while, Jiang Xi finally slowed down a little.

He frowned slightly, his eyelashes trembled slightly, and slowly opened his apricot eyes.

The eyes looked very loose, everything inside was chaotic, and seemed to be suppressing something. Jiang Xi half opened for a moment, closed her eyes again, and in his high voice, tired and tired, "Medicine..."

Mei Hanxue said helplessly, "There is no medicine."

Hearing his voice, Jiang Xi was still drowsy at the beginning, but after a while, he suddenly came to his senses. He suddenly opened his eyes and coughed in a hurry.

"You... Why are you?

"Otherwise who do you think it is?"

When Mei Hanxue asked this question, he realized it first. He looked at Jiang Xi's appearance when she was just awakened, and his tone of command was taken for granted. Ninety-nine times out of ten, she burned her head and regarded herself as someone on his lonely moonlit night.

"I thought you were..." Jiang Xi's dry and pale lips moved, trying to say something, but a wave of evil fire came up, forcing him to shiver slightly, and cold sweat soaked his underwear. Suddenly he closed his eyes, snapped his lower lip, and tried to suppress something.

Mei Hanxue knows that he always loves the limelight, likes face and does not want to be embarrassed.

He must be very uncomfortable to look like that in front of his younger generation.

Although Mei Hanxue did not like him, he did not hate him. Besides, Mei Hanxue was always kind-hearted and did not like to see people suffer, especially beauty suffer.

In her heart, Jiang Xi hates it.

But good looks are really good.

Mei Hanxue sighed and asked, "Lord Jiang, can you sit up?" I'll get you through the cold. You should be more comfortable."

He wanted to help him.

Unexpectedly, Jiang Xi's shoulder had not been touched before he was violently torn away.

Jiang Xi gasped and raised her eyes at once. The apricot eyes were bright and moist. They were like beasts trapped in cages. They were painful and vigilant. He said hoarsely:"... Don't touch me."

"..."

"Get out of my way... Ten feet away... No, the farther the better."

Mei Hanxue said silently, "But you are sick..."

Jiang Xi's forehead was wet and sweaty, and her neck and carotid arteries were beating suddenly. She said angrily, "Do you have any medicine?"

"... No."

"That's not going to go yet?!"

"..."

Mei Hanxue had nothing to say. He thought Jiang Xi was really a wonderful flower. After a while, he talked rationally and not at all. Before that, he also

talked to Xue Meng. After a while, he was very fierce and after a while, he was okay. This man was really... Somehow...

The atmosphere of plum snow and Jiangxi is stiff here. On the roof, Cake Butian Cola blossoms, hiding under lotus leaves and peeping. Good wife! Yes, there are two Es to watch! It needs to look quietly to see if they can fight or not!

Yeah, look in the dark!

As long as it is silent, no one can find it, BAHA ha ha ha!!

.

Not yet.

There are still two hours to go before Chu Wanning's birth.

Xue Meng sat in the palace of Danxin Hall and stared at the unexpected rain.

"What do you mean? I don't understand you."

Taxianjun also turned a wicker which had just been broken from Taobao Villa - when it was really cheap to pick up passengers, he went to catch people, but rushed to empty, the owner of the villa went out to swim in the clouds, not in the villa.

Taxian-Jun thought for a moment, the rest of the "Es Ah", or Xue Meng had better catch, or even do not catch, deception can be.

So he turned around and came to the SiSheng Peak.

Xue Meng stared at him. "What is it that you invite me to play in the box? Are there any mistakes? I have a lot of things on hand. How can I play with you?

Taxianjun mysteriously said, "this venerable one guarantees that you will be surprised when you go in."

Xue Meng was upset when he was approving the files. He had no good way to say, "Mo Ran, do you have -"

Before the word "sickness" was uttered, Xue Meng thought unexpectedly, oh, no!

His birthday is approaching. Mo Ran asked him what gift he wanted before.

So is this ugly box just like...

Congratulations???

Xue Meng looked down at the wooden box on the table between them and turned angry.

Mo Ran said, after entering there is a surprise, that must be his birthday gift! It's too bad that I didn't react immediately and I didn't have a good temper towards ink.

With this in mind, Xue Meng could not help feeling embarrassed and embarrassed.

"Cough..." He coughed softly and said, "You're too... It's too early."

"Morning?" Taxianjun was stunned for a moment. He didn't know what he was talking about, but he responded quickly and kindly, "No sooner, no

sooner. It's too late. Get in now."

Xue Mengba made a couple of mouths, peered at the box secretly and tried to refuse it again with restraint, but his curiosity was strong and he still had the upper hand in hesitation.

Xue Meng, who couldn't help smiling, said, "Xie Lao Ge, then I'll go in."

"?"

Although Taxianjun does not know why, as long as Xue Meng can go in, it is good.

He immediately blushed and said, "You're welcome, please!"

When Xue Meng also turned into a golden light and disappeared, Taxian-Jun clicked on the lid of the box and was very happy -- "the third one."

Only a few hours later, he caught the rare people Jiangxi, Meihanxue, Xue Meng, and the emperor Taxian was still young.

In two hours, he can catch it again!

Xuan Ji and the corrupt wolf on the top of death and life are also the people of "Es Ais". These two can't be let go either!

With great ambition, Taxianjun gathered the wooden boxes into the skirts of his robes, put on his cloak and headed for the residence of the elders.

At this time, the mind is in the box.

Xue Meng stared at everything in front of him, the golden running water, the Yale fields, the rain and the ice crystal windmill.

However, all the wonderful scenery can not shake the two people in the courtyard.

Mei Hanxue, the elder brother of Kunlun Taxue Palace, kneels half in front of Jiang Yechen, Jiang Zhangmen, on the lonely moon night in Yangzhou. He is frowning and talking to him. Jiang Xi...

Xue Meng took a cool breath.

Mei Hanxue actually locked Jiangxi with a chain!

Jiang Xi seems to have been cruelly tortured! His face looks so ugly, his forehead is messy, his cheeks are sweaty and his eyes are flushed. That's what it is.——

Xue Meng suddenly shouted, "Mei Hanxue! What are you doing?!"

Mei Hanxue looked back blankly. When he saw Xue Meng striding towards himself, he felt his nose. Before he was surprised and greeted Xue Meng, he was picked up by Xue Meng with one hand and his skirt on the ground.

Xue Meng pointed at Jiang Xi with another finger, pushed his nose and face, and said to Mei Hanxue, "Who made you do this? You let him go!!!!

Mei Hanxue: "???"

"No, Xue Zhangmen, don't be so excited..."

"Although Jiang Yechen is not a human being, it's not your turn to clean up! Why did you tie him up?"

Mei Hanxue was shocked for a moment and thought it over. He couldn't help laughing and pulling his sleeve: "Xue Ziming... You are really... Well,

what are you thinking about? What am I doing with him?"

In response to him was Xue Meng's angry punch: "How do I know what you tied him up to do?" I'm not as perverted as you are! You still don't let go?!"

"..." Mei Hanxue was scolded for pervert without any reason, and felt very wronged.

Brother, he wants to let it go. Question chain is tied by the immortal monarch, who can untie it?

Just now, Xue Meng and Mei Hanxue were quarrelling with each other, while Jiang Xi closed her eyes and didn't want to look at them. Suddenly, outside the courtyard, there were two loud noises.

Xue Meng turned his head and was shocked again. "Elder Xuan Ji, elder corrupt wolf?"

It was Xuan Ji with a blank face and the angry wolf who appeared in the box of thoughts.

"Why did you come in?"

Tan Lang scolded angrily, "It's not the man who burns the ink. Without saying a word, take a broken box and press it on the forehead of both of us. He's looking for death!"

Xuan Ji sighed, "Then we are here."

Xue Meng: "..."

Xuan Ji looked around and asked, "Where is this?" Lord, why are you here? And Mei Xianjun and Jiang..." Seeing Jiang Xi bound by chains, Xuan Ji's

face suddenly changed and he was surprised and said, "Ah, Lord Jiang?!"

That's all right. The head of the world's largest faction was tied up in such a humiliating way and thrown between the fields. There are still people on top of death and life around. What should we do with this account?

Mei Hanxue, the only one who is not at the SiSheng Peak, touched his nose and said, "I was also transported by my brother Mohist. Although this Lord Jiang Zunzhong was reluctant to talk to me, he should have been captured here by his brother Mohist. That's right." Suddenly he looked at the corrupt wolf elder and said, "Your excellency is the elder who is healed at the top of death and life."

Tan Lang said angrily, "What's the matter?"

Mei Hanxue said, "Lord Jiang seems to be in a bad condition. I am an amateur. I only slowed down a little. Please help him to heal his wounds."

Unexpectedly, Jiang Xi's face turned pale and immediately stopped, "No need."

"But you..."

"Take another time to simmer the fragrance." Jiang Xi closed her eyes, slightly moved her throat knot and slowly breathed in the wet air. "I'll be fine by myself... Not Raul and so on."

Since Jiang Xi had to persist in this way and refused to let anyone touch him, others had no choice but to let him go.

Mei Hanxue and Xue Meng walked through the world created by boxes of thoughts. Mei Hanxue asked, "Why did you come in?"

Xue Mengganba said, "Because this is a birthday gift from Mo Ran to me."

Mei Hanxue was surprised: "Birthday Congratulations?... But your birthday hasn't arrived yet?"

"Send it off early." Xue Mengdao, looking at the landscape and pastoral. Since Xuan Ji and Tan Lang came in, there suddenly appeared stars shining all over the sky. Although it was dusk, the nebulae formed by these magic powers were still shining. In the field, there are also many fragrant flowers, sniffing at the tip of the nose, sweet and pleasant, unlike the common flavor.

"The place is a good place." Xue Meng said, "I don't know why he wants to catch you all."

Mei Hanxue thought for a moment, "Maybe I want to be lively and celebrate your birthday?"

Xue Meng, tired of walking, sat on the ridges of the fields and watched the rolling golden wheat waves, the flying willow catkins and the vast sky.

Xue Zhengyong started from scratch. When Xue Meng was very young, he was very embarrassed at the top of his life and death for some time, but even so, his parents never made up for his birthday.

Almost every year, he is surrounded by praise, favor and congratulations. Xue Zhengyong always gives him the best things he can. Mrs. Wang will cook him a bowl of longevity noodles with full color, fragrance and flavor.

He spent more than twenty years like this, and he was infinitely happy.

Until he had no parents.

For a long time, Xue Zhengyong and Wang Chuqing are like two mountains, across Xue Meng's life, so that he can not see the horror of death and aging, so that he has always maintained a fearless innocence and brilliance.

After they left, Xue Meng's heart lost its shelter, and his pain and cruelty hit his flesh and blood. Suddenly, he understood what is impossible, what is helpless and what is death.

However, because of their unreserved love, Xue Meng, though overconfident and arrogant, always has a heart of gold. In the small phoenix's jumping and shouting body, it is always loaded with kindness, gentleness and compassion belonging to Wang Chuqing, and with integrity, strength and magnanimity belonging to Xue Zhengyong.

This is the fire they left in Shu, which will follow the road of the SiSheng Peak.

Mei Hanxue walked up to him and sat down. The wind blew through his long, pale blond hair. He pushed it to his ear and turned to Xue Meng and said, "That's all... I wish you a happy birthday in advance.

"..."

Xue Meng crushed the earth with his toes meaninglessly and hummed, "Don't care."

"Brother Mo is very careful to make such a beautiful world for you." Mei Hanxue's arms stretched back and a line of geese flew across the sky. He laughed. "If it weren't for his brother, I would think you were his sweetheart. He took so much trouble to prepare gifts for you and surprise you."

Xue Meng hummed again, "Take you in for the birthday celebration. I think it's almost frightening."

Mei Hanxue didn't mind. He laughed and said, "But he's prepared so well that it's better to give you gifts from my brother than to go down..."

When you find yourself losing your voice, shut up immediately.

Xue Meng, the gift-taking maniac, immediately raised his ears. "Mei Hanxue is ready for me, too?"

"... Yeah." That's terrible. I missed my word.

"What did he prepare for me?"

"... I won't tell you."

Xue Meng stared at him, stared for a moment, and felt that it was impossible to pull anything out of Meihan's snowy mouth. He had to turn his face away sadly. He pretended not to be curious and looked at the scenery for a while.

Mei Hanxue asked, "But then again... Why did Brother Mok grab Jiang Yesheng into the box for you? Is Jiang Zhangmen familiar with you?

Xue Meng stiffened for a moment and said, "No. Not at all."

What is Jiang Xi? He is indifferent and ungrateful. He can't compare with his father, Xue Zhengyong. He can't match his mother.

At this time, the elder Xuan Ji shouted at them in the far yard. It seemed that someone had been caught by the ink and thrown in. With the man's entry, a fairy mist was floating in the box.

Xue Meng did not need to discuss Jiang Xi's affairs with Mei Hanxue. He got up and dusted the ashes and strode toward the courtyard.

The evening breeze blew the wheat waves to him, and he paused for a moment, suddenly a slight sour gush came from the bottom of his heart.

He felt that the breeze was like the hands of Mrs. Wang and Xue Zhengyong, gently touching his brows, eyes and forehead.

There will be no more birthday wishes from them.

Xue Meng couldn't help looking down, and his long eyelashes covered the gloom in his eyes.

Mei Hanxue walked up to him and asked with concern, "What's wrong?"

"... Nothing. Xue Meng whispered.

But he thought that he had at least such a warm home, a pair of parents who loved him and spoiled him. They sheltered him from the rain for more than 20 years. They loved him, respected him and protected him every moment of every day. We spent so many unforgettable birthdays with him.

Ch. 350 Fighting for Affection: End

When Xue Meng thought like this, Chu Wanning sneezed in Nanping Mountain.

Not yet.

There is still one last hour before his birthday.

But Chu didn't realize that. He and Mo Ran had been in Nanping Mountain for only two years. In the previous two lives, the tens of millions of years, it was too difficult for him to live. Those who are accustomed to bitterness and suddenly taste sweetness are not so stable or used to it.

—— He is Xue Meng's eye, the kind of person who has never been spoiled.

At least in the past.

It's late at night, and it's going to be midnight soon, but the ink hasn't come back yet.

Chu Wanning stood in front of the green bamboo wood, put on a single dress, held Goutou and looked for a while, but he could not see the Mo Ran. In the evening, when he was dewy, he rolled up his hands, coughed a few times, frowned, and the dog raised his head and patted his side face, making a "whine" pleasant sound.

Chu Wanning looked down and asked, "Are you sleepy?"

"Wow!"

He put it down and said, "Go back to the house and sleep. I'll wait a little longer."

"Whoop!"

Pagoda lanterns woven from bamboo sticks are covered with silk paper, swaying gently under the eaves of the courtyard door. Bright yellow candlelight spreads on Chu's elegant and smooth face, and glitters on his brows, eyes and shoulders, making him look more sharp and gentle than plain. Goutou went to the corner of his robe and barked around him.

"Don't want to go back?"

"Wow!"

Chu Wanning then lifted it up again, pointing its small, wet and cool black nose at the tip of his nose: "Okay, then you can continue to wait with me."

"Whoop!"

But Goutou is not reluctant, Chu Wanning and its communication is not so comfortable, I do not know why each time Mo Ran and Goutou can quickly understand each other's meaning, he is much slower.

He pondered for a while before he realized, "You want me to go to bed, don't stand here?"

"Ouch!"

Goutou was happy because the owner finally understood what he meant. He wagged his tail and jumped in place.

"Wait a little longer."

"Wang Wang Wang!" It's been a long time!

"Don't you want to go back to bed alone?"

"Wang Wang!"

Chu Wanning saw it shaking its head and tail, can not help but think of the day, Mo Ran before leaving with his own words - early rest, do not care about him.

"... Night does not end, when the wings are really hard. Chu Wanning sighed, looking somewhat unhappy. Seeing Goutou pleading eagerly, he finally looked back at the path up the hill, closed his hands behind the yard door, and took Goutou back to the house.

Who knows that sleepiness is not so easy to fall asleep.

Chu Wanning left a lamp for Mo to light up and shake. He curled up in bed with his eyes closed and began to dream dimly. In spite of his usual calm and plain appearance, his body, which bears the souls and memories of two generations, is uneasy in the end.

In the first few months of his retirement from Nanping Mountain, he woke up almost every night.

After a while, I dreamed of the pale face of the emperor Taxian-Jun who was assassinated by Xue Meng in Wushan Hall. It was ghostly and gloomy against the thunderstorm outside the hall.

After a while, I dreamed that outside Tianyin Pavilion, Mo Ran knelt on the ground, blood poured out from my chest and asked him with a choke, saying, Master, have I paid off? Have I been clean?

He dreamed of the death of the SiSheng Peak, of the silence of guilt.

In his dream, he said to him, Chu Wanning, this venerable one hates you very much.

In my dream, it was Nanping Mountain. On that snowy night, Mo Ran said, "Wanning, I will always love you."

But after Mo Ran said this sentence, he slowly lost his heartbeat, leaving him with only one night of sadness and despair. He could not forget the unspeakable feeling at that time. Every time he dreamed about it, he would wake up with his grieving pain. He could not even recognize the geometry of the years. He could not help but rely on the past, repeatedly confirming that the sleepers around him had breathing and heartbeat, and that pain would gradually fade away.

But in the latter half of the night, they no longer slept soundly. From time to time, they wanted to open their eyes, look at their Mo Ran faces, and look at the peaceful sleeping faces of young people today.

Later, he was found so strange by Mo Ran.

That day was the personality of Taxianjun, a lonely man who wandered in the empty Wushan Palace for many years. At a glance, he could understand why Chu Wanning was suffering and why he did not sleep at night. So Taxian-Jun said nothing, opened his arms and held him tightly in his arms.

Over the years, across the flesh and blood, the heartbeat is strong and powerful to pass on to the people in the arms.

Dispel the shadow of nightmare.

Taxian-Jun kissed the top of his hair and coaxed him in a low voice: "... All right. Late Ning, it's all over."

Chu Wanning did not say a word, Xu is dead face, do not want to lose face.

But Taxianjun could feel the wet skirts of his obscene clothes, with warm tears in his heart. Clearly not a hot thing, but let his whole heart are hot, trembling fiercely.

He was in great pain and love, but he didn't know what to do.

He used to possess it roughly and make it difficult.

He clumsily patted Chu's shoulder and back, rubbed his lips against the top of his hair and ears, and finally lowered down to hold his cool lips.

"Wanning, I will always love you."

During the kiss, he murmured to him vaguely. He felt the obvious tremor of the man who had never been cruel in his palm. He could not help it. Then he went to sink with him again with the tender rhyme of the past.

And every day after that, no matter what kind of consciousness, Mo Ran is sleeping with Chu Wanning. Every time before going to bed, I will say once, I will always love you.

Today's sweet will slowly wash away the bitterness of the past.

This sentence, also finally in the ink incapable of repeating, from the other words of death, has become a promise to keep.

For two years, no matter what reason Mo Ran went out alone, he would always come back before dark, because he knew Chu Wanning did not say it, but he did not love the cold night of Nanping Mountain. His brother-in-law needed his company. It's the first time like tonight.

Mo Ran did not go home before sunset for the first time.

Chu Wanning calm good face, will not cross-examine that, but his mouth does not ask, face to be strong, does not mean that he will feel better.

So after such a long time, he fell asleep and fell into a nightmare again.

He returned to that year's Nanping Mountain, the day Mo Ran died.

He dreamed that no matter how he wakes up the Mo Ran, the scar left by Tianyin Pavilion on his lover's chest is so fierce and shocking that he watches over him and chokes...

He kept repeating his lover's name: "Mo Ran..."

Mo Ran.

And in this cold dream, it seems that someone suddenly took his hand and caught it and kissed it gently on his lips.

The man said to him, "Master, it's all right. It's all over."

It's all over...

Chu Wanning felt his eyelashes moist, and when he woke up, he sighed low, calm in his heart, and wanted to sleep again, but suddenly found himself leaning on a familiar warm chest.

He was startled, the blurred point of sleepiness disappeared, the wet curtain suddenly lifted, Feng eyes on the last pair of purple and black eyes.

"Mo, Mo Ran...?"

Mo Ran unexpectedly did not know when it had returned, with some deep night dew on his body, lying beside him. In order not to disturb him, Mo

Ran did not hold him tight to sleep, only carefully grasped his hand, close to him.

When Chu Wanning woke up, he raised his eyebrows slightly.

"Well? Is this venerable one still waking you up?

Chu Wanning also when he wanted to apologize, unexpectedly Taxianjun put his arm around him forcefully: "Wake up just right, simply let this venerable one hold well."

"... Get out of here."

Taxianjun knows that he has not much time left today. He has to fight with Chu Wanning on weekdays. But this time, after he hugged, he went straight in, leaned over Chu Wanning's ear and said with a deep smile, "Roll what, this venerable one has prepared a surprise for you, for fear that you will hurt me too late."

"..."

This man's face is growing with each passing day.

Chu Wanningben nightmare wake up at the beginning, get up heavy, at the moment he was hot and heavy body pressure, not from the sword eyebrows raised, Feng Mou still with the wet and sad dream, but with a sense of sleepiness and anger: "do not sleep in the evening?"

"No sleep."

Chu Wanning more angry: "What do not sleep?"

Taxian-Jun lifted his chin, rubbed it carefully, and his eyes wandered from his eyebrows to his slightly opened lips.

The man in his bosom is obviously somewhat fierce and imperfect, but for two lifetimes, every time he looks at him, he feels hot and secretly happy. Once upon a time, he refused to admit it, but in fact, he always knew in his heart that only this person could make him feel like a fire in an instant.

Want to hold him, kiss him, want him. It hurts to bully him, but it hurts him terribly.

Nowadays, I feel that although there are many beautiful people in the world like clouds, all the clouds gathered together are less than half an inch of the glory of his evening tranquility. He looks good when he's murderous, but he looks good when he's angry, and he looks good when he's angry.

Taxian-Jun then laughed and said, "There are still many things to do if you don't sleep in the middle of the night. Didn't all of you have been taught by this venerable one?"

Chu Wanning: "....."

Seeing that he was sleepless, angry and helpless, he stepped in the heart of the Immortal Emperor and couldn't help bowing his head and kissing him.

"Mo Ran-!"

"You're kidding." After a kiss, Taxian-Jun touched the tip of his nose intimately. "The time for this venerable one is coming, today you owe this venerable one, and ask you to come back in three days."

"..."

"Tonight the only thing we want to say is..." Taxianjun paused for a moment, laughed, dimples deep on the cheek side, three points of evil and seven points of pity:

"Happy Birthday, Wanning."

Chu Wanning was suddenly stunned.

At this time, the distant Jingci Temple bell sounded leisurely. It was the alternation of childhood and bamboo leaves.

At the end of 1911.

At the beginning of the year.

Mo Ran pupils still have Taxian-Jun’s pride, but can not say anything, and has changed into the gentleness of Mo-zongshi. Mo-zongshi slowed down and adapted to the memory of yesterday shared with him by fate. He felt puzzled and did not know what he had done under the condition of Taxian-Jun for a moment.

But seeing the person in front of me is my sweetheart, after the Mo Ran slightly, my heart is full of joy, so I lean against Chu's forehead and whisper, "Ning."

"Well?"

"Happy Birthday."

After thinking about it, he said, "I have prepared a gift for you."

He had planned to do some repairs in the daytime tomorrow, and then led Chu Wanning to think things into boxes. But he did not think that when he

switched back, Chu Wanning had not fallen asleep, nor did he think that he would naturally say this sentence.

He had too much sweetness for Chu Wanning, as if he couldn't bear it for a moment or at all.

It is clear that he has lived for two generations. He has married twice in real and false. His past life lasts for eight years day and night, and his present life has been accompanied for two years. But at this time, he is like a rash young man who shows his heart by offering treasures to his beloved for the first time. He is impatient, even sweating at his fingertips and trembling slightly.

"I... I haven't finished all of it yet, but... Shall I show you around first?

Chu Wanning then thoroughly reflected that today was his birthday.

In fact, Mo Ran was busy in the daytime for congratulations and did not go home.

When he lost his confusion, he was amused and guilty. He couldn't help raising his hand and holding his Mo Ran face, and his heart was soft.

"You've been busy for so long. You're busy with this."

Smile when Mo Ran.

"Does Master want to see it now?"

Chu Wanning sat up, gathered his long black hair, and followed his meaning: "Okay, what are you prepared for?"

"An extraordinary surprise."

Mo Ran said, led Chu to their courtyard, dog head sleeping soundly, face buried under his paws did not wake up. Mo Ran dived into the grass, intending to dig out his thoughts before hiding here into a box.

However,——

A scream pierced the silent night of Nanping: "Come on! Where's my box?!!!!!!

The dog continued to sleep peacefully.

Nothing happens, the head of the dog says, you can never wake up a sleeping dog, bah ha ha ha!

It took me a long time to close my eyes and try to recall what happened when I was a stepper. After thinking about it for a while, it finally reminded me of some memory fragments.——

Set a sack for Jiang Xi.

Cover Xue Meng with sacks.

Give Mei Hanxue a sack of hemp...

It's over, it's all fucking over!

Chu Wanningwei frowned and asked, "What's wrong with you?"

Mo Ran embraced his head: "I... It seems that I did some very absurd things yesterday..." He said he was looking around the house, and finally he found a box of ideas from his own pocket.

"Are you going to give this to me?"

"Originally, it was..."

"Now?"

Now... Now I'm afraid I don't know what's going on inside.

Mo Ran throat is gathering, want to leave Chu Wanning outside, oneself go to see first. But the helpless words have been spoken out, and it is not appropriate to leave the Master and enter the box alone at this time, so I have to pray in my heart that I did not make the box overturn yesterday. He was hard-headed.

"Now I can't explain it for a while... Anyway, let's go in and have a look first.

When Mo Ran and Chu Wanning entered the box of thoughts, they were both shocked by the present situation. Especially Mo Ran, when he left the day before yesterday, the box was still a normal place, but at the moment, his house was rebuilt and repaired, and there were many more glittering and magnificent ornaments.

In addition, the sky is flying, clouds and mists are dim, wheat waves are rolling, and nebulae are scattered in the sky... Originally, it was very interesting and there were white mountains and rivers in the countryside. It was filled with colors stiffly, and it was too dazzling to teach people how to cope with them.

Where is the Pillow Water Family?

It's the style of the local landlord!!

What's more, five wooden shelves were erected in the flower fields of the small courtyard. They were tied up by Jiangxi, Meihanxue, Xue Meng, corrupt wolf and Xuan Ji, like five scarecrows.

Chu Wanning looked at the five sacrificial-like people, some frozen: "... This is... You're going to give me... Gifts?"

Mo Ran was shocked. He turned to peep at Chu's face. After reading it, his heart was beating like a drum. He hurried and said, "Master, no, it's not what you saw!" That's not what I did!"

Before the words fell, a soft rice cake jumped from the roof.

Tyrant cake flickered his small tail with bright blue lights, came out clattering, looked up at his head, flashed stars, and stretched out two small claws towards Chu Wanning. "God, God Muxian Jun!"

However, before embracing Chu Wanning, he was lifted up by Mo Ran's hands around the creaking nest. Mo Ran almost collapsed, shaking it hard: "Batian cake! What the hell's going on here?'

"Huh?" Tyrant cake did not respond to the Mo Ran personality has been switched again, very confused, "Then, then, you seized four of your own Es Ah-level people? Come and exchange the idyllic landscapes! "

"..."

Mo Ran his forehead and jumped suddenly. After a long silence, he finally understood.

Suddenly he closed his eyes and wished he could not lift his hand to kill himself.

—— What on earth did he do all day yesterday!!!

Taxianjun is fighting for favor with himself again!

There was nothing to say to him. Xue Meng, who was tied up on the wooden frame, was mad and shouted, "Mo Ran!" You dog! What the hell are you doing? You're going to let me down! "

Tyrant cake twinkled his eyes and looked at Xue Meng and them for a moment. He explained to Mocifier, "This is what you did an hour ago. You caught five Ais in total. I'm afraid they would make trouble in it. So you just tied them up after the capture."

Mo Ran: "..."

Xue Meng was still shouting, "Master! Teacher saves me!”

Chu Wanning Fu sleeve: "... Look at what you've done!"

After that, he immediately went forward and untied them one by one from the bondage of the immortal monarch.

After everyone was released, Xue Meng rubbed his red-tied wrist, which was very grieving and very inexplicable: "Mo Ran!" You, you and you, what the hell are you doing?!"

"Yes." The corrupt wolf elder was not very angry. "Why do you want us to come to this box?" Say and glance at the ricecake essence, "What is this tofu ghost thing?"

The cakes overlord protruded furiously and said, "Save, Save! Lao Tzu's Four Years Cake!! Not four beancurds!"

Mei Hanxue and Xuan Ji did not say a word, but their eyes were also inquiring about the intentions of Chu and Mo.

Jiang Xi's face was so gloomy that he tidied up his expensive and delicate sleeves, smoothed out the wrinkles one by one, then raised his eyes, and said, "You'd better give Jiang an explanation."

Mo Ran wants to pass by, raises his hand and laughs, "Er, this is just a misunderstanding, sorry..."

"Excuse me?" Jiang Xi sneered. "I'm sorry it's worth money."

"..."

He narrowed his apricot eyes and said rudely, "Mo-zongshi, do you know that I have a business to discuss with Huohuangge today?"

"I, I compensate..."

"Ninety million Golden leaves, you compensate?"

Mo Ran: "..."

Xue Meng was also angry. "Didn't you say you wanted to surprise me?" I thought it was... Yes..." It's a birthday gift for me - it's embarrassing to say it again anyway, even in retrospect.

Xue Meng finally said angrily, "What on earth are you doing?"

Mo Ran was questioned by a group of people around Xingshi. Gradually, it became overwhelming and had to apologize. But these people themselves have no bad relations with them, but they are provoked to seek an explanation, which is inexplicable, and naturally endless. Mo Ran just don't know what to do. Suddenly I heard Chu's Wanning Road beside me.

"I'm sorry, but I didn't manage another kind of spleen."

The mountains and rivers were quiet in the countryside.

Only Tyrant cake was excitedly clacking and clapping his feet around Chu Wanning.

Mo Ran back and said, "Master..."

"I will try to compensate for the delay, and I hope you will forgive me."

Xue Meng waved his hand and said, "Teacher, Master, I don't mean that... I just wonder...

After that, he turned to Jiangxi and said, "Hello! You and your ninety million golden leaves can't rest on my master. I and my master have no money..."

Jiang Xi: "..."

The world's richest man seems to have ignored Xue Meng's words and stared at Mo Ran for a while. His sharp eyes turned to Chu Wanning again.

As soon as he wanted to say something, he saw the Mo Ran blocked in front of Chu Wanning and said in a hurry, "Lord Jiang, I will try to make up for it. I also ask you not to embarrass my teacher today, first and foremost. Because... Because..."

Mo Ran hesitated, the voice gradually faded down, and finally whispered, "Because today... Today... In fact, it's my teacher's birthday..."

Jiang Xi: "..."

"He never had a good birthday, so... Jiang Zunzhu's loss, I will try to make up for, personally go to Huohuangge to apologize for anything, you can."

The youth blocked between him and Jiang Xi, almost pitifully: "Just ask Jiang Zunzhu Haihan tonight, will you?"

Today is Chu Wanning's birthday?!

That's why everyone here was shocked. Xue Meng was particularly shocked, his face was like gold paper, his lips were open and closed for half a day, but he couldn't say a word. Chu Wanning did not expect Mo Ran to tell the story, but for a moment did not know what to do.

Finally, Tan Lang, who was not quite in line with Chu Wanning, broke the silence. He heard the words and held his chest with both hands. "Yuheng, no, what did you send your apprentices to catch us all for your birthday?"

"No, no!" Tyrant cake explained that the little claw pointed to the Mo Ran. "He grasped and grasped you, four or four because you four Esais class people can change very good instruments to decorate the idyllic mountain dwellings in Zeli!"

Xue Meng was shocked and said, "Take us for a changer?"

Mei Hanxue touched her chin and responded: "... No wonder every time a person comes in, the effect here will add one more weight. It was because of this."

Only Jiang Xi felt incredible, angry and flicked his sleeve: "... It's really sick to talk about love!" Looking at the Mo Ran again, he made a diagnosis without hesitation. "Mo-zongshi, you are so ill that you may be hopeless and hopeless!"

Mo Ran laughed and went to Lachu's hands. "There's no cure for it."

Jiang Xi could hardly bear it. She turned her head and held her hand. She was silent for a moment. She caught a glimpse of Xue Meng staring at Chu Wanning. She seemed to be embarrassed that she, as a disciple, had almost missed her teacher's birthday, and was blaming herself for not being able to give Chu Wanning salute.

Jiang Xi's eldest brother was impatient. He thought Xue Meng was really disgraceful, but he was not easy to attack. He also took Xue Meng for a moment and was silent. Finally, he said, "Forget it. But ninety million Golden leaves."

Mo Ran: "???"

Xue Meng: "???"

"There's no need to pay for it. It's not enough to shine shoes."

Mei Hanxue: "..."

Chu Wanning: "..."

Xue Meng: How dirty are your shoes?

Jiang Xi turned around and looked like a sudden flash of electricity. He sneered and said, "Xue Jianmen does not speak. Nobody treats you like a dumb man."

"You --!"

In the midst of the uproar, the whole story of this absurd farce was explained clearly, and the birth of Chu Wanning was eventually known by these people. Although in the end they all said they would not tell the

story, nor tell others when the birthday of Beidou Xianzun was, now that they have gathered, they will naturally stay to celebrate.

According to Xuan Ji, this is also fate.

When the baker saw the people in a harmonious atmosphere, he felt that he had completed the appointment in the ricecake Village. He moved over happily and wanted to make a lively gathering. But Xue Meng turned around and stared at it.

"Mo Ran, this is the little monster you said you caught in the back hill?"

Mo Ran laughed and said, "Yes."

Xue Meng felt his chin and looked at it carefully. "It's really made of sweet osmanthus sugar cake."

"I, I and I are the prettiest babies in our village!" The Baker flicked his blue tail lamp.

"Coincidentally, I am the most beautiful kid in the lower repair circle."

Tyrant cake: Let's make friends then.

Xue Meng: Then I'll cook you and eat you.

One man, one demon and one demon at the same time speak out, the cake tyrant is stiff, the little foot Ya quickly retreats two steps, pauses for a moment, turns around and runs: "Xue Meng is not four people ah!" Help! Monk Monster!! Ouch ah ah!!!

Xue Meng burst into laughter and finally revenged himself for being caught and tied up as a scarecrow.

In this silent night, there are many old friends gathered in the box. On intimacy, it is not all intimate with Chu Wanning, but as Xuan Ji said, it is probably a kind of fate.

In this case, all of us have come, and we are not tired of making such a noise. We simply boiled a night in the Happy Mountain Residence, set off fireworks, and sat around a table in a lively way for a drink next month.

The golden pond picks up the fish, the rice wind blows away the late smoke, and the millet is washed like pearls, and boiled in a pot. Sweet meal fragrance drifted away between the ridges. Mo Ran down the kitchen. The pot was hot and the stir-frying was very sharp. The fire under the stove lit up when the pot was turned, reflecting his bright face.

When he looked back, he saw Xue Meng and Xuan Ji talking outside in the evening. Xuan Ji and the corrupt wolf were helping to pick the fresh fruit of the demon race. Jiang Xi was walking in the field waiting for dinner. Mei Hanxue was teasing the demon playing the piano among the flowers to teach them Kunlun melody.

Mo Ran in a sudden good mood.

Although he wanted to monopolize everything in Chu's evening, his teacher was so good, he wanted to make him get a few more wishes, three or two company. Yesterday's own miscalculation of Yin and Yang, thus fulfilled his wish.

Think of things into a box, peach blossom flowing water eel fat, Mo Ran smooth fingers will be white tender and plump shoots on the desk, fine cut into silk, and fern with the overheated soup boiled, is patiently handling fresh fish and shrimp, bamboo curtain behind a fall, Chu Wanning came in.

"The Master waited a little longer and soon finished."

"No hurry. I'll bring them some melons and fruits to the yard."

Mo Ran laughed and said, "OK."

Chu Wanning went to the corner of the kitchen to pick up a pile of fresh and sweet fruits in a small basket of bamboo baskets. When I got there, I suddenly found that there was also a porcelain jar with a seal on it. It was not embarrassing to write "Happy Birthday".

He pinched it down and looked at the brush strokes, which were obviously left under the personality of Taxianjun.

Chu Wanning opened the sealed pottery altar and could not tell what was in it. Qidao said, "This is...?"

Mo Ran to see, "ah" a sound, laughing: "Carmine pear flower goose preserve, really made a success?"

"What is that?"

"It's a dish I've worked out under another personality. It takes quite a lot of time to make it. First, we need to marinate goose meat with salt, then wrap it in lotus leaves and steam it in the kettle, and then the spring water is colder and put it into the well water ice. After the ice is finished, it is sealed in the altar and brewed with pear blossoms. He said, take out the goose meat from the jar, and end it with the fragrance of wine, cool and drunk.

"Looks like it's all in one's mind and ready to go." Mo Ran weighed the degree of goose curing and laughed, "Not all bad things."

Said the fat and rich goose meat on the ginkgo cutting board, fingertips pointed to the full goose breast, sliced the meat, only to see that soaked pear blossom white and salt salted goose color like rouge, flesh rich and tender.

Mo Ran thought for a moment and said to Chu Wanning, "Master, look in the sauce cabinet again, there should be another sauce jar."

Chu Wanning went and found a yellow glazed pot with seals on it. It was still not embarrassing and awkward to write five words.

"I have my seat for the rest of my life."

Chu Wanning shook his head, but felt infinitely quiet and gentle in his heart.

He handed the pot to Mo Ran and watched him ladle out a pickle sauce carefully prepared by Xiaobamboo ladle and Taxian-Jun yesterday. The sauce was carefully poured on the carmine goose which had been packed. The sauce opened along the texture of goose meat and collided with the wine, which produced a strong peculiar fragrance.

Chu Wanning said, "How did you come up with such a dish?"

"You don't feel hot in the summer. Once you didn't take a few bites of what I cooked... Do you remember?

He said that Chu Wanning remembered that not long ago, Taxian-Jun patted his head and cooked a table of delicacies. But he was tired of the heat and did not eat much. Although Taxian-Jun did not say anything in the end, he did look disappointed that day.

"I think it's sad that I can't even take care of the taste of the people I like." Mo Ran smiled and turned around, sleeves pulled around the elbow. "So I thought about it day and night, and went outside to steal a restaurant teacher, and finally came up with such a dish."

He looked at the roll of carmine pear blossoms brewed goose preserves, with some treasure-giving fears, and with some meritorious expectations, carefully asked:

"Would Wanning like it?"

Chu Wanning was quiet for a while, and then laughed.

He put away the two notes left by yesterday's Mo Ran. He picked up the plate of carmine goose with clear sebum, fresh meat and thick sauce and went to the kitchen hall. Before serving out the dishes, he turned to the handsome young man standing at the kitchen counter and said, "... Thank you, Mo Ran."

Thank you for your past life, for your personality and for your soul. Thank you for being here.

Thank you for giving me the best birthday of my life.

I used to have a teacher, but the celebration at that time was not sincere. In the past, you had a wife, but the days were too bitter to eat even a full meal.

Now that all this is over, I will always remember the day when you were born, the day when I was still in the Zen Temple, and I don't know what the world is like, nor do I know that there are people who will spend their lives with me.

But every year after that, I will accompany you.

From now on, with you.

The banquet was not luxurious, but Mo Ran craftsmanship was rarely tasted by others. He was good at cooking. This table was made for Chu's birthday banquet. It was delicious and unusual. Even Jiang Xi, who was accustomed to the delicacies of mountains and seafood, opened his apricot eyes slightly and looked a little surprised across the wine table.

It seems that Jiang Xi would like to ask Ink-burn whether he would like to go back to cook with him on a lonely moonlit night, accompanied by a frightening salary price.

However, Jiangxi was a smart man. He took a look at Chu Wanning and swallowed the invitation back. He was a little nauseous, and thought that in his lifetime it was necessary to develop a medicine that could completely cut the roots of human relations.

It's really sick to talk about love. Looking at the case of Mo Ran, you know that a good cook delays love.

Forget it, eat a few more pieces of meat, there will be no chance in the future.

Jiang Xi lowered her eyes quietly, and her chopsticks stretched gracefully and quickly.

At the banquet, Xue Meng suddenly caught a glimpse of small white shadows flashing in the fields. He thought he was dazzled, rubbed his eyes and looked closely, so that he could not make a sound of "ah".——

"Years of cakes!"

They ran very fast, peeping among the grasses, fields, ridges and rocks, doing their interesting "human observation", but they were reluctant to let them see their own features, only shaking the little blue light on their tails, making a slight creak. Only the most beautiful cub, Batian, stood on a tree that Xue Meng could not grasp easily, and translated the evil words between the grass and the grass into words.

Although, its Mandarin is also very miserable.

"Shenmu xianjun, Sen Censen Day Joy!"

Xue Meng stared at it: "Is it birthday?"

"Do you want a gift? I am proficient in human language! Verbose words are not wrong, very standard!"

Mei Hanxue laughed and held on to Xue Meng, who was also shouting at the baker, "You don't understand. It's really hard to practise mandarin. Don't laugh at it. It's a lovely ricecake."

Xue Meng looked back at him again and said, "If you have something to say, don't pull me!"

In the midst of the bustle, there are Nian Cake geniuses on the opposite hill that ignite the fireworks of the devil tribe. The brilliant fireworks explode in the night. In the starry sky, the colorful flowers are really scattered all over the mountains.

Xuan Ji saw the situation and felt that the atmosphere was just right. He raised his wine and laughed at Chu Wanning and said, "Yuheng, happy birthday."

Chu Wanning first responded to such battles, do not know how to answer, stiff under the unexpectedly answered: "You are the same."

Xuan Ji stared, opened his eyes wide, wanted to laugh but did not dare to laugh.

"Happy Birthday." Tan Lang grunted.

"... Thank you very much.

Mei Hanxue wanted to follow his wishes and was dragged to the back by Xue Meng. He rushed to say, "I'll come first, I'll come first!" Shizun! Wish you a happy life, peace and joy, always come to see me at the SiSheng Peak!”

"Naturally, it will come. I miss your birthday for a long time. He prepared it for you a month ago.

Before the word "gift" was uttered, he was interrupted by Mo Ran coughing.

Chu Wanning: "... Nothing was prepared."

As a matter of fact, the Master of Mind and Taoism would not lie, so it would be better not to say so.

Jiang Xi also bowed his hand and said lightly, "Master Chu, Xianfu Yongheng, congratulations."

Xue Meng pouted his mouth and hugged his chest and said, "What congratulations do you offer? You give money."

Everyone said good wishes, Chu Wanning embarrassed, he is not used to - no, should say do not know how to face such a blessing.

After all, I never got it.

At this moment, Mo Ran quietly grasped his sweaty hand under the table, which was slightly wet due to nervousness. Mo Ran laughed in his heart. Sure enough, the Master was calm and calm on his face. In fact, his fingertips trembled slightly.

He clasped Chu's hand tightly, clasped ten fingers with it, and delivered the tenderness in this grasp, slowly smoothing Chu's uneasiness.

Mo Ran looked at him, in the wind and wheat waves, under the starry night, in the drifting rain and magnificent fireworks, solemnly said: "Ningxia."

"..."

The ink burst into laughter, and the dark purple eyes carried the deep feelings of the two generations.

This time, in the brilliant stars and rivers.

"I wish you... Happy Birthday, and good for the rest of my life."

-

For thirty years, the two worlds are intertwined.

In the brilliance of the spark tree and the silver flower, Mo Ran eyes are bright and moist. His face was filled with the sincerity of Mo-zongshi, the

paranoia of Taxianjun, and the gentleness and obedience of the young man who was standing in front of the Tower.

They walked for two lifetimes, and finally came to this idyllic fairy house, pillow water in the south of the Yangtze River. There are Chan sounds in Nanping, bells in the evening temple, and the two generations are crossing. Their robbery has gone through, but their fate is still deeply entangled and they are inseparable.

He and he eventually calmed down.

In that year, I regretted that I was late to realize your kingdom and that I had a peaceful life for the rest of my life.

This voice "Happy Birthday, Happy Remaining Life". Mo Ran knows that he will tell Chu Wanning all his life.

Till it's snowy and frosty.

He will keep his fire. He keeps him, and so does he.

They may not be the best people in the world, the most beautiful people, the richest people, the greatest, the most powerful and broad-minded people, but for Mo Ran, Chu Wanning is no match.

The same is true for Chu Wanning. No matter what fragment the Mo Ran, what kind of personality, what kind of life, there is no need to argue. Those are the souls that have gone through two ups and downs together with him. They are the wounded and fragmented lover who wants to protect him. He will always love him deeply, illuminate him, love him and spoil him.

A lifetime.

I have given all I have, and I will give all I have—

Love you.

Notes

[←1]

The original text is a pun on the slang for bastard, ‘Wang Ba’, which means turtle. The character for ‘Wang’ is the same as the word for ‘King’, which is probably why Mo Ran thought it was clever.

[←2]

The original text is a pun on the slang for cock, penis, dick, ‘Ji Ba’. Both ‘Cease Battle’ and ‘Cock’ have the same pronunciation.

[←3]

The original text adds another pun ‘Yuan’ to the cock pun. ‘Yuan’, different characters, same pronunciation, means “The First of” and “Ball” respectively.

[←4]

The original text is a pun on the pronunciation for ‘Nobly Chaste’, which sounds exactly like ‘Steamed’

[←5]

The art of manipulating qi so that one is weightless and light on one's feet

[←6]

乐坊 is an establishment where girls sing, dance, and/or play instruments to entertain the patrons, and sometimes sell their bodies. Think, the Hollywood Memoirs of a Geisha film

[←7]

The first line of《折杨柳》by 张九龄, a Tang dynasty poet

[←8]

Chu Wanning's title: 晚夜玉衡 Yuheng is Ursa Major, and 北斗仙尊 Beidou Xian-Zun is the Holy Grace of the Big Dipper

[←9]

Yanluo Hall - 阎罗殿 Yanluo is the king of hell

[←10]

Naihe Bridge - 奈何桥 The bridge between life and death, one must cross it to be reborn

[←11]

Mengpo Hall - 孟婆堂 Mengpo is hell's soup lady, she distributes soup to people before they are reborn, the soup erases the person's memories from the past

[←12]

Save face = 要脸, pronounced as Yao Lian, same as the disciple's name

[←13]

it's an ahoge...he grew an entire ahoge...

[←14]

贤慧 wise and kind in a wife kind of way

[←15]

夜游神 Ye You Shen, lit. night-wandering deity

[←16]

孤月夜 Gu Yue Ye - Lonemoon Night

[←17]

嘴刑 lit. mouth punishment

[←18]

公公 eunuch; royal servants were typically eunuchs in ancient China

[←19]

太上大萝卜天仙基佬紫长生圣吱昭灵捅师**尊**证王八攻戏精总管五雷轰顶大蒸人臭不要脸境界踏仙帝君... it’s a multitude of puns on the taoist name of JiaJing Emperor

[←20]

forgotten your place

[←21]

囍 character symbolizing fortune, specifically associated with marriage

[←22]

道长: polite address for cultivators

[←23]

轻功 a technique for speed and lightness, including allowing one to walk on water

[←24]

囍 fortune, typically associated with marriage

[←25]

金童玉女 attendants of Daoist immortals with childlike appearances

[←26]

海棠花 crab-apple blossom, crab-apple looks too stupid in english i cant

[←27]

白帝水 - Water from Sichuan. The White Emperor reigned over the Sichuan area, which is the current story setting.

[←28]

“扇” and “善” both pronounced shan

[←29]

The groom and bride share a piece of meat, symbolizing the start of a life together

[←30]

The groom and bride each drink half of their cup of wine, then exchange and down the rest

[←31]

Where the consummation happens

[←32]

Metaphor for a beautiful woman

[←33]

[白無常] “White Impermanence” is one of the two Greeters of Death who collects deceased souls and brings them before the King of the Underworld for judgement. One black, one white, although they show up in pairs, the innocent will be collected by the white and the sinners will be collected by the black. The girl asked if CWN is the white one meaning she believes herself innocent

[←34]

Orig text: 老子 aka chinese equivalent of ore-sama

[←35]

The Yangko dance, also called twisting Yangko dance, is a traditional Chinese folk dance commonly performed in the Northern provinces of China

[←36]

七日回魂 a person's spirit returns to the world of the living on the seventh day after their death

[←37]

聘礼 gifts to the bride’s family

[←38]

囍 marriage symbol, for fortune and happiness

[←39]

Engagements are arranged by the parents of the couple before the man goes to the woman's house to propose with betrothal gifts

[←40]

大哥 big brother

[←41]

小妹 little sister

[←42]

阎罗 King of the Underworld

[←43]

姐姐 older sister

[←44]

Proverb, more or less meaning that a death wasn't someone's direct fault, but indirect

[←45]

阴阳合欢散 - common name for a type of aphrodisiac in wuxia/xianxia novels

[←46]

Poem translation from https://zhidao.baidu.com/question/49775727

[←47]

钗头凤 poem by Song dynasty poet Lu You, who was forced by his mother to leave his wife

[←48]

师美人 Shi meiren (beauty), a play on Shi Mei's name

[←49]

湘潭 city in Hunan

[←50]

仙君 xianjun- a respectful form of address for a cultivator

[←51]

“墨烧？墨煮？墨……鱼？” - he remembered the surname 墨 Mo but couldn’t remember the given name; 烧 Shao, meaning to burn/to grill, is close-ish in meaning to his actual name 燃 Ran, meaning to burn/ignite; 煮 Zhu, to boil; 鱼 Yu, fish (Mo Ran’s courtesy name is 微雨 Weiyu meaning small/light rain, but Meatbun in her author notes calls him 喂鱼 Weiyu meaning feed fish)... Shizun, are you just hungry?

[←52]

坏水 lit. bad waters, refers to vices and wrongdoings.

[←53]

黑猫警长 - A famous 80s cartoon from mainland China.

[←54]

vinegar is sour ;)

[←55]

踏仙君 Taxian literally meaning to step on immortals/cultivators

[←56]

It was commonly believed that, by default, people get reborn after death

[←57]

三跪九叩 lit. kneel three times and kowtow nine times, the most respectful formal etiquette on meeting the emperor

[←58]

轻功 ability that allows one to be light of foot, used for running/jumping/water treading etc.

[←59]

吃豆腐 - Eating someone's tofu means to take advantage of said person, commonly used to describe sexual harassment

[←60]

Shen is a star in the Western skies, Shang is a star in the Eastern skies

[←61]

宗师 Zongshi, a prominent and distinguished individual recognized for excellence in a field; note that this will be used as a title later on, e.g., Chu-zongshi

[←62]

Ancient Chinese folklore, the nine sons are different animals each with their own personalities and likes/dislikes

[←63]

里 li, approx = 500m, 100 li = 50km

[←64]

两 liang, approx = 50 g

[←65]

钱 qian, = 1/10 of a tael = 5 g

[←66]

Elemental here is a bit different from the Western meaning, and refers more to the five types of chi/spiritual energy: fire/mars, water/mercury, wood/jupiter, metal/venus, and earth/saturn

[←67]

天之骄子 fancy way of referring to someone who's both privileged and talented; exaggerated compliment

[←68]

鲲鹏 Kunpeng, giant fish/bird hybrid

[←69]

窶鼠 Xishu, giant rat in folklore

[←70]

Gay; originates from a folklore about an emperor who cut his sleeve off because he didn't want to wake his male lover who was sleeping on it

[←71]

Younger martial sister

[←72]

基佬紫 - lavender purple that represent homosexuality

[←73]

伏羲 Fuxi, name of the Heavenly Emperor

[←74]

麒麟 Qilin, a mythical one-horned, hooved beast

[←75]

蟠蝂 Fuban, a bug in folklores that carries heavy things

[←76]

天问 Tianwen | Heavenly Inquiry - To inquire about the enigmatic questions in life at the heavens

[←77]

九歌 Jiu’ge | Nine Songs - Songs that are addressed to deities and fallen heroes (There are a total of eleven pieces. Why is called nine songs? ¯_(ツ)_/¯)

[←78]

怀沙 Huaisha | Embracing Sand - To drown oneself by sinking into water while embracing sandstone

[←79]

Shizun's weapons are named after pieces in "Verses of Chu", a collection of poetry by Qu Yuan from the Warring States Period. Tianwen and JiuGe are main pieces while HuaiSha is a sub piece

[←80]

不归 Bu'gui - No Return

[←81]

龙城 Longcheng - Dragon City

[←82]

紫电青霜 lit. purple lightning and blue frost, name of a famed sword

[←83]

凤鸣焦尾 lit. phoenix cry scorched tail

[←84]

古琴 long zither instrument

[←85]

琵琶 chinese lute

[←86]

Willow branch symbolizes the ache of parting, and is given as a parting gift. Also, Tianwen is a willow branch

[←87]

The writing is actually 血滴漏 blood hourglass, but Mo Ran doesn't recognize the words, only parts of them, so he read it as 皿古雨

[←88]

Double Eleven - Chinese black friday

[←89]

An excerpt from a poem; Jiangnan is a southern province that boasts of beautiful spring sights.

[←90]

磨剪刀叻，饿菜刀~ A rhyme sung by people who walk through neighbourhoods to provide knife sharpening services

[←91]

车 - Cars are a euphemism for porn in fandom culture

[←92]

天音 Tianyin-Sound of Heaven

[←93]

进贤冠 looks like this

[←94]

李无心 Wuxin means heartless

[←95]

杵臼之交 an idiom referring to people who are friends regardless of status or means, but the literal reading of the words is friendship of mortar and pestle. The idiom finds its origin in a story: During the Eastern Han dynasty, a scholar named Gong Shamu, in order to raise enough money to attend the Imperial College, donned plain clothes and went to work at the residence of an official named Wu You, pounding rice (using mortar and pestle). Wu You found him to be cultured and eloquent, and so made friends with him and paid for him to continue his education. Gong Shamu went on to become a principled and accomplished official.

[←96]

Homonym to “Very Smart”

[←97]

Referring to “Xia Sini” here, which is a homonym to “Scare you to death”

[←98]

聚沙成塔 many grains of sand accumulated becomes a tower, proverb meaning that many small amounts accumulate to make a large amount. In this instance, it's the name of a technique/method

[←99]

瑤光 Yao Guang, English name Alkaid or Benetnasch, leftmost star in the Big Dipper

[←100]

They’re not related by blood, Chinese culture is just really casual about referring to people who aren’t blood-related to you as brother/sister/aunty/nephew etc etc

[←101]

Reminder: underworld =/= hell, everyone who dies goes to the underworld

[←102]

“Brothers” here refers more to being close friends than blood relation

[←103]

理理我 “pay attention to me” has a lot of nuance that can’t be captured by any single word in English--it’s a plea for recognition, acknowledgement, and attention, a lot of desires rolled up in one

[←104]

九歌 Jiu’ge | Nine Songs - Songs addressed to deities and fallen heroes

[←105]

怀罪 Huaizui--”Bearing Sins”

[←106]

无悲 Wubei--”Without Sorrows”

[←107]

施主 shizhu - benefactor (term used by a monk to address a layperson)

[←108]

阿弥陀佛 “E mi tuo fo” - Amitabha Buddha, “merciful Buddha”, greeting/prayer used by monks

[←109]

Upon cultivating to enlightenment, a cultivator must first shed their mortal vessel and undergo one or more heavenly trials, possibly among other requirements as well depending on the lore, before they can become an immortal

[←110]

师祖 Shizu - grand-master, i.e., master’s master

[←111]

六道轮回 “the Six Realms of Reincarnation” - It is believed that life is a continuous cycle of rebirth; one must reach enlightenment to be freed from the Wheel of Reincarnation. The wheel has six sections, each representing one of Six Realms--Realm of Gods, Realm of Asuras, Realm of Hungry Ghosts, Realm of Hell, Realm of Animals, and Realm of Humans--which can be interpreted either literally as actual places or metaphorically as situations in life. After death, an individual re-enters the Wheel of Reincarnation to be reborn into one of the Six Realms according to their karma. Enlightenment and liberation from the wheel is only possible from the Human Realm

[←112]

三魂七魄 “three ethereal souls and seven corporeal spirits” - The three ethereal souls, “Hun” (“cloud-soul”), are associated with the Yang. These are formless, spiritual consciousness that leave the body after death and continue to exist; they’re lighter and tend to rise toward the heavens. The seven corporeal spirits, “Po” (“white-soul”), are associated with the Yin. These are tangible, substantive sensory perceptions that remain in the body after death; they’re denser/heavier and tend to sink toward and return to the earth

[←113]

黃泉 “Yellow Springs” aka the Underworld

[←114]

Brief overview of the crimes and punishments in each level of the Eighteen Hells

[←115]

Jin Hua’er means Gold Flower, an obvious prostitute name

[←116]

The title technically translates to “where to start looking for shizun” but this is the closest phrasing that starts with shizun

[←117]

凡人介里许多人没慧根, 结不了善缘 this references Buddhist concepts of karma, reincarnation, fate, and cultivation to reach enlightenment; simply put, one must have enough good karma from the previous life for a good fate that allows cultivation in this life. Most ordinary folks don't have the foundations necessary to cultivate, so normal people mocking those who have the privilege to cultivate is just them putting down something they wish they could have

[←118]

陪葬 item(s) buried with the dead to go to the afterlife with them

[←119]

Boya was a guqin player, and Zhong Ziqi was a person who could understand and appreciate his playing perfectly. When Ziqi died, Boya snapped the strings of his guqin and never played again because no one will ever understand him like that again. Exemplifies close/ideal friendship

[←120]

秀才 xiucai - someone who's passed the county (lowest) level of the imperial exam system

[←121]

君子之交淡如水 friendship between gentlemen is light as water - two interpretations: 1) between gentlemen, i.e., learned individuals of high moral caliber, friendship should be easy and natural, clear as water; and 2) maintaining a certain distance in friendship is healthy, and frequent interactions are not required to be good friends who are there for one another in times of need

[←122]

凤眼 [phoenix eyes] and 缝眼 [slit eyes] sound exactly the same: feng yan

[←123]

潘安范蠡，西子貂蝉 Pan An, Fan Li, Xi Zi, and Diao Chan

Pan An, aka Pan Yue - poet and politician, known as “the most beautiful man of ancient times”

Fan Li - businessman and military strategist, Xi Shi’s lover

Xi Zi, aka Xi Shi - one of the Four Legendary Beauties

Diao Chan - another of the Four Legendary Beauties

[←124]

A more accurately nuanced translation of the title would be “the little puppy’s past that Shizun doesn’t know about” (emphasis on the past rather than the not knowing) but alas it has to start with Shizun

[←125]

Original text actually said two bowls of congee but that seems to be a typo in view of the next paragraph

[←126]

In ancient times, dogs made of straw were used as sacrificial offerings then thrown away after, and so also signifies something lowly and worthless

[←127]

Wangcai and Wangfu are the names of his dogs; wang = prosper, but also the word for a dog's bark in Chinese (i.e., wangwang is the Chinese version of barkbark); cai = wealth, money; fu = fortune, happiness, luck

[←128]

Different from Shizun's wontons; there are three main varieties of wontons depending on the region--馄饨 [huntun] in the northern regions e.g. Beijing, 云吞 [yuntun] in the southeast regions e.g. Guangdong/Canton (this is the one being sold here); and 抄手 [chaoshou] in the southwest regions e.g. Sichuan (this is the spicy variety that Shizun makes for Mo Ran; Sisheng Peak is in Bashu, which is modern-day Sichuan) → see pic--huntun on top, yuntun lower left, chaoshou lower right

[←129]

Not literally his grandpa, of course; calling those older than you uncle/aunt/grandpa/grandma even without blood relation is a polite form of address

[←130]

Daily Chinese news programme aimed to "broadcast the voice of the party and the government, and disseminate news on things happening all around the world"

[←131]

Meridian points; Wuli is about ⅔ down the upper arm, Quchi is in the elbow area to the side, and Shangyang is on the index finger right below the nail

[←132]

The word for fat is 胖, and half-moon is 月半, resembling the word 胖

[←133]

Vinegar = jealousy

[←134]

月半 [half moon] --> 胖 [fat]

[←135]

Orange tabbies are notorious for being very fat

[←136]

The idiom means to die happy with no regrets, but Mo Ran took it literally

[←137]

To clarify, the meaning here is that it's Shizun who is the zongshi, as opposed to Mo Ran, who doesn't think himself worthy of the title

[←138]

Nangong Si's given name, Si 驷 is made up of the characters 马匹 which means horse

[←139]

The actual phrase used here was 却之不恭 which technically means “It’d be impolite to decline” but it’s deeply rooted in the “you gotta at least try to pretend to decline gifts etc” aspect of Chinese culture, and just sounds like he’s very reluctant to go in English, so I opted for an acceptance with a more accurate tone instead

[←140]

九转肥肠 braised pork intestine

[←141]

青涩 is used here to describe Song Qiutong both metaphorically as a fruit, where it means green/underripe, and as a person, where it means young, inexperienced, like a bashful new love

[←142]

生旦净末丑 roles in Peking opera: 生 sheng (main male role), 旦 dan (female role), 净 jing (painted face male role), and 丑 chou (male clown role); click here for an overview

[←143]

花旦 huadan, role of the vivacious young female, a subset of the dan role; 武生 wusheng, role of the martial male, a subset of the sheng role

[←144]

Du Fu's "Dreaming of Li Bai"

[←145]

走马灯 carousel lantern ，popular at Lantern Festival

[←146]

Again, not literally his uncle. It's common in Chinese to politely refer to older people as uncle/aunt

[←147]

桃宝 Taobao here uses different characters from the taobao website [淘宝], but sure does sound the same...

[←148]

苦 can mean both bitter (taste) and hardship, so CWN said “it must’ve been hard” and XM’s reply was basically that it was worth it/he has no complaints
sometimes… a pun just… doesn’t translate…

[←149]

大齢剩男： A man of a certain age (about 40 years old or over) who's unable to get married because he's undesirable

[←150]

昙花 Queen of the night is a flower that blooms rarely and only at night, and the flower wilts before dawn

[←151]

妙音池 the miao yin in Miaoyin Springs means beautiful (musical) sounds/tones

[←152]

The title is 小心地滑

小心 means be careful/watch out

地 when pronounced as “dì” means ground, but when pronounced as “de” is a structural particle used before a verb or adjective to link it to a preceding modifying adverb, i.e., -ly

滑 means slip

so 小心地滑 can be either “小心 be careful 地滑 the ground is slippery” or “小心地 carefully 滑 slip”

[←153]

皂角 Chinese honey locust　soapberry

[←154]

Excerpt from poem “Crossing the Han River” by Tang Dynasty poet Song Zhiwen aka Li Pin, about being away from home without news, and the anxiety one experiences upon returning (due to not knowing if the family has been well, etc.):

From beyond the mountains I’ve had news and letters neither, thus has winter gone and spring come.

The more nervous as I get closer to home, I dare not ask even the passersby

[←155]

Original term (苏到爆) comes from Mary Sue (玛丽苏), I guess Meatbun's saying that this Mo Ran is so ideal

[←156]

Lei Feng: A Communist legend whose name is now synonymous with selflessness and modesty in the Mainland Chinese lexicon due to his contributions to the Party

[←157]

Wang Bobo not Wang Dabo

[←158]

《逍遥游》, Xiāoyáo yóu, the first of the inner chapters of the Zhuangzi

[←159]

所谓不识庐山真面目，只缘身在此山中 is a line from the poem “Writing an inscription on the wall of Xilin Temple” by Su Shi (1037-1101), roughly translated as “I do not know the true appearance of Mount Lu, only for the reason that I stand on the mountain”. This blog post offers several translations and this page proposes an analysis of the poem

[←160]

程门立雪, the snow piles up at Cheng's door. It's an idiom referencing the student of master Cheng Yi, who waited outside until the snow was a foot deep so as not to wake their sleeping master

[←161]

天问, tiān wèn, means “heavenly inquiry”, so Mo Ran may be asking “What is the Heaven’s question?”

[←162]

homosexuality

[←163]

辟谷 (Bìgǔ), “avoiding grains”: a Daoist fasting technique associated with achieving xian “transcendence; immortality”

[←164]

只许州官放火，不许百姓点灯吗, basically meaning that a leader can do whatever he likes, but the common people are not allowed the same freedoms. I guess an equivalent English idiom would be “Gods may do what cattle may not”?

[←165]

a child prodigy who was gifted and intelligent in his childhood has become an unknown mediocrity as an adult because he did not learn

[←166]

东施效顰 (Dōng Shī xiào pín), idiom meaning “copycat”, “copying someone but making a fool of oneself”

[←167]

Longfeng Tianmen.

[←168]

think smallpox scars

[←169]

King Xuan of Qi (reign 319–301 BC) was rumored to ask advice from his ugly but smart wife Zhong Wuyan when in trouble, and to prefer the company of the beautiful but less smart Xia Yingchun when everything was well

[←170]

This is a Buddhist concept

[←171]

again, smallpox scars

[←172]

水泄不通 jam packed crowd

[←173]

This sentence and the one at the end of the previous paragraph reference Huang Tingjian's poem 寄黄几复, "Ji Huang Ji Fu". It recalls the joy of gatherings in the past, and further expresses the depth of the yearning for the ten years

[←174]

Up to that point, every “Mei Hanxue” in the story was written 梅含雪. This one is 梅寒雪. Both share the pinyin “Méi Hánxuě” since they are pronounced exactly the same. For clarity purposes, 梅含雪 will still be written “Mei Hanxue”. The new 梅寒雪 will be written “Méi Hánxuě”. Mei Hanxue is clarifying what characters go in his brother’s name by saying he is a cold (寒) man

[←175]

Empress Chen A'Jiao lost the favour of her husband

[←176]

Reminder that 梅含雪 is written “Mei Hanxue” in this text, while 梅寒雪 is written “Méi Hánxuě”

[←177]

Master, teacher

[←178]

Uncle

[←179]

Literally “桃苞山庄”, or Peach Bud Manor. A pun on the Taobao shopping site

[←180]

Manor Head Ma is here referred to as “接客马”, likely a pun on Jack Ma, the CEO of Alibaba, which owns Taobao

[←181]

仙长, meaning head/elder immortal

[←182]

Lit. 某某某, or so-and-so

[←183]

王小薛; 王 like Madame Wang, 薛 like his family name Xue

[←184]

薛丫; Xue like the family name, 丫 meaning girl

[←185]

王小雪; 雪 meaning snow, or like the Xue in Mei Hanxue >_>

[←186]

The literal term here used is 不自闭 which means “not autistic” which...I chose not to use in this context

[←187]

姑娘; miss/maiden

[←188]

赵大根；essentially, Zhao “big root” >_>

[←189]

杜鸡眼; Du Callous

[←190]

The pattern is that of the 夔龙纹 “kui long wen”, which appears frequently as a popular decorative motif

[←191]

Pollia japonica, known in Chinese as 杜若 “du ruo”. A medicinal plant used for treating snake bites, bug bites, and back pain. The character 若 is the same one used in “Ruo Ying”

[←192]

This wordplay works much better in Chinese; Xue Meng was going to say 娘 “niang” but changed it to 你 “ni”

[←193]

仙人跳, “immortal jump”, literally describes a pit that even immortals couldn’t jump out of. It generally refers to a type of scam where a woman approaches a man offering sexual services. If he accepts, another man, claiming to be either her husband or the police, will suddenly appear and demand compensation to not start a scene

[←194]

In Traditional Chinese Medicine, heat in the five centers is a Yin deficiency that manifests as heat on the Yin surfaces of the body, such as the palms, bottom of the feet, and the chest

[←195]

Meatbun doesn't specify here whether this is a kidney Yin or a kidney Yang deficiency. A Yin deficiency is marked by hearing problems, a dry mouth and throat, spontaneous sweating, constipation, and seminal emissions. A Yang deficiency is marked by aversion to cold, spiritual fatigue, difficulty in urination/incontinence, and declining libido or impotence in severe cases. Actually, both could apply to Xue Meng, maybe that's why she didn't specify which?

[←196]

Liver fire in TCM is associated with anger, and is caused by difficulty in managing stress

[←197]

This is an idiom, 如沐春风, which signifies someone who is noble and knowledgeable, a teacher who can pass on their knowledge in an exceedingly pleasant and enlightening manner

[←198]

As seen in many many wuxia and xianxia novels, the Jianghu is the world of martial artists and cultivators that exists outside the normal boundaries of society

[←199]

So this...is a horrible pun, and the reason why I'm leaving 萝卜精 "luobojing" untranslated. 萝卜 "luobo" means "radish", like a daikon. The character "**精**" can mean any one of the following: spirit/demon, essence/extract, or semen. Xue Meng, bless his heart, gets confused which 精 this vendor is selling

[←200]

三十如狼四十如虎, "like a wolf at thirty and like a tiger at forty," is a saying used in reference to a woman's sexual appetite, which is said to grow substantially as she enters her thirties and forties

[←201]

The "ruo" in du ruo/pollia and Ruo Ying are the same character

[←202]

Wang Chuqing is the given name of Madame Wang, Xue Meng's mother

[←203]

“冷宫”; meaning cold palace. The cold palace, as typically portrayed in fiction, is the remote part of an imperial palace to which a concubine who has fallen out of favor would be exiled

[←204]

Please note that in the original Chinese, the gender of Leng Gong is never specified

[←205]

The first part of this quote, “Pity mankind, with all its suffering,” is a line from Jin Yong’s novel Heaven Sword and Dragon Sabre

[←206]

The word used to describe Xue Meng's date is "少妇", which more precisely means a young married woman

[←207]

So. The way I understand the phrase “washing coins in a golden basin” or "金盆洗吊" is that it's a malapropism of the phrase "金盆洗屌" which literally translates to "washing your penis in a golden basin" and refers to...some kind of ceremony to increase your sexual prowess? I honestly don't know for sure

[←208]

Chen Shimei is a character from Chinese Opera and a byword in China for a heartless and unfaithful man

[←209]

A seven-level pagoda or stupa is the highest grade of pagoda in Buddhism

[←210]

A Mandarin duck pot is a type of hotpot pot with a divider, so you can have spicy soup on one side and mild soup on the other

[←211]

I was just rereading this and I realized that TXJ is probably not the type of person who'd know the word "sanctimonious"...but I like the alliteration, so this line stays as it is!

[←212]

Xue Meng here is letting out a stream of poetic lines and idioms related to being a cheating liar. A red apricot tree leaning over a garden wall, "红杏出墙" means a wife having an illicit lover. Saying three in the morning and four in the evening, "朝三暮四" means to change something already decided

[←213]

More idioms...to serve Qin in the morning and Chu in the evening, "朝秦暮楚" means to be quick to switch sides. Someone who changes like water and bends like willows, "水性杨花" describes a fickle person, particularly a woman. Know yourself and know your enemy "知己知彼" and coming out unscathed through a hundred battles "百战不殆" are both from Sun Tzu's The Art of War

[←214]

Leng Gong's speech is described using the line "语不惊人死不休", which is from Du Fu's poem "The water on the river gained momentum like the sea, so I gave a short account" or "**江上**值水如海势聊短述". It can more precisely be translated as "If my words do not startle, then I won't give up until I die."

[←215]

This is another reference to a poem by Du Fu, titled "佳人" or "beautiful woman"

[←216]

The idiom in question is "大器晚成" which literally means "it takes a long time to make great devices." Leng Gong misconstrued it as "大器早成" which means the opposite

[←217]

The Pear Garden is the first known royal acting and musical academy in China, founded in the Tang Dynasty

[←218]

Xue Meng said lion's head meatballs earlier, not xiaolongbao, and he doesn't correct this statement, so maybe this is a continuity error?

[←219]

Tangyuan are round dumplings made of glutinous rice, usually stuffed with a sweet filling

[←220]

This phrase "two to hold in three years" or "三年抱俩" basically means to have two babies one right after another, within three years

[←221]

He's referring to the practice of wei fu " 微服", which is when a high-ranking official goes out in disguise to observe daily life among the populace

[←222]

玉面娇娘 roughly translates to "Jade-faced lovable maiden". The reason why this footnote is here is because that translation sounds atrocious in English; it works better (though it's still cloying) in Chinese, I swear

[←223]

Meatbun uses the idiom Yangchun white snow or “阳春白雪” to describe the profound but unpopular works Taxian-jun used to read. In past parts of the narrative, Chu Wanning was also described as 阳春白雪

[←224]

The Book of Changes is another term for the I Ching, an ancient divination text and the oldest of the Five Chinese classics. The Book of Songs is the oldest existing collection of Chinese poetry, and also counts among the Five Classics

[←225]

This is a line of poetry from the Book of Songs, from a poem describing the author's patriotism and self-discipline, and of the lofty ambitions he can't fulfill due to the oppression of crowds

[←226]

Long “隆” meaning grand, An “傲” meaning arrogant, Tian “天" like the heavens

[←227]

The phrase "am deaf and blind" is "是聋瞎," pronounced Shi Long Xia. Meatbun...why do you keep doing this

[←228]

The idiom that TXJ at first tries to use is "“士别三日，刮目相看” or "A scholar who has been away three days must be looked at with new eyes." It's a line from Romance of the Three Kingdoms, and means that someone who has made rapid improvements in a short time should be evaluated differently

[←229]

Shao Daozi is the name of an ancient form of baijiu, a very, very strong liquor. It literally feels like fire going down I Do Not Recommend It

[←230]

FYI didi is younger brother; just putting this here since the word tends to appear far less frequently than gege in cnovels

[←231]

Gou "苟" means careless/negligent. Coincidentally, it's pronounced exactly the same as the character for dog, "狗”

[←232]

This appears to be a variation on a popular nursery rhyme, a version of which you can listen to here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAoUZcj-NSc

[←233]

Duke Zhou is a Zhou Dynasty nobleman who became known as the "God of Dreams." Zhuang Sheng, otherwise known as Zhuangzi, was a Daoist philosopher who famously authored the "Butterfly Dream," wherein he dreamed he was a butterfly, and upon waking up, didn't know if he was a man who dreamt of a butterfly, or a butterfly dreaming he was a man

[←234]

818 is internet slang for pieces of news on entertainment figures unearthed by gossip-mongers that suddenly explode into the mainstream

[←235]

The characters in Bu Shenqi, 步深契, are pronounced the same as "不生气" or "Don't get mad"

[←236]

Wang Mei Zhi Ke, "望梅止渴" is an idiom that translates to "Thinking of Plums Quenches the Thirst." You get no points for correctly guessing who this is

[←237]

Shaobing is a kind of baked flatbread. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shaobing

[←238]

A "guan" is the headdress that men traditionally used to bind their hair. You can read more about them and see examples here: https://ziseviolet.tumblr.com/post/141929771902/hi-i-was-just-wondering-if-you-have-had-a-post

[←239]

Cloth tiger pillow: a kind of common handicraft for children. They're really cute! For examples, see here: https://www.taobao.com/list/product/%E6%89%8B%E5%B7%A5%E8%80%81%E8%99%8E%E6%9E%95%E5%A4%B4.html

[←240]

SIGH. If you've read the MDZS extras, you may have already encountered this Nine Shallow One Deep, which is a thrusting technique during intercourse that is said to bring a great amount of pleasure to the receptive partner

[←241]

Dajie, “大姐” is typically a fairly polite, generally not too intimate form of address for a woman older than you

[←242]

Yi, "姨” meaning "aunt", is how you would typically politely address women of your parent's generation. Jie, "姐” meaning "older sister", is a polite address for women of your own generation who are older than you. Neither of these, nor their male counterparts, are reserved for people actually related to you by blood

[←243]

"Xiangu" means female immortal. "Mitang" literally means honeyed candy. "Meiren" means beauty

[←244]

Prescriptions Worth A Thousand Gold, or 千金方, is a famous Tang Dynasty compendium of traditional chinese medicine

[←245]

Chinese goldthread (coptis chinensis) is a plant used in traditional chinese medicine known for its exceptionally bitter taste

[←246]

The hot pillar, or 炮烙, was an ancient Chinese torture instrument where a bronze cylinder was covered in oil and heated with a bed of charcoals; a victim would be made to walk on the burning cylinder until they slipped and burned to death on the charcoals below

[←247]

A wife cake is a kind of pastry with a flaky crust and a winter melon seed, almond, or sesame filling

[←248]

The fujianese accent is characterized as not clearly differentiating the "h" and "f" sounds; hence, the confusion between “hu die”, the way the word for “butterfly” is normally pronounced, and “fu die”, which is what Xue Meng hears. Thanks to twitter user @bonbonruru for the tip!

[←249]

This is a play on "Hunan"; I guess they also have an accent with lots of "f"s?

[←250]

Tofu Xi Shi is a term for a woman who is beautiful but poor. Xi Shi is one of the Four Great Beauties of ancient China; the term "tofu Xi Shi" was coined in author Lu Xun's novel Hometown, in which a beautiful tofu shop owner is given this nickname

[←251]

An elmwood knot, 榆木疙瘩, is an idiom describing someone stupid, stubborn, and difficult to get through to, like a stubborn knot in an elm tree that can't be split by axes

[←252]

Guanye "官爷" means something like "gentleman official/sir"

[←253]

The yintang refers to the spot on the forehead right between the eyes, and is the location for the third eye chakra

[←254]

It might be a coincidence (it's totally not a coincidence) but ducks "鸭" and chickens "鸡" are slang for male and female prostitutes, respectively

[←255]

To eat the heart of a bear and the gall of a leopard, "吃熊心豹子膽" is an idiom meaning to behave audaciously and foolheartedly

[←256]

Ten feet of red "一丈红" is a punishment used in the imperial harem where an offending concubine would be beaten on the buttocks with a wooden plank until blood ran down for a "zhang", approximately ten feet. Crane-head red, "鹤顶红" is an ancient name for the highly toxic poison arsenic

[←257]

I'm not quite sure this is the correct reference, but the fragrant concubine, "香妃", was the nickname of a favorite consort of the Qianlong Emperor. Legend had it that butterflies would flutter around her whenever she appeared in the gardens. There's nothing about turning into a butterfly in this story though; maybe meatbun is referencing something else?

[←258]

"法不责众" is an idiom meaning that you can't censure one person for doing wrong when everyone is doing the same thing

[←259]

This chapter title…. SO. The original title is 姜曦扑街, which more or less means “Jiang Xi falls into the street in a manner suggesting he’s suffering from the consequences of his own misguided actions”. It’s net slang. I think “hoisted by his own petard” is a close enough English approximation

[←260]

A che is a measurement of approximately one-third of a meter. This is a quote from the Huangdi Neijing, a 2000 year old foundational chinese medical text. It is a very approximate translation, because hell if I know how to actually translate 2000 year old medical texts, and I couldn't find a pre-existing translation to do the job for me

[←261]

The xiao is an ancient chinese bamboo flute, played from the end (compare with the dizi , which is played from the side . Lan Xichen in MDZS plays the xiao

[←262]

Jiang Xi is referring to the 风痨臌膈四大证治, a medical text focused on strokes, wasting illness, edema, vomiting, and nausea

[←263]

Shuangjiang is the 18th of 24 solar terms in the traditional East Asian calendar, usually beginning near the end of October in the Western calendar. The season is considered to be marked by the onset of cold and morning frost

[←264]

It is unclear here whether MHX is raising his finger to Xue Meng's lips or his own. I will choose to interpret this as a deliberate choice by meatbun!

[←265]

bolang gu: a small drum-shaped rattle often used as a children's toy. See: https://traditional-chinese-musical-instruments.weebly.com/bolang-gu-253202801040723.html

[←266]

This is not a typo

[←267]

Nüwa is the ancient Chinese mother goddess and creator of humanity. MHX is likely referring to Nüwa's role in sacrificing herself to repair the Pillars of Heaven after they were damaged by the gods Gonggong and Zhurong fighting to determine who would rule heaven

[←268]

A time period equivalent to two hours

[←269]

The idiom used here to describe Xue Meng's resolve is 斩钉截铁, which literally means "to chop nails and cut iron"

[←270]

This is the most terrible pun the character for bird, 鸟, is pronounced “niao”, but when pronounced as “diao” means “penis”

[←271]

Literally "to fondle the flowers and trample the grass"

[←272]

Zhuyeqin is a variety of green tea produced on E Mei mountain in Sichuan province

[←273]

Chu Wanning's name is normally written 楚晚宁, with his given name containing characters meaning "night" and "peaceful"; here it's written as 楚婉凝, with characters meaning "graceful" and "to attract attention"

[←274]

Please note that this part in the original had no pronouns, so it's ambiguous whether Mo Ran is referring to "he" or "we" as the ones who want to win the livestock show next year

[←275]

I'm not sure what this is a reference to? When I searched Fei Yun Zhai I found a bunch of ancient bronze urns. If you know what this is feel free to let me know!

[←276]

I have no clue what meatbun meant by “said silently”, but it is literally what she wrote

[←277]

骑驴找马 "to ride a donkey to look for a horse" is an idiom meaning to use your existing, non-ideal resources to get to what you really want. 骑驴找驴 "to ride a donkey to look for a donkey" is like when you're looking for your glasses when you've been wearing them the entire time (not that i'm speaking from experience...)

[←278]

Meatbun.pls. Are MHX's eyes blue or green, make up your mind! Jade and turquoise and whatever other things you've compared them to are not the same color!

[←279]

The original term used to describe MHX uses is 辣, which literally means "spicy", and is used in the slang 辣妹子, describing the stereotypically independent and bold women from Sichuan province, and 辣妹, the Chinese equivalent of the Japanese gyaru archetype

[←280]

平沙落雁式. This appears to be a reference to the 屁股向后平沙落雁式, a joke name for the motion a student made as they were kicked flat onto their back in Jin Yong's novel The Smiling Proud Wanderer

[←281]

Borneol is a fragrant traditional chinese medicine that can come in the form of translucent crystalline white flakes

[←282]

Xue Meng's exclamation here is 嗨, which is literally pronounced "hai," so I'm presuming Meatbun is punning on Japanese here. The term used for Japanese is 東瀛人, people from east of the ocean, an old literary term

[←283]

The idiom here is 十指不沾阳春水, which means the ten fingers must not touch freezing cold water, and refers to a pampered woman who doesn't need to do housework

[←284]

口是心非, or to say yes when your heart means no

[←285]

The scroll spirit quotes an idiom from Mencius, 君子远庖厨. While it literally means "a gentleman stays away from the kitchen", its figurative meaning is actually that a gentleman who has gotten to know an animal can't bear to watch it die, hence, why he'll stay away from the kitchen

[←286]

Metaphorical gunpowder, in the sense that things are about to explode

[←287]

"Lang": honeys, weetheart, my love, a loving way of calling each other between lovers or between a married couple. I would love if these two get to have something but we all know that Xue Meng is the most asexual person in the world, along with his father Jiang YeChen. Xdddd

[←288]

狗头 Goutou

[←289]

God-wood Lord Celestial

[←290]

吵(Chǎo) Noise/noisy

[←291]

操 (Cāo) Fuck

[←292]

草 (Cǎo) Grass